

BRIDGING BAYS, BRIDGING BORDERS: GLOBAL JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

A Report Sponsored By:

The Social Equity Caucus (SEC)

Urban Habitat (UH)

and

The Center For Justice, Tolerance, & Community (CJTC)

An analysis of Globalization and Bay Area Community Organizations
in preparation for attendance by an SEC Delegation at the 2005 World Social Forum.

Research, Analysis, and Writing By:

Joshua Abraham

Cheryl Brown

Juliet Ellis

Lili Farhang

Lila Hussain

Tony LoPresti

Manuel Pastor

Bhavna Shamasunder

Erica Swinney



Center for
Justice, Tolerance
& Community
University
of California
Santa Cruz



URBAN HABITAT

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank all of those who served as the inspiration for writing this report: the individuals and organizations who were part of the Social Equity Caucus (SEC) delegation to the 2005 World Social Forum:

Lian Cheun, *Center for Third World Organizing*
Karen Pierce, *BayView Hunters Point Community Advocates*
Carla Perez, *Communities for a Better Environment*
Wanna Wright, *Communities for a Better Environment*
Joshua Abraham, *Ella Baker Center*
Jessuina Pérez-Terán, *Marin Tenants Union*
Colin Rajah, *National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights*
Andrés Soto, *Richmond Progressive Alliance*
Ché Soto-Vigil, RPA, *Southwest Voter Registration Education Project*
Jason Negrón-Gonzalez, *POWER*
Lili Farhang, *San Francisco Department of Public Health*
Fran Calpotura, *TIGRA*
Lila Hussain, *Urban Habitat*
Cheryl Brown, *Urban Habitat/Social Equity Caucus Coordinator*
Margaret Gordon, *West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project*

Special thanks to Anthony Panarese, Leslie Ruiz, Angelo Logan for providing their in-depth perspectives of ongoing grassroots campaigns and to Victor Menotti and Mark Randazzo for their insight into what is occurring at the global level. We especially appreciate the SEC WSF Working Group (thanks so much AJ Napolis, Phil Hutchings and Dolores Beliso!) and Urban Habitat staff for seeing this project through.

This report was made possible by the generous funding from the Akonadi Foundation, Collins Center for Public Policy, Ford Foundation, French-American Charitable Trust, and the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program.

CJTC, UH and the SEC
January 2005

Table of Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	3
<i>Wal-Mart and the ‘Low Road’ to Community Development</i>	6
What’s happening in California and the U.S?	7
What’s happening in the Bay Area?	9
What’s happening around the world?.....	11
The Alternatives	13
<i>Costco</i> :.....	13
<i>Mondragon’s Eroski</i> :.....	14
<i>Calgary Co-op</i> :	14
<i>Thinking Big: WE-Mart</i>	14
Policy Potential	14
<i>Local and State Level: Curbing Public Subsidies to Wal-Mart and Big Box Retailers</i>	15
<i>National Level: Protecting the Right to Organize</i>	15
<i>International Level: Labor – Our first line of offense</i>	16
Conclusion: What’s the Global-Local Connection?	17
<i>The Port of Oakland and Movements for Community Accountability</i>	19
California Ports	20
Community Response	21
Labor and the Port of Oakland.....	23
Legislation and Litigation	24
The Living Wage Campaign	25
Real Estate Developments--Oak to Ninth Street.....	25
The Shafter Project	27
Conclusion: What’s the Global-Local Connection?	28
<i>ChevronTexaco and the Black Blood of the Global Economy</i>	30
What’s happening in the Bay Area?	32
What’s happening around the world?.....	35
<i>Ecuador and the “Anti-Globalization Trial of the Century</i>	35
<i>Nigeria and the War Against ChevronTexaco</i>	36
Alternatives	38
Policy Potential	39
<i>State and National Level</i>	39
<i>International Level</i>	40
Conclusion: What’s the Global-Local Connection?	41
<i>Moving Foward: Local Voice is Global Voice</i>	42
<i>BIBLIOGRAPHY</i>	45

FOREWORD

Since its symbolic debut in the Seattle protests of 1999, the U.S. wing of the global justice movement has been both celebrated and criticized. On the one hand, the increasing presence of protestors at international trade gatherings has signaled that the free trade jihad pushed by America's largest corporations is finding strong resistance. On the other, ever since Betita Martinez's provocative question – *Where was the color in Seattle?* – it has become clear that diversifying the set of organizations actively questioning globalization is both a challenge and an imperative.

The challenge is all the more pressing since it is, in fact, often low-income communities of color that have been hardest hit by the forces of globalization. In the Bay Area, for example, globalization is feted as a major asset for the high tech economy. But the benefits are unequally distributed. Manufacturing employment, central to traditional economic advancement, is being eroded by international competition. Immigrants and others struggling in exploitation and working poverty as well as low-income communities living in the shadows of our ports and trading centers have few positive connections to these growing centers of activity. Making globalization part of the consciousness and strategies of the organizations working in these communities would appear to be a natural fit.

But the fit is not really so easy. Abstract discussions of intellectual property rights, investment protocols, and import tariffs tend to trigger yawns, not engagement. Meanwhile, the pressing issues of gentrification, budget cutbacks, and environmental injustice demand immediate attention. The task, it seems, is to make the 'global-local link' – that is, to point out how the pressures of the Bay Area's global prominence has driven up housing prices, why tax revenues and public spending have been limited by the threat of international competition, and how environmental injustices are played out against both the Third World and U.S. communities of color.

For the last three years, the Center for Justice, Tolerance and Community (CJTC) of UC Santa Cruz and the Inter-American Forum of the Collins Center for Public Policy in Miami have been trying to explore how to more effectively link the local and global faces of the movement for social justice. As part of this project, we have held several national convenings of activists, worked with communities of color to organize their own protests at free trade meetings, helped to send low-income activists to the World Social Forum, and begun to work with others to develop and categorize a set of popular education tools that will more effectively show how global forces and possibilities can be tied to grassroots struggles.

Joining early on in that process was Urban Habitat (UH), an environmental justice and regional equity organization that convenes the Social Equity Caucus (SEC) in the Bay Area. The SEC is a coalition of more than 75 organizations and individuals committed to building a regional equity agenda in the San Francisco Bay Area. SEC participants represent economic, social, and environmental justice community-based groups, as well as, labor, faith, and youth organizations. The SEC works to connect local issues to a broader regional equity agenda, and forms strategic partnerships to build power within the Bay Area's low-income communities and communities of color.

This document represents part of that effort. Created as part of the preparation for a group of SEC activists to attend the 2005 World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, it offers several examples of how understanding the impacts of globalization are actually critically related to the

local work for social justice in the Bay Area. The threat of the “Walmart-ization” of the Bay Area retail economy, for example, is seen in the context of a global drive for lower costs. The environmental threats associated with ports and their related diesel traffic is connected explicitly to the corporate imperatives for ever-expanding trade. And the experience with ChevronTexaco in Richmond is considered but one face in a larger global effort to impose the negative impacts of drilling and refining on communities least well-positioned to defend themselves.

Yet the document also offers many rays of hope, noting how those in the social and environmental justice movement might better connect and learn from each others’ strategies and practice. It details, for example, the parallels between the struggles to keep Wal-Mart out of Richmond and Inglewood, two Californian cities with significant communities of color, and the attempt to prevent Wal-Mart from erecting a store near Aztec ruins outside of Mexico City. It points out that the community-based efforts to protect fenceline communities abutting the ChevronTexaco plant in Richmond are related to a set of struggles by indigenous groups in both Ecuador and Nigeria. And it points out how those worried about a fair share of the benefits as well as the costs from the Oakland port might connect to efforts for economic and environmental justice in other parts and ports of the U.S.

Why did we at CJTC, UH, and SEC create this document? We specifically hope that it will provide a mechanism to bring the global home. Attendance at international events like the World Social Forum, billed as a meeting of activists from around the world to “debate alternative means to building a globalization in solidarity,” often leads to individual enthusiasm, transformation, and growth but the payoff upon return to local organizing is sometimes less evident. There are exceptions: partly because of their learnings at the WSF, a set of organizations in Miami formed a coalition called “Root Cause” to organize a grassroots protest to the meetings of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) that consistently connected globalization to local issues such as the privatization of public housing. But making the global-local link requires preparation and follow-up as well as attendance, and this is part of that effort.

Yet this is only a partial answer to our decision to collaborate: more broadly, we have come together on this document because we firmly believe that incorporating the global aspects to our work – understanding the impacts of trade and investment, learning from the best practices of social justice groups in other counties, and standing in solidarity with those who believe “another world is possible” – will enrich our own efforts to promote equity at the local and regional levels. It is, we know, a leap of faith, but we hope others will join in the experiment.

The CJTC-UH-SEC tie also builds on a longer set of mutual activities, particularly the historic 2003 “Bridging the Bay” conference that brought together nearly 100 leaders to determine the common elements of a regional approach to social justice in the Bay Area. It is our firm belief that another sort of bridging – over the traditional gaps between activists and academics – can contribute to more effective social change. To do this, research work needs to be collaborative, building on the skills in both community organizations and university departments. This document follows that lead, combining the talents of community-based and university-based researchers and thinkers to produce what we hope is an informative and useful set of case studies.

For the funding that has enabled UH to participate in both this preparation and support SEC attendance at the World Social Forum, we thank the French American Charitable Trust, Akonadi Foundation, and the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock. For the funding that has enabled CJTC to provide support to this project, we thank both the Ford Foundation

and the Collins Center for Public Policy. CJTC, in collaboration with the InterAmerican Forum, has also created a report that profiles four community-based organizations versed in using popular education techniques that bring members into the know. This booklet, entitled *Bringing Globalization Home: Profiles of Popular Education at the Global-Local Junction* was released in February 2005, and is accessible for download, along with more information and popular education tools, at www.globallocalpoped.org

Van Jones, founder and director of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights in Oakland and member of the SEC, has long been a proponent of bringing global understanding to our local work. A participant in the Seattle protests, he was asked in 2002 to attend the World Economic Forum, an international gathering usually limited to corporate executive and top-level policy makers, as a designated Global Leader for Tomorrow. While there, he said:

“Our point is simply this: There's more wisdom at the grassroots, you know, the mothers around the world who are trying to figure out ways to raise their children have as much wisdom or more than any CEO, but they are not being included in this process at the World Trade Organization, or the World Economic Forum. Our point is, include everybody. We need the wisdom of the whole human family to solve these problems.”¹

We offer this document as our own effort to build the inclusion and understandings that will help both communities and leaders recognize the grassroots wisdom and issues that could help us realize the positive impacts from globalization and minimize the negative aspects that have concerned us all. Another world is possible, but it is up to us to build it.



Juliet Ellis
Urban Habitat



Manuel Pastor, Jr
Center for Justice, Tolerance, and
Community

¹ The quote is from an interview with Willow Bay of CNN, as documented on the website for the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS; see <http://www.businessfightsaids.org/site/apps/nl/content2.asp?c=nmK0LaP6E&b=239237&ct=279588>

WAL-MART AND THE 'LOW ROAD' TO COMMUNITY

DEVELOPMENT

In This Section

- Wal-Mart is quickly becoming the new model for American business. In the U.S., it lays claim to success by cutting workers' wages, slashing health care, and busting unions. Around the world, they are driving a sweatshop standard of production that developing countries are forced to accept.
- Small businesses take the harshest blow when Wal-Mart enters a community, and are forced to compete with Wal-Mart's low-ball labor standards or close shop.
- California is a bright target on Wal-Mart's radar. The company is planning to build 40 of its 200,000-plus square foot superstores in California in the next four years.
- California communities, and especially Bay Area communities, are taking a stand against Wal-Mart by passing local legislation that zones out the company's superstores. Wal-Mart has responded by throwing millions of dollars into campaigns to overturn such legislation.
- Wal-Mart is mighty, but not all-powerful. Alternative models of development take the 'high-road' to community development and don't oblige legislators to welcome big boxes with open arms.

Overview

In recent years, the exploits of Wal-Mart have taken center stage in debates about both local and global economic development. Raking in over \$250 billion in 2003, Wal-Mart is the largest company in the world, even surpassing 155 nations in economic size. It is also the largest private employer in the U.S. with over 1.2 million people on the payroll. Each day, about 20 million people shop at Wal-Mart, where they will find their bread and eggs, a sweater, a lawnmower, a diamond ring, make-up, and just about anything else a person can think to buy.

On the retail end, the Wal-Mart mantra has been to offer customers the lowest prices possible. While the statistics above certainly prove that this approach wins the patronage of consumers, it has come at a significant cost to communities. To maintain rock-bottom prices, Wal-Mart has formulated a business model that sets a standard which other retailers and grocers are scrambling to match. This model epitomizes 'low road' economic development: low wages, costly benefits or no benefits at all,

high turnover, and a rigorous union-busting program. Wal-Mart's efficiency in pursuing this business model, coupled with its size and competitive practices, tends to gut the clientele of

What's the Difference?

The Low Road: The dominant economic development model used around the world. Low road businesses:

- Make decisions to maximize short term investment returns, often regardless of social, cultural, and environmental impacts;
- Pay low wages with few, if any benefits;
- Use technology primarily as means to replace labor.

The High Road: A vision of economic development that seeks the best use of human and material resources to encourage the broadest distribution of wealth among laborers and communities around the world. High road businesses:

- Consider social, cultural, and environmental costs as part of determining short and long term business strategies;
- Pay livable wages along with employee benefits;
- Use technology primarily as means to increase production potential and accelerate workforce development.

small businesses in communities, and drive down labor standards at larger retailers in competition with Wal-Mart.

On the global scene, Wal-Mart has become such a powerhouse that nations often send emissaries to the company's headquarters in the small town of Bentonville, Arkansas. In the 80s and 90s, Wal-Mart built its image on a 'We Buy American' rhetoric. Today, more than half of its product is imported, mostly from China. The company carries so much weight in the global economy, that they can dictate the conditions of production. As a result, the sweatshop problem that has received so much attention from global justice activists is aggravated by Wal-Mart's purchasing power and low-cost commitment.

The Wal-Mart debate has only recently hit home in California, when the company announced plans to build some 40 superstores (combined retail and grocery, usually upwards of 200,000 square feet) by 2008. Legislators in Los Angeles, Inglewood, San Diego, and several Bay Area cities and counties including Oakland, Martinez and Contra Costa, have reacted by passing legislation to block big box developments of this kind. Wal-Mart has responded by engaging in aggressive public relations and political campaigns of its own to construct a positive image and win over public opinion.

This section discusses the implications of Wal-Mart's growing empire in the U.S., California, Bay Area, and around the world. The section concludes with some discussion about possibilities for progressive policy and alternative modes of development.

What's happening in California and the U.S?

In 2003, the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) declared a strike against three major grocery store chains in Southern California that put over 70,000 workers on the picket lines for five months. At stake were health care benefits that the companies declared to be too costly to compete. In the end, despite losing billions of dollars in profit, the companies refused to compromise on any of the union's key demands, and forced workers to accept a significantly reduced health care plan. One of the common explanations that the companies gave for taking such a stubborn stand on health care was that they were forecasting Wal-Mart's intensified entrance into the California market.

This reaction typifies retailers' 'race to the bottom' to survive as Wal-Mart looks to expand from its current base of 143 stores, employing 60,000 workers in the state. As it stands, Wal-Mart workers in California make 31% less than other workers employed in big business retail, and are 23% less likely to be provided with health care. A study conducted by the Orange County Business Council found that Wal-Mart's insertion into the Southern California's market alone would drive down wages and benefits by an estimated \$2.8 billion in the retail sector.

Quick Fact

Five of the ten richest people in the United States are Waltons. S. Robson Walton, eldest son of Wal-Mart's founder Sam Walton, is one of the richest men on the planet, worth an estimated \$65 billion.

The quality of the Wal-Mart's health insurance is far from adequate for most families scraping out a living on an average wage of just over \$9.00/hour. Full time employees must work six months before they are eligible, and part-time employees—anyone working

less than 34 hours per week—must work two years (average turn-over rate at Wal-Mart is seven months). For coverage that requires a deductible of \$350, employees are charged a premium that amounts to 6 – 20% of their wages, and to include a spouse in the plan, there is an additional fee of \$1300/yr. To add to the expenses, there is a 20% co-payment for every visit, no coverage for prevention/wellness care, and no coverage for immunizations.

Given that only 48% of employees even have access to this costly health care plan, it is not surprising that the families of Wal-Mart employees are 40% more likely than those of other big retailers in California to utilize tax-payer funded public health care. Similarly, these employees are frequent users of all public assistance programs, including food stamps, free school lunches, and earned income tax credit. In fact, it has been shown that Wal-Mart actively encourages its workers to seek public assistance to supplement wages and benefits offered at the company. A recent study by the UC Berkeley Labor Center put the equation together, and came up with a startling figure: California taxpayers are subsidizing the largest company in the world to the tune of \$86 million per year.

One of the key ingredients in Wal-Mart's low cost recipe is militantly confronting union organizing in its stores. Managers are coached by a union-busting handbook, which teaches them to badmouth unions and detect a 'tendency to organize' amongst workers. The company has formed a second line of defense, as well, creating an emergency 'labor relations team' that will promptly travel from Bentonville, Arkansas on a company jet whenever there are signs of workers organizing to advise store managers on how to combat the threat. To date, Wal-Mart's efforts have been successful: not one of its over 3,500 stores in the U.S. is unionized.

Beyond the low wages, strain on public health care, and anti-union stance that Wal-Mart delivers to the communities it enters, it is also the dreaded retailer villain because of the pressure it can bring to other businesses in the region. The massive size of their stores draws customers looking for convenience and lower prices away from competitors. The typical superstore averages 100,000 customers per week and grosses \$140 million each year. Wal-Mart also works actively to draw customers away from competitors to drive them out of business. For instance, they have been accused repeatedly of predatory pricing practices (marking key items at a loss to attract customers). They also build smaller stores near competitors to pull customers away, and then close up shop when their competitor goes out of business, oftentimes leaving hollowed out buildings in their path.

Big Box Retail and Urban Sprawl

Environmentalists and community activists alike rail against big box retailers, such as Wal-Mart, for aggravating urban sprawl. Big box retail refers to the growing predominance of huge retail stores that typically take up between 90,000 and 250,000 square feet. These stores are usually located near interstate intersections, are distant from public transportation hubs, and have large parking lots to accommodate car traffic. Because Wal-Mart seeks out low-cost land, they often build in unincorporated areas on the outskirts of urban areas, which draw business away from central commerce districts and supports new developments. This reconfiguration attracts shoppers from a wide radius, often creating serious traffic congestion in the area.

While Wal-Mart seems to be taking the country and California by storm, communities are becoming sophisticated, and are quickly building barriers that shield out the retail behemoth. There have been dozens of victorious 'site-fights' and local ordinances through which Wal-Mart has been turned away by local legislation, usually in the form of zoning ordinances.

One campaign took place in Inglewood, California in 2003-2004, which has become the landmark case of communities battling Wal-Mart. After the city council rejected a local Wal-Mart's plans to expand into a supercenter, the company collected 6,500 signatures to force a ballot measure. A strong coalition of community organizations, labor, and church groups organized to counter the \$1 million—or \$100 per Inglewood voter—that Wal-Mart flung at the campaign.

The defeat of the measure by a 60 – 40% vote was celebrated as a clear signal that communities are ready to fight the company's entry into California. As one commentator wrote in the San Diego Union-Tribune, "Inglewood is Wal-Mart's biggest defeat because it was a naked attempt to show that a low-wage, high unemployment community could be bought at the right price; that, for enough coin, citizens would turn their backs on government and planners." But, as organizers found in Contra Costa County, the results of challenging Wal-Mart are not always so encouraging.

What's happening in the Bay Area?

The debate over Wal-Mart has been particularly sharp in the Bay Area, which is a target region for expansion in the coming years. Already, Alameda County, Contra Costa County, San Francisco, Oakland and Martinez have passed measures outlawing the construction of supercenters. While the city ordinances have stood, each of the county ordinances was successfully challenged by Wal-Mart and swiped from the books.

The battle was most bitter in Contra Costa, where Wal-Mart put up a record \$1.7 million to overturn an ordinance that would have prohibited stores larger than 90,000 square feet from dedicating more than 5% of shelf space to non-taxable items, which include groceries. Such an ordinance effectively bans Wal-Mart from building superstores, which combine retail and grocery. After the county supervisors voted the ordinance in, Wal-Mart hired a team of signature gatherers to force a ballot measure. An unlikely alliance between Safeway, UFCW, ACORN, environmental groups, and the county supervisors formed to protect the ordinance.

The Richmond Wal-Mart Battle

In Richmond in 2003, Wal-Mart made an unusual attempt at building a superstore: Instead of purchasing land and constructing the building, they proposed a take-over of an abandoned Macy's store at the busy Hilltop Shopping Mall. Local activists mobilized to raise issue with the proposal, highlighting Wal-Mart's union busting practices, poor health care for workers, discrimination against women, and predatory pricing that steals customers from local businesses. Andrés Soto of the Richmond Progressive Alliance focused his critique on Wal-Mart's growing reputation as the number one gun merchant in the country. Because Soto and others had worked to pass local legislation requiring gun dealers to apply for a conditional use permit, they were able to pressure Wal-Mart on this issue. "This is the one hook we really had in them from the beginning. The people from Wal-Mart agreed off the top that if they came in they wouldn't even try to sell guns and ammunition."

Wal-Mart was not opposed by all local residents and activists, however. Many argued that Richmond needed low-skilled jobs that residents were eligible for, and despite their poor labor practices, Wal-Mart jobs fit that bill. Additionally, many were eager to access Wal-Mart's low prices.

After several protests, Wal-Mart was walled out not by activists, but by the merchants in the mall. One of the criteria for becoming a tenant at Hilltop is that a majority of the other merchants must vote to accept the new tenant. While the exact results of this vote are private, the other merchants, concerned about Wal-Mart's business tactics chose to block their proposal.

Even though the alliance was able to put over 400 volunteers into the streets to go door-to-door urging residents to support Measure L, on election day voters decided 54% - 46% against the ordinance. While Wal-Mart made good on its promise to 'spend whatever it takes to win', Anthony Panarese, an organizer with ACORN that worked on the campaign, noted that it was not as simple as money,

“In retrospect, I think they had a better message, a simple message that spoke to people. Their entire campaign was built around consumer choice—people should have the option to shop wherever they want. And they were also drilling it into the people’s minds that we were a smoke screen for Safeway and the union, that we were ‘special interests’.”

The alliance changed their central issue focus midway through the campaign. Initially, organizers argued that supercenters in unincorporated Contra Costa would aggravate traffic problems that already rank amongst the worst in the state. Supervisors, in particular, zeroed in on this land use perspective, arguing that huge stores with large percentages of non-taxable items would not generate the tax dollars to pay for the traffic impacts. The alliance shifted course, though, to hammer Wal-Mart for compromising local control, arguing that their refusal to respect the political will of elected officials was enough to keep them out.

Both issues—traffic and local control—are frequently used in the case against Wal-Mart. But Panarese believes that the alliance failed to persuade voters, and overcome the more than 2 to 1 discrepancy in campaign funding, primarily because of Wal-Mart’s strong-arm campaign tactics and because they spoke to people’s self-interest,

“We can’t just go out there and say ‘We hate Wal-Mart’. We’ve got to face up to the fact that a lot of people like Wal-Mart. We’ve actually got a lot of ACORN members that don’t care about anything but getting a better deal on groceries. And a lot of people that need a job would like to take a Wal-Mart job.”

One study put out by the Bay Area Economic Forum turned up a statistic that estimated just how much consumers would save from shopping at Wal-Mart. According to the study, if supercenters captured between 6 – 18% of the Bay Area Region’s grocery sales by 2010, total consumer savings would be between \$382 million and \$1.2

Opening in Oakland

In April 2004, Simeon Developers broke ground on a 150,000 square foot Super Wal-Mart to be built in East Oakland. The development is on Port of Oakland property, so Oakland City Council’s big box ordinance did not apply and there was no public hearing on this major retail development, despite million of dollars in public funds for infrastructure improvements and clean up at the site. And, because the land is part of the Port’s Commercial Real Estate Division, the developer was able to get around the Port of Oakland Living Wage ordinance, meaning more low-wage, low-road retail jobs for Oakland. Just Cause Oakland, ACORN, Sierra Club and labor organizations organized their own public hearing in which over 200 community members demanded that Simeon pay for health care, job training, youth scholarships and other benefits for the people of East Oakland. Leslie Ruiz, who has taken the lead on the campaign since June 2004, noted that Wal-Mart’s global record resonated with people, “Especially in the Mexican community, people want to know about what they do in the world. They view Wal-Mart’s power as part of a war against the poor.” The Wal-Mart is set to open in Spring 2005.

billion. And by Wal-Mart's own statistics, each superstore creates about 200 temporary construction jobs, and between 400 and 500 permanent jobs.

While such numbers are impressive, studies show that these savings don't make up for the impact of Wal-Mart's downward pressure on wages in the region. The same study put out by the Bay Area Economic Forum showed that supercenters offer total compensation (wages plus benefits) at \$21,552, which is about \$21,000 less than the average Bay Area grocery employee. A study conducted by the Southern California Association of Governments found that for each dollar lost in wages, there is a ripple effect that results in the loss of an additional \$1.08 to the regional economy. Using this figure, the Orange County Business Council estimated that regional impacts of Wal-Mart's entrance into the grocery market would be between \$1.6 billion and \$3 billion per year.

What's happening around the world?

On the heels of Wal-Mart's 'Buy American' publicity campaign in the 90s that advertised their commitment to preserving U.S. manufacturing, the company has done an about-face, increasing the portion of its products which are imported by more than 1000% in less than a decade. 80% of the imports come from China, where Wal-Mart has established its Global Procurement Office headquarters. This office is responsible for scanning the planet for the cheapest, most efficient production, dealing directly with factory owners clamoring to meet Wal-Mart's cut-throat demand that the price of each product go down every year.

That demand most often translates into lower wages and violations of labor standards in developing countries where enforcement mechanisms are lax or non-existent. While anti-sweatshop activists claim that factories producing for Wal-Mart are the most exploitative, there is actually very little documentation of this because Wal-Mart refuses to release information disclosing the name and location of these facilities. After several high-profile scandals broke in the 90s exposing forced labor and repeated abuses of basic human rights in their factories, Wal-Mart drafted a code of conduct to govern environmental and labor standards in its global supply chain. However, because the company does not permit independent monitors to audit these suppliers, there has been no verification of compliance.

Since the code of conduct was released in the 90s, reporters and activists have been able to identify and investigate several

factories around the globe producing for Wal-Mart. The National Labor Committee, for instance, released a report titled *Toys of Misery* that peaked in at several Wal-Mart toy manufacturers in China. The report found that workers (mostly young women in their teens and early 20s) making dolls, toys, and action figures were working 13 – 16 hour shifts, and 20 hour shifts in peak season, seven days a week. While the Chinese minimum wage is 31 cents/hour, these workers made an average of 13 cents/hour. Even though the production

Unions Even Wal-Mart Can Love...

In December 2004, Wal-Mart announced that it would respect unions in its 40 retail outlets in China. No such announcement has ever been made anywhere else in the world, and Wal-Mart has been famous for its staunch anti-union philosophy. Why the change of heart? The All China Federation of Trade Unions (AFCTU) that will represent the approximately 20,000 workers is regarded as nothing more than an extension of the Communist Chinese state. They are less likely to bargain on behalf of workers than they are to cut a deal with top-level management without consulting workers.

entailed handling of toxic chemicals, such as paints and thinners, workers were given no training about the hazards, and were provided with little safety equipment. These workers lived in squatter shacks that averaged 50 square feet, or in company-run dorms that charged \$1.95 per week. None of the workers had ever heard of or seen a Wal-Mart code of conduct.

This is a typical scenario, whether it be Sri Lanka, Honduras, Bangladesh, or any of the other 63 countries that produce for Wal-Mart. The governments in these countries are hardly eager to crack down, though. Wal-Mart wields enormous control over the stability of these countries' economies, essentially acting as a gatekeeper to the richest capitalist market in the world—over 100 million consumers walk through Wal-Mart's doors in a given week, and these countries need access to Wal-Mart if they want access to those consumers. It is no surprise that countries like Bangladesh, which ships 14% of its apparel production to Wal-Mart, sends emissaries to Bentonville to deal directly with decision-makers in the company. Governments jostling for export income are not about to raise concern with the estimated 50,000 children that sew Wal-Mart products in the country.

Wal-Mart and the Temple of the Sun

The battles over Wal-Mart retail outlets are raging in the Global South, as well. Just a mile from the pyramids at the central structure in the ancient Aztec city of Teotihuacan, just outside of modern-day Mexico City, Wal-Mart completed one of its 652 Mexican outlets in November, 2004. The new store was the subject of a huge campaign by indigenous organizations, academics, artists, merchants, and others, that conducted demonstrations, ceremonies, and hunger strikes to try to force a halt to the construction. Construction workers reported that when preparing the site, they were told to hide artifacts that they excavated to avoid delays prompted by archaeologists wanting to search the site. Author Lauren Carlson reflected on the resistance to Wal-Mart, "Mexico is still a country that defines itself by legends, and whose collective identity—unlike its northern neighbor—reaches back thousands of years. In this context, Wal-Mart is a symbol of the cultural insensitivity of rampant economic integration."

But while dozens of countries have put their eggs in the Wal-Mart basket, global trade policy, as it is dictated by the World Trade Organization, will deal a crushing blow to many in January, 2005. A system that has been in place since the 70s, referred to as the Multi-Fiber Agreement (MFA)², that effectively guaranteed developing countries a share of consumer markets in the U.S. and Europe, will be eliminated at the turn of the new year. As corporations will be free to choose the country they source products from, Wal-Mart has stated plans to consolidate its production from 63 countries to just four. All estimates are that China will receive the lion's share of the business.

As Wal-Mart continues to grow, it holds unparalleled control over where global production takes place. Because China has a stable economy and an enormous, very low-wage labor pool desperate for work as the country moves from rural agricultural to urban

industrial economies, it is an obvious choice. As scholar Gary Gereffi noted in an interview, "Wal-Mart and China are a joint venture, and both are determined to control the U.S. economy." In fact, Wal-Mart's direct (sourced by Wal-Mart itself) and indirect (sourced by

² The Multi-Fiber Agreement (MFA) was a multilateral agreement that set quotas which limited garment imports into the U.S. and Europe from developing countries. These quotas insured a broad distribution of garment manufacturing. With the phase-out, a massive migration to the lowest wage countries is underway and expected to continue.

brands selling to Wal-Mart) imports probably amount to between \$30 billion and \$45 billion, a sizable chunk of last year's \$124 billion trade deficit with China.

The U.S. trade relationship with China is partially a result of mis-calculation in the mid-90s, when U.S. politicians decided to open trade with China hungry for access to a massive emerging market of over a billion consumers. It didn't turn out to be the bonanza for American industry that many had expected, however, largely because opening up to China without insisting that labor and environmental standards comparable to the U.S. be in place, created such an economic imbalance that manufacturers in the U.S. were pushed to relocate to China themselves.

Because Wal-Mart has taken over as the largest supplier in one U.S. industry after another, the company holds the fate of much of U.S. manufacturing in its hands. Many scholars are ready to acknowledge that Wal-Mart has become the most powerful country in the history of the world, and they have achieved such prowess by vigorously pursuing a low-road business model. Fifty years ago, General Motors was the 'template' company emulated around the world. GM's model was based on the premise that workers should be able to afford the product they make, and live a solid middle-class lifestyle. Today, Wal-Mart is the template business that everyone is racing to copy. The people that make the products are not likely to ever purchase one, and most of the folks that work 40-plus hours a week in the U.S. are living below the federal poverty line.

The Alternatives

Wal-Mart is a dominant force in the global and national economy, but it is not the only one. There are successful businesses that already operate on scales similar to Wal-Mart but prioritize quality of life for their employees, and provide affordable goods and high quality service to consumers. These companies have established themselves in the United States and internationally as business leaders. Their success is proof that consumers and social justice activists alike are not confined to Wal-Mart's low road ultimatum. This section looks at other companies and cooperatives that have devised an alternative formula that provides jobs, cheap goods, and tax revenues for our communities.

Costco:

Also based in Arkansas, Costco is a warehouse club with outlets located nationally and internationally. Combining a smart business strategy (selling a mix of higher and lower

You Get What You Pay For...	Costco	Wal-Mart's Sam's Club
Average hourly wage	\$15.97	\$11.52
Annual health costs per worker	\$5,735	\$3,500
Covered by health plan	82%	47%
Annual retirement costs per worker	\$1,330	\$747
Covered by retirement plans	91%	64%

margin products) and high road business practices, Costco has consistently out-performed Wal-Mart's warehouse store, Sam's Club. Workers at Costco are some of the best paid retail workers in the industry, making about \$16.00 hourly—40% more than Sam's Club employees. Costco workers also have

comprehensive health care benefits and some 20% are unionized. Although Costco has fewer stores and employees, last year it generated about the same amount in sales (Sam's

Club's \$35 billion to Costco's \$34 billion). Costco competes by increasing worker productivity instead of cutting pay. In fact, they spend far more on health care, retirement, and profit-sharing plans, delivering employees about \$2000 more per year more than Sam's Club employees.

Mondragon's Eroski:

Mondragon's Cooperative Corporation is a network of over 100 companies employing about 60,000 people across Spain. It is owned and managed on a democratic one worker/one vote basis. Mondragon maintains several income balancing policies, such as a rule that the highest paid employee can make no more than eight times that of the lowest paid employee. This corporate network is at the leading edge of the Spanish industrial economy and is a model of comprehensive development that is being studied around the world as an effective High Road approach. Given Mondragon's success establishing Eroski, a grocery/retail chain with over 500 stores and \$5.3 billion in gross sales last year, it's no surprise that Spain is one of the few Western European countries without a Wal-Mart.*

Calgary Co-op:

Based in Alberta, Canada, this company has more than 3,600 employees (one of the largest employers in Calgary), a membership of 390,000, and sales of \$750 million in 2003. They operate 20 retail shopping centers, 22 gas stations, 13 liquor stores, and 12 travel agencies. Calgary Co-op extends membership to customers who are then able to fully participate in the democratic structure including being elected to the Board of Directors.

Thinking Big: WE-Mart

The New Chicago School for Community Economic Development (NCS) is actively exploring the creation of a retail cooperative in Chicago as an answer to Wal-Mart and as a means to pilot high road retail development that can provide access to quality, low-cost consumer goods in Chicago communities, provide decent jobs, and promote local ownership and locally-driven development. This project will be part of an over-arching strategy to build a Chicago High Road Retail Network, which will partner with similar retailers already active in the Chicagoland Area to strengthen the presence and competitive capacity of all the member businesses. NCS has assembled a national advisory board of experts in cooperative and community development to work with a local team that will guide the development of this project. Currently, NCS and the advisory board are in the process of compiling detailed knowledge of the retail sector, understanding the applicability of international models to Chicago's economy, and exploring the roles that government, community, and labor can play.

Policy Potential

Although a formidable economic force, Wal-Mart is fallible. However we are only in the beginning stages of realizing what it takes to build powerful coalitions and assemble water-tight policies that can protect our communities. On local, national, and international levels,

* See *Wal-Mart: A Destructive Force for Chicago Communities and Companies* by Dan Bianchi and Dan Swinney, for more information on this and other alternatives discussed here.

ground is being broken and we are moving forward to positively transform our economic landscape.

Local and State Level: Curbing Public Subsidies to Wal-Mart and Big Box Retailers

One of the factors determining California's susceptibility to Wal-Mart is Proposition 13, which has created a general desperation for sales tax dollars and a 'fiscalization' of land use, local grants and subsidies. Given this challenge, it is important to both continue efforts to block low road businesses such as Wal-Mart from establishing altogether, as well as implement community-protecting policies such as; land use ordinances; setting hard local standards that dictate wages; policies that make it difficult for Wal-Mart to abandon empty buildings, and; curbing exorbitant taxpayer subsidies dealt out to exploitive corporations.

A report published by Good Jobs First in May 2004 studied Wal-Mart's ability to capture public subsidies to help finance its rapid growth. Given Wal-Mart's impact on local business, strain on publicly funded services, and poor labor relations record, the report questions whether it makes sense for economic development officials to funnel further resources to Wal-Mart. In spite of Wal-Mart's status as the biggest company in the world, the Palm Beach Post revealed in an article that over \$150 million in public subsidies has been provided to Wal-Mart to build 47 distribution centers alone. Such corporate welfare practices incited a public statement from the National Governors Association, a bi-partisan forum designed to inform public policy discussions, "The governors believe that the public and private sectors should undertake cooperative efforts that result in improvements to the general economic climate rather than focus on subsidies for individual projects and companies."

While big boxes could respond to a problematic shortage of local grocers in low-income communities, policy should be passed that requires any company receiving or benefiting from a direct public subsidy to pay workers above the economic self-sufficiency standard, generally defined as 115% of local average wage for non-managerial workers. Such a policy would insure a benefit to the community in the form of good-paying jobs, and, at the same time, curb the hidden taxpayer subsidies that provide public services for underpaid workers. Community Benefits Agreements (CBA) have become a popular tool used by community groups in effort to set a basic code of conduct for large companies that wish to locate in a particular area. The CBA is a legal document that becomes part of the city's agreement with the developer. It contains numerous provisions stipulating exactly how the development will benefit the community. Although passing a CBA is an important first step in negotiating the terms under which the city and community should permit the establishment of a particular business, its enforceability and the monitored benefits actually tendered to the community over the long-run is still largely unknown.

National Level: Protecting the Right to Organize

While Congress has not directly confronted Wal-Mart's growing dominance and affect on labor standards and communities, there are current policy measures designed to better protect workers' right to organize—a key step in infiltrating anti-union Wal-Mart. In 2003, Representative George Miller of California, one of the most outspoken critics of Wal-Mart,

introduced the Employee Free Choice Act, which would amend the National Labor Relations Act that would triple damages for unlawful firings of pro-union workers and generally increase civil fines on employers that repeatedly violate the right to organize. The legislation, which has over 200 co-sponsors, would also institutionalize a card check system, instead of requiring an election before the National Labor Relations Board. The bill is currently in the House subcommittee for employer-employee relations.

International Level: Labor – Our first line of offense

China

Labor unions are at the front line of forcing Wal-Mart to recognize labor rights nationally and internationally. Under mounting pressure from Chinese labor activists associated with the Communist party, Wal-Mart announced that it would allow the union into its Chinese stores if employees requested it. The China Federation of Trade Unions, which, according to the Associated Press has 123 million members (123 million people is more than the number of U.S. shoppers who go to Wal-Mart every month), had threatened to sue Wal-Mart if they don't set up union branches in their China operations. Because China represents one of the largest growth opportunities for Wal-Mart in the world, Chinese labor can use Wal-Mart's intent to exploit that market as leverage for having a significant say in how Wal-Mart does business there.

However, after the WTO phase-out of the Multi-Fiber Agreement (MFA), retailers such as Wal-Mart are racing to a small set of countries with the most lax labor standards, predominantly China. Wal-Mart has plans to concentrate its sourcing from over 60 countries to four. One of the great appeals of China for Wal-Mart and others is the country's reluctance to enforce its already lenient labor and environmental laws. Studies by several NGOs have shown that as many as 80% of Chinese factories violate more than one labor law. The WTO has governed the 10-year phase-out of the MFA ignoring the appeals of developing countries that stand to lose big from the termination of the agreement. Given the solid evidence demonstrating the widespread violations in countries such as China, labor, NGOs and community based organizations need to bridge cultural dynamics of their respective institutions and find policy and organizing strategies to fortify and enforce the labor and environmental laws on national levels where Wal-Mart intends to concentrate their sourcing.

Switzerland

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, the Danish trade union pension funds, part of an international services and skills workers union, UNI, denounced Wal-Mart anti-worker policies and committed to dropping all their Wal-Mart shares. They also called on all responsible investors to support this work by following the initiative and dispersing of their Wal-Mart shares and move to supporting ethically and socially responsible companies. Recently, anti-Wal-Mart activists in Mexico asked TIAA-CREF, a major pension fund and financial planner, also to disinvest in Wal-Mart stock.

Canada

In Canada, efforts to unionize have been underway in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia. Recently, in Jonquiere, Quebec, Wal-Mart decided to close a store instead of negotiating a contract with a union that was formed six months prior. Although such results are usually touted as “warnings” for what workers in other stores can expect if they dare engage in unionizing efforts, it actually should be construed as labor’s power to mandate what kind of business is welcome in a particular location, and if that business is unwilling to compromise then it is welcome to close its doors and leave.

Students in Canada have also allied themselves with labor in standing up against Wal-Mart on behalf of workers and the communities they live in. Students, part of the UberCulture Collective, a non-profit organization based out of Montreal, Vancouver and Halifax, went on a tour of small Canadian towns in 2004 with Wal-Mart’s with the intent to inform the public of the connections between Wal-Mart’s low prices and how the company is able to achieve those prices. This important outreach was a means to engage Wal-Mart customers and employees in a dialogue about Wal-Mart’s labor practices and the company’s effects on small communities.

Conclusion: What’s the Global-Local Connection?

With its unprecedented economic power and political clout, Wal-Mart has wielded enormous influence over the development of our societies, both local and global. Champions of the free market contend that the imperatives of the global economy demand Wal-Mart type business models. However, as functional alternatives emerge and thrive, it is clear that Wal-Mart’s policy of busting unions, undermining local businesses, and promoting sweatshop production abroad, are hardly an unavoidable destiny.

Making the global-local link will require that social justice advocates and consumers alike widen their circle of consciousness beyond the local. While working to pass city and county land ordinances in the Bay Area is a fight on the frontlines of an anti-Wal-Mart battle, so too is the struggle for human rights in Bangladeshi sweatshops. It’s clear that solidarity makes sense on both ends of the production chain. Pushing from within the U.S. to reform WTO trade policy so that human rights are monitored and enforced will curtail abuses in factories around the world. Similarly, if workers in those factories organize and win improved wages and working conditions, it dulls Wal-Mart’s low price edge in the market here.

Community-based organizations don’t need to show up in droves at the next WTO protest to tame Wal-Mart. If social justice advocates frame the message correctly, raising a red flag when they try to set up shop can bring attention to the company’s record in communities at home and abroad. This message could be inserted in the CBAs we draft. Along with using the CBAs to mitigate and acknowledge local standards of living, we should include language that requires Wal-Mart and their suppliers to adhere to labor, social and environmental standards in other countries. Although not necessarily enforceable, it would serve as a means to continue educating ourselves and demonstrating to decision-makers and exploited peoples around the world that we understand how the economic oppression in other countries is very much relevant to our local plights. If the critique is global and local at once, it will yield

a corresponding response from legislators such as Representative George Miller, who used his progressive muscle to bring congress' attention to legislation that confronted Wal-Mart at both levels. And while trade policy decisions are made at the federal level, there could be untapped potential in appealing to local and state politicians, who can voice their concerns about the impacts trade policy is having on their constituencies.

Based on what we know about current local, national and international examples and models of what people are doing to keep Wal-Mart from economically devastating communities around the world, we need to;

- Educate ourselves as well as outreach to others about how Wal-Mart is destructive to our communities.
- Support and promote (individually and with public monies) the businesses that are doing the right thing.
- Block the businesses that seek to exploit our communities through a variety of means, including through laws and disinvestments.
- Work together as labor, government, business, community and religious-based organizations, locally and globally, to implement regulations affecting development that address the long term social and economic needs of our diverse communities.

As consumers, social justice advocates, and community members, insisting on the power to choose is essential. Fortunately, urban planning and economic development are not like shopping at Wal-Mart—we do not casually choose business models off the shelf. Economic development is the product of a living culture of experience, intelligence and commitment to community. Effectively confronting Wal-Mart and other low road businesses are key battles in the ongoing struggle to build community-friendly economies.

THE PORT OF OAKLAND AND MOVEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY

ACCOUNTABILITY

In This Section

- Ports are huge regional and global economic players yet neighboring low-income communities gain few economic benefits from port development while bearing many health and environmental costs.
- Ports are massive sources of pollution. Multiple environmental and environmental health impacts are caused by the cumulative effect of: container ships with engines running on dirty fuel, thousands of diesel truck trips, and diesel locomotives hauling mile-long cargo trains. Yet ports are not regulated as “single source” polluters but as multiple small sources by a range of uncoordinated regulatory authorities.
- International trade treaties and development bank loans often include language governing port regulation and privatization. Future WTO agreements could weaken regional authorities ability to regulate ports.
- Ports and related transportation issues have become major organizing targets for communities. Organized labor and community groups have pressured California ports to mitigate pollution and improve labor practices. Holding ports accountable to the needs of local communities can be a driver for global accountability and change. Ongoing struggles at the Port of Oakland can serve as exemplars of key issues and tactics involved in winning accountability.

Overview

As worldwide trade increases, ports are increasingly important in the globalized economy. Because of their intrinsic function as gateways for huge volumes of goods, the stakes in conflicts between labor, management, environmentalists, industry and low-income communities in which they are generally located are extremely high.

Labor struggles in ports led to the west coast general strikes of the 1930s which were critical in the gains workers and low-income communities won in the 20th century. In Oakland, Los Angeles and Long Beach work stoppages by truckers and longshore workers, anti-war protests and sustained community pressure have affected the flow of billions of dollars of goods.

Because large modern ports are complex collaborations between public agencies and large corporate entities, mobilizing community and labor pressure for change can be challenging, but precisely because ports are in part accountable to the public, progressive organizations often have more leverage than when confronting corporate behemoths such as WalMart or ChevronTexaco.

In this section we take a preliminary look at campaigns waged in at California’s port communities, particularly Oakland, for insights into strategies and tactics useful in building power for low-income communities, workers, and people of color living in the shadow of port operations. Such campaigns have a natural link to the struggle against corporate globalization’s excesses because as international trade grows, so too do impacts on port neighbors.

California Ports

California is home to three of the world's busiest ports—Los Angeles, Long Beach and Oakland—combined they carry almost 50 percent on the United States total container cargo volume. The total value of trade through the Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego ports was \$392 billion in the year 2000. Shipping companies project West Coast ports will see a 13.67 percent increase in cargo over last year's levels and that West coast shipping volume will double by 2020.

The Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach have reached maximum capacity and are struggling to keep up with the growth. Oakland, historically an outbound port for U.S.

10 LARGEST PORTS IN THE U.S.

- 1. Los Angeles, California**
- 2. Long Beach, California**
3. New York-New Jersey
- 4. Oakland, California**
5. Charleston, South Carolina
6. Hampton Roads, Virginia
7. Seattle, Washington
8. Savannah, Georgia
9. Houston, Texas
10. Miami, Florida

agricultural and industrial goods, is taking advantage of the congestion in Southern California to expand its reach and obtain the overflow business, competing with Portland and Seattle.

The scale of operations at the Oakland port is already stunning. In 2004, 814,124 twenty foot shipping containers (TEUs)³ mostly filled with fruits, nuts, vegetables, agricultural products, raw cotton, crude fertilizers and industrial machinery flowed outbound while 691,004 inbound loaded

cargo containers carried auto parts, computer equipment, apparel, toys, iron and steel, as well as raw cotton, crude fertilizers and industrial machinery. In addition 539,467 empty TEU's passed through the port of Oakland on their way to other destinations to be filled.

In order to enhance Oakland's chances of becoming a first port of call for massive new vessels from Asia, the Port is planning to dredge deeper channels, improve rail links, and increase truck traffic capacity. Of course, such growth will create increased traffic, noise, and air pollution in the neighboring Oakland communities.

All told, over 1.7 million TEU's were transferred at the Port of Oakland in 2002, and estimates of the port's planned expansions will almost double the amount of truck traffic in the area, generating 22,000 truck trips per day by 2010.

Diesel is the primary fuel used in moving goods in the United States. Diesel exhaust is the number one toxic air contaminant in California. Because of where ports, rail yards, and distribution centers are located, diesel pollution severely and unfairly impacts low-income and communities of color. The nine-county San Francisco Bay Area Basin has a history of recorded violations of federal and state ambient air quality standards for monoxide, and inhalable particulate matter.

While air pollution affects all communities, low-income communities of color living in highly polluted transportation corridors are disproportionately impacted. These communities suffer from higher rates of all illnesses associated with diesel particulate matter exposure

³ Shipping volumes is measured in units known as TEUs which are equivalent to the freight volume of a standard 8x8x20 shipping container. Volume estimates are from the Port of Oakland website: http://www.portofoakland.com/maritime/facts_operations.asp

including asthma, exacerbated cardiovascular problems, cancers, and other respiratory illnesses.

This type of volume moving through California ports has led to substantial strain on communities located nearby. The West Oakland community, faced with massive pollution problems, is organizing to clean up the Port and aligning with communities across the state. Communities in and around the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports are struggling with the traffic congestions, pollution, and resulting health problems while realizing few of the benefits of the global economy that the ports are both benefiting from and serving.

Brownfields, ugly facades, idling diesel trucks, noise pollution, polluting ships, and abandoned and underutilized railroad tracks all contribute to the economic, health, and social burdens placed on poor communities of color living near ports. Ports add to the land use problems plaguing communities dealing with a myriad of environmental injustices.

Community Response

Activists are working to significantly reduce the burden of diesel pollution by involving community residents, environmental and environmental justice organizations, and truckers in implementing state-wide solutions. As part of a larger environmental justice effort, communities in California are advocating that the California Air Resource Board adopt a Land Use Guide to address the issue of air pollution from ports. This is a radical step for a regulatory air board, long accustomed to operating within narrow parameters of air quality. Residents are pushing for community-based land-use planning in order to build sustainable and safe neighborhoods.

Communities living near ports have shifted their organizing strategies from facility-specific organizing to addressing the cumulative burdens and exposures they face. Organizations such as the East Yard Group in Southern California mobilize residents to combat the rail systems and trucks that idle in their community. The East Yard community faces severe health inequities due to their proximity to rail, truck, and port pollution

Another important organizing tactic has been a push for the inclusion of barrier zones near polluting facilities. Industry and city planners often are opposed to this concept, but barrier zones correct the problems of poor zoning that allows residential communities near

An L.A. Story

Angelo Logan is a crusader for better air quality in the City of Commerce. The East Yard communities, most of them inhabited by Latinos in low wage service and manufacturing jobs, are composed of little homes stuck between two huge railroad yards where goods to and from the Los Angeles ports are loaded from trucks onto trains or trains onto trucks. Just across from the rail yard there's the neighborhood park. The asthma rates in this community are extremely high. Over the next few decades, the port will undertake a massive expansion of the port without plans for reducing pollution levels in neighborhoods that are already suffering from soaring cancer and asthma rates. Angelo Logan says thirty-five thousand trucks pass through Commerce each day. And that number is expected to triple over the next 20 years, according to transportation officials. As the head of East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, Angelo Logan led a grassroots community fight against the city of Los Angeles' expansion plans of the 710 freeway that would bring more truck traffic to Long Beach/Los Angeles corridor. East Yard has forced public officials to make community health concerns a priority. Logan says he hopes more people will come to see cargo containers the way his community does – not just as the economy on wheels, but a civil rights issue too.

industrial sites. Creating a defined space between polluting areas and communities makes good public health sense and gives relief to poor communities of color that have long suffered disproportionate health effects from pollution.

Environmental Health and Air Pollution

In the Bay area, two major freeways, I-880 and I-80, are used by diesel trucks to travel from the Port of Oakland to rail yards in Richmond and to refueling, storage, and service stations in San Leandro. Diesel pollution concentrates in this corridor because large trucks are banned from traveling on the parallel 580-corridor that services the hills and more affluent neighborhoods. Flatland communities along the I-880 and I-80 corridor are burdened by diesel particulate matter pollution from ships, cargo-handling equipment, trains, in addition to diesel truck traffic and truck idling.

The diesel engines at ports that power ships, trucks, trains, and cargo-handling equipment, create vast amounts of air pollution affecting the health of workers and communities nearby. According to research by the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project and the Pacific Institute, there is far more diesel particulate pollution in West Oakland than in the rest of the city of Oakland. The amount of toxic soot produced by trucks traveling through West Oakland to the port per day is the same as that produced by 127,677 cars. West Oakland residents face increased cancer risks, higher rates of asthma, increased susceptibility to heart attacks, and many other health effects resulting from living between three major highways and being the thoroughfare for trucks traveling from the 880 corridor to the Port of Oakland.

According to a report by the Natural Resources Defense Council, port pollution is expected to account for one fifth of all diesel soot generated in 2020, making ships the second largest source nationwide. While diesel engines in new trucks are cleaner than other diesel sources, the local trucks that serve container ports tend to be of the much older and polluting variety.

There is almost no regulatory control in ports because there are many sources of pollution to measure, but taken as whole, ports make up some of the largest polluters in the country. Adding to this regulatory dilemma is the fragmentation of decision-making. While

Oakland Residents won \$9 million in air pollution mitigation measures through lawsuit settlement

Most of the air quality programs at the Port of Oakland stem from a 1998 legal settlement involving the Port's Vision 2000 expansion plan. Nearby West Oakland residents were concerned about air pollution from the proposed expansion. Noting that roughly 20 percent of children in West Oakland suffer from asthma, one local activist alleged that the port's activities were "literally killing us." The Golden Gate Environmental Law and Justice Clinic took the port to court on behalf of West Oakland neighbors. The port settled with a \$9 million air quality mitigation plan, the most stringent diesel exhaust mitigation plan of any port to that point. The air quality plan includes nine measures, some of which reduce pollution from non-port-related sources in the community to make up for increased emissions from port activities. The implementation of the measures is guided by a technical review panel that is composed of representatives from regulatory agencies, community, & environmental groups.

Excerpted from the Natural Resources Defense Council Report HARBORING POLLUTION: The Dirty Truth about U.S.

Sources: "Port of Oakland Works to Clear the Air," *Bay Area Monitor*, Sep/Oct 1999. Summary Report #7, Vision 2000 Air Quality Mitigation Program, Feb 2003, Port of Oakland.

land use is regulated locally, air pollution is regulated regionally and statewide, and railroads fall under federal regulation. This morass of regulation makes it very difficult to adopt a primarily local strategy for dealing with port pollution. A policy question that communities in California are posing is, “shouldn’t ports be regulated as a point source like other large sources of pollution?”

Labor and the Port of Oakland

Employment at the port is similarly distributed across a wide diversity of employers. They range from expected categories such as shipping companies, trucking companies, warehouses and railroads but also include restaurants, office buildings, nightclubs, bookstores and numerous other tenants in port owned properties. The regional waterfront shopping area known as Jack London Square is owned by the Port and has been subsidized by the City of Oakland for decades.

The Port of Oakland itself is a public agency, returning approximately \$12 million per year to the City in the form of payments to reimburse the City for services, such as police and fire. As a major employer in Oakland, the Port also employs hundreds of workers and generates millions of dollars in wages. By far, the most well known workers, though, are the members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU).

The ILWU has a long history of engaging in militant collective action in accordance with their slogan, “An Injury to One is an Injury to All.” The ILWU has the ability to shut down a port by calling a local meeting during business hours, and has done so on several occasions to show solidarity with broader struggles. For instance, in 1999, the ILWU shut down all west coast ports when the World Trade Organization met in Seattle. The local at the Port of Oakland, Local 10, also has actively engaged in the protests against the War on Iraq. The ILWU Drill Team has led large protests against the war and ILWU members and business agents who refused to cross the line of anti-war protestors were attacked by Oakland police in front of the gates of the SSA terminal at a 2003 protest in which local law enforcement agents used brutal force on peaceful demonstrators. Beyond protest, the aggressive and effective collective bargaining of the ILWU has delivered some of the best wages and benefits had by anyone living in working class West Oakland. (For more on the ILWU history and a description of its role in the San Francisco general strike, please see www.ilwu.org.)

Sitting across the table from the ILWU at contract time is the Pacific Maritime Association, a management grouping that represents 72 employers ranging from shippers to maintenance operations. Fourteen PMA members operate out of the Oakland port.

In addition to negotiating contracts to keep wage and benefit costs down, PMA also lobbies local and national decision-makers on trade policy and regulatory matters. The PMA in effect sets industry standards in response to labor saving technological changes that have been decreasing Longshore and Warehouse employment for over two decades.⁴ The PMA in turn works closely with the West Coast Waterfront Coalition--which represents corporations like Wal-Mart and Toyota that depend on the ports to move their goods.

⁴ Spinosa, James. “The employers’ plan to shred the longshore contract,” ILWU Dispatcher. June 11, 2004.

At the Port of Oakland, the member companies of the PMA negotiate their leases on an ad hoc basis. Decisions about whether to continue using any given port or port facility are reviewed at regular intervals putting the shipping companies in a powerful negotiating position with the different ports. Relationships with the PMA and individual shipping companies are therefore all very important to the economic health of any Port.

In 2002, contract negotiations at the port stalled when the PMA demanded staffing concessions from the ILWU. In order to enforce their position, the Port locked out the ILWU workers, shutting down the ports for 10 days and creating a 23 day backlog that disrupted trade valued at \$6.28 billion just at the Ports of Long Beach/Los Angeles. Many labor advocates were appalled when the Bush administration threatened to use the Navy to keep goods flowing but after Bush invoked the Taft-Hartley Act and ordered an end to the lockout, the Port and the ILWU eventually reached an agreement on November 25, 2003.

Other recent labor actions at the port have included a truckers' strike that actually began in central and also in southern California as a one-day protest, but which on reaching Oakland turned into a full fledged blockade. Hundreds of the striking drivers occupied the gate area of the American Presidents Line (APL) terminal along Middle Harbor Road demanding increased payments from the dozens of different trucking companies which employ them as independent contractors. Ironically, due to anti-trust laws these drivers are legally forbidden from creating a union to represent them and are generally forced into individual competition to win contracts from the trucking companies. Port officials initially played a mediating role with the Oakland port's Executive Director Yoshitani telling the drivers, "We're the only port that's trying to help you."⁵ But ultimately Oakland sought an injunction against the workers and cleared the roadways for commerce.

Legislation and Litigation

As a public entity, the Port of Oakland has appeared responsive to some demands of an active and organized economic justice and labor movement. Whether as a result of legislative, labor or legal challenges, the Port has created some programs to meet the needs of low-income, people of color and workers.

Examples of hard-fought programs won by the labor and business communities are the Non-Discrimination and Small Local Business Utilization Policy (NDSLBU); the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program which covers federally funded construction projects and airport concessions and sets goals for the number of small minority-owned, women-owned, other disadvantaged businesses; the Port of Oakland Living Wage which covers businesses with more than 20 employees working on Port related contracts at least 50% of their work hours; and the Port's Prevailing Wage which guarantees standard wages for construction projects.⁶ The Port also has a Social Justice Committee that gives the community a direct voice in contractor compliance.⁷

⁵<http://www.indybay.org/labor/#2065>

⁶ <http://www.portofoakland.com/business/contract.asp>

⁷ <http://www.portofoakland.com/business/contract.asp>

Communities continue to struggle with having a meaningful voice in economic and land use decisions. Without ongoing vigilance, monitoring and participation of stakeholders, the Port is not unlike any other large public or corporate entity that is subject to unfunded or forgotten mandates or worse, engaged in green-washing rather than true institutional change.

The Living Wage Campaign

In 2002, the voters of Oakland passed an ordinance requiring the Port of Oakland and businesses that pay the Port \$50,000 or more by means of a contract, lease or license, hold service contracts with the Port, where the Port pays \$50,000 or more over the term of the contract, hold a subcontract, sublease, or management agreement to pay their workers a living wage.⁸ The Living Wage, which sets a wage floor at \$9.58 per hour plus benefits, was won after many years of organizing and going back and forth between the City Council and activists. The campaign was led by EBASE, the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy, with support from labor and many community organizations.

The campaign for a living wage was resisted at every step of the way, by some of the very people that have the authority to appoint the members of the Port commission. Before the charter amendment got on the ballot, Mayor Jerry Brown and City Council President Ignacio de la Fuente engaged in some behind-the-scenes dealing to water down the Living Wage, among other things, excluding the Port's Commercial Real Estate Division from the ordinance. The Chamber of Commerce also supported the weaker proposal. Outraged unionists forced de la Fuente, a union member with a poor track record on labor issues as an elected official, to resign from the Alameda County Central Labor Council.⁹

Unfortunately, as of 2005, we do not know how fully the Port of Oakland has implemented this policy. EBASE analyzed the impact on aviation workers in 2003, one year after implementation, and the Port made some initial improvements as a result of EBASE's report.¹⁰ Since then, neither the port nor community groups have had the resources, capacity or will to assess the impact on maritime workers and contractors or the aviation workers initially studied by EBASE. It is imperative that communities and local government find a way to hold the Port accountable to the Living Wage. Communities often miss out on claiming all the benefits from their organizing victories by failing to devote resources to continued monitoring and it is important for community campaigns to prioritize implementation and enforcement alongside winning the initial campaign.

Real Estate Developments--Oak to Ninth Street

The Living Wage requirements exempt the Port of Oakland's Commercial Real Estate division, an area of intense focus for the Port's economic strategies. The Port is currently expanding its commercial real estate properties, doubling the size of its current project at Jack London Square, selling land along the estuary to Signature Properties for the proposed

⁸ www.portofoakland.com/portnyou/livingwa.asp

⁹ "Living Wage Movement Greets the Recession with New Victories," by Jen Kern and Stephanie Luce, *Labor Notes*, March 2002.

¹⁰ Dundon, Thomas. *Living Wage Implementation at the Port of Oakland: One Year Status Report*. East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy. July 2003.

upscale Oak to Ninth project, and entering into a development agreement with Simeon Properties for the Hegenberger Gateway Project in East Oakland where Wal-Mart managed to enter Oakland's market through the backdoor, avoiding public process and skirting around Oakland City Council's Big Box Ordinance. (See box on page 10 of the WalMart section) These real estate developments are battlegrounds between the community and Port, the developer, and the City of Oakland.

The Oak to Ninth development is controversial for a number of reasons, ranging from the amount of subsidy the Port is giving to the developer in the form of subsidized land to the apparent disregard for the City's own Estuary Policy Plan, part of the city's approved General Plan. The land in question is located along Oakland's waterfront, south of Jack London Square. Currently primarily industrial use (with an artist colony that faces displacement), the parcel is adjacent to some of East Oakland's most densely packed, ethnically diverse, and impoverished neighborhoods. In exchange for clean up of the land and \$18 million, the Port of Oakland is selling the multi-acre plot that has been appraised at \$67 million. Additionally, the property is in a redevelopment zone and can therefore qualify for redevelopment money from the City of Oakland.

The proposal being pitched by Signature Properties is for 3,100 units of condominium-style housing, primarily for sale at a starting price of \$300,000 for a one-bedroom unit, neither adequate in size nor affordable to local families needing housing. While slated for open space and recreational use in the Estuary Plan, public access to this development will clearly be limited in regards to the rights of the new property owners. The developer and political allies are seeking changes to the City of Oakland's General Plan from its Planning Commission, plus a variety of approvals from the State Lands Commission, the Bay Area Conservation and Development Commission and the Port of Oakland's commissioners.

At the same time, the community has been gathering information and informing itself as to the ramifications of this massive market-rate infill housing development. Community organizations with members in the area, such as Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Oakland Coalition of Congregations, Oakland Community Organizations and Just Cause Oakland, along with Urban Strategies Council, East Bay Asian Youth Center, PolicyLink, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, EBHO, Data Center, BACSIC, EBASE, Eastlake Merchants Association and Urban Habitat have joined together in coalition to understand more about the details of the development deal and formulate a platform of demands as the community most directly impacted by the development of the publicly-owned lands¹¹.

Even though the Real Estate division was explicitly excluded from the Living Wage by City council the people of Oakland do have the precedent of directing the Port of Oakland to pay living wages to employees. It is significant that the Oak to Ninth Community Benefits Coalition has made the creation of living wage jobs on publicly owned Port property intended for sale a central tenant of the community benefits campaign.

¹¹ Oak to 9th Community Benefits Coalition fact sheet.

As of the Spring of 2005, the Coalition is working towards meeting with the developer to ask that their needs be met, with an eye towards finding the pressure points at the City where they could influence a major development to benefit those who are currently living and keeping shop closest to the property. The Port of Oakland, a final approval-giver for the Environmental Impact Report and sale of the land to Signature Properties, and a public entity, is being seen as a major entity to influence to make a decision for the greater public good.

Components of the community benefits agreement and many other useful tools for equitable development can be found online by accessing PolicyLink's Equitable Development Toolkit at <http://policylink.org/EDTK/>. Again, an important lesson from the living wage struggles around the region is that follow-up monitoring for compliance for any programs to benefit low-income workers and the surrounding community needs to be planned and paid for in advance!

The Shafter Project

Another aspect of the port's expansion plans is the Shafter Project which is meant to improve port efficiency as a major shipping hub. On October 28, 2004, the Port of Oakland announced a new alliance with Northwest Container Services, Inc. (NWCS) and the City of Shafter to improve the movement of goods by combining rail entering the Port of Oakland. According to a port press release, The City of Shafter will become an inland intermodal transit center by taking containers loaded with goods coming into the Central Valley and Southern California from abroad and turning them around to export agricultural goods from the U.S. through the Port of Oakland. The project aims to increase efficiency and reduce the amount of time, typically 50%, that containers travel empty. According to the Port of Oakland's Director of Maritime Wilson Lacy, "This project will improve flow of commerce, take trucks off the highways, and will help keep California competitive in the world market." The Port of Oakland also sees this project as a way to expand its own facilities and give relief to congestion in Southern California.

What is not revealed in this press release is that both the Port of Oakland and the City of Shafter are home to predominantly low-income communities of color. West Oakland, where the Port of Oakland is located, is already overburdened with undesirable land uses including four major freeways and thousands of trucks traveling daily through the community. West Oakland has five times the asthma rates of the rest of Oakland as well as a multitude of other illnesses linked to poor air quality. Through this project, the Port of Oakland is hoping to grow larger and increase its capacity. This is not good news for the West Oakland community, which bears much of the costs through poor health and environmental pollution while realizing few economic benefits from the Port.

The rail and trucking industry combined are large contributors to particulate air pollution in the Central Valley. The Central Valley suffers from some of the dirtiest air quality in the state. According to 2000 Census data, the City of Shafter has a median household income of \$29,000, is 68% Latino with 59% of the households speaking a language other than English. Of these families, half claim to not speak English very well. Without a clear public process to solicit the opinions of the residents of Shafter, highlighting both the benefits and burdens

of turning the city into a transit hub, this decision by Shafter and the Port of Oakland is an environmental justice problem.

Conclusion: What's the Global-Local Connection?

The Port of Oakland is a major economic entity in the State of California and drives the regional and local economy of the Bay Area. Local communities living near the Port are subject to poor air quality, health effects of air pollution, and undesirable land uses. But even though diverse community organization have waged successful campaigns to improve Port accountability on wages, working conditions, hiring practices, pollution mitigation, transport impacts and community input on real estate development the linkage of these sectors in a common organizing effort for greater public accountability remains elusive. This review of community campaigns is a necessary first step in building the complex coalition that will be needed to tackle the larger issues of port governance and to more firmly link local organizing to the anti-globalization movement.

Ports operate on a global stage, making it also important to understand global “push” and “pull” factors that drive decisions at the local and regional levels. Combating poor quality of life in our communities is directly linked to our ability to carry out local, regional, and global analyses. Through our travels to the World Social Forum, we return with a perspective of solidarity across communities struggling with similar local to global issues and are inspired towards continued commitment to create healthy and sustainable communities.

Global corporations use lobbying organizations, such as the maritime shipping industry's International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), to urge national trade ministries to sign World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements that restrict governments from regulating corporate activity. These types for global trade agreements have large local ramifications because they frequently lead to overriding national or regional policies that protect peoples' health, safety, labor rights, environment, and the public interest. While communities are struggling locally to combat problems already occurring, they must remain vigilant of efforts as the WTO seeks to extend its reach. The push to increase global trade requires expanding the transport infrastructure for goods and services to cross borders, as seen at the Port of Oakland. Current WTO negotiations include specific themes that could reduce the power of local communities to assert democratic control over their ports.

The Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), even though currently unratified by the U.S. Congress, is increasing pressure on the developing countries in CAFTA to open their ports to privatization. The World Bank is setting up public-private investment projects that will outline the steps to port privatization for CAFTA signatories such as Guatemala and port communities in Mexico, Honduras and El Salvador, have already felt the impact of the push to increase trade with the United States. Longshore unions have been dismantled through force, ports have been occupied by the military, port authorities have been privatized and environmental standards ignored.

Clearly, the growth of corporate globalization is creating widespread problems for local communities. And while each specific port community is organizing against these impacts, we have not yet built a campaign that effectively connects the local, regional, and global

realities of port cities. We hope this overview of accountability campaigns at the port of Oakland can play a part in gathering the forces that are already watching and working for cleaner, more sustainable ports to build a comprehensive alliance connecting labor, land use, development, environment, and local communities.

CHEVRONTEXACO AND THE BLACK BLOOD OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

In This Section

- ChevronTexaco, one of the largest energy companies in the world, has a long-standing record of environmental and social abuses in communities of color. The corporation is accused of cutting corners to increase its profit margins at the cost of people's health and livelihoods.
- In Richmond, the century-old ChevronTexaco refinery is targeted by community-based organizations that have documented patterns of disease in fence-line neighborhoods that are a result of poor environmental safeguards.
- In Ecuador, indigenous tribes have filed a lawsuit that has become known as the 'anti-globalization trial of the century', alleging that the company is in violation of international human rights law, including genocide, citing the near extinction of three tribes as a result of Texaco's oil drilling practices.
- In Nigeria, Chevron had a long and intimate relationship with the military dictatorship in power until 1999. The company worked in tandem with the military to violently crackdown on protests and strikes demanding reparations for environmental degradation in the Niger Delta.
- As oil companies fuel the global economy, international trade policy is designed to protect their interests, while neglecting the health and safety of communities. This section ends with discussion of local and global policy opportunities that work to even the balance of power.

In 2002, a group of indigenous leaders from Ecuador traveled to the Bay Area to try to meet with the CEO of ChevronTexaco at the corporation's San Ramon headquarters. The twelve Amazonian leaders, who have been pushing a campaign supporting a lawsuit to force ChevronTexaco to pay a \$5 billion environmental clean-up tab, made presentations to various church and labor groups in San Ramon and Contra Costa County, then toured through Richmond and met with community organizations and residents fighting the local ChevronTexaco refinery. Amazon Watch, a San Francisco-based NGO that works in collaboration with indigenous and environmental groups in South America, raised funds to bring to the Amazonian leaders to the Bay Area. According to Leila Salazar, Amazon Watch's project coordinator for the ChevronTexaco campaign, the visit evoked a simple and profound revelation,

There was just an intense sense of solidarity when these two groups met and realized that the worst polluter in the Bay Area was also the worst polluter in Ecuador. The Richmond folks saw that people of color were being disrespected by this corporation around the world. And the indigenous leaders couldn't believe that this sort of pollution happens in the U.S. They had not understood poverty and exploitation in the context of the U.S. They went away very much inspired to learn that they are not an isolated case and that there is widespread support for their struggle.

In fact, environmental injustice in Richmond and the plight of indigenous tribes in the Ecuadorian jungle are only two examples amongst many of ChevronTexaco and other oil giants wreaking havoc on local economies and livelihoods where they operate. Many activists argue that the extraction of oil from Southern developing countries for use in the Northern developed countries has in many cases preserved a colonial-type relationship. In

most cases, Southern countries have given up or shared their sovereignty over these resources, ceding ownership to Northern-based corporations, which reap the profit without owning up to the social and environmental consequences.

This section looks at ChevronTexaco as one example of the power and impunity of the oil industry and the struggle of communities around the world that insist on the simple credo that people should come before profit. Oil and fossil fuels are at the core of globalization: these energy sources make possible the increased transportation, industrial activity, and mechanized agriculture that characterize the global economy. This hunger for oil is most apparent in the U.S., which has 5% of the world's population, and consumes 25% of its petroleum products. In the last decade, ChevronTexaco has been the subject of lawsuits and intense protest in Richmond, Ecuador, and Nigeria for violating international human rights law and environmental standards. In these arenas, the jury is still out on corporate accountability in the age of globalization—Just how much license will mammoth corporations like ChevronTexaco have in feeding the global demand for oil?

Overview

In 2000, Chevron and Texaco merged to form the second largest energy company in the U.S. and the third largest in the world. The marriage boosted the company's chances of thriving in an increasingly consolidated and competitive oil industry. But the combination also piled together long histories of environmental and social abuses in many of the 180 countries where they are active. ChevronTexaco is currently fighting back challenges on many fronts, including Richmond, California, the Oriente region of Ecuador, and the Delta region of Nigeria, which are discussed below.

In each of these places, extreme damage to the environment and people's livelihoods has been documented. ChevronTexaco has skirted around the issues in most cases by ignoring the appeals of affected communities, and buying a seat at political tables. In Richmond, Ecuador, and Nigeria, the company is a chief power broker by virtue of its economic weight. For instance, in Ecuador, from 1964 to 1992, oil revenues through a joint venture between the state oil company and ChevronTexaco [then Texaco] accounted for more than 50% of the country's economy. In Nigeria, a similar partnership provides almost 90% of government revenue, and 80% of their total economy. And in Richmond, ChevronTexaco is the biggest source of city revenue and largest employer, with over 2000 workers on the payroll. As a whole, the company pulled in \$121 billion in 2003, which earns it the number six spot on the Fortune 500, makes it the biggest company in the Bay Area, and allows it to wield enormous influence amongst decision-makers that rely on the revenue.

No More Flaring

“We have just taken a decision to extinguish the fierce flames of hell called gas flares on our land. We have done so because of its negative impact on our people, on our environment. The noise, the soot, and the heat. The permanent daylight and the death of animals and plants. These sorrowful matters are far removed from Aso Rock (Nigeria's seat of power), Kaduna, Ikeji, Victoria Island, London, the Hague, and San Francisco where the directors and shareholders of the companies live.... By this our symbolic gesture we hope the Nigerian State and the oil transnationals will appreciate that the issues go beyond price per barrel and that it is about life on Planet Earth.”

DOUGLAS ORONTO

of ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS ACTION

Speaking during civil disobedience that included dance, prayers, and demonstrations to initiate Operation Climate Change

While some governmental officials see dollar signs when ChevronTexaco comes knocking, many communities along the production chain have not been in on the payoffs. Richmond still hosts some of the highest rates of childhood poverty in the state of California, entire indigenous tribes have been nearly wiped off the map in Ecuador, and extreme poverty has almost doubled in Nigeria in the 35 years that oil companies have sited their wells there. Studies show that ChevronTexaco's legacy includes drastically elevated rates of cancer, asthma, and other debilitating disease caused by toxic spills and environmental degradation. Activists note the pattern: ChevronTexaco uses its economic power as a mandate to drill and refine its oil where exploited and marginalized populations have little recourse to action.

What's happening in the Bay Area?

In 1902, Standard Oil built the second largest refinery in the United States at the western end of the just-finished Santa Fe Rails' transcontinental line in Richmond, CA. Formally incorporated in 1905, the city grew up around the refinery and other industry looking to situate near the rail and water-access points. Since the mid-1980s, community groups have targeted the refinery as a chief perpetrator of environmental racism, and have sought to hold Chevron, and now ChevronTexaco, accountable for elevated rates of disease. Most affected are the 'fenceline' neighborhoods whose residents, mostly people of color, live closest to the refinery. The zip code that surrounds the refinery plays host to a childhood poverty rate of

Quick Facts

Today, ChevronTexaco, which currently owns and operates the refinery in Richmond, turns out 250,000 barrels of gasoline each day, which satisfies about 1/8 of demand in California, the leading oil consuming state in the U.S. It is also one of the top-ranking toxic waste producers in the Bay Area, with documented releases of some 1.5 million pounds of toxins into the environment in 2000.

44.2%, one of the highest in California, and about half of the families in the fenceline neighborhoods have children suffering from asthma.

While the community is concerned about the risk of Bhopal-type catastrophes—in fact, ChevronTexaco has had more than 35 major industrial accidents since 1989—there are harsh health impacts that result from day-to-day

operations and routine violation of environmental code. Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), an organization based in Oakland and Los Angeles, has been tracking the company's record in Richmond as part of an ongoing campaign to win compensation and better controls. After documenting both the patterns of elevated health risks in fenceline communities and repeated failure to comply with EPA regulations, CBE filed a successful lawsuit in 2001.

The resulting five-point clean-up and pollution prevention program that CBE and the community is now pushing for the EPA to enforce includes a ban on flaring, or the burning of toxic gases as they separate from the crude oil being refined. The flares release fumes into the air that settle on nearby neighborhoods. After three years of applying intense pressure on the EPA to pass the ban, the vote will come up in early 2005. The first of the five points controlling emissions from wastewater systems was passed in September, and is celebrated as a precedent-setting refinery control rule that is currently the most stringent in the U.S.

CBE is also pushing a campaign to keep an agreement between ChevronTexaco and the EPA from passing, which would absolve ChevronTexaco from years of violations and unreported or under-reported spills by imposing insignificant fines on the company. The consent decree, as it is referred to, was filed on the same day as the EPA filed to sue ChevronTexaco, suggesting to community leaders that the EPA is safeguarding industry more than it is residents. In fact, CBE can cite 40 cases in which ChevronTexaco failed to install pollution-control mechanisms during expansion or retrofitting, which is in clear breach of the Clean Air Act. Without fully investigating a single one of these cases, the EPA decided to offer a generous consent decree, which CBE contends is hardly a slap on ChevronTexaco's hand. As Carla Perez, a community organizer with CBE, explains, the consent decree amounts to a pardon for ChevronTexaco, and a sort of conviction for the community,

“If that consent decree passes, it prevents any future possibility of the community coming back and filing a suit that makes them install that equipment. The difference is thousands of pounds of toxins each day. Babies are being born every day, and people are getting older every day, and it's the kids and the elders that are most impacted.”

Beyond environmental health, the issue of ChevronTexaco's accountability and responsibility to the community is reflected in local politics, as well. While Richmond is home to the highest percentage of Democrat-registered voters in the Bay Area, at 82%, ChevronTexaco has a hefty influence that has played a central role in maintaining an archaic political structure that favors its interests in many cases, such as extremely high campaign finance limits and at-large elections (as opposed to more balanced district elections).

ChevronTexaco's power is most apparent in the city's tax code. Over the years, the company has lobbied for regressive taxes and negotiated multiple tax breaks. Richmond is the only Bay Area city with over 100,000 people that does not have a gross receipts tax, which taxes medium and large size businesses a percentage of their total income before expenses. ChevronTexaco was able to push the city council to replace this by putting a half-cent sales tax on the ballot. As a result, Richmond, which is the poorest city in the Bay Area, has the highest sales tax.

***West County Toxics Coalition
and
The Good Neighbor Agreement***

One of the key players in Richmond working to hold ChevronTexaco accountable to the community is the West County Toxics Coalition. Led by Henry Clark, the organization has challenged Chevron since the mid-80s, raising awareness about their hiring practices and environmental record, and questioning their commitment to the health of the community.

In 1994, Communities for a Better Environment, West County Toxics Coalition, and the Golden Gate Law Clinic lobbied the planning commission to demand a share of ChevronTexaco's profits in exchange for a land-use permit for a newly constructed facility. After the city council approved a deal that would bring the community as much as \$50 million, ChevronTexaco won an appeal that effectively cancelled the ordinance. The coalition was able, however, to negotiate the 'Good Neighbor Agreement' with ChevronTexaco, which includes:

- Installation of 350 'leakless' valves, and retrofit of another 250 to 400
- Continued reduction of toxic emissions
- Skilled job training to 100 residents
- \$2 million to a local health center
- \$5 million of corporate philanthropy to nearest and poorest communities

A more recent hot-button tax issue involved an accusation that ChevronTexaco shortchanged the city when utility taxes were raised to their 10% limit in 2003 to generate more income amidst a fiscal crisis. After Proposition 13 passed in 1978, limiting property taxes in California, most cities introduced a utility tax to help cover the shortfall. Even though every other business in Richmond pays their utility tax, ChevronTexaco strong-armed a release that allows it to pay a flat rate far below what it would otherwise owe. While ChevronTexaco refuses to publicly release information that would allow a calculation of the resulting difference in revenue to the city, councilmember Tom Butt estimated that the city had lost tens of millions of dollars over the years, and made this statement in a memo published in the local newspaper,

“ChevronTexaco owns some 3,000 prime waterfront acres in Richmond, nearly 14% of the City’s land area. The company pays about \$0.14 per square foot of land in taxes, including property tax and utility user tax – probably the lowest tax rate of any property in the City. If those 3,000 waterfront acres were paying what other Richmond taxpayers pony up, the City wouldn’t even have a budget crisis.... It must be tough being a \$100 billion multinational company, and being expected to give a little back to a City that ends up with endless pollution, sirens, fires and explosions.”

Despite Butt’s pointed criticism of ChevronTexaco, many community activists complain that local politicians are too close to the company. Andrés Soto, of the Richmond Progressive Alliance, explained that ChevronTexaco has always been accepted as a sort of invisible decision-maker,

“In the old days, everyone in politics knew the Snodgrass brothers. One was the chair of the school board, and the other one worked for a PR firm and was the frontman for Chevron. He’d be at every city council meeting sitting in the front row and he would do the bidding for Chevron. And he was the guy who distributed the money come campaign time. There has always been a cozy relationship between the political machine and the company.”

I understand their ignorance because I was ignorant for a long time, too. It took five of my close friends dying in my arms to wake me up.

WANNA WRIGHT— CBE ORGANIZER

Wanna Wright, an organizer from Richmond that began working with CBE after she survived breast cancer, notes, the process of building consciousness around the injustices can be painful and slow,

“Many from my generation in Richmond were hired by Chevron and pulled out of poverty because of it, so they feel beholden to the company. They don’t want to look at what’s happening to the community. It’s difficult for people to believe that

ChevronTexaco would do anything so bad. They fund Black History Month, they pay taxes, and people feel dependent. I understand their ignorance because I was ignorant for a long time, too. It took five of my close friends dying in my arms to wake me up.”

Dirty Technology

Most children that live where Texaco operated have a permanent sticky layer of crude oil on the bottom of their feet, which comes from the roads they often play on. The government decided to use sludge sucked off the top of the wastewater pits to control dust. When heavy rains come and the pits begin to overflow, workers are paid to wade into the pits with wheelbarrows, often up to their chest, to haul excess wastewater out. These workers typically have only boots for protection.

What’s happening around the world?

Ecuador and the “Anti-Globalization Trial of the Century”

In 1964, the Ecuadorian government struck a deal with Texaco to explore for and produce oil in collaboration with the state run oil company, which would take control of the venture over a 28-year period. The government left the construction of the bulky infrastructure needed for oil extraction and transport to the Texaco

subsidiary that took on the project, assuming that the company would comply with technological standards used in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world. The company, however, had different ideas when it came to environmental safeguards. Instead of injecting the production water (highly toxic byproducts of oil drilling that come from deep in the earth) back into the ground, as is common practice around the world, the company disposed the production water in unlined pits next to the oil wells, saving billions of dollars in expenses over years of production.

In the years that Texaco operated, over 10 million gallons of wastewater per day were discarded into 351 pits that ranged from one to ten acres in size. When the pits would fill, workers would drain them into nearby rivers and estuaries, which are the lifeblood of eight tribes indigenous to the Oriente region. The indigenous in the area bathe and fish in the streams, and depend on them as their sole source of water for drinking and agriculture. Beyond the toxic wastewater pits, there are also consistent leaks along the pipelines. In 1989, the Ecuadorian government conducted a study that showed an average of 20,000 gallons of leaked oil per day from flowlines alone. In 1989 and 1992, two massive spills caused the Napo River, which is one kilometer wide in many places, to run black for over a week.

As the waterways became increasingly polluted, the indigenous groups were unable to survive. One tribal group, the Cofan, located where Texaco first sited its wells in 1971, saw its numbers drop from 15,000 to under 500 thirty years later as a result of disease and forced migration. Humberto Piyaguaje, a member of another tribe threatened with extinction, the Secoya, described how the wastewater and spilled crude affects their daily lives,

“There are times when (my people) bathe in the river and their bodies get full of rashes. The people have a lot of problems, but they don’t know why because they don’t have doctors. The children have the most problems, because they love to be in

the river. They vomit and have skin problems and stomach aches and diarrhea a lot.”

The shortage of doctors in the region is a reflection of the poverty and dependency on a subsistence economy in the region. Most villages have primitive sanitation, limited electricity, no health services, and no running water. However, public scrutiny of Texaco’s environmental record has motivated scientific studies that show significantly elevated rates of cancer and other disease. A study published in 2004 by the reputable International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health found that where Texaco has operated, children under 15 years of age are three times more likely to contract leukemia (all other individuals about twice as likely), than they are where Texaco has not operated. Another widely cited report produced statistical evidence showing that residents of the oil zone are at an elevated risk for contracting larynx, bile, liver, skin, and stomach cancers. While these statistics may seem stunning, they are likely to underestimate the true impact because of the lack of doctors in the region and the frequency with which cases go undiagnosed.

In 1993, a class action suit was filed against Texaco (now ChevronTexaco) on behalf of over 30,000 indigenous peoples. The case, which the Wall Street Journal has called the ‘anti-globalization trial of the century’, alleges that ChevronTexaco is responsible for paying an estimated \$5 billion in clean-up costs. The lawsuit marks the first time that rainforest dwellers have legal jurisdiction over a U.S. transnational oil company. The stakes are high—many believe that this case will set the standard for how oil companies interact with communities where they operate, and decide whether a parent company can be held responsible for the wrongful acts of subsidiaries operating in another country.

The trial has been a drawn-out process. After ChevronTexaco tried five times unsuccessfully to have the case dismissed, and prosecutors were denied a motion to hold the trial in the U.S., it moved to a court in rural Ecuador. Now part of an Ecuadorian judicial process, the judge is moving through an investigative process, visiting and analyzing over 100 contaminated sites. A judgment is expected in 2005.

Nigeria and the War Against ChevronTexaco

The Niger Delta is one of the largest and most populous delta regions in the world, and a fragile eco-system that sustains millions belonging to tribes native to the region. Chevron purchased drilling rights in Nigeria from the British colonial government, and has continued to operate in the region as ChevronTexaco, currently pulling out over 500,000 barrels of oil per day. Many of the pressing issues in Nigeria’s Delta region mirror those in Ecuador’s Oriente and in Richmond, California. Instead of re-injecting wastewater underground, the toxic gas that is separated from the crude oil is flared off, producing giant towers of fire that paint the Nigerian landscape. Pollution has diminished yields of staple crops such as rice, and fish. Wildlife that inhabitants have traditionally hunted are scarcer and sometimes toxic.

Resistance to transnational drilling companies has been particularly intense in Nigeria, and has attracted international attention since a non-violent group called the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) successfully forced Shell from the Ogoni Homeland. Soon afterward, the military dictatorship sent in a dreaded sector of the army

called the ‘mobile police’, to seek out the protesters. In 1995, nine individuals were executed, including MOSOP’s leader, Ken Saro Wiwa, who had become an international symbol of resistance.

In December of 1998, the Ijaw Youth Congress organized two weeks of non-violent direct actions demanding an end to flaring, a kick-off for a campaign dubbed Operation Climate Change. On December 30, soldiers opened fire on 2,000 marchers dressed in black who were singing through a village called Yenagoa. Three people were killed, and another 25 arrested. Shortly afterward, during another march demanding the release of those imprisoned, three more protesters were shot and killed. The military declared a state of emergency, imposing a dusk to dawn curfew, and proceeded to invade houses, beat residents, and rape women.

The Curse of Nakedness

Many of the thousands of women that stated that they were ‘at war’ with ChevronTexaco threw off their clothes during the occupation of key processing centers in 2002. Nakedness by wives, mothers, and grandmothers in Nigerian culture is considered to be the ultimate curse, and many men believe that the curse is fatal or causes madness. The act symbolizes the women’s commitment to have their demands met or die in the process. News of the women’s nakedness gave rise to a wave of naked anti-war protests around the world in which protesters spelled ‘No War’ or ‘No Bush’ with their bare bodies.

Activists claim that in many cases in which the military has violently reacted to direct actions, Chevron has provided leased helicopters and speedboats, sent personnel along on raids, and even provided per diem stipends to soldiers. Such joint actions evidence the intimate relationship between oil interests and the military dictatorship that was in power until 1999. Even though a civilian government has taken control of the country, residents notice little difference: Army, navy and mobile police detachments are still widespread in the Delta region.

In spite of the extreme risks that come with protest, Delta communities have increasingly targeted the oil drilling companies, aiming to hold them accountable for worsening standards of living and demanding a piece of the profit pie. Indeed, studies show that between 1970 and 2000, when most of the oil companies have been active in the region, Nigeria’s poverty rate—measured as people living on less than one dollar per day—has risen from 36% to 70%, or 19 million to 90 million people. In that same time period, Nigerian oil revenues have been \$350 billion. Such statistics suggest to Delta dwellers that corrupt governments and oil giants have sucked in the profit and left those most adversely impacted with nothing but the fumes.

The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights (EBC)

EBC, through its new project Reclaim the Future, plays a key role in the California Apollo Alliance and advocates to fundamental improvements in the quality of life for all communities in the Bay Area, especially low-income people of color. Among EBC’s goals are to: teach community members about energy conservation, green technology and its inextricable link to the realization of environmental justice. EBC supports securing jobs that allow people to participate in this new “green economy”. Shaping California’s fossil fuel alternative energy policies and making sure grassroots community members actively participate to implement them is EBC’s vision; one part of a solution oriented, long-term commitment for environmental, social, and economic justice.

Armed with the conviction that ChevronTexaco had not produced any benefit for the Delta communities hosting their facilities, 600 women occupied ChevronTexaco’s major export terminal, Escravos, for ten days in 2002, during which they negotiated 26 demands with corporate management. The women won local hiring and job training agreements, support

for income generation projects, allowances to elders, and funds to construct houses and health centers, amongst other items. The company bowed to everything the women asked for except the key demand that they cease operations in the region. In spite of the unprecedented concessions, many leaders were still keen on kicking ChevronTexaco out altogether. As one organizer noted,

“We are tired of complaining.... Chevron has treated us like slaves. Thirty years... and what do we have to show by Chevron except this big yard and all sorts of machines making noise. What do we have? They have been threatening us that if we make noise, they will stop production and leave our community and we will suffer, as if we have benefited from them. Before the 1970s, when we were here without Chevron, life was natural and sweet, we were happy. When we would go to the rivers for fishing or forest for hunting, we used to catch all sorts of fishes and bush animals. Today, the experience is sad. I am suggesting that they should leave our community completely, and never come back again.”

Before the Escravos group completed negotiations, their example spread around the region. Over 1,000 women occupied six ChevronTexaco flow stations, and began negotiating with the company. Having sensed the efficacy of the women’s strategy, ChevronTexaco spokespeople came out in the international press and noted that the concessions marked a new era in which ChevronTexaco would work to support host communities.

Alternatives

Despite the myriad of problems that the current fossil fuel economy presents, especially to those communities that suffer the presence of extraction or refinery operations like Richmond California or the Ogoni region of Nigeria, there exists an alternative paradigm. A diverse set of minds in the United States recently came together to develop a plan to effectively counter the ravages of its domestic fossil fuel industry and join the ranks of countries that lead by example in the struggle to divorce themselves from oil dependence. Such an ambitious effort finds itself comparable to sending a man to the moon and as such, the initiative is called the “Apollo Project.”

What makes the project so special in the eyes of social justice activists is whom the alliance includes. The Apollo project brings mainstream environmental organizations, communities of color and their grassroots organizations, along with labor unions, into partnership. This unprecedented coalition seeks to empower people of color to win economic and environmental justice for their communities. Community members will have the opportunity to obtain good paying union jobs in the building trades while working to green their local urban environments.

The main aspirations of the Apollo Project include investing in large scale green infrastructure creation and renovation across the country. Apollo calls for \$300 billion in investments over the next ten years. Such an investment will create 3 million new jobs and sharply reduce dependence on foreign oil. Such an effort will require a commitment from the legislative and executive branch of the US Government. In 2004 presidential candidate John Kerry mentioned the ideas of the Apollo Project several times as part of his platform. Although U.S. voters failed to elect him into the executive office, the ideas of the Apollo Project are still viable in some bellwether states within the U.S.

NAFTA's Chapter 11 vs California's Health?

In the NAFTA chapter on investment, there is a rule that allows foreign corporations to sue a state or national government if that government imposes regulations of any kind that diminish their profits. Judgments on such cases are issued by a secret trade tribunal. In 1999, California became one of the major targets of a Chapter 11 case when the governor issued an order for the phase out of methanol from gasoline products because the carcinogenic chemical had been proven to leech into drinking water sources. The Canadian company, Methanex, which makes the chemical, sued the state for \$970 million in prospective lost profits as a result of the regulation. The case is still pending in tribunal, however other similar cases have forced governments to cough up millions in tax dollars for enforcing their laws.

California is one of those states where the Apollo vision can still be realized. California is known for its progressive pollution standards and commitment to exploring alternative energy standards. Environmental, union, and community leaders are meeting regularly in the California Apollo Alliance. They are positioning themselves to make significant impacts on energy policy and infrastructure renovations. Increasing solar power investment and energy conservation retrofitting are two of the many potential policy pieces the California Apollo Alliance is poised to work on and endorse.

Policy Potential

State and National Level

Struggles like the one being waged by Communities for a Better Environment in Richmond illustrate the need for environmental code with real teeth and an environmental protection agency willing to crack down on major polluters. Communities will not be protected if the fines do not exceed the cost savings of violating environmental laws. A report released in 2004 by the Environmental Integrity Project found that at refineries and other industrial sites in 29 states, data reveal the same accident happening repeatedly because full repair of the problem is rarely completed. Gross polluters should not only be responsible for the full clean-up costs of all releases into the environment, but also required by law to install the cleanest business-viable technology to curb emissions in a timely manner.

At the national level, complaints about repeated accidents at refineries gave rise to a joint project by the US EPA and the US Department of Justice called the integrated refinery compliance strategy. As of 2004, refineries have put \$1.9 billion in pollution control and paid civil penalties of \$36.8 million through this program. However, this program has not reported actual outcomes of implementation, has poorly monitored refinery reform progress,

and has lagged on pushing compliance at refineries. While this program is regarded as a viable mechanism for improving environmental performance at refineries, increased pressure on the US EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance is necessary.

International Level

While the Bush administration has an intimate concern for the welfare of oil giants, social justice organizations within the U.S. still have a unique opportunity to impact the trade debate because the U.S. Trade Representative has the most power of any single figure within the WTO. For the most part, the oil and gas sector has been kept outside the realm of WTO policy because it has proven to be such a hot-button issue. However, the potential volatility hasn't kept it completely off the table in the current Doha Round of negotiations. For example, proposed rules on competition would greatly compromise a country's ability to protect and cultivate national industry, whether it be private or public. Similarly, new WTO policy would remove barriers to foreign ownership of everything from infrastructure to retail outlets.

Oil Profits vs the Clean Air Act?

In 1990, under an amendment to the Clean Air Act, oil refineries were forced to decrease smog-causing chemicals in gasoline to 9.2% by 2005. In 1993, Venezuelan oil export officials asked to ship gasoline to New York containing almost 30% smog producing chemicals. When the U.S. Congress passed a law requiring that imported gasoline meet the new smog-reduced standards, Venezuela filed suit with the WTO, claiming that the Clean Air Act amendments were unfair barriers to trade. After a secret tribunal ruling handed down by three trade officials in Geneva ruled that the U.S. was in breach of WTO rules, the EPA reformed the Clean Air Act to allow imported oil which does not comply with the new standards.

More relevant to organizations working at the community level in the U.S. is policy within current and proposed trade agreements and trade bodies which puts at stake the policy victories that have already been won by social movements. For example, the WTO has already ruled that parts of the U.S. Clean Air Act are unfair to oil companies, thus undermining one of the key historic victories for the environmental justice movement. Other trade agreements such as NAFTA and FTAA, apply many environmental restrictions if they curb the profits of transnational corporations, such as

Chapter 11 of NAFTA (see text box above). This can set a precedent for future WTO rules, prevent nations, and states within nations, from regulating polluting corporations.

Local and state governments have begun to wake up to the threat, and have voiced opposition to such international trade policies that trump their own laws. Global justice organizations such as Public Citizen have been instrumental in winning the active support of these legislators, who can issue formal complaints or concerns individually or through associations to which they belong. For instance, the National Conference of State Legislators, Conference of Chief Justices, National Association of Counties, National League of Cities, and National Association of Towns and Townships have all issued letters to the USTR regarding Chapter 11. Community-based organizations can work to increase these associations' engagement in such debates, and utilize a valuable point of entry into international trade policy.

Conclusion: What's the Global-Local Connection?

In September, 2003, 250 anti-war protesters marched on the gates of ChevronTexaco's Richmond refinery to drive home the point that the war in Iraq is linked to a war at home, namely the struggle to hold ChevronTexaco accountable for polluting in and endangering low-income communities of color. Working with Project Underground at the time, organizer Gopal Dayaneni noted in an interview that the war abroad was being carried out to serve the profit hunger of massive oil corporations, "Before the war, Chevron assured us they were not making any moves for Iraqi oil. But, they were the first American company to get a contract to move the oil.... There are two ways to open [countries] like Iraq. One is through WTO rules. The other is through war."

While this section has not gone into detail on the deep connections between oil and U.S. imperialism, it is an important backdrop in any analysis of the oil industry and its impact on communities. This section has shown that communities around the world are fighting for their survival against one oil giant. Given oil corporations' indispensable role in the global economy, and their massive size, it is a classic David vs Goliath struggle. However, the small victories in Nigeria and Richmond, and the lawsuit pending in Ecuador, are testament to the power of societies to lead where their governments have fallen short.

Making the global-local connection as organizers will entail educating our bases and legislators about the environmental and social record of these companies around the world, and then waging our struggles not only in the name of our neighborhoods, but in the name of similar communities around the world. Additionally, organizers need to plug into ongoing long-term campaigns to realize alternatives, such as the Apollo Project. Put together, ChevronTexaco will be forced to react to protesters everywhere as it has to the women in Nigeria: with deference to culture and human livelihoods.

MOVING FOWARD: LOCAL VOICE IS GLOBAL VOICE

On February 15, 2003, over 10 million people marched throughout the world against the imminent U.S. invasion of Iraq. In the largest day of coordinated protest ever known, the world's activists embodied the spirit of international solidarity and illustrated the power of organization and communication. Activists resolutely pounded out the expression "No Blood for Oil," explicitly making the connection that corporate greed and profit were unacceptable justifications for the expected loss of life and exploitation of soldiers and Iraqi citizens. The Bay Area protest was one of the largest, and many activists transcended their topical differences to forge connections with groups engaged in a range of social justice efforts. More importantly, social justice activists were acutely aware that the issues they faced on the home front were deeply connected to the local struggles of other communities elsewhere around the world.

Through this report, our goal has been to illustrate that many of the problems we face are the same problems that others face, and that knowledge and power could be forged if local struggles, irrespective of national borders, are connected to each other. In so doing, we are taking one of the central tenets of the Social Equity Caucus' work of connecting environmental, social and economic justice struggles throughout the nine counties of the Bay Area, to a whole other level. We have seen that the Wal-Mart who pushes anti-worker and anti-family policies in San Leandro and Antioch is the same Wal-Mart pushing similar, if not worse, practices in China. The ChevronTexaco practice of buying political influence in Richmond and San Ramon is the same being used 8000 miles away in Nigeria. The asthma suffered by children living around the Port of Oakland and in Bay View/Hunter's Point is the same asthma being suffered by children who live around the ports of Asia. What brings us together is that low-income communities, people of color, workers and families face the same adversaries in battles against globalization and the growing corporatization of local communities.

The problems faced by our communities *must* be scrutinized through a common lens. For example, our stories of Wal-Mart, ChevronTexaco and the Port of Oakland illustrate a number of common points:

- There is an unending tug-of-war between economic restructuring, development, the treatment of workers and environmental protection, the effects of which are borne out by members of our communities.
- People of color, indigenous, immigrant, and low-income communities of the world are forced to choose between their economic needs and their quality of life.
- Irrespective of national borders, corporations are conducting an all-out assault on workers and the environment in order to expand their bottom line.
- Because of short-term economic incentives, governments are often complicit in supporting the practices and policies of global corporations.
- Complicated bureaucracies make government and corporate accountability an uphill battle for activists, organizers and advocates.
- The growing appetite of U.S. consumers for more and cheaper goods sold, typically at big box retailers in sprawling suburban areas leads to growing demand for petroleum products (oil, diesel, gas), larger ports, and more pollution and low-wage jobs for low-income communities.

In the 1960's, the American women's movement coined the phrase "the personal is political." The experience of sexism and discrimination, which had until then been considered a woman's personal dilemma, was re-conceptualized to be understood as a product of systemic social, political and economic forces. As a result of this development, American women of a range of colors and classes were together able to confront a common behemoth. Today, global justice activists confront a similar challenge: the ability to wage local struggles against corporate powers that know no borders.

In order to participate fully in these struggles, a key step for the Social Equity Caucus is to undergo an educational process, where we come to see that many of the elements of corporate greed and the lack of government accountability are the same everywhere. The war on the poor and working class in America is a generic war, being fought against communities throughout the world. The visit of Ecuador's indigenous tribal leaders to Richmond, CA was an example of exactly this kind of education – an example of how our ability to work together against corporate giants is dependent on our ability to build solidarity. The Social Equity Caucus' participation at the World Social Forum in Brazil is another example of where through a process of learning we can build understanding of our common interests and experiences.

We have presented a set of tangible stories depicting the impacts of globalization on our Bay Area communities. Many who are quoted were members of the Social Equity Caucus' delegation to the World Social Forum. The vision of the World Social Forum is to "debate alternative means to building a globalization in solidarity, which respects universal human rights and those of all men and women of all nations and the environment, and is grounded in democratic international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality and the sovereignty of peoples." To advance this vision at home, delegation members committed to returning with a deeper perspective to improve our community's and Caucus' understanding of globalization and its impacts.

Many provocative questions have arisen in this report. To answer them, delegation members committed to do the following at the World Social Forum in Brazil:

- Collect stories of how communities have won regulations or the cessation of activities that, though good for trade and the corporate bottom line, are harmful to low-income communities and communities of color.
- Investigate the role of U.S. consumption in global economic development and environmental degradation, especially in developing countries. Improve our ability to discuss the effects of our consumption, especially with our own constituencies.
- Discover alternatives to the model of civic participation we know in the Bay Area.
- Identify concrete actions based on solidarity and organizing that will change policies and practices at U.S.-based institutions.

The Social Equity Caucus Delegation members brought back the answers to these and other questions to the SEC as well as their organizations, communities and families. Some of the main lessons learned included:

- Through the telling of our own stories of struggle, people of color and immigrants in the United States have a lot to share with social movements in the rest of the world
- However, our isolation from the world and media framing of the issues often means that not only do U.S.-based people not always have the answers, we don't even know all the right questions to ask
- The economic practices of U.S.-based companies and military foreign policies of our government have a great impact on people all over the world, especially low-income people
- People from social movements appreciate support our struggles for social, environmental, and economic justice in the belly of the beast
- There is power in connecting our work on common issues, corporate targets, and visions and solutions for a better future not only across regions but borders, continents and oceans.

We are beginning to understand that a core element of our future work must be to understand what is taking place elsewhere, but to act locally to effect change where we can and where it impacts us. We look forward to working with members of the Social Equity Caucus and allied organizations throughout the region and beyond as we take the inspiration from the people we met and movements we learned about at the World Social Forum and continue our work to advance regional and global justice and equity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Wal-Mart Section

Articles and Texts

- Bianchi, Dan and Dan Swinney. Wal-Mart: A Destructive Force for Chicago Communities and Companies. Center for Labor and Community Research. 25 March, 2004.
- Boarnet, Marlon and Randall Crane. "The Impact of Big Box Grocers on Southern California: Jobs, Wages, and Municipal Finances." Orange County Business Council. September, 1999.
- Boarnet, Marlon, et al. "Supercenters and the Transformation of the Bay Area Grocery Industry: Issues, Trends, and Impacts." Bay Area Economic Forum. January, 2004.
- Chorneau, Tom. "Wal-Mart Invests Millions in California Republicans, Corporate Ballot Initiatives." Reclaim Democracy website. 2004.
www.reclaimdemocracy.org/walmart/california_political_contributions.html
- Cleeland, Nancy. "Seams Start to Unravel." Los Angeles Times. 24 November, 2004.
- Cleeland, Nancy and Evelyn Iritani and Tyler Marshall. "Scouring the Globe to Give Shoppers an \$8.63 Polo Shirt." Los Angeles Times. 24 November, 2003.
- Dube, Arindrajit and Ken Jacobs. "Hidden Cost of Wal-Mart Jobs." University of California Berkeley Labor Center. August, 2004.
- Goldman, Abigail and Nancy Cleeland. "An Empire Built on Bargains Remakes the Working World." Los Angeles Times. 23 November, 2003.
- Goodman, Peter S. and Paul Blustein. "Worldwide Textiles Shake-up to Outsource Even Sweatshops." The Washington Post. 23 November, 2004.
- Meyerson, Harold. "Wal-Mart Loves Unions (In China)." Washington Post. 1 December, 2004.
- Miller, George. "Everyday Low Wages: The Hidden Price We All Pay for Wal-Mart." Rep. George Miller's Office. 16 February, 2004.
- Featherstone, Liz. "Will Labor Take the Wal-Mart Challenge?" The Nation. 28 June, 2004.
- Goldstein, Carl. "Wal-Mart in China." The Nation. 8 December, 2003.
- Kink, Paula. "Oakley Weighs Pros, Cons of Big-Box Retail." Contra Costa Times. 20 August, 2004.
- Mattera, Philip and Anna Purinton. "Shopping for Subsidies: How Wal-Mart Uses Taxpayer Money to Finance Its Never-Ending Growth." Good Jobs First. May, 2004.
- Mitchell, Stacy. "Wal-Mart, the Abuse of Eminent Domain and Corporate Welfare." Reclaim Democracy Website. December, 2004.
www.reclaimdemocracy.org/independent_business/walmart_important_domain.html

Moberg, David. "The Wal-Mart Effect."
In These Times. 11 June, 2004.

Rosen, Ruth. "Wal-Mart vs. Contra Costa County."
Rockridge Institute Website. 2 February, 2004.
www.rockridgeinstitute.org/projects/moral/walmart/2.22.04

Street, Paul. "Slaves Had Jobs Too: Wal-Mart's Weakest Link Strategy and Black Chicago." Z-net
Website. 26 May, 2004.
www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=10&itemID=5603

Temple, James. "Wal-Mart's Plans Jeered and Cheered."
Contra Costa Times. 19 June, 2004.

Tong, David. "Port of Oakland in Expansive Mood."
San Francisco Chronicle. August 15, 2004.

Felsenfeld, Peter. "Big Box Puts Up Big Bucks in Ballot Win."
Contra Costa Times. 4 August, 2004.

Iritani, Evelyn and Nancy Cleeland. "Audit Stance Generates Controversy."
Los Angeles Times. 24 November, 2003.

Web Sites

"Corporate Swine, Inc." Wal-Mart: Downsizing or Supersizing?
Corporate Swine. 11 November, 2004
www.corporateswine.net/walmart.html

"Frontline." Is Wal-Mart Good For America?
Public Broadcasting System. 2 January, 2004.
www.pbs.org/wgby/pages/frontline/shows/walmart/

"Wal-Mart's War On Workers." Why is Having Lots of Imported Products at Wal-Mart Bad? United
Food and Commercial Workers. 27 December, 2004.
<http://www.walmartswaronworkers.com/index.php>

Sprawl-Busters: Helping Hometown America Fight Back. 21 March, 2005.
<http://www.sprawl-busters.com/index.html>

Ports Section

Articles and Texts

Bailey, Diane, et al. "Harboring Pollution: Strategies to Clean Up U.S. Ports."
National Resources Defense Council. August, 2004.

Kern, Jen and Stephanie Luce. "Living Wage Movement Greeted the Recession with New Victories,"
Labor Notes, March 2002.

Natural Resources Defense Council. "World's First Electrified Port Terminal Unveiled."
On the Natural Resources Defense Council Website. 21 June, 2004.
<http://www.nrdc.org/media/pressreleases/040621.asp>

Palaniappan, Meena and Diana Wu and Jacki Kohleriter. "Clearing the Air: Reducing Diesel Pollution in West Oakland." Pacific Institute. November, 2003.

Tong, David. "Port of Oakland in Expansive Mood." San Francisco Chronicle. August 15, 2004.

Websites

"A Tale of Two Ports, The Cost of Inefficiency". Prepared for the World Bank by María del Pilar Londoño-Kent & Paul E. Kent, Ph.D., December 2003
<http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/lac/lacinfoclient.nsf/>

"CAFTA'S Vision for the Future - Privatization at Gunpoint", By David Bacon May 2005
http://www.truthout.org/issues_05/051205LA.shtml

"Candidate Responses to Question of Greater City Control over the Port of Oakland,"
<http://www.greatergrandlake.org/question5.html>.

"EcoPorts" EcoPorts.
EcoPorts Foundation. 15 January, 2005.
www.ecoport.com

"ILWU history" <http://www.ilwu.org/history/ilwu-story/index.cfm>

"Moody's Investors Service", Moody's Rating Methodology for U.S. Ports, February 2005.

"Port of Oakland Living Wage" www.portofoakland.com/portnyou/livingwa.asp

"World's First Electrified Port Terminal Unveiled." Natural Resources Defense Council
On the Natural Resources Defense Council Website. 21 June, 2004.
<http://www.nrdc.org/media/pressreleases/040621.asp>

ChevronTexaco Section

Articles and Texts

Apollo Alliance. "Report on the Apollo Project for Good Jobs and Energy Independence from Institute for America's Future & Center on Wisconsin Strategies." The Apollo Alliance Homepage Dec. 2004. 18 Jan. 2005 <<http://www.apolloalliance.org/document.cfm?documentID=60>>.

BBC News. "Deal Reached in Nigerian Oil Protest."
BBC News Website. 16 July, 2002
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/2129281.stm>

Bodzin, Steven. "Protesters Blockade Refinery for Accepting 'Stolen' Iraqi Oil."
North Gate News Online Website. 9 September, 2003.
<http://journalism.berkeley.edu/ngno/stories/001281.htm>

Butt, Tom. "Texaco Poormouths Over Richmond Refinery."
Richmond Greens Website. 5 August, 2003.
www.richmondgreens.net/chevron.htm

Chorneau, Tom. "California Causes a Row Over Refineries: Report Shows Large Role by ChevronTexaco."
On the MSNBC website. 3 Sept. 2004.
<msnbc.msn.com/id/5906313/print/1/displaymode/1098/>

- Claflin, Warren and Meghan Purvis. "Needless Risk: Oil Refineries and Hazard Reduction." Los Angeles: Environment California Research and Policy Center, 2003.
- EarthRights International. "Is ChevronTexaco Liable for Abuses in Nigeria?"
EearthRights International Website.
www.earthrights.org/news/chevronmay2003.shtml
- Environmental Integrity Project. *Gaming the System*. Washington DC: Environmental Integrity Project, 2004.
13 Jan. 2005 http://www.environmentalintegrity.org/pubs/EIP_upsets_report_appendixA.pdf
- Hurtig, Anna-Karin and Miguel San Sebastián. "Incidence of Childhood Leukemia and Oil Exploitation in the Amazon Basin of Ecuador." International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health.
September, 2004.
- Jacques, Kristi. "Environmental Justice Case Study: Texaco's Oil Production in The Ecuadorian Rainforest."
University of Michigan Website.
www.umich.edu/~snre492/Jones/texaco.htm
- Koenig, Kevin. "ChevronTexaco on Trial."
World Watch Magazine Jan. /Feb. 2004.
<<http://www.worldwatch.org/pubs/mag/2004/171/>>
- Larson, Denny and Linda Weiner. "Protecting Against the Protectors: The Upsetting Truth about Air Pollution in the Bay Area." The San Francisco Chronicle 7 Sept. 2004.
http://www.refineryreform.org/News_SFChronicle_090704.html
- Lifsher, Marc. "Chevron Would Face \$5 Billion Tab for Amazon Cleanup, Expert Says."
Wall Street Journal. 30 October, 2003.
- "On the Record: Dave O'Reilly Goes 'On the Record' with the San Francisco Chronicle."
ChevronTexacoWebsite. 21 December, 2003.
www.chevrontexaco.com/news/spotlight/21dec2003_oreilly.asp
- Project Underground. "ChevronTexaco: Polluting You and the Planet." Project Underground Homepage. 12 Dec. 2004
<http://www.moles.org/ProjectUnderground/motherlode/chevron/wto2001_nov.html>.
- Public Citizen. "NAFTA Chapter 11 Investor-to-State Cases: Bankrupting Democracy."
Washington DC: Public Citizen, 2001.
<<http://www.citizen.org/documents/ACF186.PDF>>.
- "Replacing MTBE with Ethanol in Reformulated Gasoline." On the Renewable Fuels Association Homepage.
13 Jan. 2005.
www.ethanolrfa.org/leg_position_mtbe.shtml
- San Sebastian, Miguel and Juan Antonio Córdoba. "Yana Curi Report: The Impact of Oil Development on the Health of the People of the Ecuadorian Amazon."
Departamento de Pastoral Social del Vicariato de Aguariaco, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Medicus Mundi. June, 1999.
- Taugher, Mike. "Refinery 'Upsets' Easily Avoided, Environmental Report Says."
Contra Costa Times. 19 Aug. 2004.
www.environmentalintegrity.org/pub245.cfm

Turner, Terisa E. and Leigh S. Brownhill. "Why Women are at War with Chevron: Nigerian Subsistence Struggles Against the International Oil Industry."
Journal of Asian and African Studies, 39: 63-93. 2004.

Websites

- "Afrol News." Nigeria.
Afrol News. 14 December, 2004.
www.afrol.com/News2002/nig021_warri_pollution.htm
- "Amazon Watch." Northern Exposure: Texaco's Toxic Legacy in Ecuador.
Amazon Watch. 18 December, 2004.
www.amazonwatch.org/amazon/EC/toxico
- "International Forum on Globalization." The WTO and Oil.
International Forum on Globalization. 9 December, 2004.
<http://www.ifg.org/analysis/wto/cancun/usoilvm.htm>
- "Project Underground." Oil Campaign.
Project Underground. 18 October, 2004.
<http://www.moles.org/>
- "Refinery Reform Campaign." Refinery Reform.
Tides Foundation. 14 January, 2005.
<http://www.refineryreform.org/index.htm>
- "Texaco Rainforest." After the Gold Rush.
The People of Ecuador. 16 December, 2004.
www.texacorainforest.org