

# School of Assassins & "Free Trade" Partners in Exploitation and Murder

## Free Trade Enforcement in Bolivia

Last year the Bolivian government sold the public water system of Cochabamba to a private corporation, resulting in skyrocketing water rates for the people of Bolivia. As thousands took to the streets, Bolivian President and former military dictator, SOA graduate Hugo Banzer sent out the armed forces to attack civilians. After 4 days of anti-privatization protests in April 2000, the Bolivian government declared a "state of siege", sending soldiers into the street with live bullets. On the afternoon of April 8<sup>th</sup>, 17-year-old Victor Hugo Daza was killed by a shot through his face. At least 7 demonstrators were killed, with over 100 injured.

## SOA Used to "Beat Down" Opposition to NAFTA

Hours after NAFTA went into effect, the Mexican military moved in with troops, helicopters, and artillery to squash the resistance to "free trade"--



the newest installment in the war against the poor. At least 18

high-level Mexican officers who planned the repression campaign were trained at the US Army School of the Americas (now WHISC).

Consistently Latin American countries with the worst human rights records have sent the most students to the SOA during the heyday of the repression. Therefore, it is no surprise that shortly after the uprising against NAFTA, Mexico began pumping soldiers into the SOA and soon became the largest country client of the School of Assassins. Mexican soldiers made up 1/3 of the SOA graduating class in 1997 and over 1/4 of the total SOA enrolment in 1998. The SOA claimed that this training was necessary to fight the "war on drugs." However, only 10% of the Mexican SOA graduates took counter-narcotics courses. No Mexican soldiers took the counter-drug operations course in 1999, whereas 40 received military intelligence training.

The SOA trained the military to beat down the opposition to NAFTA and other union busting economic agreements such as the FTAA.



## Free Trade and the SOA Crush Unions in Colombia and Throughout Latin America

In 2000, Human Rights Watch released "The Ties that Bind", a report linking SOA graduates to the formation and operation of Colombian paramilitary groups. These paramilitary groups are notorious for horrific labor abuses, including fatal attacks on Colombian labor leaders. Among those SOA graduates cited for involvement with paramilitary groups were:

**Brig. Gen. Jaime Ernesto Canal Alban**---Canal commands the Third Brigade of the Colombian military, the brigade found responsible for setting up a paramilitary group called the "Calima Front" in 1999.

**Maj. David Hernandez Rojas**---Hernandez, cited for the 1999 murder of peace commissioner Alex Lopera, is now reportedly working with the paramilitary group ACCU.

**Maj. Jesus Maria Clavijo Clavijo and Maj. Alvaro Cortes Morillo**--- In 1999, both men were linked to paramilitary groups through cell phone and beeper communications as well as regular meetings on military bases.

**Gen. Carlos Ospina Ovalle**---The former commander of the Fourth Brigade, Ospina and his troops were cited with "extensive evidence of pervasive ties" to paramilitary groups involved in human rights abuses throughout 1999.

*Colombian paramilitary groups have been involved in countless labor abuses including the following:*

- ◆ On May 4, 2000, Javier Suarez, the leader of a truck driver's union, was shot and killed near his home.
- ◆ In early August of 2000, Carmen Emilio Sanchez Coronel, a trade unionist with the teacher's union in the Norte de Santander, was killed along with 7 other trade unionists at a paramilitary roadblock.
- ◆ In February 1999, paramilitaries killed Julio Alfonso Poveda, a founder of the United Labor Confederation (CUT).

## Help stop the globalization of greed. Close the School of Assassins (WHISC). Here's What You Can Do

- ✓ **Spread the Word ~ Copy/Distribute this Flyer**
- ✓ **Call Your Congressional Representative**  
Ask him/her to co-sponsor HR 1810, the new bill to close the SOA
- ✓ **Organize to Come to Ft. Benning November 16-18, 2001, for a Mass Action to Close the SOA**
- ✓ **Learn More! Order Additional Resources**  
Contact SOA Watch or visit [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org)