

what labor rights agreement, if one would be actually kept, would be chosen? The NAALC or the eventual MERCOSUR's Charter of labor rights? Perez-Lopez (1995: 473) proposed the establishment of a hemispheric organization that would secure the observance and promotion of ILO conventions by nations of the hemisphere. Perhaps a "joint venture" between OAS and ILO could function as a "pilot project" as to an eventual hemispheric organization. The OAS could also function as a unique catalyst, ensuring that a Charter of labor rights will be kept in any hemispheric economic integration process.

In any economic integration scenario, would it be necessary to conclude a new labor side agreement for the Americas? Chile will not probably be the leader of a continental economic integration, followed by MERCOSUR countries and the other sub-regional economic integration project in Latin America. What is much more probable is that MERCOSUR is and will remain the "leader project" for a "South American free trade area". The process for an eventual South American Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) is going ahead for many years. On the other hand, negotiations for full accession of Chile into NAFTA began after the 1994 Summit of the Americas. According to Murphy (1995: 420), Chile's choice of NAFTA rather than MERCOSUR is based on the fact that Chile should raise its average tariff level "significantly" to meet the MERCOSUR countries common external tariff. Brazil will probably act as the leader country of SAFTA, so that the final step of the hemispheric economic integration will be in the hands of the two country leaders: Brazil (MERCOSUR) and US (NAFTA). It could give birth to the accession of MERCOSUR to NAFTA, only if this scenario could give substantial advantages to SAFTA's natural leader (Brazil).

In the context of creating a free-trade area for the Americas, the States involved in the process will be in face of two basic political wills: to avoid protectionism and to avoid social dumping. States are the basic policymakers in the public sphere, so that they should emphasize their task to safeguard the social conscience, to share the resources with objectives of fairness and social justice (Dion: 1997). The Joint Committee OAS-ILO could contribute to such a role, in working for an eventual Social Clause for the Americas.