

Trans Pacific Partnership is A Win for Corporations

By JIM GOODMAN



TPP negotiations are held in secret for a reason: If they were public, if the public understood what was at stake, TPP would never pass.

In the early years of the United States we had, and enforced, strong trade tariffs. It was necessary to protect farmers and businesses from unfair foreign competition.

Now, that we are an Empire, we demand free access to foreign markets for our small businesses and farmers. No.. we demand market access for our corporations. Trade agreements are written with the financial interests of corporations in mind.

This is not new. Trade policy, when imposed by an Empire, is not for the benefit of the people, but rather the Empire or those who control it.

The British Crown instituted the Tea Act of 1773 granting the British East India Company (one of the worlds first multi-national corporations) a monopoly on tea

sales to the American colonies — a bailout policy to get the East India Company out of debt.

Back then, when people had an interest in governing themselves, the colonists responded with the Boston Tea Party which was an act of rebellion against corporate control as much as, or perhaps more so, than an act of opposition to British Rule.

Now, our government, which is supposed to represent the people, places the interests of corporations and banks ahead of the interests of the people.

The U.S. government has, over the past 20 years, entered a number of international trade agreements. NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), FTAA (Free Trade Area of The Americas), WTO (World Trade Organization), CAFTA (Central

American Free Trade Agreement) and now the Obama administration is intent on fast tracking TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership).

We are told that these agreements are a win-win for everyone, but history has shown that someone has to lose. WTO, NAFTA and the rest have done one thing very well: increased corporate profit.

To increase corporate profits, Trade Agreements have:

- Moved living wage jobs to economies where they have become slave labor jobs
- Busted unions and fired union organizers
- Moved food production to wherever food can be produced at the lowest cost
- Increased food imports to the extent that food safety inspections are nearly non-existent
- Aggressively promoted GMO's (genetically modified organisms) and the corporations that produce them
- Pushed U.S. agriculture into a system of commodity cropping and CAFO's (confined animal feeding operations)
- Pushed indigenous farmers worldwide off the land and into urban slums
- Made farm workers and livestock expendable commodities

- Devalued the place of women in agriculture.

While corporations have always had plenty of input into these trade negotiations, there was some degree of transparency, Congress and the people were somewhat aware of what was being discussed in the negotiations.

Negotiations for the TPP have taken the final step in secrecy; no one really knows what is being discussed. The language of TPP is being written by corporations so they get it exactly right.

As under NAFTA, investors can sue governments for loss of profits. Mexico put restrictions on U.S. imports of high fructose corn syrup, under NAFTA that was illegal, the health concerns cited by Mexico — irrelevant.

Malaysia prohibits foreign investment in supermarkets, which fosters the development of locally owned grocery stores – that can be challenged under TPP.

TPP chapters on Sanitary Standards and Technical Barriers



Each trade agreement gets worse, each trade agreement takes away our control, each trade agreement shifts wealth upward and leaves the world more impoverished.

to Trade are, of course not available, but why wouldn't the U.S. government be pushing an agenda like it has in other trade agreements to lower food safety standards to the least common denominator in order to increase export opportunities for agribusinesses?

Policies promoting sustainably produced foods sourced from local small-scale farmers for con-

sumption in schools or institutions could be deemed to unfairly discriminate against foreign suppliers.

Trade liberalization and elimination of local control will promote more intensive fossil fuel based agricultural production that is the exact opposite of the type of farming we must promote to reverse agricultures contribution to climate change.

We have yet to determine if anything is good about TPP. We have no way of knowing.

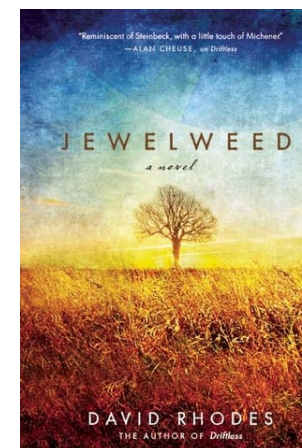
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Jim Goodman and his wife Rebecca run an organic dairy farm in Wonewoc, Wisconsin

Jewelweed by David Rhodes

A book review by Rebecca Goodman



I have the advantage of being able to call the author my friend of about 25 years and of living in the Driftless area of Southwestern Wisconsin, where his last novels take place. Reading *Jewelweed* is like talking with David face-to-face. Each word in this 448 page novel is measured and mined. The description of place and homey speech makes the reader feel they are there as an observing participant. There are many new characters of all ages along with some old friends from *Driftless* who make up this slice of rural life. They are just plain good folks trying to live worthwhile lives. *Jewelweed* brought me to places I have never been, experienced emotion I have never felt and ideas never explored all with a little touch of magic.