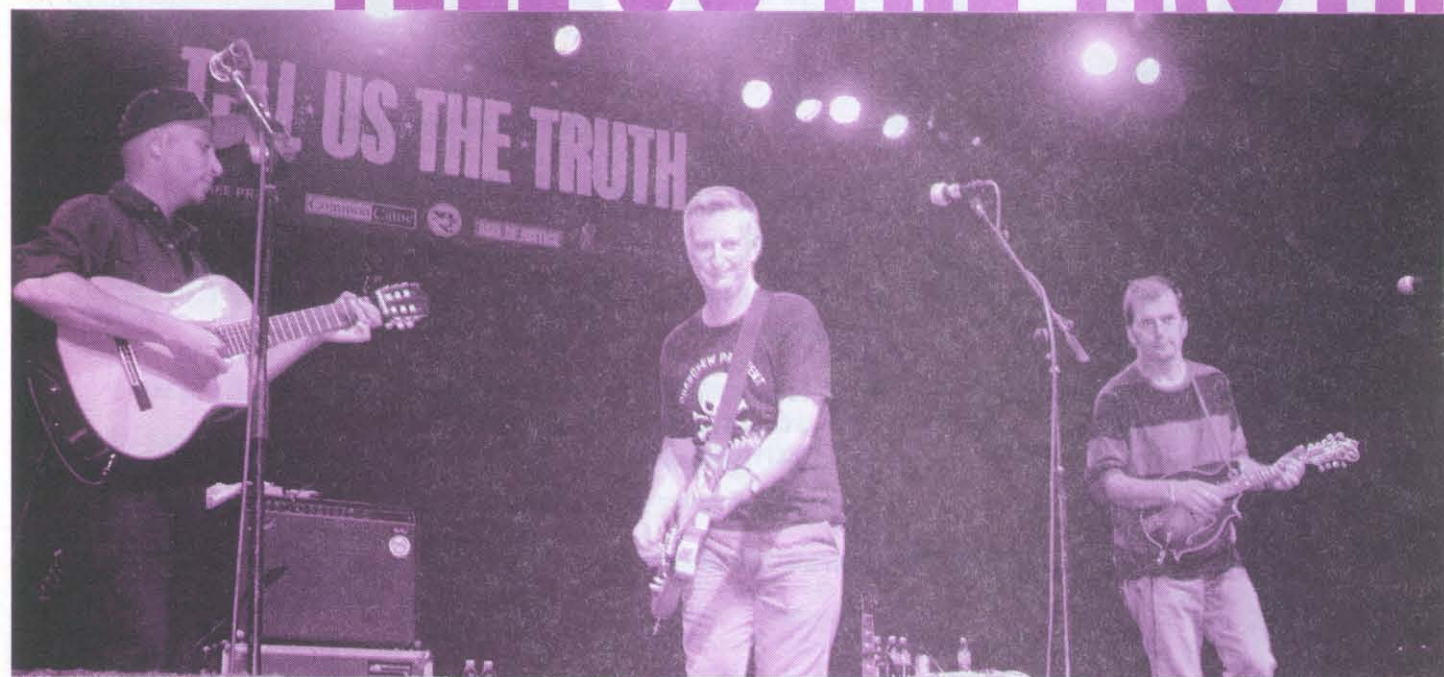


TELL US THE TRUTH



ROCKING FOR FREE MEDIA AND FAIR TRADE

by Seth Baum
Photos by Bob Ingalls

What do a rapper from Oakland, a folk singer from England, a comedian from Los Angeles, and an historian from Cambridge have in common? They all shared the stage at Berklee Performance Center on November 23 as part of the Tell Us The Truth Tour. Boots Riley from The Coup, Billy Bragg, Janeane Garofalo, and Howard Zinn all helped the Tour raise awareness of media consolidation and fair trade issues through music and entertainment.

Sponsored by Free Press, the Future of Music Coalition, Common Cause, and the Axis of Justice, The Tour was largely inspired by a recent Federal Communications Commission (FCC) decision to expand the abilities of single companies to own multiple media outlets within the same media market. With today's major media companies pushing their corporate-centric politics in their programming, having a diversity of coverage and opinion within the media is essential to keeping properly informed. And a successful democracy depends on well-informed citizens.

The Tour kicked off with a performance at the first ever National Conference on Media Reform in Madison, Wisconsin on November 7-8 and has been working hard to draw attention to this issue on its stops around the country.

Fair trade has become a larger rallying point for activists this year with the advent of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) agreement [see report on page 23]. Under current trade practices, corporations dodge U.S. labor and environmental restrictions by set-

Hip-Hop, banjos, tambourines, country draws, and a little bit of Howard Zinn make for a great night out if you care about making the world better. The Tell Us the Truth Tour brings like-minded activists, performers, and lecturers together for a show full of good music and much-needed inspiration.

ting up shop in countries where they can get away with labor, environmental, and human rights abuses. Fair trade advocates seek to improve conditions for foreign workers and level the playing field for American workers. We should expect the media to extensively cover these abuses. However, an increasingly corporatized media is increasingly projecting the corporate viewpoint.

While trade ministers from throughout the western hemisphere were in Miami on November 19-20 to discuss expanding the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to include Latin America through the FTAA, thousands showed up to protest, and the Tour played a special concert for them. "We're probably the only ones to

