

ROCLA UPDATE ON THE AMERICAS

**RICE & BEANS
SPECIAL EDITION**

FEBRUARY 2014

A PUBLICATION OF THE ROCHESTER COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA

ROCLA

MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 1973, the Rochester Committee on Latin America (ROCLA) seeks to build bridges between the Rochester, NY, community and the people of Latin America. Through its monthly presentations, speakers, films, and quarterly newsletters, ROCLA educates local residents about the culture, economics and politics of the countries of Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean and the ways globalization, US trade and drug-war policies impact the lives of their people. ROCLA also supports the work of frontline organizations involved in working for justice and democracy in the global south, including the Latin America Solidarity Committee (LASC), Nicanet, Committee in Solidarity with the people of El Salvador (CISPES), Network In Solidarity with the people of Guatemala (NISGUA), Rights Action and the Pastors for Peace Cuba Friendshipment. We also encourage our members and others to advocate for US policies that support human rights and reverse the often oppressive history of US involvement in Latin America. Annually, ROCLA presents its international and local White Dove Awards for outstanding leadership and service in the cause of human rights in Latin America.

Steering Committee

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Editor: Grania Marcus
Designer: Jim Anderson



JOIN THE CELEBRATION!

Rochester Committee on Latin America's 26th Annual Rice & Beans Gala Dinner & White Dove Awards

Friday, March 14, 2014, 5:30pm

Gates Presbyterian Church, 1049 Wegman Road
Come and Honor our White Dove Winners!

Ray Rogers of the **Campaign to Stop Killer Coke - ROCLA's 2014 International White Dove Award winner** for his work organizing against the Coca-Cola Company's anti-union violence in Latin America.

The Rochester Labor Council, AFL-CIO - recipient of the **2014 Local White Dove Award** for its longtime support of worker justice in Latin America.

GOOD FOOD, FUN, LIVE & SILENT AUCTIONS

Buy your tickets now! Ticket prices: Sponsor: \$50; Friend: \$25 (but no one is ever turned away!)

To make Reservations: Bob & Marilyn Kaiser: (585) 293-3194; RKaiser3@rochester.rr.com

Peter & Gail Mott: (585) 464-0878; interconnect_mott@frontiernet.net.

Or use the enclosed envelope to order: Make your check payable to MJ/ROCLA with "Rice & Beans Dinner" on the memo line. If you can't attend, consider making a donation to support ROCLA's work.

How it Began

By Marilyn Anderson

A Rice & Beans Dinner in Berea, Kentucky inspired our first Rice & Beans dinner in 1988. In March of that year, Lucius Walker's organization, Pastors for Peace, had organized an ambitious educational tour consisting of men and women who had suffered injustice and torture in Guatemala and El Salvador, and who were now living in the U.S. as refugees. Activists from the U.S. accompanied them and I was invited to participate.

We were sent out to various communities all over Kentucky. With my tray of slides in hand, I gave presentations about the refugee situation in Guatemala in high schools, libraries, nursing homes and churches. One of the best programs took place

at Berea College, a progressive school that had been integrated since 1855, where a large number of people gathered for a "Rice & Beans Dinner."

Later, in August 1988, ROCLA organized a "copy cat" Rice & Beans dinner at the Unitarian Church in Rochester. David Dyson of the National Labor Committee (now the Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights) spoke in support of labor justice issues in Guatemala. The National Labor Committee (NLC) had been founded by Jack Sheinkman, President of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; Douglas Fraser, President of the United Auto Workers; and Bill Wimpisinger, President of the International Association of Machinists. The NLC's mission was to help union members and activists

in Central America who were victims of political violence. Peg Gefell's group provided the music. Nearly every year since, the ROCLA Rice & Beans Dinner has brought people together in Rochester to honor those who have worked to further peace, justice and human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. ■

Items needed

ROCLA is seeking donated items for the Live and Silent Auctions at the Rice & Beans Dinner - anything from a plant to a weekend retreat. Items valued at over \$100 will be included in the live auction. If you would like to donate, please contact Gail Mott at (585) 464-0878 or interconnect_mott@rochester.rr.com. **The deadline to donate is March 7, 2014.**



THE 2014 INTERNATIONAL WHITE DOVE AWARD TO RAY ROGERS



The Rochester Committee on Latin America is proud to honor legendary union activist Ray Rogers, Director of the Killer Coke Campaign with the International White Dove Award at ROCLA's annual Rice & Beans Dinner on Friday, March 14th, 2014. [Ed. Note]

Ray Rogers is an American labor rights activist, strategist, organizer and head of Corporate Campaign, Inc. He is credited with pioneering the strategy of the corporate campaign, a tactic that has been used with success by labor unions, human rights advocates and environmental groups in their battles against corporations in the United States and all over the world.

Rogers explains that the corporate campaign begins with an analysis of a targeted company's corporate, financial and political ties. This information is then used to design specific strategies and tactics to put relentless economic and political pressure on the primary target and its most important allies, with the ultimate goal of forcing the targeted company or political institution to change its behavior and act responsibly. Usually that requires the target to recognize the rights of its workers and their union, or to stop polluting and clean up contaminated land, and, where appropriate, to make restitution to the victims, their families, and their communities.

During his decades of activism, Rogers has battled on behalf of labor union members against giant corporations and political institutions such as J.P. Stevens & Co., Hormel, International Paper, American Airlines, Campbell Soup, Consolidated Edison, TIAA-CREF, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, State of New York and, most recently, The Coca-Cola Company. Time Magazine noted that Ray has succeeded in bringing some of



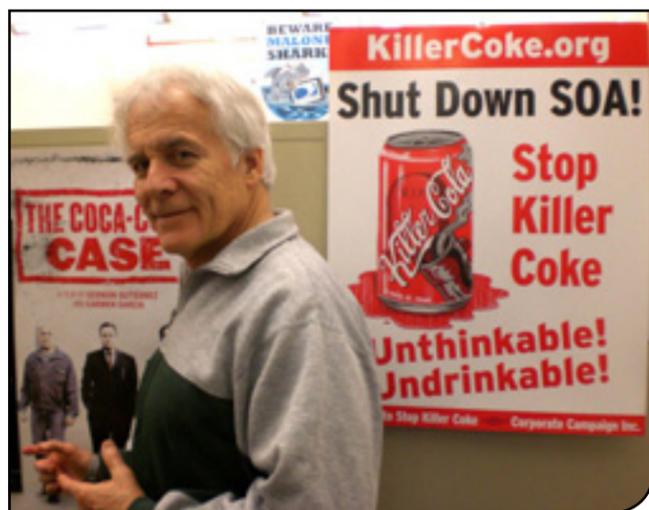
America's most powerful corporations to their knees.

Since 2003, Rogers has directed the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke, which he founded because of Coca-Cola's complicity in numerous acts of violence in Colombia and Guatemala. These include the kidnapping, torture and murder of union leaders and members of their families. Lawsuits in Colombia charge that Coca-Cola bottlers "have contracted with or otherwise directed security paramilitary forces that utilized extreme violence and murdered, tortured, unlawfully detained or otherwise silenced trade union leaders."

In 2010, another human rights abuse lawsuit filed in a U.S. federal district court charged that in Guatemala, Coca-Cola has conducted "a campaign of violence—including rape, murder and attempted murder—against trade unionists and their families at the behest of the management of Co-

ca-Cola bottling and processing plants." In El Salvador, Coca-Cola benefits from child labor and its operations have polluted major water sources. Coca-Cola in Mexico is alleged to have cheated workers and the government out of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Thanks to the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke, some 70 schools in the United States and around the world have kicked Coca-Cola off their campuses. These include City University of New York, the State University of New York at Stony Brook, Rutgers University, DePaul University, the University of California Berkeley, Smith and Bard Colleges and the University of Saskatchewan. More than 45 labor unions have announced their support of the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke. Most recently, the Executive Board of the Rochester Labor Council endorsed the Stop Killer Coke campaign, unanimously adopting a resolution calling on affiliates to remove all Coca-Cola products from their facilities and to ban purchases of Coca-Cola products in the future. ■



THE 2014 LOCAL WHITE DOVE AWARD TO THE ROCHESTER LABOR COUNCIL

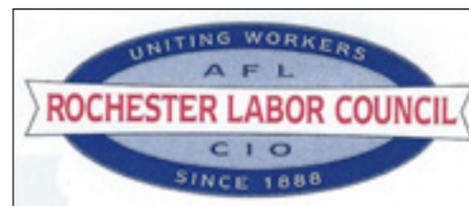


On March 14, 2014, ROCLA is proud to honor the Rochester Labor Council, AFL-CIO (RLC) with the Local White Dove Award for its decades long commitment to workers in Latin America and to Latino workers in our area. James Bertolone, President of the RLC and President of the American Postal Workers Union Local 215, will be present to accept the award. Below are excerpts from Jim Bertolone's recent press conference speech demonstrating RLC's continuing opposition to trade agreements that hurt workers everywhere. [Ed. note]

Trade Agreements have put the U.S. on a Fast Track to Economic Ruin

By James Bertolone

Free trade agreements from NAFTA on have destroyed wage, environmental and safety standards the world over. They have created a race to the bottom, and they even compromise national sovereignty in favor of corporate interests . . .



they are written by special interests to get favored treatment and to reduce or eliminate competition. They are made to exploit poor people the world over while assaulting middle-class standards of living. This is a more technologically advanced new colonialism. . . .

The model depends on cheap labor and allows workers little dignity and justice, often keeping them in line with brutal repression, as we have seen recently during strikes in Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh and parts of Africa. Brutal repression is used to deny justice in China . . .

Again we are seeing a bipartisan effort to fast-track a trade agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP. It has become almost routine for Congress to abdicate its responsibility to debate, amend and vote on international trade agreements . . .

. . . Our national trade deficits year after year run north of a half-trillion dollars. That is a half-trillion dollars of growth denied to our economy, with the spending creating jobs outside our borders, where

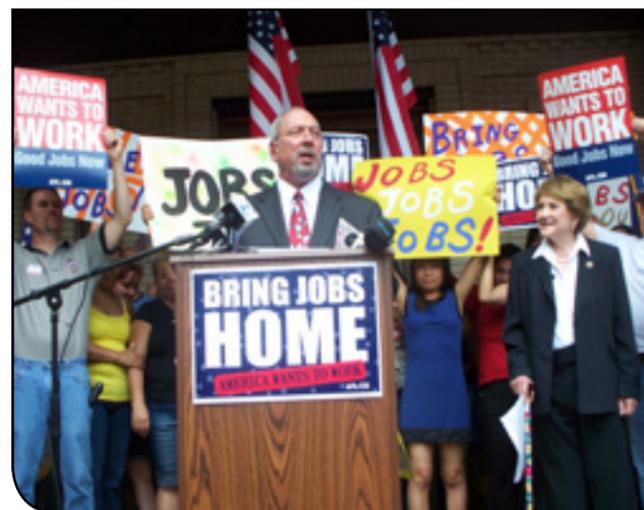
those goods and services are produced.

The largest part of trade agreements like TPP transfers our sovereignty to international tribunals whose decisions trump our laws and regulations on financial services, copyrights, patents, energy and food safety, labor standards, taxation and even government procurement, such as domestic content laws. Drug companies are writing regulations to extend patents for many years, protecting indefensible profits at the expense of broad access to life-saving medicines . . .

NAFTA's corporate backers promised they would create millions of jobs to meet the demand of Mexican and Canadian consumers. Instead they closed U.S. factories and moved the jobs to Mexico for cheap labor and unregulated operation, turning U.S. trade surpluses into deficits. The U.S. trade deficit with South Korea has increased each year since a new agreement took effect in 2012, costing us more jobs and economic growth while increasing downward pressure on wages.

After normalization of trade relations with China in 2001, the United States lost more than 5 million jobs and suffered the closure of 50,000 factories in less than a decade . . . According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, two-thirds of displaced manufacturing workers who found new jobs in 2012 did so at lower pay—a majority with pay cuts exceeding 20 percent.

We want trade policies that increase American innovation, American manufacturing and American jobs. Given a level playing field, we can compete with anyone, as we have in the past. Fast-track trade agreements, written in secret by corporate and banking interests for their own enrichment, are not the answer. This has been proved beyond a reasonable doubt. Fast-tracking for TPP or any trade agreement must be stopped. ■



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ROCLA UPDATE ON THE **AMERICAS**

DON'T MISS ROCLA'S APRIL & MAY PROGRAMS

Wednesday, April 2, 2014, 7:15pm:

Mauricio Morales, who recently returned from voting in the Salvadoran elections, will present **"El Salvador: Then and Now,"** detailing the many changes he has observed in his home country between 1987, when he fled for his life to the U.S., and the present, when the ARENA party is finally loosening its hold on the people of El Salvador. After spending four years in Sanctuary on Long Island sheltered by various churches, Mauricio and other Salvadorans were given permission to stay in the U.S. in 1992. In 2011, he became a U.S. citizen.

Wednesday, May 7, 2014, 7:15pm:

Paola Macas Betchart, an Environmental Anthropologist, will present **"Ecuador, its Environment and its Indigenous Peoples."** She comes to Rochester from Ecuador, where she was deeply involved with environmental issues and especially concerned with the effects of natural resources exploitation on indigenous peoples. Here, Paola is Director of Development with the environmental organization Rochester Greenovation and works also with the Worker Justice Center of New York.