

expense of both Mexico's environment and, as it turns out, its economy.

There is vicious public outcry when illegal Mexican aliens try to cross the border into the United States to take advantage of our jobs and wages. Why shouldn't they? It would seem that if our corporate monsters are allowed to feast on Mexico don't we owe its people something more than hothouse jobs and a shrinking peso? When you scream in frustration at illegal aliens trying to collect U.S. welfare or health services, reflect on the larger picture. If NAFTA were really anything but a free hand to big business, borders north and south would be open as well as the market. Do you think the compassionate American is really ready for that kind of international homogeneity?

Not to run on, but there really is quite a bit to this new GATT document written in secrecy in Uruguay. (Well, not total secrecy; many U.S. industry captains were invited to offer their wisdom.) Labor is not the only thing at risk in this big brother managed "FreeTrade" agreement. Intellectual properties, meaning patents and copyrights, are to be protected worldwide. Previously companies owning patents in the United States would also have to apply for separate patents in Great Britain, Europe and Japan for a limited version of international protection. When countries such as India or Brazil wanted to copy products from the United States there was nothing keeping them from doing so. Under GATT patents will provide full international protection — including for pharmaceuticals. This seems fair enough at first, but if you look closely, U.S. industry holds precedent on a majority of the significant patents. Good for us, right? *Well, who knows?* One first thinks that the critical patents are in the area of electronics. Maybe so ten years ago. Not today. The most valuable intellectual properties come from the science of genetic engineering. Of critical significance are biological patents on the DNA structure of seeds, synthetic growth hormones, pesticides, and who knows what else, Dr. Mengele? It's a brave new world order out there. Brave, indeed.

For the most part we have addressed the short-term "advantages" of GATT — and really NAFTA too. American big business has much to gain. Yes, in a way we will all benefit from a wider, "freer" market. The United States will be open to a variety of new products and, in the name of "open" competition, many at cheaper prices. Everything will be better as international economics homogenizes the world. But maybe before the business execs and CEOs start congratulating themselves on a smear job well done, we should return to Sir James Goldsmith's poker game on the *Titanic*.

Peer into his telescope for a glimpse of the long-range picture. Consider the "free" strictures of GATT and the American farmer. The door to the international market is opened with money. With large quantities of capital a smart buyer can access a wide variety of foods from all over the world at the cheapest prices. As the United States offers one of the richest markets,

cheap food imports can find ready buyers all over America. *Great!* Food costs for the individual will go down all over the country, but only at the expense of driving the small American farmer, already a rare breed, into extinction. The farmer will not be able to compete on the international level and he will sell his farm (if the bank doesn't already own it) and move to the city. GATT's "Tarrification" plan to gradually phase out agriculture tariffs over the course of ten years will help the American farmer like a finger in the dike; because as this process proceeds with time big buyers will bankrupt small farmers all over the world. Giant agri-business will consolidate small farms into large plantations and we'll have laborers (read slaves), not farmers, tilling the land. In the end it will be the companies that own the biological patents and produce seeds, fertilizers, hormones and pesticides that will control agriculture. The overall trend will be for mass migrations, as are already evident in the U.S., from the rural to the urban. In much the same way all manner of business open to international operation will tend to eliminate small companies in favor of a few megacorporations.

In economy just as in the environment stability is based on variety. (The more types of life the more stable the environment. The more players in the marketplace the more stable the society.) The economic pyramid needs a wide base to ensure the secure placement of the capstone. The long-term effect of GATT will be an economic pyramid standing on its point. *Maybe if they put the right spin on it it will balance like a top.*

If we apply this same principle of variety to the community of nations the result repeats itself. Money to capitalism is like weapons to war. In this New World Order "free market" dollars represent firepower, and there are corporations wealthier than many third world nations. Without economic protection small countries become cannon fodder for the international conglomerate. But at least they will produce jobs in these countries, you say? Maybe. But in no time at all the country's natural resources will be spent; their environment ruined; and the eight aristocratic families in the country will be rich(er) while the common folk, if still employed, will be working sweatshops. *Smells like corporate totalitarianism, doesn't it?*

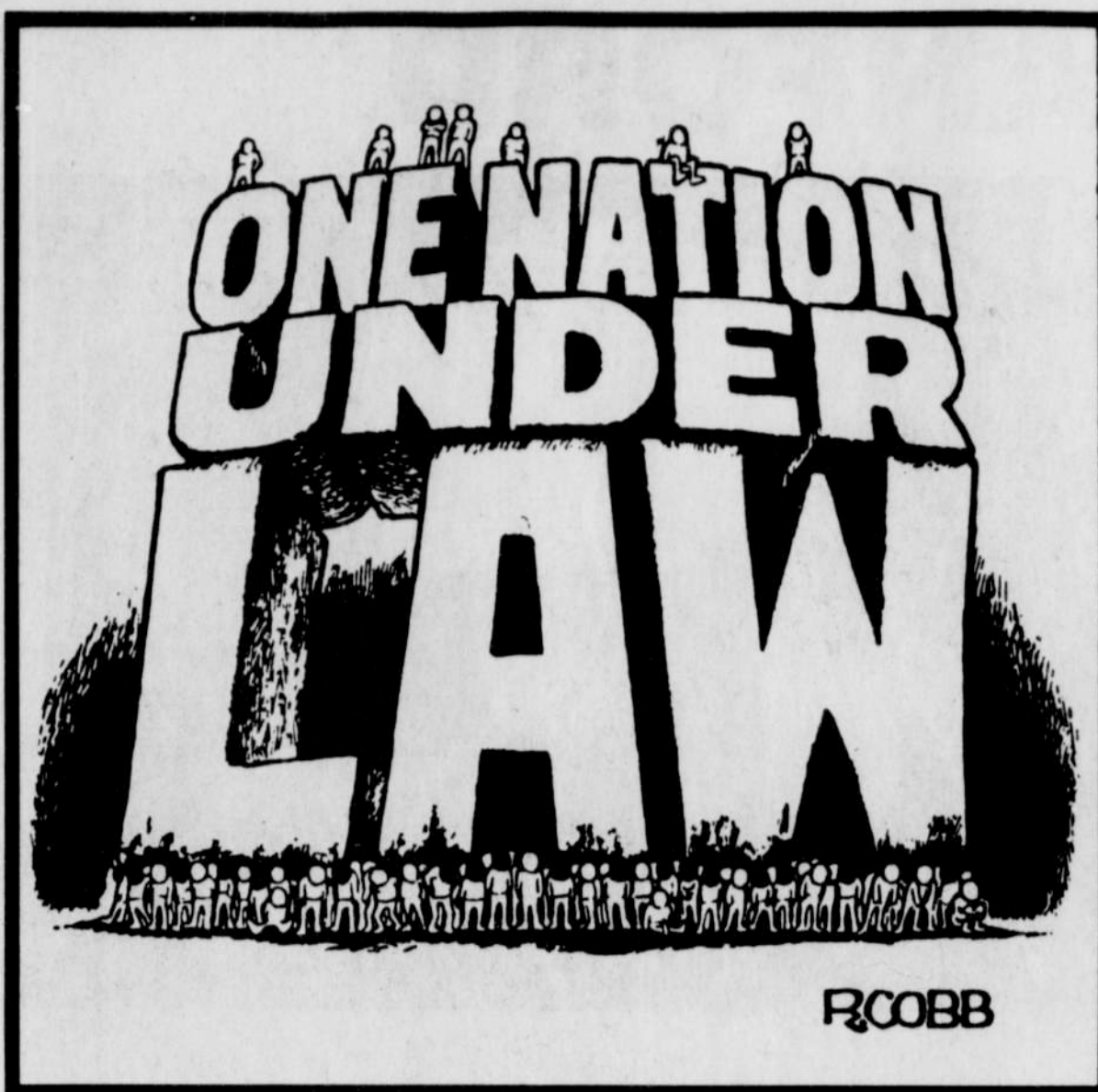
Great industrial nations like West Germany, Japan and the United States did not develop their present-day strength by competing in a free market. In fact, only through extreme protectionism did they succeed at all. One must wonder how our silver-tongued econo-diplomats convinced the hundred plus smaller nations to enter the economic arena on equal terms with the Giants. Must have been with dollars held to their temples! You might say we're headed to an era of global re-colonization in this lovely new game of Capital Risk.



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The long-term picture is not pretty. As is happening in the United States specifically, the same will happen worldwide. The rules of the game have already been decided. With GATT the G-A-P between the rich and the poor will only widen. Economic, cultural and environmental variety will diminish. International conglomerates will override national governments. A handful of feudal lords will rule the planet.

The system of capitalism has this one great flaw. All this economic "progress" will be at the expense of worldwide social stability. Near mythic economic theorist Adam Smith once said, "As the divisions of property become increasingly unequal, it is more necessary to have a (*National Security*) state to defend those who have property from those who do not." But we shouldn't worry, many great civilizations have sustained on a society based on slavery. But it's just too bad the framers of the General Agreement on Tariffs & Trades hadn't read their history books lately because there just might be a run on the works of Karl Marx as the old millennium becomes the new.

In summary to this lovely two part thesis it is appropriate to mention (hope?) that the above offered scenario does not have to proceed as described. The individual can participate. The economic laws of supply and demand still do apply. The consumer has the right to choose what he or she buys. Of course the cost of local products or ecologically or politically correct products are likely to be higher but the market will respond to those choices. In this system we clearly vote with dollars spent.

Long-range, worldwide, the choice of the New World Order over the Global Village will depend on documents "like" GATT and NAFTA. There may be sometime, long in the future, when a version of free trade may be able to exist without detriment to the common man and woman, but we are not there yet. As long as *those with* set the rules for *those without so much* we are in trouble. Compassion, benevolence and public participation must be added to the sordid system of capitalism. GATT must be scrapped. A new document needs to be written that includes proper protection for undeveloped countries and uniform high standards for the environment, workplace safety, health care and human rights. Without these the pyramid balanced on its point is destined to topple.

At the national level, critical to the success of the United States is public outcry for a vast decrease in military spending and reform of our monetary system. In both we see methodical manipulation of the public by this push-me-pull-you animal we call the National Debt. The fractional reserve method is the frighteningly doomed invention of bankers who pull financial strings behind the scenes while sitting on their asses compounding interest into eternity — simply money for nothing for those who scream loudest about the work ethics in America. There are other monetary systems available. But with the one in place, held securely there by those with the most, be certain it will take one mass outcry from the public to get it changed.

In addition to this the United States must also have a third party or more — and not just another lobbying group for the special "corporate" interests. Every other industrial democracy in the world has a labor party and/or proportional representation. The way things stand today the working person has no representation at in Washington, D.C. Unions have been destroyed or corrupted through corporate economics. Wages drop as profits soar.

Who knows, maybe we just need to fully embrace capitalism with something like a wise-buyer consumer coalition? Organize the buying public into smart spenders. If we realize that media advertising is really a method to organize (read dumb-up) buyers maybe the reverse (consumer education) can be implemented. Save the environment by buying right. Save human rights by buying right. If we really live in a capitalistic democracy, if the people really do run the country, new party coalitions, both as voting masses and economic spending forces, are the way to find out. If not, this beautiful place we know as America will soon have more security systems than ball parks.

(Note: Special thanks to Juanita Huebner for editorial assistance on this essay.)

Dan Armstrong is a frequent contributor to the Times Eagle. His most recent article, *They Shoot Horses Don't They?* appeared in the April/May '96 issue. (Juanita Huebner's poem *Walking Tour of Astoria* was on Page One of the Jan/Feb '96 issue.)

CORPORADO

(BY THE VULTURES)

Corporado
you'd better watch what you're doin'
or you will bring us all to ruin
before too long

Your bottom liners
your clearcut loggers and heap leach miners
your engineers and designers
could get it all so wrong

Well, don't you buy into the gold and diamonds boy
that deal is with the devil
The path with heart will fill your deepest need

Now, did God make the mountains green and tall
for us to make 'em bare and level?
We must understand we create our own greed

Corporado
we all breath by the same grace
you'd better let down your game face
and get yourself real

Can you rise up
break free of your denying
and see all that is dying
beneath your wheel

Well, don't you love to play *Monopoly*?
you got hotels all around the table
You're havin' so much fun that you just forgot to see

That you've got hired guns to make up play your game
for just as long as we are able
When you've got it all will you finally set us free?

Corporado
you'd best realize your power
will you bring our final hour
with the next dawn?

It is within you
to serve a higher calling
and stop that axe from falling
all our hope gone

Will you serve all life or mammon now
when the judgment is upon us?
In this final ticking of the 11th hour

You're gonna push your camel through the needle's eye?
it seems you're bound to take it with you
When all the fruit you hoarded long ago went sour

Corporado
it's not right to put us through this
You say someone else would do this
it's just our fate

It won't be easy
try to start sympathizing
And stop rationalizing
Stop your rationalizing
Before it's too late

~R. LOUIS RICHARDS