

the Socialist

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Editorial

The False Choices of Food in Capitalism

How can we change the world? This is the question that socialists face in the 21st century. It certainly offers more possibilities than the one presented in the mid-90s that asked whether we had reached the end of history. However, capitalism is also attempting to provide an answer to this question by offering individualized ways to change the world. Food is an important arena for this project – corporations insist that eating the right food or drinking the right coffee can really make a difference in the world.

Behind the anti-septic choices offered by the system, lies the storm and stress of capitalism.

Corporations chasing each other across the world in search of profits, workers being squeezed for ever lower wages and natural resources being monopolized and spoiled. Old wine in a new bottle – a certified organic 100% post-consumer recycled bottle, but the same old bitter wine. In the process, a world transformed is neatly reduced to an individual act of consumption that serves to substitute itself for any bonds of solidarity or affinity. Personal choices about which corporate products to consume become the only acceptable avenue for “politics,” a term now used to discuss which products corporations offer instead of examining the consequences of the very existence of corporations themselves.

No food item better demonstrates capitalism’s ability to quietly adapt to and create consumption patterns while shielding consumers from the transformative nightmares it

engenders than soy. The seemingly innocent jiggly glob of crushed soybeans has caught the attention of North American consumers looking toward a post-meat world. Its pristine white color radiates goodness, the plastic packaging it arrives in screams about good health and the imaginary hippie-style communal edginess is irresistible to the deeply alienated late capitalist consumer. Soy has a slightly different meaning for Paraguayan campesinos however. It means war.

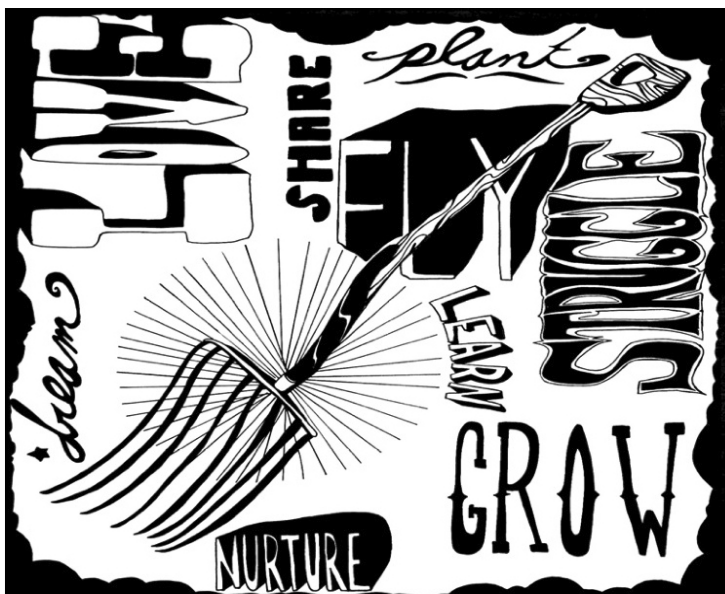
Meat-scares in Europe, rumors about the soy-secret to long life in Japan and big-agro trends toward new feed commodities have pushed soybean cultivation globally. Big companies

such as Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), and Bunge monopolize the soy market. In Paraguay, these same corporations have, for many years, strong-armed local farmers into producing corporate Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) soybeans in order to integrate the area into the “soy republics” that have been set up in Brazil and Argentina.

Never mind the enforcement of mono-crop cultivation, the deforestation or the extreme amounts of pollution caused by pesticides so toxic that campesinos in Paraguay have termed them “the venom.” Environmentally conscious consumers in the North now desire soy as a means to change their individual worlds and big capital is determined to produce it at the cheapest cost possible.

Some campesinos have resisted by asserting their right to cultivate traditional crops such as yucca, corn, beans

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Statement of Principles

THE SOCIALIST PARTY strives to establish a radical democracy that places people’s lives under their own control - a non-racist, classless, feminist socialist society... where working people own and control the means of production and distribution through democratically-controlled public agencies; where full employment is realized for everyone who wants to work; where workers have the right to form unions freely, and to strike and engage in other forms of job actions; and where the production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not for the private profit of a few. We believe socialism and democracy are one and indivisible. The working class is in a key and central position to fight back against the ruling capitalist class and its power. The working class is the major force worldwide that can lead the way to a socialist future - to a real radical democracy from below. The Socialist Party fights for progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. We support militant working class struggles and electoral action, independent of the capitalist controlled two-party system, to present socialist alternatives. We strive for democratic revolutions - radical and fundamental changes in the structure and quality of economic, political, and personal relations - to abolish the power now exercised by the few who control great wealth and the government. The Socialist Party is a democratic, multi-tendency organization, with structure and practices visible and accessible to all members.



The mascot of the Alvarado Street Bakery (ASB) is an orange and black cat, with a swinging tail and a sly grin. Perhaps his feisty smile is the result of good working conditions. ASB is the worker owned and run cooperative featured in Michael Moore's recent film Capitalism: A Love Story as an example of economic democracy. ASB is based in Petaluma, California, but ships nationally through their website. In this interview, Joseph Tuck of ASB tells The Socialist about the company's practices.

The Socialist - Can you describe how your cooperative works? In particular, how are the big decisions made about what is produced and how much and how are the small day-to-day decisions made, how fast and how much people work, breaks, etc.?

Joseph Tuck of the Alvarado Street Bakery - Generally in our worker cooperative all large decisions that impact the cooperative are decided by the worker/members at our quarterly membership meetings. Our by-laws specify these as

- (a) approval of new members and membership criteria
- (b) approval of by-law changes;
- (c) approval of annual business plan;
- (d) approval of annual budget;
- (e) commitment of resources greater than the amount allowed in the policy adopted from time to time by the membership;
- (f) setting of wage policy;
- (g) setting of major policies on hiring and firing;
- (h) determining product line produced; and

(i) election of the board of directors. The day-to-day affairs of the cooperative are coordinated through our management structure. My position (I am hired by the board) coordinates departmental managers who do things like scheduling, setting of breaks, line speed, determining the amount of product to be made on a day, etc. We, of course, use worker input in these types of decisions, as they are the experts in their particular discipline.

TS - What do you see as the advantages of this non-traditional way of organizing your company?

ASB - The economic advantages of being a worker cooperative stem from the fact that workers decide the fate of the cooperative and reap the rewards if we do well. This tends to build more trust internally in one another and less of a need for managers for issues such as oversight etc as traditional organizations may have. Workers get that they are the sole benefactor of the company doing well. The transparency in financial statements etc. allow everyone to know and feel like a stakeholder. If we are not doing well everyone one knows it and knows the reasons for the situation. In our group, there is peer pressure for everyone to do their best. Our workers do not tolerate well their co-workers not putting in effort.

TS - What were some of the hurdles you had to overcome in setting up a workers' co-operative and how did you address them?

ASB - The largest hurdle for us to overcome was the lack of access to capital when we

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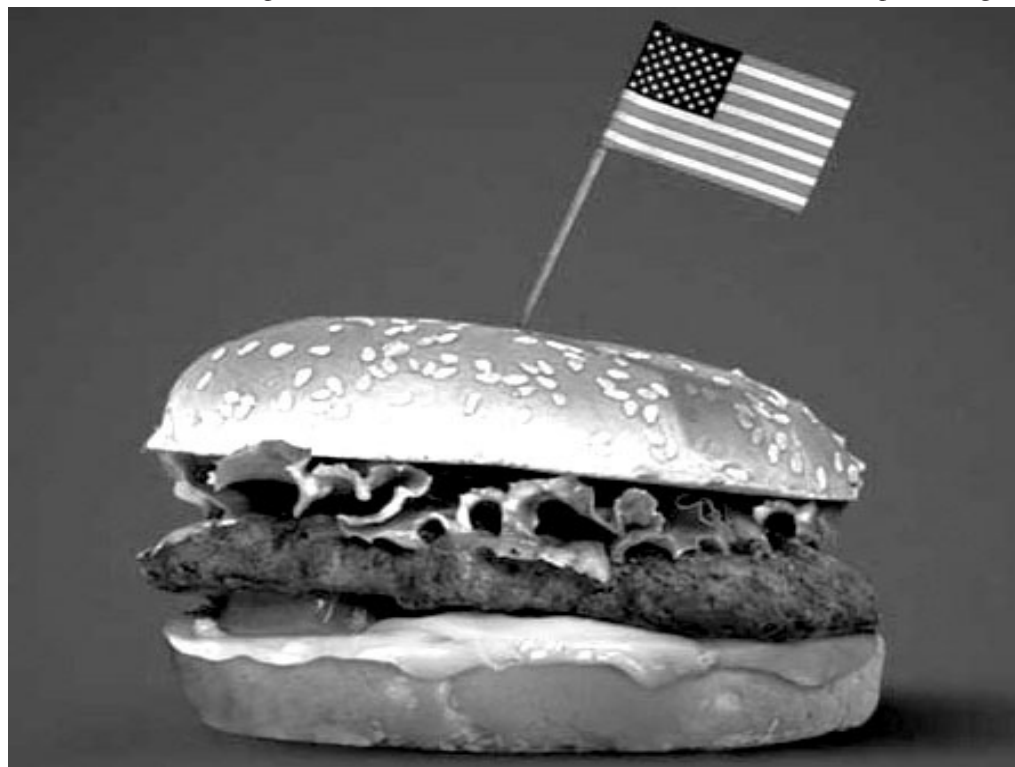
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Food in America and the World: Another Way is Possible and Necessary

by Dan La Botz

Today, food production in the United States and in the world is dominated by a handful of corporations that put their profits above the hunger, the health, and the well-being of America's and the globe's population. Tyson, Kraft, Pepsico, Nestle, Conagra, and Anheuser-Busch are generally at the top of the list, though in virtually every area of food production, a small number of corporations control what is grown and what we eat. The food industry, of course, meshes with the banks and with other corporations, such as chemical companies and agricultural implement manufacturers, as well as with government agencies, which built the network of dams and canals that provide their water and which also



provide government subsidies and financial aid.

We know some of the results of this concentration of wealth in the hands of the corporations and the government they dominate. Family farmers—and there are few of them left—must borrow from the banks and produce for the corporations, their livelihood often in question. Another result of this interlocking of corporate and governmental interests has been, for thirty years, the deregulation of food production, resulting in outbreaks of E.coli and other diseases. The American people who eat corporate food are increasingly unhealthy, obese, suffering from diabetes and heart disease. Farm workers and meatpacking workers work in unsafe and unhealthy conditions, often live in abysmal conditions, and are paid extremely low wages for the most arduous work. While most Americans can afford food, there are approximately 40 million people in the United States who have difficulty getting enough to eat; and worldwide there are between a billion and two billion people who go hungry.

The great food corporations have for decades successfully resisted attempts by workers, consumers and environmentalists to restrain their power. Still we see important movements to change the food industries. Worker's organizations such as the United Farm Workers, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers have succeeded in winning better wages and conditions for a small number of farm workers. The United Food and Commercial Workers Union has had important victories in new organizing among meat and poultry processing workers. Within the Teamsters union, which represents most other food processing workers, there is an important

rank-and-file movement, Teamsters for a Democratic Union, working to make the union do a better job in representing its members.

We have also seen in recent years a tremendous growth in consumer movements demanding a return to government regulation of the industry, as well as movements that press for locally grown and organic food. Environmentalists continue to educate the public about the tremendous waste and environmental damage done by our food production system which relies so heavily on carbon fuels. While all of these are hopeful signs, we do not yet see a powerful social movement which can begin to restrain the food industry's

dominant corporations. To get there, we need to work to rebuild the unions, expand the workers' centers, revive the social movements, and create a political alternative.

We see in this country a small but growing anti-corporate and sometimes anti-capitalist sentiment. Beyond that, recent polls by Rasmussen, Gallup, and Pew have shown that about one-third of the American people feel sympathetic to socialism. Still, many Americans fear that socialism means Soviet style Communism while others can see that European Social Democracy more often administers capitalism somewhat more humanely than the United States, though still without escaping its crises and the suffering they bring. We need to be able to talk about socialism in a way that makes it clear to the American people, that socialism is fundamentally an expansion of democracy, and an increase in the power of ordinary working people to improve their lives.

What might agriculture look like under socialism? First, of course, we stand for the *Continued on p15*

“Put It in the Ground and See What Happens” A Political Garden Grows in Memphis

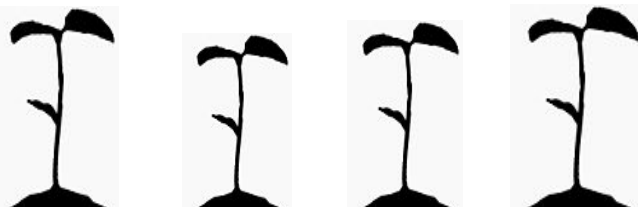
by Sally Joyner

This is the second summer that the Memphis Socialist Party has cultivated a little patch of land in the Binghampton neighborhood, a block from the community center where we hold our meetings. Binghampton is an old neighborhood near the center of the sprawling city, where immigrants from West Africa and Mexico live next door to elderly lifelong Memphians. Ice-cream colored shotgun houses are intertwined with boarded-up duplexes and newly renovated two-story homes.

Last year, when we started the garden, ten minutes of working never passed without someone walking up to introduce him or herself, offer advice, or ask about the vegetables. We were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of our neighbors, who, as the summer wore on, became more and more involved. Although we tilled only a small portion of the lot, we planted organic summer squash, tomatoes, melons, scarlet runner beans, eggplant, and herbs, and we enjoyed a large yield of good, healthy food. There were no fences or barriers and everyone felt free to have as much as they wanted. We had been warned against leaving the garden open in that manner, but we couldn't imagine any other way.

This year, it was still winter when a couple of neighbors caught up with us at the community center to make sure we were doing the garden again. It turned out that the man living across the street from the lot--who was around just about every day last year--has an old tiller and big plans; we were lucky, because the local ag-extension is no longer tilling gardens due to budget cuts. So, from late April to early May, we tilled up an area around four times the size of the original plot. Directly next door to the garden is a couple in their 80s who helped with watering last year. This summer, they planted radishes, beans, cauliflower, and the seeds of a particularly good butternut squash they'd enjoyed a few months ago. Because there is more than enough room for everyone's gardening experiments, this year's mantra has been: "Let's just put it in the ground and see what happens."

Our purpose in creating an open neighborhood garden was to have a space where people could come together to do meaningful work, get to know each other, and grow some great food. Now May is almost over, and sure enough, we've got sunflowers, beets, cucumbers, okra, peppers, watermelon and potatoes sprouting up, along with all of the vegetables that did so well last year. The experience has been fundamentally satisfying for everyone; as a neighbor we met earlier this year said, "It's a lot of work, but we're gonna eat good this summer."



Rethinking School Lunch by Kristin Schall



We all remember school lunches. They usually consisted of hamburgers stored in a vat of greasy water and served on a soggy bun, often accompanied by something that may or may not have once been a vegetable. Canned fruit would be washed down with a small carton of milk-- usually chocolate. However, nostalgic flashes about the industrial lunches we loved to complain about as children don't cover for the suspect nutritional value of the food. While the official school menu follows strict United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines for nutrition, including limiting calories from fat to 30 percent and saturated fat to less than 10 percent, the nutritional value of the meals students actually consume raise serious questions.

What's For Lunch

The typical school lunch served to more than 31 million schoolchildren each day very often consists of highly processed prepackaged or precooked foods. Fruits and vegetables come in cans, and carbohydrates usually take the form of white bread buns or white rice. In addition, critics of school food argue that the meals are used as a means to get rid of agricultural surplus. Dr. Walter Willett, head of the department of nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health, told the *BBC News* that the food served in American school cafeterias, "tend to be at the bottom of the barrel in terms of healthy nutrition."

Nutritional problems with school lunches are

exacerbated by the vending machines and a la carte choices available to students. Therefore, while the lunch provided by the school may, at least in theory, be nutritious, it is not uncommon for American school children to choose a lunch consisting of French fries and corn syrup laden soft drinks.

If questionable nutritional value isn't enough, the safety of meat served in school lunchrooms is also suspect. A December 2009 *USA Today* investigative report found that the USDA had been providing schools with meat that was far below fast-food industry standards, including "spent hens" or chickens past their egg laying prime that no fast-food chain would touch and are often used in pet food. *USA Today* also found that the meat used in school lunches was tested five to 10 times less frequently for bacteria and pathogens than fast-food meat and that the USDA had limits for bacteria 10 times higher than those set by fast food chain, Jack in the Box. In response to the report, the USDA announced new measures in February 2010 to ensure the safety of meat purchased for school lunches including testing meat more often and bringing their standards up to those held by the fast-food industry. However, serving children meat at the quality standards of McDonalds hardly qualifies as progress.

"Is Our Children Learning?"

There are some new characteristics to childhood in America in recent years. Health problems that were previously rare in children are on the rise. Twenty percent of children are overweight and 15 percent are classified as obese. There have also been marked increases in diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease among children. This is partially a result of a decrease in the activity level of children, but the foods children eat also plays a significant role. Kids' diets are filled with fatty foods, sugars and foods containing preservatives, dyes and other additives. This is evident in the choices students make when purchasing lunch at school. The most popular item on many school lunch menus is French fries, followed closely by pizza. This is not to mention the many kids who report eating a bag of chips and soda for lunch.

In addition to making poor choices for lunch, many students skip breakfast and studies have shown that children who skip breakfast are more likely to experience a lack of energy and inability to concentrate at school, resulting in poor academic performance. These are just two of the behavior issues that are present in American schools. Diagnoses of ADD and ADHD continue to increase. Approximately 10 percent of school-aged children are currently diagnosed as having ADD or ADHD and more students than ever are on prescription drugs. According to some researchers, diet is a contributing factor in the alarmingly high number of children diagnosed with these disorders. Food critics argue that a combination of unnatural dyes and additives, simple carbohydrates and sugar are to blame for the epidemic.

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Is Big Brother Still Coming to Animal Farm? by Steve Rossignol

In February 2010, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the Agriculture Department would no longer try to implement the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). The announcement immediately set the meat industry up in arms.

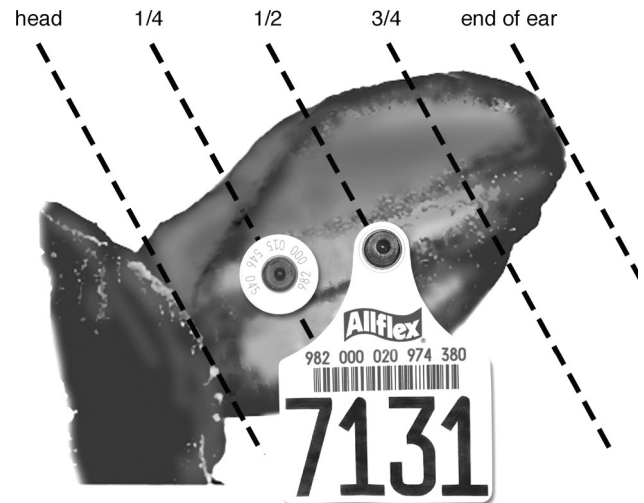
If you have never heard of the NAIS, you're not alone. While the meat industry has for years clamored for some sort of nationwide tagging and tracking system to ostensibly monitor livestock from farm to feedlot to food store, it wasn't until the tragedy of September 11, 2001 that the industry saw its opening, using as its rationale the perceived threat of terrorists striking American agriculture. The effort for a national tagging system was in place right after September 11 under the auspices of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture, composed of agricultural industry giants and manufacturers of identification technology systems, which immediately began lobbying for the implementation of the Animal Health Protection Act (AHPA). In the climate of anti-terrorist hysteria, Congress very quietly passed the AHPA in the middle part of 2002, and it instructed the Agriculture Department to implement the act. In May of 2005, the AHPA was further strengthened by Congress to specifically mandate electronic tagging and certain exemptions from the Freedom of Information Act.

The original intentions of the bill may certainly have been well meaning. Fears of terrorist activity, occasional cases of Mad Cow and other diseases, and the consolidation of a variety of agricultural laws dating back to the 19th century prompted the initial writing of the bill. However, the Act also contained within it frightening germs of government control that slowly became known, especially the right to inspect and seize livestock without a warrant. The additional notion of a constant electronic surveillance of livestock also led to Big Brother fears. The Act commissioned the Agriculture Department with implementation, and corporate consultants within the USDA developed a series of administrative suggestions that soon led to the National Animal Identification System.

Among the provisions of this developed NAIS were the three-stage requirements that every livestock premise and location in the nation be registered with the Department of Agriculture; that all individual swine, sheep, goats, cattle, horses, poultry (yes, every chicken), pigeons, and exotics (your pet llama, for instance) be tagged and identified to know its location at all times (electronic tagging with a microchip was the suggested method); and that the Department of Agriculture be notified whenever any livestock was transferred to any another locations, including moving livestock to a another pasture or taking a horse on a trial ride.. These requirements were even to include the single animal premises, the family pet goat, and animals not used for food. And Congress even entertained ideas to extend the computerized radio frequency tagging to include household pets like Fido and FiFi.

From the start, the major supporters for NAIS

have been the large agricultural conglomerates and lobbies: Monsanto, Cargill Meat Solutions, the National Pork Producers Council, Schering-Plough; electronic tagging companies like Allflex USA, Farnam, Temple Tag Company, and Y-Text; and such professional associations as the Texas Veterinary Medical Association and the conservative Farm



Bureau. In May of 2005, then Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced, "We are moving forward to a mandatory system."

Perhaps the biggest insult in the mandatory implementation of NAIS was having the costs of electronic tagging borne by the producers of the livestock. At an estimated cost of \$13 a head in 2005 for herds less than 125, the cost could prove to be very expensive for a small goat producer, for instance, especially when goat prices at auction could bring much less than that. After much negative feedback, the Agriculture Department decided that it would only pay one-third of the cost of implementing NAIS, with the balance coming from the producers and the state governments. The estimated cost for implementing NAIS is \$550 million for the first five years.

From the start, perhaps intentionally, there was never much fanfare or media coverage of the NAIS. Opposition in response to the NAIS slowly developed as corporate lobbyists began the process of pushing forth the legislation in various state legislatures. Many Congressional representatives, when asked about the Act, simply had no inkling as to what the legislation was. In Texas, for instance, the bill passed unanimously in the Legislature in the closing weeks of the 2005 legislative session, and later many legislators responded that they were unaware of the provisions of the bill.

As word about NAIS slowly reached the public and the livestock producers, grassroots opposition arose from all parts of the country. From Idaho to Virginia, New Mexico to Tennessee, and points in between, small livestock producers, organic beef producers, animal hobbyists, pet owners, and civil libertarians began

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The Fight Against Genetic Engineering of Agriculture by Mitchel Cohen



All over the world people are resisting the genetic engineering of their food supply. At the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in 1999, African countries – standing alongside the protesters in the streets – refused to sign the seminal trade agreement proposed by the U.S. because it would require them (and all countries) to accept genetically engineered food from abroad. Their courageous stance caused those talks to collapse. Refusal to accept genetic engineering of agriculture has continued to be a major obstacle to the globalization of capital and U.S. corporate control of the world’s food supply.

Henry Kissinger once portrayed American “aid” this way: “To give food aid to a country just because they are starving is a pretty weak reason.” Exactly! Food is a weapon in the hands of U.S. foreign policy. From the bombardment of Yugoslavia in the late 1990s to the current U.S. occupation of Iraq, one of the key (and little-known) requirements forced on the defeated populations has been acquiescence to the planting of genetically engineered crops in their countries.

The U.S. uses genetically engineered plants (and now trees) to disrupt the economies of other countries, forcing them into dependency upon the U.S. Almost all U.S. food aid to the victims of the Tsunami in the South Pacific, for example, or to earthquake victims in Pakistan and Haiti was genetically engineered. Replanted, crops grown from genetically engineered seeds are considered under global trade agreements to be owned not by the farmer who planted them but by the corporation that engineered them. Africa has become a major dumping ground – countries are required to plant genetically engineered seeds patented by U.S. corporations in exchange for funds or debt relief, as part of

the International Monetary Fund’s structural adjustment programs. And, the U.S. government’s dumping of genetically engineered corn in Mexico has the added “advantage” -- for U.S. policy -- of undermining the local economies that serve as a base for the Zapatista rebellion. The corn dump causes the extinction of dozens of varieties of indigenous corn by supplanting them with corn genetically engineered abroad, uprooting hundreds of thousands of self-sustaining small-scale farmers from their lands and forcing them to migrate out of the area in search of food.

Proponents claim that, theoretically, genetic engineering is needed to generate predictable traits by narrowing or even eliminating “unpredictability” in agricultural production, which should increase quantity and “feed the world.” Of course, none of that is true; people are not starving because there is not enough food being grown, but because they have been forced off their lands by the tens of millions – so that agribusiness corporations could take them over and grow unnecessary export crops – coffee, cotton, sugar -- for wealthier countries, instead of being used to feed and sustain local communities. In reality, the new technology is a capitalist’s dream and the working class’ nightmare; it allows huge corporations to privatize and thus transform nature — trees, crops, grasses, animals, human beings — in unexpected ways, and with consequences as potentially deadly as that other technological wizardry that defined and terrorized prior generations: the nuclear bomb.

Unlike other products of industrial production – say, faulty automobiles, for instance – self-replicating genetically modified organisms cannot be “recalled” once they’ve been released. To date, over 3,000 varieties of plants, animals and micro-organisms have been genetically

engineered in the U.S. Greenpeace reported that a human gene has been added to salmon, trout, and rice; genes from flounder have been implanted into tomatoes to keep them from freezing; genes from chicken have been spliced into potatoes to keep them from bruising. And through it all, agricultural biotechnology – while excelling in wresting control of the land from small farmers -- has not created a single food product that is of any benefit for consumers. In fact, consumers might very well question this lack of benefit – if they only knew about it. Who wouldn't feel a twinge of trepidation when eating fruit that had been brushed with genetically-synthesized scorpion toxin (to keep away pests)? So as a rule, biotech corporations in the United States fight to prevent products that contain genetically modified organisms from being labeled. They are all too aware that consumers would avoid such products if they were properly labeled.

Another reason for the biotech industry's opposition to labeling is to lessen the likelihood – at least in court -- of holding manufacturers accountable for severe allergic reactions or illness that might otherwise be traced back to, for instance, genetically engineered soy in infant formula. Giant biotech corporations such as Monsanto have even sued smaller companies to prevent them from voluntarily labeling products containing genetically engineered material.

Giant corporations are now legally allowed to patent genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and release them into the wild, while claiming ownership of the seeds those crops generate. Farmers are forbidden by contract to replant seeds from crops engineered by Monsanto unless they pay royalties to the company, which has set up its own police force to go onto farmers' lands and confiscate crops to test for patented DNA sequences — even if caused by genetically engineered pollen that drifted onto pristine fields. Increasingly, farmers are forced to lease their seeds, plants and animals from biotech conglomerates.

Neither the companies nor the agencies assigned to “regulate” them have been required to demonstrate the safety of releasing genetically modified organisms and crops into the wild. And yet, organisms containing genetically engineered sequences are being released into the environment on an ongoing basis. Why? Because genetic engineering is the ideal technology for colonizing and corporatizing whole new areas of nature. In line with Kissinger's observation about U.S. food policy, genetic engineering is an essential component of the new globalization of capital. It allows private corporations — and the governments they control — to conquer those parts of life that have thus far stood outside of its domain: the inner workings of the living cell.

We are taught (incorrectly) that science and technology are “good” and “free from politics.” Science and technology — tools for manipulating and “developing” the world around us -- are ideological lenses through which we see the world. They are dripping with politics. Far from being “neutral,” biotechnology and genetic engineering constitute, to companies like Monsanto and Novartis (and their paid apologists), a new engine for the accumulation of

capital, profits and control. And the toll that takes on living beings and the world around us is staggering.

But, there is hope! Throughout the world, as people begin to understand the implications of the genetic modification of agriculture, the new genetic technologies are meeting widespread opposition. Ecological activists in EarthFirst! and Greenpeace have been burning fields of genetically engineered crops and breaking into laboratories and farms, carefully tearing up genetically engineered plants (while making sure that no organisms with altered genes escape). Some areas are fighting for an outright ban and, in the meantime, for labels on all foods containing genetically engineered products. Farmers have protested by dumping milk from cows injected with genetically engineered hormones. Consumer activists have exposed the executives of biotech corporations and their supporters in government, holding them up for public ridicule and condemnation.

Some opponents of the new technology have tossed pies in the faces of the CEOs of Monsanto and Novartis at public events. A few of those found guilty of “pieing” have been sentenced to longer prison terms than murderers or thieves -- even more jail time than given to corporate polluters (who generally serve no jail time at all despite destroying the environment). The tens of thousands of activists blockading delegates to the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in November of 1999 listed opposition to genetic engineering and the global domination of capital as among their main concerns, and that opposition has now spread throughout the world. The European Union has attempted to enforce a moratorium on purchases and planting of genetically modified crops, as have many small nations led by Zambia and other African countries, who continue to successfully resist the strongarm tactics of USAID and the IMF. Once perceived as “flakes” or “environuts,” resisters to genetically engineered agriculture are turning out to be heroes, far-sighted activists willing to challenge the self-serving rationalizations offered by the overlapping agribusiness and pharmaceutical industries and its bought politicians, in order to save the planet.

These protests have now crept into the inner sanctums of the GE corporations themselves. The Gerber Company announced that it would no longer use genetically engineered crops in its baby foods. The irony is that Gerber is owned by Novartis, one of the biggest of the genetic engineering corporations. Similarly, the company serving lunch in Monsanto's cafeteria has announced it will no longer serve genetically engineered produce, after the company received too many complaints from Monsanto's employees! But even as resistance increases in some areas of the world; and even as independent findings confirm bit by bit what ecological activists have long asserted; and even as we learn that pollen from genetically modified corn could be killing monarch butterfly caterpillars and possibly wiping out butterflies altogether (generating a chain reaction through every species), the biotech's propagandists, including such apologists for Monsanto as former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, are busy bolstering the market for such products in Africa, Latin America,

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Dissent at Cochabamba Climate Summit by Bill Weinberg

On May 7, Bolivia's socialist and indigenous President Evo Morales arrived at the UN in New York City to personally present Secretary General Ban Ki-moon with the conclusions of the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of the Mother Earth (CMPCC), which was held in Cochabamba from April 20-22. Some 30,000 people from over 150 countries attended the CMPCC, which sought to bring governments and civil society groups together to work to address climate change.

As it closed on Earth Day, the CMPCC issued several resolutions, including: that the UN adopt a Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth; that an International Committee be organized to hold a global referendum on climate change on Earth Day 2011; that the industrialized nations provide annual financing equivalent to 6% of their GDP to confront climate change in the developing world; and that an International Tribunal on Environmental and Climate Justice be created, with its seat in Bolivia. The conference called for a new global organization to press for these demands, tentatively dubbed the World Movement for Mother Earth—or, by its Spanish acronym, MAMA-Tierra.

These resolutions emerged from the CMPCC's 17 official "tables," or working groups, which were organized around themes such as "Structural Causes," "Harmony with Nature," "Rights of Mother Earth," and "Indigenous Peoples." Representatives of the working groups submitted their resolutions to the assembled government officials at a joint meeting at the Hotel Regina, in the Cochabamba suburb of Tiquipaya, on the morning of April 22. They were then officially adopted.

President Morales told the press that he would demand the resolutions be endorsed at the upcoming UN world climate summit in Cancun, Mexico, and warned that if this demand was not met he would seek redress at the International Court of Justice.

However, the CMPCC's stated goal of establishing an alternative process on climate change to that of the UN, dubbed the Conference of the Parties (COP), seemed to fall short. Aside from Morales, the only head of state to attend was Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez. Diplomats and lower-level officials did attend from several countries, mostly in the developing world. The summit closed with an afternoon Earth Day rally at Cochabamba's municipal stadium, presided over by (in order of appearance) Cuban Vice President Esteban Lazo, Nicaraguan elder statesman Tomás Borge, Chávez and Morales.

The conference also saw controversy over the dissident "Table 18," on social conflicts related to climate change. Convened by Aymara indigenous leaders and their supporters, Table 18 was not recognized by the summit's organizers. Barred by organizers from the official summit grounds on the Tiquipaya campus of the University del Valle (Univalle), Aymara elders of the National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Cullasuyu (CONAMAQ) and their allies convened the dissident forum in a Brazilian restaurant just off the campus.

Cleared of tables to make room for rows of chairs, the premises filled with pungent smoke as incense and coca leaves were ritually burned for the opening ceremony. With many drawn by the controversy, the unofficial Table 18 was as well-attended as the many tables held at the official proceedings on the campus—despite a contingent of UTOP, the national police anti-riot force, stationed at the restaurant's door.



Officially dubbed the table on "Collective Rights and the Rights of Mother Earth," the panel credited the Bolivian government of Evo Morales with recognizing the collective rights of Bolivia's "original nations," as well as Afro-Bolivians and "inter-cultural communities" (mestizos).

Table 18 panelist Pablo Regalsky of the Andean Center for Communication and Development (CENDA) stated: "Here in Bolivia, we are building a new model—in practice, not theory—so we have to discuss the problems that arise in the creation of this new model." And he warned that there are some in the Evo Morales government—especially the Finance Ministry—who seek a "forced march to industrialization."

Despite "the anti-capitalist discourse of Brother Evo," he charged that "foreign capital" still often plays a decisive role in Bolivia's development policies. He cited moves towards reviving plans for an inter-oceanic transport link through Bolivia, and mineral and gas exploitation on the Guarani indigenous lands of the country's remote east. Refuting government charges that Table 18 was only dealing with internal Bolivian issues, Regalsky said, "These questions also have implications for Paraguay, Brazil, Chile and Peru. And they have implications for the rights guaranteed by the Bolivian constitution."

Other Table 18 grievances centered on ecological impacts of mineral projects, including the Japanese-owned San Cristobal mine in southern Potosi department and the state-owned Corocoro mine in La Paz department.

Figures in the Bolivian government attempted to discredit Table 18, with Chancellor David *Continued on p13*

BP Oil Spill A Crime Not a Disaster - SP-USA National Action Committee

Language matters, especially at times of crisis. The explosion on BP's Deepwater Horizon rig that released hundreds of thousands of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico has been called a "disaster" by many. It isn't a disaster. It is a crime. Early estimates are that the spill will cost more than \$14 billion to clean, will devastate local fisheries for generations and will result in untold damage to all parts of the ecology in the Gulf region. Corporations are the criminals here - British Petroleum (BP) and, a company that is no stranger to corporate crime, Halliburton. This massive spill highlights both the need for an immediate transition to clean energy sources and the need to apply democratic controls to inherently criminal multinational corporations.

The clean up of the area must begin immediately, it must be conducted with the consultation and best interest of local fishermen and environmentalists and it must be entirely paid for by BP. In addition, BP should be made to pay into a public fund that would be used for the continued clean up and preservation of the local ecology. Any failure to meet these demands should result in the seizure of the US holdings of BP and its banning from conducting business in this country. Anything less than this should be considered as a betrayal to the best interests of residents of region and the broader international community.

This massive oil spill demonstrates the urgent need to transition to clean renewable energy forms. Such a transition will not likely take place inside of a capitalist system where short-term profiteering dominates the allocation of capital funds. BP has fought the federal government on safety procedures that might have minimized the impact of the most recent spill for more than a decade. CEOs do not get bonuses based upon ensuring future generation's access to resources, clean air, or a hospitable climate. The purpose of corporations is not to oversee the welfare of the people of the world, but to make money. Environmental damage is not factored into the corporate calculations of costs and profits. Instead, environmental damage is viewed as the collateral damage of the free market in operation.

Not surprisingly, BP had a partner in this crime - Halliburton. Fresh off their stint bilking US taxpayers during the war in Iraq, the company was contracted by BP to cement the drill, oil well and pipe into the ocean floor. The Los Angeles Times reports that this task was completed a mere 20 hours before the well exploded. Not surprisingly, Halliburton has also been accused of being responsible for another oil spill in the Timor Sea last August after completing a similar cementing job. Here we see the logic of capitalism in full display. BP wants to take the cheapest bid for the job and Halliburton wants to pocket the most money with the least costs. All with no mind paid to the environment, local fishermen, or the future of the planet.

Meanwhile, politicians from the Democratic and Republican parties serve as willing accomplices to the corporations. In 2008, the McCain/Palin ticket was run on the suicidal slogan of "Drill Baby Drill!" The campaign of now President Barack Obama softly dismissed these claims, but once in office, designed a plan to allow oil exploration off the coastline

of North America. The current spill exposes the bankruptcy of Obama's drilling plan and the futility of his cap-and-trade market based proposals to address carbon emissions. Corporations will continue to pollute the environment as long as they have political partners who will allow them to evade the desires of the vast majority of people in this country for clean energy and a safe environment.

The Socialist Party USA offers a clear eco-socialist alternative to the proposals of the two parties. By establishing a system of public ownership and democratic control over our natural resources, we will ensure that corporations are prevented from exploiting and spoiling our environment. By creating strong enforceable laws regarding endangered species that focus on habitat-centered protection, we propose to begin repairing the damage done by capitalist production. Finally, we intend to bring the United States back into line with the world by signing on to international environmental treaties and participating and supporting grassroots environmental justice efforts. In short, our goal is to create a cleaner, more democratic future where environmental preservation, instead of profit motive, becomes a primary part of economic decision-making.

Capitalist profit-motive will be the death of our planet. Democratic socialism, operating on an international basis, can save our fragile ecosystem and our health by defending the rights of future generations to clean water, clean air and a democratically run society.

Solidarity With the Protests in Greece - SPUSA National Action Committee

The Socialist Party USA resolutely supports the workers and students protesting against the IMF/European Union imposed austerity package. Greek trade unions and socialist organizations have acted swiftly and correctly by using one of the most powerful tools available to workers, the general strike, to combat this process. The crisis in Greece may come to head in the coming period and we join other international socialist and radical political organizations in extending our promise to support our comrades in Greece.

Greece shows the current crisis of international capitalism in its harshest form. This crisis is an attack by global capital on the weakest link in the European welfare states. Since the fall of the USSR and the end of the Cold War, capitalism has sought to break the power of the European working class, impose a neo-liberal agenda, and end decades of welfare state benefits. The current global economic crisis has allowed the ruling layer of capital, the so-called FIRE sector (Finance, Insurance, Real Estate) to strike, refusing to lend Greece any more money, creating the possibility of a Greek default.

The continued attack on the Euro, despite a trillion dollar international bailout shows that capital cannot be appeased or negotiated with. If Greece refuses to bow, it will be forced to default on its debts, and have no choice but to impose the austerity measures demanded by capitalism, unable to borrow money to pay its workers. Greek workers are thus confronted with a *Continued on p15*

Studies suggest that putting children diagnosed with ADD or ADHD on a diet consisting of whole foods, complex carbohydrates and low-sugar foods, results in behavior changes similar to those of children on Ritalin.

An Alternative

For many public school students, school lunch is their only substantial meal of the day. In the 2008-2009 school year, 19 million students received free or reduced price lunches. With such a large number of students who rely on school lunch programs, providing students with healthy, nutritious meals at school should be a top priority for public policy. Some public schools are making efforts to implement new lunch programs that do just that. Berkeley California public schools have benefited from a program called The Edible Schoolyard. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School houses a one acre "edible schoolyard" that provides some of the fresh, whole produce used in the district's 16 cafeterias. The schoolyard also serves as a laboratory and houses a kitchen classroom where students of King Middle School learn how to garden, prepare fresh meals and eat well. The school district also serves organic milk, has begun purchasing from local farms, and is committed to environmental sustainability by using minimal packaging, reusable trays, recycling and composting.

Berkeley is not the only public school system that is beginning to reinvent school lunch. Districts across the country have begun the process of switching from the traditional school lunch to whole foods, cooked fresh in-house that provide students with the opportunity to get at least one nutritious meal per day. These models also sustain local agriculture and by-pass corporate dominated factory farms, encourage environmental sustainability, and teach children about proper nutrition and preparing healthy meals. While the Edible Schoolyard is a private/public partnership, it is possible to imagine a nationwide overhaul of the school lunch program with government supported gardens in each school district, real chefs in school kitchens, and children receiving breakfast, lunch and an education about healthy eating, environmental sustainability and community involvement. Such demands could find support among parents concerned about their children's health, educators interested in more engaged pupils and students looking to transcend the limitations imposed on them by neglectful institutions.

Big Brother on Animal Farm - continued from p7

reacting negatively to NAIS. Resolutions were passed at the county level, demonstrations were held nationwide. Ranchers in Bandera County, Texas, even threatened revolution. Faced with the opposition, and given that compliance with NAIS was only at about 37%, the Department of Agriculture backed down in December of 2005 and declared that compliance with NAIS was no longer mandatory, but was now "voluntary". In March of 2006, Texas public officials postponed taking action on any proposed NAIS guidelines and cancelled future public hearings on the measure (Texas compliance was at 4% in March of 2006). The major con-

cerns were that NAIS would drive small producers out of business, that the measure was intrusive and a violation of personal liberties; that it would weaken attempts at organic cultivation of livestock or cultivation of livestock for one's own personal consumption.. One criticism that leveled at NAIS was that it "would actually subject the owner of a chicken to more surveillance than an owner of a gun."

But the Agriculture Department continued to try to implement the NAIS through the back door. Under the guise of an agricultural "census" form sent out in 2006, requiring that the forms be returned "under penalty of law", the USDA essentially attempted to do what Stage One of the NAIS wanted to do--premises registration. And, in perhaps an attempt to use the carrot and not the stick, it appears that the Agriculture Department may have used the confidential information provided in the NAIS registry to selectively provide hay and forage to only NAIS registered cattle stranded during the 2008 blizzard in Colorado, the excuse being that they knew where those cattle were located because of the NAIS registration.

One of the ironic things about NAIS was that while it was touted to protect the nation's food supply, it also came at a time when the Bush Administration had cut back the number of USDA inspectors and inspections. It is also apparent that large producers like Cargill and the National Pork Producers Council wanted some sort of Federal insurance for their overseas markets, especially with such nations Japan rejecting US beef because of Mad Cow fears.

There is no doubt that there needs to be a greater purview of the nation's packing and food services. Under the Bush Administration enforcement standards have dropped to practically nothing, with corresponding salmonella and E.coli outbreaks in a variety of foodstuffs, from peanut butter and hamburger meat to strawberries, cantaloupes, and spinach. Less expensive produce from overseas oftentimes does not have the same standards as in the United States, with resultant disasters. It would appear that given the nature of the greed in the food industry, the first line of defense in this respect would be to reverse the neglect of the Bush years by enhancing inspection and enforcement. Additionally, we need to completely re-think our existing notions of food production. Mad Cow Disease, for instance, can be eliminated if livestock is not fed ground bone meal from diseased animals, something the Agricultural Department finally wised up to in 2002. E. coli in cattle can be greatly reduced if mass feedlot production is eliminated and cattle are allowed to eat grass, which does not allow the development of E.coli. Chemical steroids, which increase animal weight and production, need to be eliminated. Production should return to a smaller, more environmentally friendly, organic, and hygienic scale.

So, will NAIS come back? It's very possible. Secretary Vilsack stated, that even though NAIS was currently abandoned, a "new strategy was needed". And NAIS's enabling legislation, the Animal Health Protection Act, is still on the books. It may just be a question of time.

Alvarado Street Bakery continued from p3

were a young company. Though this is a universal issue for companies starting out, our being a cooperative made it more difficult as there are no guarantors in a cooperative for loans (as there are no real owners in a worker cooperative). We initially resolved this issue by some small personal loans along with years of delayed gratification (sweat equity) in terms of what we paid ourselves. We finally had stand alone financial strength to be considered for a loan without a traditional guarantor. We also structurally evolved in the thirty years we have been in business in ways that helped us continue to grow and prosper. Our initial collective form (and low flat pay for all) needed to evolve to the system we now employ. This was necessary for us to do to stay in business. All changes were not universally agreed upon and in fact, there were some very fractious years during the time of change. It was not easy for the membership to change wage policy or delegate power. However, these changes are the real reasons why we all have prospered as a worker cooperative.

TS - You were featured in Michael Moore's *Capitalism: A Love Story* how has that effected your operation.

ASB - The impact of the film on our business was in reality fairly negligible. There are certainly some more customers buying our bread due to the film, but not in such quantities that we see it in our sales numbers. It was great internally and made us all proud of what we represent. It has had more interest put on worker cooperatives in general which for us is a great thing.

TS - Why organic ingredients? How did you balance the desire to provide good food with the motivation to lower costs for your business?

ASB - Organic was part of our original philosophy when we formed the cooperative. We wanted to create a business that did not exploit workers or the environment and provided health to the community. There is always a balance between such goals and, of course, there are trade offs. We found that in our world technology, expertise, and a lack of bureaucracy has allowed us to provide ourselves a good standard of living while providing the community with whole grain organic baked goods at a reasonable price. We are one of the lower priced breads in the whole grain category (including the large companies such as Oroweat).

Visit ASB at www.alvaradostreetbakery.com

Against Genetic Engineering - continued from p9

Russia and China.

I write this as a warning: Genetic engineering of agriculture is a dangerous, anti-nature and anti-human, destructive technology. It must be stopped now, before it is too late.

What Can We Do?

AVOID EATING GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOODS by choosing organic foods. This means checking the label. If soy, corn, or canola oil are in the ingredients and they are not labeled organic, then it is highly likely that they

are genetically engineered.

TELL FOOD SUPPLIERS AND COMPANIES that you do not want yourself or your children to be eating genetically engineered foods.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY about the hazards of genetically engineered food, and how the biotech companies are dictating what we will eat without informing us or showing that they are concerned for our health or the health of the planet.

CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS to support legislation to label or stop the production of genetically engineered foods. **SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND LOCAL FARMERS.** Whenever possible buy organic or locally grown food. Join a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture; Justfood.org). Shop at a food coop.

GET MORE INFORMED. Visit anti-GE websites, watch the movie *The Future of Food* by Deborah Koons Garcia, Available at the Organic Consumers Association website — www.organicconsumers.org

Dissent in Bolivia - continued from p10

Choquehuanca unsobly stating that any effort to divide the summit is the work of "opponents and capitalists." Yet, when Norma Pierola, a national legislator from Cochabamba with the right-opposition National Convergence party, attempted to enter the restaurant to address Table 18 (on environmental concerns, she said), her way was blocked by attendees who barred the entrance with their bodies, chanting "¡No pasará!" (she shall not pass).

When she finally gave up and turned away, Pierola spoke to a clutch of reporters outside the restaurant, railing against the supposed environmental impacts of coca-growing, and calling for a crackdown on the cocalersos.

On the night before the Hotel Regina meeting, the Aymara elders who convened the dissident table held a final meeting, where CONAMAQ leader Rafael Quispe announced that President Morales had agreed to meet with the Table 18 leaders and hear their demands. At the Hotel Regina the next morning, Quispe did meet with Morales, to demand "the expulsion of all extractive resource industries" from Bolivia, and the adoption of a new development model based on the "Andean cosmo-vision" of ayllus (traditional collective land-holdings), markas (autonomous regions) and local self-sufficiency.

Ironically, the days around the Cochabamba summit saw a wave of campesino and indigenous protest over development projects and land rights throughout Bolivia, and the immediate aftermath of the CMPCC saw a nationwide general strike by workers who rejected the government's offer of a 5% wage increase. These conflicts bring home the contradictions that Morales and his ruling Movement to Socialism face as they try to balance the dictates of state power and economic reality with an indigenous and ecological sensitivity.

Bill Weinberg is editor of the online journal World War 4 Report (WW4Report.com). He is at work on a new book, Pachamama Returns: The New Indigenous Struggles in the Andes.

Ed Asner on Capitalism, Socialism and Obama



*Ed Asner is more than an actor. As one of the stars of the hit 1970s TV series *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and the spin-off *Lou Grant*, he became a household figure to many Americans. Yet, he used his fame for more than self-aggrandizement. In the 1980s, he became one of the most visible opponents of President Ronald Reagan's secret wars in Central America and paid the price of being blacklisted. Today, he enjoys new recognition as the voice of Carl Fredrickson, the old man character in the popular movie *UP*. Here, Asner sounds off on capitalism, socialism and the Obama administration.*

Billy Wharton - I received a number of letters from our readers about an interview you did in the May 2010 issue of *The Progressive*. The interviewer asked you about socialism and you said, "I think we need more of it." So, I'm wondering if you could expand on that idea.

Ed Asner - That's a big order isn't it?

BW - Yes it is.

EA - You can't even get brave Americans to talk about that can you. Brave legislators. But, what have I got to lose? As rich and as prosperous as we are, I think up till now we have been able to prosper because of the unbelievable gift of this land, which we took from the Indians and then worked, in large part, with the aid of slave labor for over a hundred years and after the slave labor disappeared, or was terminated, we then went into employing or practicing economic slavery, with the immigrants who came from other impoverished lands, as well as the former slaves. We live in an age where we're exhausting our natural resources and have had to turn to the rest of the world to supply us both with the labor and the product and the resources. We've become internationalists by doing so. At the same time, we have certainly not freed the economic slaves we have in this country. Capitalism, in my opinion, certainly won't do it by itself and so I think that anyone with a brain would resort to the idea of socialism with its managed economy, its guarantee of health, of wage, of education. Socialism is designed or should be designed to take care of the lowest without impoverishing the highest, that's the socialism I believe in.

BW: I'm wondering if you can give me a sense of where you think the Obama administration is at now, a couple of years

in, especially when it came into office with such high expectations.

EA: Well, he's trying to satisfy everybody and in the end, he satisfies nobody except, I suppose, the rich. I don't believe he's the cool cat that he'd like us to think. I think his acts have not been sweeping enough. After what George Bush and company did to this country, he knocked the democrats for a loop and because they had already sold out anyway, it didn't make any difference and Barry Obama has to employ the same tactics. He has to

sweep the country off its feet. I'm talking about restructuring the country and while it's struggling to gain its feet, let him put these practices in and by their sweepingness I think they would have succeeded. But he wasn't prepared. He decided to plaster the wall rather than put up wallboard.

BW - Let me take you back a little bit. One of the questions I get, especially from younger activists is what the heck happened in the 1980's and I am wondering if you can help me answer that question.

EA - I had a show cancelled! I had a show cancelled because I was, so to speak, crying out against American policy in Latin America. What happened in 1980? Reagan attacked government and while he was doing so, he broke us. Reagan didn't achieve one god damned positive thing in his dismantling of government.

BW - Let me ask you a kind of positive question, what has your political engagement, your political activism, added to your life and what advice would you give to a young person who may just be getting involved in politics.

EA - I keep worrying about my activism, because I'm not sure if it's activism or just shooting my mouth off. And being an actor, an actor loves to shoot his mouth off, so I am constantly double checking myself to see how well do I know the nuts and bolts of what I am speaking about and it's a cautionary note that I always have to keep jamming up my ass to remind myself. And as far as young people go, we're nowhere now. The vast majority of politicians are captives of the system. Money dictates who runs, who wins, who gets media coverage, who is not too punitive to vested interests. I mean, it is a system in which the freethinking individual really doesn't have a chance and few are they and far between.

BW - I do get a sense that there's a new generation of activists that are being born.

EA - Yeah, they may be born but they helped create the army that elected Obama. So what's Obama's inefficacy going to do for them? How strong will they be, what will their will be like. Will they be able to see beyond Obama and realize that it takes more than words and a Harvard education?

and potatoes. However, agro-businesses have accumulated such massive amounts of land that soy has become the king-crop in the region.

Today, after re-shaping the cultivation world and transforming the biological coding of all sorts of food, multinational corporations like to tell you that they are all about sustainability. Soy giants like ADM, have taken public bruises from anti-trust cases and from the voices of displaced campesinos that have filtered out into the Western world. So, they have announced a new era of corporate ethics. ADM's business, the company's CEO Pat Woertz declared, "Is intimately tied to our social responsibility." "Our values," Woertz wrote, "inspire us to achieve the right results, the right way." Yet, the company is not offering to pull back from production in the "soy republics," or move to eliminate GMO crops, or clean up the local environments they have polluted. Their corporate responsibility amounts to little more than a press campaign about a mythical commitment to sustainability that will always be second to the bedrock logic of capitalism – profit-motive.

So, if the false individual choices of consumer capitalism won't change the world for the better, what will? A good first step is to cultivate a notion that will be central to any attempt at international socialism, a globalized "we" – a recognition that the capitalist system works as a whole and that we are integrated into this total system. Digging our way out will necessarily entail creating a movement with the ability to link the soy consumer in the north with a Paraguayan farmer or to see how yucca, corn, beans and potatoes might produce a far greater benefit for the planet than mono-cropping. The politics of the "we" of socialism hold far more potential for addressing the dire needs of our planet than the "I" of capitalist consumption.

Breaking down the hegemony of corporations necessarily means building up our capacity to extend ties of affinity – both planned and spontaneous. Food politics can open this door by offering a political edge to decisions that are central to our everyday lives. Sometimes this may mean cultivating local sources, other times developing positive global links between farmer and consumer or using grassroots democracy to determine what the contents of our plates will be. Such new relations come with the requirement to see through the easy fantasy offered by multinational corporations who stand at the heart of the destruction of our solidarity with fellow humans and are ruining our relationship with the natural world.

Food in America - Continued from p4

social ownership of the banks, as I've said, nationalize them and create the U.S. credit union to provide credit to small business, homeowners, and farmers. We want to see the nationalization of the oil, coal and other energy corporations which represent such a large factor in agriculture today. Third, we would want to see the nationalization of agribusiness, not to continue the factory farm or industrial meat model, but rather to create an environmentally, economically, socially sound alternative. We would want to see the nationalization of the grocery chains and the restaurant

chains, bringing them under social control, with large input from workers and consumers. We might want to consolidate in some areas and decentralize in others. Only once we have taken the resources away from the corporations, however, will we be able to create the alternative.

We as socialists have no blueprint for the future, but we have a vision and principles that revolve around working class power and democracy. The alternative to today's food industry might well include some large-scale agriculture, but could also mean a vast expansion of small family-owned farms and cooperative farms. We would want to put the emphasis, of course, on healthy, affordable food produced by workers who are paid living wages and enjoy all the benefits and rights of other people in our country. We would want to consult throughout these processes with health professionals such as nutritionists, with environmentalists, and with consumers. We would want to see the American people, through democratic institutions elaborate a national economic plan, in which agriculture would play a central role, and we would want that plan to be carried out through the cooperation of workers and consumers.

All of this, however, remains nothing more than a dream unless we can rebuild the labor and social movements and create the political alternative. The Socialist Party, as well as other political groups such as the U.S. Labor Party and the Green Party, have worked to help present the American people with a left alternative. Today, I am running for U.S. Senate in order to continue to raise the vision and platform of democratic socialism, to help to build networks of activists in my state and throughout the country, and hopefully to inspire others to become part of a struggle for an alternative.

Dan La Botz is a Cincinnati-based teacher, writer and activist, and the Ohio Socialist Party candidate for the U.S. Senate.

Greece Protests - continued from p11

stark choice: a crushing defeat or socialist revolution.

American workers have been subjected to a series of lies about the Greece. Claims that Greek workers are overpaid and retire at the age of 53 are false: the average retirement age in Greece is 61.4 years, later than the average European. Greek wages, already the lowest in Europe, were slashed by previous governments to 1984 levels. The average wage, including social security and taxes: a measly \$1,063. Despite claims that Greek government was irresponsible, that its debt is unsustainable, the cost of servicing Greek debt is now less than half of what it was in 1993, a mere 6% of GDP.

The Socialist Party USA rejects these lies and stands in solidarity with the Greek workers, socialists, communists, and anarchists. We urge the protesters to move further, not merely to reject the despicable policies of the IMF/EU, but to overthrow capitalism altogether. Only by abolishing capitalism can the Greek workers defend their way of life.

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