

# Foreword

**T**he ornately decorated, gilded conference room on Capitol Hill known appropriately as the “Gold Room” was the backdrop to an important public forum on June 12, 2003.

Farmworkers, farmers, fishermen, industrial workers, advocates, and academics came from every corner of the country to testify about the effects of international trade agreements such as NAFTA. What they said, from personal experience and footnoted research, revealed the underside of the conventional wisdom about globalization.

This book contains the testimony from that day of truth-telling. You will read about how poverty has deepened as a result of our trade agreements, about how our trade agreements have been used to further the violation of human rights, and about how workers in this country have been pitted against workers in other countries by the companies that authored and now exploit NAFTA and the WTO.

One point of view you will not read in this book is the official view from the White House. The United States Trade Representative was invited to attend. In fact, he was promised that any reasonable accommodation would be made to allow him to speak at a time convenient for him. But he chose not to respond to the invitation.

It is rare that the views of workers dominate the marble-tiled halls and wood-paneled hearing rooms of Congress. But if Congress were truly responsive to the aspirations of the majority, this book is what more congressional hearings would sound like.

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