GLOBAL FOOD FIGHT

SMALL FARMERS UPROOT AGRIBIZ

BY A.K. GUPTA

When the average American makes the journey from couch to fridge, she opens a door to the world: apples from New Zealand, coffee from Vietnam, cheese from Europe, chocolate from Africa, bananas from Ecuador, tomatoes from California. Despite this, we may still imagine our food as coming from some giant farm, feeding products to some global enterprise. Even in this country, when the harvest isn’t the work of some giant combine, it’s probably being peaked, cut, raped or uprooted by migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean.

But some farmers have a different vision. Hawthorne Valley “surrounds our farm with value-added and direct-marketed products” like processed vegetables (sauerkraut, pickles), dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt), a stand at the Union Square Greenmarket in Manhattan, community supported agriculture (CSA) and an extensive store.

Rachel Schneider, who helps to manage the vegetable gardens at the 400-acre farm, explains that since its founding in 1972, the mission of the non-profit Hawthorne Valley Association, which includes the farm, a 300-student school, and a visiting students’ program and camp, is to “integrate agriculture and the arts.” “Our main goal at the farm,” explains Schneider, “is to farm sustainably and as ecologically sound as possible.”

According to government statistics, farmers received 41 cents of every dollar consumers spent on food in 1950; today, they get barely half of that. To be economically sustainable, says Schneider, Hawthorne Valley “surrounds our farm with value-added and direct-marketed products” like processed vegetables (sauerkraut, pickles), dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt), a stand at the Union Square Greenmarket in Manhattan, community supported agriculture (CSA) and an extensive store.

By filling the role of not just the farmer, says Schneider, but also the processor, the distributor and the retailer, Hawthorne Valley is able to avoid “being industrial or having a huge farm.”

CONTINUED ON P. 17

THE INDEPENDENT
new york city independent media center

Email: imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org
Phone: 212.684.8112
Web: NYC: www.nyc.indymedia.org
GLOBAL: www.indymedia.org
Office and Mail:
NYC Independent Media Center
54 Varick St. 2nd Floor
NY, NY 10013

FROM THE NEWSWIRE

Here’s a sampling of recent posts and comments to the NYC and global newswires. Each Independent Media Center website features open publishing software that allows readers to post articles, stories, photographs, audio clips and video footage to our newswire. Viewers can also log comments that appear below articles allowing for open debate. To read more or to post your own article, visit www.nyc.indymedia.org or www.indymedia.org.

Justice Denied: The Case of David Wong
BY OREAD DAILY

For the last 18 years 37-year-old David Wong has been locked away in the Auburn Correctional Facility in upstate New York serving time for second degree murder. This despite the fact that eyewitnesses say he did not commit the crime. The Asian-American Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance are now asking the local district attorney to reconsider the case. Wong’s lawyers are hoping to file a motion with the court in several weeks to show new evidence that Wong did not commit the murder and to get the conviction reversed.

http://nyc.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=28195

Protests in the Philippines
BY ESTADO, GUBERNO

A first-hand, personal account and analysis of the July 22 ACC-Philippines Anti-State Actions:

“Kapit-bisig!” The cry that cut the air of hostility, and awakened spirits of strength and solidarity within us. It means “linking arms.” When I shouted these words, my comrades shouted these too. When six traffic enforcers and three cops began pushing us to the sidelines and attempted to de-mask us, we turned our backs on them, pointed our asses towards them and linked arms. It was a spontaneous show of resistance. All seven or eight comrades in Black Bloc glasses tried as hard as we could to stand our ground, but police training and the psychology of the gun were too much. We lost strength, and fell…

http://nyc.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=28131

104 Years of American Colonialism in Puerto Rico
BY JUAN ANTONIO OCASIO RIVERA

One hundred and four years ago today, General Nelson A. Miles took the Spanish by surprise by attacking the town of Guanica, Puerto Rico — a southern coastal town which was barely defended by the Spanish. Earlier efforts in May of 1898 to attack the capital, San Juan, failed due to the fierce resistance of Spanish soldiers and Puerto Rican milita-men, not to mention the huge concrete fort known as El Morro.

General Miles, the same General who decimated the native tribes in the Midwest, declared that he had come to extend democracy to Puerto Rico, but in one fell swoop the Americans outlawed Spanish citizenship (without replacing it with another, making Puerto Ricans citizenless), outlawed the Spanish language and outlawed the independence movement, which had been in existence since the early 1900s.

Today, thousands of Puerto Ricans fill the town of Guanica…

http://nyc.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=28251

N O More Business As Usual
BY JOHN J. SWEENEY

We’re faced with 21st century corporate pirates who took advantage of our transition from an industrial to an information economy to kidnap working families and take us back to the past. They plundered our companies by replacing long-term prosperity with short-run insincerity. They polluted our capital markets by pumping up prices instead of producing profits.

Then they perverted our government by purchasing every politician money could buy, creating legal black holes where they can enrich themselves out of public sight. The most cruel irony of all is that today the corporate criminals not only break our laws, they make the laws.

http://nyc.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=28638

Critical Mass Ride Overpowering Despite O ne Arrest
BY MADDATER

As we approached the bridge, the police came out and spread themselves across the entrance. So we doubled back around to the grass median that led to the bridge, but about nine police stopped their scooters, dismounted and ran to stop the crowd. They targeted one rider who was on his bike but was stopped. A police officer decided to tackle the idled biker for no reason and brought him to the ground, inviting eight other officers to aid in his handcuffing. The rest of the 200-strong crowd verbally shamed the police for their actions and took on the NYPD by overwhelming them onto the Manhattan Bridge, taking all three lanes.

http://nyc.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=28345

Danmar Workers Struggle
BY TRABAJADORES EN ACCIÓN

The workers of Danmar Finishing in Brooklyn are continuing their struggle against exploitation and labor abuses, despite the persecution of 15 fellow workers who were forced to leave their job because of the harassment and abuse by the Danmar bosses. The workers’ strong resolve and the support they are receiving from Workers in Action is a sign that this struggle will stay strong. And we are ready to fight in the streets and in the courts for workers’ rights.

http://nyc.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=28143

A Message from INS Detainees in New Jersey
BY NYC IMC

The American justice system is supposed to give any person accused of misbehavior a chance to make their case in court. But since Sept. 11, the net has been cast against people not because of any misbehavior but because of their religion and nationality. These INS detentions discriminate on the basis of religion and race, targeting people from Muslim countries, especially Pakistan, Yemen, Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. The conditions here are terrible. The medical care is minimal, and many of us are suffering without necessary medications. Sharing in this misery are many other immigrants from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and Africa.

http://nyc.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=27497

Eco-Protesters Struggle to Make NY’ers Care About Ecuadorian Pipeline Deal
BY COLIN RUSD

Amazon Watch, Activism Center at Wetlands Preserve, and Greenpeace USA demonstrated at lunchtime July 25 outside the New York offices of WestLB, a German bank acting as lead financier for Ecuador’s new heavy crude oil pipeline. The 300-mile pipeline would carry oil from the country’s rainforest region to the Pacific Coast, where the majority of the oil would be exported to the United States. Amazon Watch opposes the pipeline because it is routed to pass through 11 protected areas of Ecuadorian rainforest, and would put the surrounding ecosystems and communities at significant risk of ecological disaster.

http://nyc.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=28302

Letters to the Editor may be sent by email to imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org or be mailed to The Indypendent, 34 E. 29th St. 2nd Floor, NY, NY 10016
On July 13, over 100 people gathered outside the Middlesex County Jail in North Brunswick, N.J, to protest the continuing mistreatment of immigrants detained by the INS in the New York-New Jersey area. The action was part of the ongoing resistance to post-Sept. 11 policies that have resulted in the disappearance and deportation of thousands of immigrants of Arab, Muslim, and South Asian descent.

Orel Bob, a former detainee who volunteers with Desis Rising Up and Moving was one of several speakers at the event who commented on the harsh conditions inside the jails.

“They placed us in an environment where officers were very brutal, very disrespectful, where medical assistance didn’t even exist. They put slop on a dog tray and shoved it under a fence and said ‘this is your dinner,’” said Bob.

Although there were no reports of police harassment at the rally, several groups working closely with the detainees, including the Coalition for the Human Rights of Immigrants and the Stop The Disappearances Campaign, reported that following the rally, FBI and INS agents interrogated and transferred many prisoners to undisclosed facilities around the country in retaliation for publicly speaking out against human rights violations at the jails.

In a public letter released on July 5, the prisoners of H-Pat, the unit where most of the detainees in Middlesex are held, called attention to the inhumane conditions and abuses at the jail, stating “We ask the people of the United States to stand up on the side of justice and equality, and to support the principles of human rights which your government is trying to blackmail.”

The allegations of retribution against the Middlesex detainees is part of a larger pattern of retalitory measures against immigrant prisoners held locally including solitary confinement, relocation to distant facilities in Virginia and Texas and deprivation of basic rights to practice religion.

According to Omar Mohammedi, legal liaison for the Council on American Islamic Relations in New York, these maneuvers by authorities are deliberate attempts to “intimidate and pressure many detainees into signing statements against immigrant prisoners held locally including solitary detainees is part of a larger pattern of retaliatory measures against immigrant prisoners held locally including solitary confinement, relocation to distant facilities in Virginia and Texas and deprivation of basic rights to practice religion.”

Mohammedi notes that in late June, several detainees at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn called upon the Department of Justice to investigate conditions and allegations of abuse at the facility. In response, many were harshly interrogated and moved to other centers around the country far from their families and supporters.

This phenomenon, identified by some activists as “re-disappearance,” often has irreparable psychological and legal consequences for those in custody. As Adem Carroll, a family relief coordinator with the New York chapter of the Islamic Circle of North America, explains, “these tactics are very effective in really breaking people down. They are already vulnerable from months of arbitrary detention and then they just vanish to some distant location and we don’t hear anything for several weeks about their status. In some cases, we don’t hear anything until they have already been deported.”

Carroll also observes that the entire issue of the detentions has virtually vanished from the “radar screen” of the mainstream media.

“It’s as though many people just want to pretend this whole thing is over with. And meanwhile, many journalists are being directed to focus on Sept. 11 anniversary coverage. But the reality is that the detentions and deportations problem is still very much an issue. We are getting reports every day of more people disappearing into INS custody,” said Carroll.

Martha Cameron, of Justice For Detainees, coordinates many of the visitations to immigrants held in detention locally. She emphasizes the critical significance of the issue, especially for the families that are directly affected.

“This entire post-Sept. 11 immigrant backlash by the government is just absolutely outrageous. It’s the wholesale smashing of families for no good reason whatsoever. It is accomplishing nothing in terms of national security and yet it continues with very little response from most Americans. It’s as though people just have blinders on,” Cameron explains.

Perhaps the most alarming aspect of the detentions problem according to many of those addressing the issue is the lack of concrete information about the numbers of people detained or deported.

As Carroll explains, information and numbers are as mysterious as the disappearances themselves.

“It would be really helpful to have real numbers and answers, especially for the families, but ultimately the government has succeeded in creating a total haze. It’s the old paradigm of ‘the fog of war’ manifested in the violations of human and civil rights in America’s ‘war on terror.’”

One of the most notable “holes” in terms of information, as Mohammedi observes, is the experience of individuals and families when they are shipped back to their original countries, such as Egypt, Jordan and Sudan.

“We have to wonder what will happen to all these people. They have been in America for years — in some cases decades — and they just vanish and we don’t know anything about how they will be treated, by these other governments. They arrive as criminals, with no legal representation from the FBI or INS,” said Diane Krauthamer and Elliot Rosner of New Jersey Immigrant Coalition.

An overview of recent detainee-related news

Aug. 1: Hip-hop legend Slick Rick begins his first month in INS detention. His crime? Committing a felony 11 years ago that he already served time for. As a legal U.S. resident, but not a citizen, he was arrested in Miami after a June 1 performance.

July 31: U.S. federal judge rules British and Australian citizens held in Guantanamo Bay have no legal rights because the U.S. military camp is technically in Cuba.

July 26: The Christian Science Monitor reports the CIA has begun arranging for suspected terrorists arrested overseas to be sent to Egypt, Syria and Jordan where torture during interrogation is legal.

July 25: The U.S. opposes a UN antiterror treaty because it would allow international human rights observers into its prisons and detention camps.

July 22: The founder of the stopamerica.org website, James Lujama, is detained in Denver, his hometown, as a material witness in an undisclosed case. The Rocky Mountain News warns: “If he can be spirited off to an unknown location while the government refuses to confirm his whereabouts, or even his initial detention, that means the rest of us could be treated that way, too.”

July 19: Peter Kirsanow, of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, suggests the government admits to using secret interrogation camps: “If there’s another terrorist attack and it’s from a certain ethnic community...that the terrorists are, you can forget about civil rights.”

August 1: NYPD police officer Charles Schwartz was spared a third conviction of violating Abner Louima’s civil rights by a lone juror. In 1997, the Haitian immigrant was held down in a police bathroom and sodomized with a broken stick.

“A single juror in the jury room, for reasons other than to establish innocence or guilt, succeeded in subverting the process,” jury foreman Joseph Bimbaum told the New York Observer.

Bimbaum said that the staunch holdout was prone to fits of giggling and inaudible mutterings and rejected the testimony of almost every witness.

“We were, in the end, outmaneuvered by one juror who entered this trial with a mission different from the other 11 of us,” Bimbaum added.

Schwartz’s two prior convictions, shown out earlier this year by a federal court, jury selection for a fourth trial begins September 9.


In a city where African-Americans and Latinos account for more than half of the population, the New York City Fire Department has all the diversity of rural Vermont: 94 percent of the 11,000-person force is white as is 97.6 percent of the city’s 329 battalion chiefs.

The FDNY recently announced a new minority recruiting effort, but many question if the $2.7 million program will do anything to diversify the force.

In an interview with Newsday, a representative from the Vulcan Society, an organization of black firefighters, said the police recently spent $1 million to vary its staff — which is about 6 percent white — while the fire department has budgeted nothing for the drive. A private public relations firm donated $2.7 million to the effort.

Even in more prosperous times, minority recruitment was not a priority.

“Why did they do years ago when the city was fat?” asked Battalion Chief Phil Parc, who will lead the recruitment effort. “Nothing.”

QUEEN’S BUS STRIKE ROLLS ON

The Queens bus strike may be nearing resolution, but not without weeks of tension and discord. The strike began after the City backed out of health care provisions from a settlement in March.

The Transit Workers Union Local 100 sued to overturn Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s emergency declaration permitting van and livery drivers to pick up passengers along affected routes. The union has raised over $50,000 to support its strike fund, and over 30 New York City Council members have sponsored a bill supporting the strikers.

Queens Borough President Helen Marshall had proposed a $2 million loan from the city to the private contractors and their employees; he declared that the union had ulterior motives.

The union has raised over $50,000 to support its strike fund, and over 30 New York City Council members have sponsored a bill supporting the strikers.

Quesn Borough President Helen Marshall had proposed a $2 million loan from the city to the private contractors and their employees; he declared that the union had ulterior motives.

The union has raised over $50,000 to support its strike fund, and over 30 New York City Council members have sponsored a bill supporting the strikers.

Quesn Borough President Helen Marshall had proposed a $2 million loan from the city to the private contractors and their employees; he declared that the union had ulterior motives.

The union has raised over $50,000 to support its strike fund, and over 30 New York City Council members have sponsored a bill supporting the strikers.
PATAKI SAYS NO TO ADS

Governor Pataki recently forced the city’s two Spanish-language stations to pull two ads critical of his proposals to reform the Rockefeller Drug Laws. The ads’ producers, the Drug Policy Alliance, accused Pataki of “misuse of executive power to stifle criticism.”

The local Telemundo and Univision affiliates pulled the ads after Pataki’s office claimed they were “blatantly untruthful.” The original ad claimed drug offenders could face 25 years to life instead of the correct figure of 25 years to life for their crimes.

Even without the broadcast of critical ads, Pataki failed to push through his reforms of the drug laws before the Albany legislature recessed.

Haitian Family Demands Justice

D.A. Pleads Ignorance to Police Brutality Charges

By Pandi Hopkins

Family members and friends of Georgy Louisgene, a Haitian immigrant fatally shot by police six months ago, gathered July 13 outside Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes’s office to protest his refusal to call a grand jury to consider indicting the officers. The protestors charged the city with failing to carefully examine the 23-year-old’s death.

Louisgene was shot five times by police during an encounter at a Brooklyn housing project on January 16.

Louisgene’s family sees the young man as the latest victim of police brutality and police cover-up within the New York Police Department. They claim that evidence shows Louisgene had just been beaten up by a neighborhood gang and was seeking police assistance when the successful encounter began.

“He was going to the cops and trying to tell them — his jaw may have been broken — to arrest the men who had beaten him,” eyewitness Janet McQuillar told the Haiti Progress. Another witness (who asked to remain unidentified) said: “He was no threat to anyone. Nobody was around him. They just went and shot, shot, shot.”

In contrast, police described Louisgene as a “homeless man” exhibiting “bizarre behavior,” alleging that he was armed with a knife and gardening tool and that he refused to put down his weapons after repeatedly being ordered to do so.

Although the shooting occurred at 2:30 p.m.

Pataki says no to ads.

Democracy Now! trademark, syndication rights and programming are owned by Pacifica Radio Network, Inc. under a contract with Democracy Now!, its most popular show.

Contract roils listeners.

The interim Pacifica National Board will look into renegotiating a controversial new contract recently signed with Democracy Now!, its most popular show.

The contract, approved at a June 23 board meeting in Berkeley without being read by any of the board’s 13 members, calls for Pacifica to assume most of the show’s production costs while still paying significant fees, starting at $488,000 per year. The contract also stipulates that Democracy Now! Productions, Inc. will be able to use the trademark on its own behalf, and will have use of the Pacifica subscriber lists for that purpose. It will also retain the Democracy Now! trademark, syndication rights and sole copyright ownership of the archives of both past and future shows.

Amy Goodman, the show’s host, and senior producer Kris Abrams agreed to revisit the contract on July 9 following a listener uproar over the terms of the agreement. Pacifica is the nation’s only listener-sponsored radio network with stations in five major cities including New York (WBAI-99.5 FM).

Queen S Activists Start New LGBT Organization

Activists in Queens announced the founding of the Guillermo Vazquez Independent Democratic Club, a club that will support the diverse populations within the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) communities in Queens.

Pauline Park, a club vice-president, said at a press conference that the group will advocate for those who have been marginalized in politics, primarily bisexual and transgendered people of color.

She said the club will “especially articulate the needs of new immigrants.”

Phil Valez, the group’s president, said the club will seek “to energize and motivate individuals to speak out and get involved in the political process.”

Korea: Troops Remain

50 Years After War

On July 31, a group of about 20 activists gathered at the Times Square Army Recruiting Center to show solidarity with the Korean people who oppose U.S. troops in Korea. The protest was sparked by the recent deaths of Shin Hyo Soon and Shim Mi Sun, two 13-year-old girls in South Korea who were walking to a birthday party on June 13, 2002, when a 57-ton U.S. armored vehicle used to clear mines ran them over near the town of Uijongbu.

Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, the U.S. military presence in the country has fomented increasing public outrage. The number of troops now stands at 37,000.

Country and City Folk Connect at Greenmarkets

By Nándor Sala

Three times a week, Franca Tantillo loads her truck with flowers, peas, potatoes, squash and strawberries grown on her 29-acre farm. She braces herself with coffee and cola for the two-and-a-half-hour, 130-mile drive from the small town of Cooksville, N.Y. to Manhattan. Tantillo is one of several hundred small farmers and food producers who rely on New York City farmers’ markets for their livelihood.

During peak season, approximately 200 farmers like Tantillo attend 35 open-air markets at 26 locations throughout the city, which are managed by Greenmarket, a non-profit organization run by the city’s Council on the Environment.

“I get 95 percent of my sales from Greenmarket. Without Greenmarket I’d be out of business,” says David Graves of Berkshire Berries, a maple syrup, honey, jam and jelly producer.

Chris Luttering, an employee of Fantasy Farms, likewise notes that all the produce from their 80-acre farm is sold at the markets.

Farmers, in turn, fund the Greenmarket program by renting booths at $40 to $72 per space, generating nearly $1,000,000 annually.

And consumers? They get the pleasure of buying just-picked fruits and vegetables. And since there are no middlemen at the greenmarket, they also get to talk directly with the people who grow their food.

“It’s a trust relationship I have with my customers,” says Tantillo. “I give my customers what I want to get.”

As the pool of local farmers shrinks and farmers till less acreage, it’s becoming harder to attract farmers to the markets, says Green Market Director Tony Mametta.

Each week of the peak season, 250,000 people flock to the markets, according to Mametta. Many of them are repeat shoppers committed to supporting the farmers.

Amy Rachelle shops weekly at the Tompkins Square market and ventures up to Union Square, the city’s largest Greenmarket, for organic produce. “I shop at Greenmarket because they have the freshest produce,” she says. “It’s the most vibrant. It is grown with love.”

Saturdays are the biggest days for farmers at Union Square, with nearly 100,000 people attending each week.

Farm booths fill the square, which is packed with a tight crush of people trying to squeeze past each other towards the delights.

Stewart Borowsky, a wheat grass producer, describes Saturdays as “positively euphoric, nothing but a big ego crush of people coming and telling you that you are feeding them. You feel rewarded for your effort.”

The World Trade Center was also a vibrant hub of Greenmarket activity. Eighty thousand people a day passed through the Tuesday and Thursday markets there. When the towers were destroyed on Sept. 11, the loss of the markets hit farmers hard. Thirty-one farms have lost about $300,000 in revenue since the attacks.

However, Mametta plans to open new Greenmarkets at South Street Seaport, Battery Park and the new Trade Center redevelopment site. More markets may soon give New York City a fresh taste, and urbanites a greater sense of life on the farm.

As Mametta notes, “The farmers not only bring the freshest and best produce but they give New Yorkers a chance to escape the city without leaving it.”
If a capitol is meant to reflect the rest of the nation, Washington D.C. reflects more than just pools. The construction of the White House and the Capitol building contained not only Roman designs and impressive rotundas, it was partially built by slave labor. Out of the 650 workers who built the U.S. Capitol, 450 were slaves. These slaves, of course, received nothing for their labor. Their descendents and others are coming to Washington on Aug. 17 to change that.

"Whites are unjustly enriched today as a class," said Richard America, a Georgetown University lecturer. "They have income and wealth that should have gone to blacks and was diverted by force, fraud, manipulation, exploitation and expropriation."

National Black United Front and Viola Plummer

The Millions for Reparations rally, set to coincide with Pan-Africanist Marcus Garvey’s 115th birthday, will mark the first national gathering of African descendants demanding reparations, or economic compensation, for the damages caused by the enslavement of Africans in the United States. The rally and preceding mobilization efforts are co-chaired by Conrad Worrill of the Chicago-based National Black United Front and Viola Plummer of the New York-based December 12th Movement. The rally’s catch phrase: "They Owe Us."

In the census of 1860, a year before the Civil War, the entire slave population of the United States numbered 3,953,696. A third of Southern families owned human beings. Even though the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in 1865, a similar system continued for another 100 years. Reconstruction, the Freedman’s Bureau and “40 acres and a mule” sought to give freed slaves a chance to participate equally in society. Instead, a system of de facto bondage developed in which freed slaves were largely denied economic and political rights and were terrorized by their oppressors. Repressors supporters say the advances made during the Civil Rights Era were not enough to make up for the historic injustices of slavery and legalized racism. The amount of forced labor, both before and after 1865, that helped build this country physically and economically remains incalculable. The reparations movement has grown steadily in the past decade. Over a dozen city councils and the California State Assembly have passed resolutions in support of reparations. A billion-dollar lawsuit that alleges three major corporations profited from slavery is now being pursued in federal court in Brooklyn (see sidebar).

“This are corporations that benefited from stealing people, from stealing land, from forced breeding, from torture, from committing numerous horrendous acts, and there’s no reason they should be able to hold onto assets they acquired through such horrendous acts,” said Deadria Farmer-Paellmann, the lead plaintiff in the lawsuit.

Several other lawsuits could be filed as early as this fall, including a massive suit, involving high profile professors Cornel West and Charles Ogletree and attorneys Johnny Cochran and William Gary, against the U.S. government. Other reparations cases include last year’s 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Reconciliation Act, which created a scholar-ship fund for 300 descendents and a memorial for survivors. The survivors of the 1923 Race Massacre, in which an all African-American town in Florida was destroyed, were awarded a total of $2 million in 1994.

Worldwide, there are more legal precedents for reparations. Germany has paid $61.8 billion to Israel and Holocaust survivors since 1951. In Switzerland, United Bank of Switzerland, the Swiss Bank Corporation and Bank of America have paid $25.2 billion in compensation to thousands of dollars of damage. Historically, loan rejections to black growers have led to massive foreclosures and loss of farms. In 1920 there were $25,000 black farmers, while today there are about 15,000.

Deadria Farmer-Paellmann, a former New York law student, has recently filed a lawsuit against these businesses for profiting from slave labor:

**FLEETBOSTON FINANCIAL CORPORATION**
Assets: $192 billion
Chartered: 1791

A very different John Brown from the famous abolitionist founded Providence Bank, which FleetBoston later incorporated. Brown also invested in two boats, the Hope and the Delight. The Hope shipped 229 men, women and children from Africa to Cuba; the Delight took its 81 humans to Savannah, Georgia. Fleet has refused comment.

**AETNA**
Assets: $25.2 billion
Chartered: 1833

In the 1830s Aetna issued handwritten insurance policies for $5 to $10 to many southern farmers, including a Virginia blacksmith named James. These policies were on the lives of the slaves they owned. James owned 16 slaves, his seven still-existing policies on his slaves are a potential smoking gun for Aetna. Aetna has issued an apology.

**CSX**
Assets: $2 billion
Incorporated: 1978

Like Fleet, CSX is an agglomeration of many smaller and older companies, companies who built the original railways. One firm, Virginia’s Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac, leased slaves for up to $150 annually to build railways.

**THEY OWE US**
Slavery Reparations Sought

BY INDEPENDENT STAFF

CIN CIN NATI POLICE TO TRACK "CITIZEN BRUTALITY"

In April 2001, Timothy Thomas, a 19-year-old unarmed African-American man was shot and killed by Cincinnati police who had stopped him for traffic violations. Thomas’ death sparked three days of violent demonstrations in the city’s outraged African-American community. Strict curfews were imposed on the city for a week following the slaying.

Since 1995, 13 black men have been killed by Cincinnati police. Civil rights advocates complain little has been done to check pervasive police abuse.

Now, however, police have announced a new system to help officers record the abuse perpetrated against them by citizens. Representatives of Cincinnati’s Fraternal Order of Police say officers have the same right as civilians to complain about abuse. To that end, police will compile the name, age, race, address and phone numbers of citizens who dispute officers.

“One of the things we have to recognize is that there are things that don’t rise to the level of a crime but can still be reported by the police,” said Donald Hardin, a police union attorney.

BLACK FARMERS FIGHT USDA-FORCED LAND LOSS

A five-day sit-in by 350 black farmers in early July and a class action lawsuit against the USDA three years ago have done little to alleviate the debt problems of black farmers. The farmers say that practices have not improved, and compensation claims allowed by the lawsuit are being delayed or unfairly turned down.

The sitin at the USDA offices in Brownsville, Tennessee ended when the farmers won two concessions from Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman. She agreed to meet with them in Washington, and promised that five Tennessee farmers from nearby Fayette county would be notified about the status of their 2002 planting loans.

The loans never came. The planting season ended in early July, and now farmers face thousands of dollars of debt. Historically, loan rejections to black growers have led to massive foreclosures and loss of farms. In 1920 there were $25,000 black farmers, while today there are about 15,000.

RAVING MAD: CONGRESS CRACKS DOWN ON PARTIES

Congress may add yet another poisonous ingredient to its alphabet soup of draconian legislation. The RAVE, or Reducing Americans’ Vulnerability to Ecstasy Act, broadly expands an existing statute, known as the “crack house statute,” which empowers the federal government to fine or imprison business owners if customers or tenants sell, use or manufacture drugs on their premises.

Section 4 of the Senate bill enables prosecutors to charge property owners with fines up to $250,000. Individuals could face 20-year sentences for using drugs or throwing parties where drugs are present in private homes.

According to the Drug Policy Alliance, the nation’s leading drug policy reform institute, the proposed bills are not only “a dangerous threat to free speech and the right to dance,” but “could endanger our nation’s youth ... by driving raves and other musical events further underground and away from public health and safety regulations.”

"THEY OWE US"
Corporate fraud used to be limited to over-stating assets: the prime Florida beachfront property is really swampland, our amazing business plan will make billions someday.

Today's accounting frauds include a sneaky new feature: expenses can magically vanish off the balance sheet onto a special purpose vehicle into the future. By combining old-fashioned backroom and 21st-century accounting shenanigans, you can both inflate the value of your assets and eliminate your expenses.

This potent combination permits fraud (and bankruptcy) on a scale not previously known to mankind.

In the old days, the price of a stock represented the buyer's estimate of the likelihood that the company would pay dividends. Today it's easy to calculate the value of the stock: compare the price of the stock against the dividends it paid, and figure out if you would make money or lose money if you bought it at that price. That was the theory, anyway.

Dividend-paying went the way of the dinosaurs because of income taxes. Dividend income is taxed twice: once when the income is earned by the corporation, and again as it is earned by the corporation, and again as it is paid as dividends to individual investors. To avoid this, corporations began to keep their earnings as "retained earnings." Investors avoided this, corporations began to keep their earnings as "retained earnings." Investors avoided this because your stock doesn't appreciate the buyer's estimate of the likelihood that the company would pay dividends.

Harken To Your Political Instincts:

"X Marks the Spot": Where do you want this money on your balance sheet? This two billion looks better under "assets" than under "liabilities." (try it on for size.) No, post money borrowed as sales you made (Xerox), swap fiberoptic capacity with your buddies and list it as a cash sale (Global Crossing).

"I'm shocked, shocked," exclaimed Claude Rains' character, Capt. Renault, in Casablanca, upon discovering illegal gambling in Rick's Casino. Shocked, shocked, too, is President Bush upon discovering the growing galaxy of corporate rogues.

At least Capt. Renault was able to pocket his winnings without skipping a bet, but not the "CEO" administration. Battered almost daily by its corporate chicanery, from Harken to Halliburton to Enron, the White House has had trouble convincing Wall Street of its outrage. The major market indices went into a free fall after Bush's two malapropistic lashing last month. The Dow Jones, Nasdaq and S&P have all plunged to their lowest levels in over five years. Over $7 trillion in wealth has evaporated since the bubble popped in March of 2000.

Far from being a few bad apples in the corporate barrel, the Fortune 500 crooks are as American as apple pie. Merrill Lynch recently paid a slap-on-the-wrist fine of $100 million after emails surfaced showing its analysts breathlessly pumped up internet stocks to the public even as they were secretly calling them "dogs," "junk" and "crap."

Cable's financial oracle, CNBC, turned analysts like Henry Blodgett into rock stars, helping the brokerage house sharks devour the investing chum. But when it came time to own up, one of CNBC's blow-dried talking heads blamed it on investors who should have known better than to follow advice being dished out on TV.

The business world's gold fever is complemented by politicians' mendacity in our legalized system of campaign bribery. Over $1 billion, overwhelmingly from corporations and the rich, flowed into campaign coffers during the last election cycle. In return, winning candidates pass legislation of, by and for their benefactors, like the recent consumer bankruptcy bill, which prioritizes credit card payments before childcare and alimony.

While campaign finance reform has shut off the "soft money" spigot, corporates have found an enterprising solution. Software company Siebel System's head honcho, Thomas Siebel, built corporate America's second largest political action committee within weeks by pressuring hundreds of employees last year to cough up $5,000 each. The new PAC has amassed over $2 million, making a mockery of the new law.

Cheating is the rule, rather than the exception, in the land of the free. Bush himself came into office by stealing the 2000 election. He got help from his bro' Jeb in Florida with the disqualification of thousands of black voters in an illegal purge of the voting rolls. On election day, many blacks reported being harassed and intimidated at the polls.

When the vote deadlocked, his campaign enlisted party brownshirts to terrorize state officials from doing a proper recount. And it all got the seal of approval from a Supreme Court headed by a Chief Justice who bullied black voters in Arizona during the 1964 presidential election.

It's all in keeping with national tradition. America, after all, was stolen from its original inhabitants and then tamed by millions stolen from Africa. One early American historian, Charles Reystor, portrays the Founding Fathers as a colonial-era Glengarry Glen Ross. They comprised a land-speculating variety that used its political connections to build fortunes on debts they usually welched on, always hoping to score the ultimate real estate deal that would return untold riches.

Then again, you can't even trust the historians anymore. Several esteemed historians have seen their reputations tarnished of late. WWII chronicler Stephen Ambrose and Pulitzer Prize winner Doris Kearns Goodwin have both been accused of plagiarism, and another Pulitzer winner, Joseph Ellis, admitting to faking a Vietnam War service record.

It's hard to find a bastion of rectitude anywhere. The hollowed Ivy League halls have been stained by revelations that a Princeton official was illegally entering a Yale website to apparently check if students who had applied to both schools had been accepted at Yale. Even the Naval Academy, where honor is what makes "an officer and a gentleman," was rocked in 1992 when 134 seniors — over 10 percent of the
CHEATING IS AS AMERICAN AS APPLE PIE

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney speaks at a July 30 rally on Wall Street.

class — were implicated in a cheating scandal.
The tolerance for cheating is so high that there’s hard-
ly a guarantee you’ll be punished, even if you’re caught.
That’s what happened to 28 Kansas students flunked by
their teacher, Christine Pelton, after they were caught
cheating on a botany project. After some parents com-
plained, however, the school board ordered Pelton to
reverse her decision, and she resigned in protest.
America’s substitute for education, show business, has
been no stranger to cheating, either. The “Quiz Show”
scandal of the 1950s shocked a public that still believed in
“truth, justice and the American way” malarky. But few
bared an eyelash when
Sony Pictures was caught
last summer fabricating
glowing movie reviews,
and using employees and
actors posing as moviego-
ers in TV commercials to
praise its flicks.

But the real pros at
deceit and duplicity may be in the sports world. From the
Olympics’ biennial scandals of crooked judges, knee-cap-
ping ice skaters and venal officials who select the hosting
cities, to rigged boxing matches, fake resumes for college
football coaches and doping scandals in soccer, the Tour
de France, professional football and virtually every other
high-performance sport, fair play seems to be for losers.

Maybe it’s because athletes learn young. A little league
team in the town of Kearny, N.J. was apparently told to
throw a game recently so a playoff-bound rival could bol-
ster its record. One player was said to have asked the
coach who proposed the fix what to do if they were pum-
melting their rival. The coach reportedly said, “Then we’ll
walk in a couple of runs.”

The granddaddy of baseball fixes is the “Black Sox”
scandal of 1919 that saw eight Chicago White Sox play-
ers in TV commercials to
praise its flicks.

But McGwire’s record of 70 was passed by Barry Bonds’
73 homers last year. Many of baseball’s fandom view
these new constantly falling records as legitimate as a
Wall Street earnings report.

George W. Bush would know about that. The one
“success” our Cheat Executive has had as a businessman
was as part-owner of the Texas Rangers. Unable to pony
up the dough to buy a stake in the baseball team, Junior

Sammy Sosa brought
crowds back to the ball-
park during their back-
and-forth chase in 1998
to overtake the single
season home run record
of 61. When the dust
settled, both had easily
surpassed the record.

So the prez can express his shock over corporate
crooks and cheats, but too many people have noticed him
pocketing winnings to take a stake. Bush may think that
with the war on terrorism boosting his approval rat-
ings as high as his ill-gotten profits, the corporate scan-
dals won’t amount to a hill of beans. But if his presiden-
cy is buried by the growing scandals and a shrinking
economy, he may yet have something to regret.

Sources: Yahoo Finance; beer prices based on 30-pack @ $12.99 (plus deposit)
BUSH THREATENS 1000s OF WOMEN’S LIVES TO APPEASE RIGHT-WING

The United States’ withdrawal from a United Nations family planning program could result in 80,000 deaths and 800,000 induced abortions, according to UN officials. To appease anti-abortion activists, the Bush Administration announced July 29 that it would renege on its $34 million pledge to the United Nations Population Fund. The move “will be detrimental for women and families in the poorest countries,” according to Thoraya A. Obaid, Executive Director of the UN agency. Obaid estimated that $34 million could have prevented: 2 million unwanted pregnancies; nearly 800,000 induced abortions; 4,700 maternal deaths; nearly 60,000 cases of serious maternal illness; and over 77,000 infant and child deaths.

RECORDING IN D U S T R Y C A N H A C K. Y O U C A N’T.

Just days after the House of Representatives passed a bill to up the maximum sentence for hacking to life in prison, U.S. Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA) introduced a bill to allow the recording industry to sue “peer-to-peer” (P2P) networks that are engaged in the sharing of pirated files. “[T]he legislation is an appalling attack on consumer’s rights — it is an invitation to online lawlessness,” said Allen Stroud, a representative of StreamVet Networks Inc., the Franklin, Tenn., firm behind the Morpheus file sharing program. The Berman proposal is welcome news for the Recording Industry Association of America, which lobbied in October 2001 for the inclusion of similar provisions in a section of the USA Patriot Act.

ROBOTIC FLIES, LOBSTERS PREPARE TO GO TO WAR

Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, are putting final touches on a robotic fly that could be used to spy on terrorists or locate survivors of an attack, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. Researchers are preparing the fake bugs for flight through a mechanism that will allow for simultaneous flapping and rotating of their wings at a rate of 150 times per second.

The federal Office of Naval Research wants to use these flies “as a battlefield to detect the presence of hostile forces and materials.” The Pentagon has also funded a project at Northeastern University to create robotic lobsters that would crawl through water to clear mines.

U.S. MILITARY GAINS ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS

The New York State School Boards Association (NYSBSA) recently reported that the Marine Corps requested personal information about New York high school students. Email addresses, telephone numbers, addresses, extracurricular activities and lists of students’ honors and awards are some of the items that have been solicited.

Nearly all public schools receiving federal funding must now hand over personal student information to U.S. military recruiters upon request or risk losing all subsidies.

Rather than allow recruiters more ammunition to make students want to “be all they can be,” the NYSBSA has made available the fact that “individual students or their parents can request that the information not be released without prior written parental consent.” The NYSBSA has posted a sample exemption letter at http://www.nysbsa.org.

HELP WANTED: GOV’T SEeks Tipsters

Despite major opposition, the Bush administration appears determined to launch the Terrorist Information and Prevention System, known as Operation TIPS, a program designed to encourage ordinary citizens to become law enforcement’s “extra eyes and ears” during the war on terrorism.

The government intends to train and provide “millions of American truckers, letter carriers, train conductors, ship captains, utility employees, and others a formal way to report suspicious terrorist activity.” Several groups, including the Teamsters Union, American Trucking Association and the International Longshoreman’s Association have already pledged support for the administration’s efforts.

But the civil libertarian program has attracted widespread condemnation from Congress. Several leaders on both sides of the aisle, civil liberties groups, think tanks and the U.S. Postal Service have expressed concerns with the operation’s initiative to the Postal Inspection Service and to local homeland security regarding Operation TIPS; however, Homeland Security office,” said Hoffa.

In one of the biggest setbacks to the TIPS initiative thus far, House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Texas) has inserted a ban on the program into the recent bill creating the Homeland Security Department.

In an unannounced word statement of the bill, Armey said, “To ensure that no operation of the department can be construed to promote citizens’ spying on one another, this draft will contain language to prohibit programs such as Operation TIPS.”

Several Democratic legislators have also been quick to raise objections to the Bush administration plans. “It appears we are being transformed from an information society to an informant society,” said Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) in a recent interview with investigative reporter Bill Berkowitz. “Do the math. One tip a day per person and within a year the whole country will be turned in, and we can put up a big fence around the country, and we’ll all be safe.”

“I find it kind of scary,” responded Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt) when asked by the Associated Press about Operation TIPS. “We used to laugh at the old Soviet Union idea where everybody reported everybody else,” said Leahy. “... We don’t need to have it happen here.”

Leahy isn’t the only one making the comparison to former Soviet bloc citizen surveillance techniques. “The administration apparently wants to implement a government’s "eyes and ears," labor groups have offered mixed reviews.

Following a June 21 meeting with Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge, James P. Hoffa, general president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters announced his support.

“On behalf of the Teamsters, I offered the fact that we have 500,000 truck drivers on the road at any one time, and these people can be the eyes and ears of the Homeland Security office,” said Hoffa.

The American Trucking Association has also pledged support by announcing an expansion of the Highway Watch program to include reporting on potential terrorist activities in all 50 states.

The U.S. Postal Service, however, has been less compliant. “The Postal Service had been approached by Homeland security regarding Operation TIPS; however, it was decided that the Postal Service and its letter carriers would not be participating in the program at this time,” the agency said in a statement issued on July 17.

A few days later, the Postal Service announced that they would discuss the Justice Department program, but noted “that it already has long-standing processes in place for employees nationwide to report suspicious activity to the Postal Inspection Service and to local authorities.”

THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE has expressed concerns with Operation TIPS, but the Teamsters, which represents UPS truckdrivers, plan to join the civilian spy program.

BY F. TIMOTHY MARTIN

In one of the biggest setbacks to the TIPS initiative thus far, House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Texas) has inserted a ban on the program into the recent bill creating the Homeland Security Department.

In an unannounced word statement of the bill, Armey said, “To ensure that no operation of the department can be construed to promote citizens’ spying on one another, this draft will contain language to prohibit programs such as Operation TIPS.”

Several Democratic legislators have also been quick to raise objections to the Bush administration plans. “It appears we are being transformed from an information society to an informant society,” said Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) in a recent interview with investigative reporter Bill Berkowitz. “Do the math. One tip a day per person and within a year the whole country will be turned in, and we can put up a big fence around the country, and we’ll all be safe.”

“I find it kind of scary,” responded Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt) when asked by the Associated Press about Operation TIPS. “We used to laugh at the old Soviet Union idea where everybody reported everybody else,” said Leahy. “... We don’t need to have it happen here.”

Leahy isn’t the only one making the comparison to former Soviet bloc citizen surveillance techniques. “The administration apparently wants to implement a government’s "eyes and ears," labor groups have offered mixed reviews.

Following a June 21 meeting with Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge, James P. Hoffa, general president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters announced his support.

“On behalf of the Teamsters, I offered the fact that we have 500,000 truck drivers on the road at any one time, and these people can be the eyes and ears of the Homeland Security office,” said Hoffa.

The American Trucking Association has also pledged support by announcing an expansion of the Highway Watch program to include reporting on potential terrorist activities in all 50 states.

The U.S. Postal Service, however, has been less compliant. “The Postal Service had been approached by Homeland security regarding Operation TIPS; however, it was decided that the Postal Service and its letter carriers would not be participating in the program at this time,” the agency said in a statement issued on July 17.

A few days later, the Postal Service announced that they would discuss the Justice Department program, but noted “that it already has long-standing processes in place for employees nationwide to report suspicious activity to the Postal Inspection Service and to local authorities.”
A food crisis in seven southern African countries—Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—is threatening 13 million people with starvation. The crisis is taking place in a world plagued by hunger amidst plenty.

The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) has appealed for $611 million to provide close to one million tons of African food relief. Contributions, which up to now total about $128 million, have been slow in coming. Among the donors have been the United States, $98 million; the United Kingdom, $28 million; Canada, $993,000; the Netherlands, $491,000; Norway, $398,000.

The crisis in Angola first emerged during a prolonged civil war. The conflict ended in April with a cease-fire agreement between the Angolan government and the rebel forces of UNITA. At least 750,000 people were uprooted during the conflict, and the dislocations did not end with the cease-fire. Others in need of food assistance are the families of UNITA soldiers and returning refugees.

In the six other countries, the crisis developed “following two successive years of poor harvests,” the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said. Other, more long-term contributing factors, according to U.N. missions to each country, were economic crises, disruption of farming activities, policy failures and political mismanagement.

Malawi, for example, was driven to sell off its national grain reserves to the hungry. “With abnormally high malnutrition rates among small children and women and extremely high food prices, desperation set in, and survival strategies such as skipping meals and going without food were widespread,” the FAO said.

In Angola, the food crisis has been complicated by the war with the rebel forces of UNITA. At least 750,000 people were uprooted during the conflict, and the dislocations did not end with the cease-fire. Others in need of food assistance are the families of UNITA soldiers and returning refugees.

In the six other countries, the crisis developed “following two successive years of poor harvests,” the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said. Other, more long-term contributing factors, according to U.N. missions to each country, were economic crises, disruption of farming activities, policy failures and political mismanagement.

Malawi, for example, was driven to sell off its national grain reserves to the hungry. “With abnormally high malnutrition rates among small children and women and extremely high food prices, desperation set in, and survival strategies such as skipping meals and going without food were widespread,” the FAO said.

In Angola, the food crisis has been complicated by the war with the rebel forces of UNITA. At least 750,000 people were uprooted during the conflict, and the dislocations did not end with the cease-fire. Others in need of food assistance are the families of UNITA soldiers and returning refugees.

In the six other countries, the crisis developed “following two successive years of poor harvests,” the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said. Other, more long-term contributing factors, according to U.N. missions to each country, were economic crises, disruption of farming activities, policy failures and political mismanagement.

Malawi, for example, was driven to sell off its national grain reserves to the hungry. “With abnormally high malnutrition rates among small children and women and extremely high food prices, desperation set in, and survival strategies such as skipping meals and going without food were widespread,” the FAO said.

In Angola, the food crisis has been complicated by the war with the rebel forces of UNITA. At least 750,000 people were uprooted during the conflict, and the dislocations did not end with the cease-fire. Others in need of food assistance are the families of UNITA soldiers and returning refugees.

In the six other countries, the crisis developed “following two successive years of poor harvests,” the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said. Other, more long-term contributing factors, according to U.N. missions to each country, were economic crises, disruption of farming activities, policy failures and political mismanagement.

Malawi, for example, was driven to sell off its national grain reserves to the hungry. “With abnormally high malnutrition rates among small children and women and extremely high food prices, desperation set in, and survival strategies such as skipping meals and going without food were widespread,” the FAO said.

In Angola, the food crisis has been complicated by the war with the rebel forces of UNITA. At least 750,000 people were uprooted during the conflict, and the dislocations did not end with the cease-fire. Others in need of food assistance are the families of UNITA soldiers and returning refugees.

In the six other countries, the crisis developed “following two successive years of poor harvests,” the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said. Other, more long-term contributing factors, according to U.N. missions to each country, were economic crises, disruption of farming activities, policy failures and political mismanagement.

Malawi, for example, was driven to sell off its national grain reserves to the hungry. “With abnormally high malnutrition rates among small children and women and extremely high food prices, desperation set in, and survival strategies such as skipping meals and going without food were widespread,” the FAO said.

In Angola, the food crisis has been complicated by the war with the rebel forces of UNITA. At least 750,000 people were uprooted during the conflict, and the dislocations did not end with the cease-fire. Others in need of food assistance are the families of UNITA soldiers and returning refugees.

In the six other countries, the crisis developed “following two successive years of poor harvests,” the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said. Other, more long-term contributing factors, according to U.N. missions to each country, were economic crises, disruption of farming activities, policy failures and political mismanagement.

Malawi, for example, was driven to sell off its national grain reserves to the hungry. “With abnormally high malnutrition rates among small children and women and extremely high food prices, desperation set in, and survival strategies such as skipping meals and going without food were widespread,” the FAO said.

In Angola, the food crisis has been complicated by the war with the rebel forces of UNITA. At least 750,000 people were uprooted during the conflict, and the dislocations did not end with the cease-fire. Others in need of food assistance are the families of UNITA soldiers and returning refugees.

In the six other countries, the crisis developed “following two successive years of poor harvests,” the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said. Other, more long-term contributing factors, according to U.N. missions to each country, were economic crises, disruption of farming activities, policy failures and political mismanagement.

Malawi, for example, was driven to sell off its national grain reserves to the hungry. “With abnormally high malnutrition rates among small children and women and extremely high food prices, desperation set in, and survival strategies such as skipping meals and going without food were widespread,” the FAO said.

In Angola, the food crisis has been complicated by the war with the rebel forces of UNITA. At least 750,000 people were uprooted during the conflict, and the dislocations did not end with the cease-fire. Others in need of food assistance are the families of UNITA soldiers and returning refugees.
One of biotechnology’s most significant impacts is its overwhelming drive to turn all of life into commercial products. From microorganisms that lie deep within industrial wastewaters, to genetically modified plants and animal, foods, and pharmaceuticals, the promise of redesigning life forms to satisfy the demands of the market. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution. Where plant health is undermined by the complex interactions between plants and their environment, as well as the environmental consequences of agricultural and industrial-scale irrigation, we find that genetically engineered crops can increase the risk of disease and environmental pollution.
SELF-HELP FOR THE PLANET

BY ANNE VENESKY

Thirty years after Frances Moore Lappé published her ground-breaking Diet For a Small Planet, a new McDonald’s opens every five hours worldwide; the creators of Agent Orange legally pour potentially carcinogenic milk down the American gullet every day; and Pepsi paints its logo on trees in India.

So I could understand, as the somewhat maudlin title of Lappé and daughter Anna’s new book, Hope’s Edge, suggested to me, if she had taken a respite from food politics to become a self-help guru or pop psychologist. Blocked feelings, the inner child — it’s all good. The follies of giant agribusiness certainly would have pushed me over the edge.

But — rest easy, Deepak Chopra — Lappé has done nothing of that sort, lucky for us. With Hope’s Edge: The Next Diet for a Small Planet, the Lappés build on the in-depth empirical work of Diet and Food First, while also making a dramatic departure into an exploration of personal transformation which the Lappés feel can’t be separated from social change.

The maverick pair take us into over 20 communities in nine countries where dynamic pioneers of sustainable living and agriculture are bucking the destructive system of chemically-powered agribusiness.

We meet Kenyan village women who have planted over 20 million trees since 1977 to fight the disastrous shrinking of their country’s forests; the founders of Bangladesh’s Greenbank Bank, a democratically-run microlending institution exclusively for women; Indian farmers who have resisted chemical seed varieties and begun to restore native seed diversity; members of Brazil’s Landless Workers’ Movement (MST), which has settled over 250,000 landless families onto their own land despite the harsh and often bloody resistance of a virulent land aristocracy; members of the Fair Trade Coffee movement, an organic gardening program for San Francisco prison inmates; and the irascible McDonald’s marauder, José Bové, among others.

Food, however, is not the sole end of these narratives, which the Lappés skillfully weave together in a matrix of their own voices, reflections, socio-economic context — and recipes! Food is an “entry point,” they tell us, into “living democracy.” By this, the Lappés argue that people must overcome five “thought traps,” or false assumptions that have helped ensure the continued paradigm of universal corporate capitalism.

The rate of extinction may exceed 50,000 species per year according to eminent biologist Edward O. Wilson. Many biologists concur, saying that this could be the greatest extinction spasm since the dinosaurs were wiped out at the end of the Mesozoic era 65 million years ago. Except this time, we’re the culprit — and not a giant asteroid.

Like the lucrative trade in endangered species for medicinal or medicinal use, the promoters also create the market. The trafficking of endangered species is considered to be the third-largest illegal trade in the world, after drugs and weapons, and is estimated to generate $10 billion per year.

For example, on December 11, 2001, 10,000 live turtles, estimated to be worth over $3.2 million, were seized by authorities at a cargo area in Hong Kong.

Another example is the use of endangered whale meat in Japan, considered to be the third-largest illegal trade in the world, after drugs and weapons, and is estimated to generate $10 billion per year.

The mass media, for example, fails to confront the dominant paradigm of universal corporate capitalism with alternative visions because of limitations in its mental map, say the Lappés. It’s that the media cannot see what we are showing you, not that they won’t. As an IMCatt, I can’t buy this one.

This book is through a similar failure in the book’s conceptual framework that the Lappés describe these sustainable living enterprises as the “creative evolution of capitalism.” (What would Marx say about that?) True, the individuals and groups are working creatively within the capitalist system and supporting fair trade. But the Lappés imply, then, that the market is synonymous with capitalism, and that changes in our use of the market are necessarily advancements in capitalism.

The plea gives short shrift to the socialistic principles underlying these innovations in sustainability.

But the Lappés are finding their way, too. These flaws are small in comparison to the important contributions the book makes to food politics as well as to the larger anti-corporate movement.

With Hope’s Edge, the Lappés take us on a uplifting journey that even jaded, long-time activists won’t thumb their noses at — and provided self-help for the planet along the way.

Join Hope’s Edge co-author Anna Lappé at a benefit for The Indypendent on Saturday, July 24. See p. 13 for more information.

FROM TURTLE SOUP TO WHALE MEAT SUSHI, ENDANGERED SPECIES REMAIN ON THE MENU

BY DON ODGEN

It’s enough to give you indigestion. In spite of all the educational efforts, all the international and national laws against trafficking in endangered species, folks still go way out of their way to eat animals that are on the brink of extinction.

The alleged delicacies include bear paw soup, whale meat sushi, cobra casserole, turtle soup and crocodile croquettes — all from species that may soon disappear from the planet, just to satisfy outmoded tastes, snob appeal or perhaps the perceived virility of some homo sapiens.

A small portion of such consumption may be used on a survival level — I recall having a plate of endangered sea turtle handed to me by my not-so-wealthy host on a small Caribbean island some years back — but that’s the exception.

Today, much of the demand stems from appetites and old cultural baggage that needs re-examination. Growing wealth in China, for instance, has increased the demand for traditional foods and medicines derived from endangered bears, tigers or rhinoceros. There are perfectly acceptable alternatives for most of these products, but old habits die hard.

The rate of extinction may exceed 50,000 species per year according to eminent biologist Edward O. Wilson. Many biologists concur, saying that this could be the greatest extinction spasm since the dinosaurs were wiped out at the end of the Mesozoic era 65 million years ago. Except this time, we’re the culprit — and not a giant asteroid.

Like the lucrative trade in endangered species for medicinal or medicinal use, the promoters also create the market. The trafficking of endangered species is considered to be the third-largest illegal trade in the world, after drugs and weapons, and is estimated to generate $10 billion per year.

For example, on December 11, 2001, 10,000 live turtles, estimated to be worth over $3.2 million, were seized by authorities at a cargo area in Hong Kong.

Another example is the use of endangered whale meat in Japan, considered to be the third-largest illegal trade in the world, after drugs and weapons, and is estimated to generate $10 billion per year.

The mass media, for example, fails to confront the dominant paradigm of universal corporate capitalism with alternative visions because of limitations in its mental map, say the Lappés. It’s that the media cannot see what we are showing you, not that they won’t. As an IMCatt, I can’t buy this one.

This book is through a similar failure in the book’s conceptual framework that the Lappés describe these sustainable living enterprises as the “creative evolution of capitalism.” (What would Marx say about that?) True, the individuals and groups are working creatively within the capitalist system and supporting fair trade. But the Lappés imply, then, that the market is synonymous with capitalism, and that changes in our use of the market are necessarily advancements in capitalism.

The plea gives short shrift to the socialistic principles underlying these innovations in sustainability.

But the Lappés are finding their way, too. These flaws are small in comparison to the important contributions the book makes to food politics as well as to the larger anti-corporate movement.

With Hope’s Edge, the Lappés take us on an uplifting journey that even jaded, long-time activists won’t thumb their noses at — and provided self-help for the planet along the way.

Join Hope’s Edge co-author Anna Lappé at a benefit for The Indypendent on Saturday, July 24. See p. 13 for more information.
MAJOR PLAYERS IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY

BY CATHY BUSSEWITZ AND MARK PICKENS

Food is big business. It’s more than a trillion dollar a year industry in the U.S. and second only to pharmaceuticals in profitability. Here are some of the major players, their vast holdings, brands and other significant information. An expanded report, covering more than 30 of the most important food companies, is available as a center column feature on our website at www.nyc.indymedia.org.

BAYER CropScience ($6.28 BILLION, 2001)
Industries: pesticides and genetically modified (GM) seeds.

Food for thought: Bayer CropScience has more than 30 percent of the global soybean markets. The company made Multinational Monitor’s Ten Worst Corporations list twice in 2000 when corn from its GM StarLink plant illegally found its way into Taco Bell brand taco shells, causing allergic reactions in 44 consumers.

CARGILL ($49.4 BILLION, 2001)
Industries: grain, cotton, sugar, salt, animal feed, fertilizer, food processing, petroleum trading, financial trading, steel.

Food for thought: As the U.S.’s largest privately-owned corporation, Cargill controls 45 percent of the global grain market, and is one of the world’s largest producers of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Farmers’ groups around the world claim they are being put out of business because such agribusiness conglomerates now control the markets for both farming essentials and products.

COCA-COLA ($20.1 BILLION, 2001)
Brands: Bang’s, Coke, Dasani water, Dr. Pepper, Fruitopia, Minute Maid, Pклассик, Sprite.

Food for thought: Coca-Cola commands about 50 percent of the global soft-drink market. The company made Multinational Monitor’s Ten Worst Corporations list twice in the past five years — once in 1998 for its rabid marketing of sugary drinks to children, and again in 2001 for a 30-year record of human rights abuses in its overseas operations. Most recently, Coke managers in Columbia hired right-wing paramilitaries to intimidate, torture and murder trade unionists organizing for better wages and working conditions.

CONAGRA FOODS ($27.19 BILLION, 2001)
Industries: processed food, dairy, oils, feed ingredients, packaging, meat and poultry, agricultural products

Food for thought: ConAgra is the largest food producer in North America, leading the way in meat packing, french fry production and distribution of agricultural chemicals. More than 30 of its brands top $100 million in sales. Twenty million pounds of beef were sold to American schools by a ConAgra subsidiary, which from 1997-98 was cited for 171 “critical” food safety violations. In 1995 ConAgra paid $13.6 million to settle a lawsuit involving price fixing in the carthf industry, and in 1989 was caught under-weighing over 45,000 truckloads of chicken.

DEAN FOODS ($6.23 BILLION, 2001)
Industries: Dairy, syrup, oil beverage, pickles, peppers
Brands: Borden, Creamland, Land O’ Lakes, Sun and Soy, Tuscan.

Food for thought: Not only is Dean Foods the leading U.S. producer of fluid milk and dairy products, it has also recently become the largest soy milk manufacturer.

DOLE FOOD ($4.49 BILLION, 2001)
Industries: fresh fruit, vegetables, cut flowers, packaged foods.

Food for thought: The world’s largest producer of fresh fruit and vegetables with active interests in 90 countries. Dole agreed in mid-July to pay up to $24 million to 3,000 Honduran banana workers exposed to sterilization- and cancer-causing pesticides used on company plantations over a 30-year period.

DOW CHEMICAL ($27.8 BILLION, 2001)
Industries: pesticides, fertilizers.

Food for thought: The largest chemical company in America. A major spill of 47,000 gallons of concentrat-ed Dursban insecticide in 1997 led to a major fish-kill and contamination of water supplies in four Alabama counties, causing nausea, diarrhea and dizziness among citizens. Dursban is the top selling pesticide in the world. Dow recently purchased Union Carbide, but is refusing to honor the compensation liabilities from the 1984 Bhopal disaster in which 8,000 Indians were killed after poison gas leaked from a pesticide factory.

INTERNATIONAL FLAVORS & FRAGRANCES ($1.84 BILLION, 2001)
Industries: Chemical compounds used to flavor food and produce scents in bathroom, household and pharmaceutical products.

Food for thought: The world’s largest flavor company, IFF flavors many brands and is not required to list ingredients. The line between artificial and natural flavor has grown increasingly thin as companies replicate the chemical structure of natural ingredients, calling chemical concoctions “natural flavoring.”

KRAFT FOODS ($33.8 BILLION, 2001)

Food for thought: Kraft Foods owner Philip Morris didn’t need wings to fuel creation of a monster food company. It just needed to know which companies to gobble up and house under the Kraft umbrella. Kraft is the number one food company in North America, holding the top market share in 17 of its 20 top product categories. In March 2002 Kraft Foods was part of a $59 million settlement of a federal lawsuit regarding the use of Bayer’s genetically modified StarLink corn in its taco shells.

KROGER ($50.1 BILLION, 2001)
Brands: Fred Meyer supermarkets, Kroger’s super-markets, Kwik Stop and Quik Stop convenience stores, Ralph’s Grocery, Smith’s Food and Drug Centers, Winn-Dixie supermarkets.

Food for thought: The leading U.S. grocer with 3,600 stores coast-to-coast, less than 15 percent of Kroger sales come from stores bearing the company name. Thanks to acquisitions, Kroger sells groceries under the banner of some two dozen different store names. Kroger also manufactures a wide variety of its own store brand foods. In a move designed to take advantage of the $7.8 billion market for organic foods, Kroger will add “natural foods” sections to its stores in 2003.

MONSANTO ($5.54 BILLION, 2001)
Industries: herbicides, genetically modified seeds and food substitutes.

Food for thought: The world’s third largest agri-cultural company, Monsanto is developing a hammer-lock on farmers by leveraging its top-selling Roundup herbicide and Roundup Ready GM seeds. Farmers that purchase Monsanto’s seeds find they must also purchase the herbicide to protect them. Such practices have prompted farmers’ groups in India to burn Monsanto test fields in protest, and earned Monsanto’s chief executive officer a vociferous_array of threats in the face. One Monsanto official said, “Monsanto should not have to vouchsafe the safety of biotech foods. Our interest is in selling as much of it as possible. Assuring its safety is the Federal Drug Administration’s job.” Monsanto also produces the sugar substitute marketed as NutralSweet and Equal.

NESTLE ($50.2 BILLION, 2001)
Brands: Alpo, Coffee Mate, Dairy Farm ice cream, Friskies, Haagen-Dasz, U.Preal, Lean Cuisine, Mighty Dog, Nescafé, Neslé’s Quik, Perrier, Poland Spring, Purina, Skillet Sensations, Stouffer’s.

Food for thought: The Swiss-headquartered Nestlé is the world’s largest food product company with 495 factories and 230,000 employees around the world. It has a mishmoguling array of over 8,000 brands in its global larder. One of its best-selling brands is Nescafé instant coffee, 3,000 cups of which are consumed worldwide every second.

SARA LEE ($17.7 BILLION, 2001)
Brands: Ball Park Franks, Best Kosher, Brycan, Chock Full o’ Nuts, Endust furniture polish, Hanes, Hillshire Farms, Jimmy Dean, Kiwi shoe polish, Leggs, Pickwick teas, Playtex, Sunbeam, Wonderbread.

Food for thought: Mention Sara Lee and everyone thinks cheese-cake, but the corporation is all about packaged meat and underwear, serving up a full plate of sausage, hot dogs and lunch meats, bras, panties and pantyhose. In 2001, Sara Lee cut a deal with federal prosecutors as sweet as one of its famous cheesecakes: plea bargaining to two misdemeanors and a $200,000 fine in exchange for dropping all other charges to 21 deaths and 100 injuries caused by bacteria-contaminated Ball Park Franks hotdogs.

SYNGENTA ($5.32 BILLION, 2001)
Industries: agri-chemicals and genetically modified seeds.

Food for thought: Drug giants Novartis and AstraZeneca merged in 2001 to form the world’s largest agri-chemical and seed company. Syngenta now controls more than 40 percent of the world’s patents on genetically modified technologies, including what the compa-ny calls “Terminator Technology,” or the ability to render seeds sterile and force farmers to buy new stock each year. Worldwide, 1.4 billion people rely on saved seed to plant the next year’s crop.

TYSON FOODS ($10.79 BILLION, 2001)
Industries: chicken, beef, pork processing, animal feeds, prepared foods.

Companies owned: Iowa Beef Processors, Hudson Foods.

Food for thought: Tyson’s recent acquisition of IBP makes it the largest meat processing company in the world, with more than a fifth of the U.S. market. Tyson’s recall of 35 million pounds of beef in 1997, the largest food recall in history, was hidden from the public for three weeks, allowing 25 million pounds to be consumed. Meat packing is now the most dangerous job in the nation, with an injury rate three times higher than a typical American factory. Tyson successfully lobbied the state of Missouri into halting welfare benefits for people who refused their jobs.
LIMITED OPTIONS STARVING MANY

BY EMILY REINHARDT

The offerings of many bodegas on 125th St. bear more resemblance to a frat boy’s dorm room than to a food provider. There are potato chips, pork rinds and an army’s supply of 40-oz. bottles of malt liquor. There are some braided bananas and apples in crates, and a few loaves of whole wheat bread among mountains of Wonder Bread.

The type of supermarkets and grocery stores in poor neighborhoods often limits residents’ access to nutritious food. For instance, lower-quality grocery stores like Met Foods with sad-looking produce abound in Astoria, Queens while greengrocers and stores like Gourmet Garage saturate upscale neighborhoods like SoHo.

“[Lower-income food choice is] a huge issue of access,” says Bryant Terry of B-Healthy, a group promoting nutrition, youth leadership and youth activism. “Even if you change the people’s perceptions, it’s an issue of access. The food selection is horrible.”

Malnutrition, a major problem plaguing low-income communities, is not synonymous with hunger. Hunger stems from a lack of food; malnutrition is caused by a lack of nutrients. Over 20 percent of Americans are clinically malnourished, whereas eight percent are hungry. In fact, many Americans are both malnourished and obese.

“Food insecurity” — meaning a lack of regular access to healthy foods — is a large contributor to malnutrition in poor communities, affecting some 33 million Americans nationwide. Though not technically “hungry,” these people often consume diets that lack many essential vitamins and minerals. It is often the “food insecure” who dine on macaroni and cheese by necessity, rather than by choice.

But even for the rest of Americans who have proper access to nutritious foodstuffs, malnutrition may be no stranger. According to an article on HealthWorld Online (www.healthy.net), by Dr. Patrick Quillin. “At least 20 percent of Americans are clinically malnourished, with 70 percent being sub-clinically malnourished (less obvious).”

Though food insecurity exists in both urban and rural America, certain problems are inherent to the urban poor. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), urbanites spend 30 percent more money on food than other communities, but consume fewer calories. Fresh produce is less accessible in cities due to transportation and distribution issues. Fast food consumption in the cities is also high. (One-third of America’s “eating out” is done at fast food establishments.)

Urban, lower-income households also tend to buy less at the supermarket. They buy more from stores with fewer offerings, such as bodegas, even though supermarkets sometimes underestimate the smaller stores by as much as 10 percent. Supermarket prices are four percent higher in urban and rural areas than in the suburbs, but the suburbs contain the lowest amount of poor households. In a perverse twist, the richest people pay the least for their groceries. And because the poor have far less money, they also spend a far greater percentage of their disposable income on food than the rich or middle class.

Back in 1970, when a cup of coffee was 25 cents, the average household spent less than 15 percent of its disposable income on food. By 2000, that number had dropped to 10.6 percent. But this statistic does not mean that food is a bargain for lower-class communities. The percentage of after-tax income households spend on food is 34.2 percent, for incomes between $5,000-$9,000. In contrast, a household making $70,000 spends 8.7 percent.

According to the USDA’s Economic Research Service report “Expenditures for food require a large share of income when income is relatively low...the figure [average household spending on food] has sometimes been misused to prove that food is a bargain.”

There is also a tendency to buy starchy and fatty foods that fill the stomach but starve the body. This offers little nutritional variety in daily and weekly meals.

Kuo Huang, an agricultural economist for the USDA, writes that fluctuating food prices can also weaken the nutrition that poorer households receive.

“If the price of beef goes up, while the price of chicken remains the same, consumers will likely buy less beef and more chickens.” This not only affects chicken and beef but the foods that would be bought in conjunction, like cheese for cheeseburgers. Food consumption based on price and not nutritional value can make for a much less-balanced diet.

An additional barrier faced by many communities of color is the perception that “eating healthy is a white bourgeois thing,” Terry says. The food activist links this attitude to food production and in the perceived high cost of eating healthily.

Though many immigrant families may cook nutritious meals, Terry says many immigrant youth just want to be “Americanized.” McDonald’s and pizza symbolize America to these young people, who are often more enthusiastic about these foods then their own food heritage. Mexican-Americans now have the highest obesity rates of any ethnic group in America.

Over half of all Americans meet worldwide standards for being overweight, while 23 percent of Americans are obese.

The U.S. Surgeon General’s 2001 report on obesity claims, “overweight and obesity are particularly common among minority groups and those with a lower family income.” This is especially true for women. Lower-income women are 50 percent more likely to be obese then those with higher incomes. African-American women suffer particularly, with 69 percent considered “obese.”

“There needs to be a demand [for nutritious food in lower-income areas], a demand needs to be created,” says Terry. “Having fresh produce is meaningless if there’s no one around to buy it.”

---

When CNN becomes “America Strikes Back,” where do you turn for news?

To: The Independent. Delivered to your mailbox every month, the N ew York IM C’s paper is investigating, interrogating, and investigating. For $20 / year, you can keep on top of the issues you care about with articles written by activists on the scene — like the Middle East, Colombia, Afghanistan, the environment, the criminalization of dissent, corporate globalization and the resistance to it, the IMF and Third World debt.

Don’t miss an issue — subscribe today!

☐ Bill me ☐ Check enclosed

Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________

City ____________________________

State _______ Zip _______

[ ] 3/yr $60 [ ] 5/yr $100

Subscription rate: $20 / year (10 issues) Angel rate: $100 / year. Make checks payable to the N YC IMC. Print Team and send to: 34 East 29th St, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10016.
IRRA DIATED? O NLY C O N G R E S S K N O W S

The fat subsidies for agro-businesses contained in Congress’ recent farm bill have raised the ire of Capitol Hill watchers, but a provision permitting food manufacturers to label irradiated food has attracted limited public notice.

The provision, buried deep in the bill, allows companies to label food treated with radiation as “pasteurized.” Food safety groups registered strong protest over the twist of words that hides the nature of what consumers are eating.

Irradiation, or the use of X-rays to kill pathogens and insects contaminating food, is a distinct process from pasteurization. The 150-year-old technique of sterilizing liquids through rapid heating and cooling. Recent research indicates that irradiation degrades the molecular structure of food and may also destroy nutrients and produce potentially carcinogenic and cell-damaging chemicals.

SUPERMARKETS HIT THE SW EET SPOT OF PRO DUCT PLACEMENT

Product placement is becoming the leading profitgetter for supermarkets, outpacing the actual sale of food. According to a recent University of Missouri report, up to 75 percent of supermarket chain profits now come from fees paid by food manufacturers to gain prime shelf locations and eye-catching displays for their products. The Tampa Tribune reports that $50,000 will place one jar of specialty pickles in the best shelf spots of the four major grocery chains in Tampa, Florida. Supermarkets see this as a win-win, deriving profits from both consumers and manufacturers.

G M CROPS BLITZ ON U . S. FARM S

For the first time, over 70 percent of the soybeans and cotton grown in the U.S. are genetically modified, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Since their controversial introduction in 1996, genetically modified crops have quickly spread across the nation’s farming landscape. In 2001, 34 percent of corn, 72.9 percent of soybeans and 71 percent of cotton was genetically modified crops have quickly spread across the nation’s farmland. In 2001, 34 percent of corn, 72.9 percent of soybeans and 71 percent of cotton was genetically modified, but the true percentage is likely higher.

The USDA does not collect data on all crops.

U. S. FARM BILL SLAMS THIRD-WORLD FARMERS

It’s bad enough that the newly-passed 2002 U.S. Farm Bill will funnel $130 billion in subsidies over the next decade from U.S. taxpayers’ pockets to large farm-ers and agribusinesses with an average income of $135,000. But what often goes unnoticed is the harm it could have on many farmers and activists is that by encouraging overproduction — primarily modified, but the true percentage is likely higher. The USDA does not collect data on all crops.

THE BRONX
Avenue, (212) 946-6336.
Central Harlem: 6 Edgecombe Ave., (917) 617-3404.
Upper West Side: Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 164-166 W 100th St. (at Amsterdam), (212) 846-6336.

CSA S IN THE CITY

THE BRO N X

Inwood: Isham Park, (212) 353-6842.
Upper East Side: Church of the Heavenly Rest, 90th Street & 5th Avenue, (212) 502-8562.
Chelsea: Hudson Guild, 441 W 26th St., (212) 769-0800.
Midtown: Prince George, 14 East 22nd Street, (212) 471-0959.
East Village: 6 St. Community Center, 638 E. 6th St. (between Avenues B & C), (212) 677-1863.

THE BRO N X

Inwood: Isham Park, (212) 353-6842.
Upper East Side: Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 164-166 W 100th St. (at Amsterdam), (212) 846-6336.
Central Harlem: 6 Edgecombe Ave., (917) 617-3404.
Upper West Side: Church of the Heavenly Rest, 90th Street & 5th Avenue, (212) 502-8562.
Chelsea: Hudson Guild, 441 W 26th St., (212) 769-0800.
Midtown: Prince George, 14 East 22nd Street, (212) 471-0959.
East Village: 6 St. Community Center, 638 E. 6th St. (between Avenues B & C), (212) 677-1863.

Q U E E N S

Forest Hills: Forest Hills Community House, 10825 62nd Dr., (718) 592-5757.

THE BRO N X

Inwood: Isham Park, (212) 353-6842.
Upper West Side: Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 164-166 W 100th St. (at Amsterdam), (212) 846-6336.
Central Harlem: 6 Edgecombe Ave., (917) 617-3404.
Upper West Side: Church of the Heavenly Rest, 90th Street & 5th Avenue, (212) 502-8562.
Chelsea: Hudson Guild, 441 W 26th St., (212) 769-0800.
Midtown: Prince George, 14 East 22nd Street, (212) 471-0959.
East Village: 6 St. Community Center, 638 E. 6th St. (between Avenues B & C), (212) 677-1863.

Q U E E N S

Forest Hills: Forest Hills Community House, 10825 62nd Dr., (718) 592-5757.

THE BRO N X

Inwood: Isham Park, (212) 353-6842.
Upper West Side: Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 164-166 W 100th St. (at Amsterdam), (212) 846-6336.
Central Harlem: 6 Edgecombe Ave., (917) 617-3404.
Upper West Side: Church of the Heavenly Rest, 90th Street & 5th Avenue, (212) 502-8562.
Chelsea: Hudson Guild, 441 W 26th St., (212) 769-0800.
Midtown: Prince George, 14 East 22nd Street, (212) 471-0959.
East Village: 6 St. Community Center, 638 E. 6th St. (between Avenues B & C), (212) 677-1863.

Q U E E N S

Forest Hills: Forest Hills Community House, 10825 62nd Dr., (718) 592-5757.
IOWA FARMER PLANTS SEED OF HOPE

BY DENISE O'BRIEN

The life of a hog is determined from beginning to end in corporate boardrooms.

The inhabitants of these factories spew out millions of pounds of antibiotics to prevent disease, putting human lives at risk as bugs become resistant to the antibiotics. The overabundance of manure causes air quality problems as ammonia, carbon dioxide, methane and hydrogen sulfide wash through the air and contaminate the countryside. Factory farms also threaten democracy. In Iowa, the legislature has decided that county governments are not capable of making the decision about whether or not they want a factory farm in their county.

Factory farms create conditions where low-paid workers become the keepers of confined animals inside huge buildings where air quality creates lung problems. The image of an independent farmer caring for land and animals has been transformed into one of a low-paid corporate lackey. In corporate agribusiness, there is no freedom to make independent decisions. The life of a hog is determined from beginning to end in corporate boardrooms.

By making a sacrifice area of this huge empty space in the middle of our country, agribusiness has provided people with this country with “cheap food.” By using growing methods that pollute the air, water and soil, corporations are producing food that is making people fat, causing heart disease, diabetes and cancer—just a few of the current threats to human health.

Growing up I learned that Iowa was the breadbasket of the world. Farmers took pride in the knowledge that they were “feeding the world.” As agribusiness sunk its talons into our flesh, farmers didn’t stop to question whether or not this business approach to agriculture was good for the environment, the community, the animals, ourselves or our democracy. Nor are these hundreds of thousands of acres of corn and soybeans being used to feed a hungry world. While this overproduction takes place, the world’s 800 million malnourished and starving people still lack sufficient food.

Our dependence on fossil fuels to raise crops only adds to the fragility of the earth. Our dependence on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) threatens biodiversity. Contamination from pollen drifting from GMO fields threatens to ruin the business of organic farmers, making it almost impossible for organic corn crops to remain GMO-free. Pharmaceutical companies and agribusiness companies patent genes in order to gain more profit. Their propaganda literature calls upon a moral foundation to feed the world. That is bunk, and people are beginning to figure it out.

This picture of a system of agriculture is gloomy and downright scary. It could be so overwhelming that one may want to run for the woods, never to emerge again. But I have been farming organically for nearly 27 years and still retain my idealism and my optimism. In all of these years of farming I have never witnessed such monumental growth of the movement towards organic and sustainable agriculture as I have seen in the past five years.

Consumers are becoming more aware of the harmful effects that the overuse of chemicals and antibiotics to grow food and raise animals is having on their health. Environmentalists understand more clearly that a family farm structure of agriculture may do more to help to rehabilitate than to harm it. And many of us are becoming aware of the benefits of eating locally-raised food—benefits to consumers and farmers as well as to the local economy.

The most hopeful and important change is that people are beginning to question whether or not the current food system is just and fair. People are questioning why the corporate profits have to be so high at the expense of Mother Earth and her inhabitants. People are beginning to resist corporate domination. In Iowa, for example, people have been organizing to stop hog and chicken factories. They have been holding town meetings, petitioning legislators and showing up at the capitol to protest bad laws and work on good ones. In defiance of state legislation, there are several county governments that have issued a moratorium on the building of any more factory farms. For Iowa, this is outright rebellion.

People are beginning to take control over where their food comes from by participating in the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement. This movement is comprised of farmers and consumers who support each other. The consumer supports the farmer by buying a membership or share in the farmer’s CSA and the farmer supports the consumer by providing good, healthy fresh food. This arrangement has provided people with an opportunity to participate in the growing of their food.

Many times a consumer may purchase a working share where part of the membership cost is paid for with their labor. We need to account for the costs that agriculture has on the environment, our communities and the farmer in order to have a fair, equitable food system in the world.

The organic and sustainable agriculture movement is comprised of farmers that work in partnership with nature as opposed to domination over nature. Women are playing a major role as farmers to change the current male-dominated, patriarchal system of agriculture into a system of fairness and justice.

The bottom line is that everyone has a right to food. Even though the United States will not endorse the idea that food is a human right, we need to fight for that right for all. Healthy, fresh food nourishes our brains and our bodies and makes us whole people.

Denise O’Brien is coordinator for Women, Food and Agriculture Network, an organization that links and amplifies women’s voices on issues of food systems, sustainable communities and environmental integrity.

FOOD OPTIONS: HOW TO...

... DUMPSTER DIVE  

By Dedi Bolt

Dumpster diving is a liberating act. You can find all the necessities of life in the trash. When poking around in the waste of our consumer society, I'm likely to find fresh organic coconuts, roasted garlic hummus, bagels, soy ice cream (partially melted) and many other tasty goodies. A tip for finding the best dumpsters is to check the phone book and keep an eye out for wholesale distributors. Many grocers will discard more than enough to feed the average family.

In most of the world, things are discarded because they are no longer useful or edible. In this country, goods are discarded when they are no longer profitable. No matter how much someone tries to feed themselves, some foods are cooked or baked for same-day sale. Grocery stores discard produce with minor blemishes, and in many cases, fruits are discarded just as they begin to ripen. Food is usually trashed once it has reached its expiration or sell-by date, which is often arbitrary. Foods damaged during shipping or stocking are often arbitrary. Foods damaged during shipping or stocking are often more fresh than what remains on the shelves.

The Environmental Protection Agency has rated dumpster diving (or source reduction and reuse) as the best environmental strategy for dealing with municipal solid waste. Yet in 1999, the U.S. wasted more than 25 million tons of food, approximately 5 pounds of food per person per day, compared to 3 pounds in 1960.

Dumpstering is not an option for everyone. Nor is it any more a revolutionary act than dropping out and living in the wilderness or eating a vegan diet. It neither supports the system of hierarchy and oppression nor threatens it. However, for many dumpstering is a small part of an environmentally conscious lifestyle. Practiced in conjunction with squatting, it makes possible a life free of work and money. The more we liberate ourselves, the more we are able to help others.

Mr. Bolt is an anarchist who’s been active in Food Not Bombs; The Mutual Support Network and More Gardens Coalition. He’s explored dumpsters throughout North America and has appeared on PBS’s Life Mutual Support Network and More Gardens Coalition. He’s explored

... START YOUR OWN GARDEN  

By Cathy Bussewitz and Abhis Janav

Tired of eating genetically engineered food? Ready to grow your own peaches? The community garden movement is on the rise. Berkeley, and the large city, is one of the most innovative in its use of urban space. In 1999, Berke
er’s abandoned lots reached 400. Berkeley has added 100 new community gardens and a dozen residential plots since then.

As with most farm work, injury rates are disproportionately high. Pesticide usage is widespread. Maine’s Washington County, the self-proclaimed “Blueberry Capital of the World,” is the poorest county in a poor state, with $40,000 inhabitants scattered over a heavily wooded area larger than Delaware and Rhode Island combined.

Maine’s annual wild blueberry production has more than tripled from 24 million to 75 million lbs. per year over the past two decades, and in that time, a small, locally-controlled industry has been increasingly assimilated into the global economy. Last year, independent growers received the same price ($31 cents) they received in 1976. The box price for rakers has also remained stagnant or declined.

Cherryfield Foods, a subsidiary of a Canadian frozen foods conglomerate, is now the largest blueberry grower in Maine, owning or managing over 12,000 acres of land. It once hired 800-1,200 rakers per season. It now makes do with 250. Mechanical harvesters are more cost-effective even though they are prone to tearing plants from their roots and recover as little as 60 percent of the berries that a hand raker gets. Such is progress in the era of globalization.

GLOBALIZING THE WILD BLUEBERRY

By John Tarleton

Wild blueberries. They are everywhere these days — in breakfast cereals, jams, muffins, pancakes, pop tarts and sold alone. They flourish in the highly acidic soil of northern Maine, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and are harvested in August by hundreds of migrants including this reporter. It’s a back-breaking work that attracts a diverse collection of people. At once idyllic and brutal, this unique harvest may soon be a thing of the past.

A BLUEBERRY RAKER  

A BLUEBERRY RAKER returns to his row with empty buckets. (Above)  

A RAKER DIGS into bushes full of Maine’s favorite fruit. (Right)

As with most farm work, injury rates are disproportionately high. Pesticide usage is widespread. Maine’s Washington County, the self-proclaimed “Blueberry Capital of the World,” is the poorest county in a poor state, with $40,000 inhabitants scattered over a heavily wooded area larger than Delaware and Rhode Island combined.

Maine’s annual wild blueberry production has more than tripled from 24 million to 75 million lbs. per year over the past two decades, and in that time, a small, locally-controlled industry has been increasingly assimilated into the global economy. Last year, independent growers received the same price ($31 cents) they received in 1976. The box price for rakers has also remained stagnant or declined.

Cherryfield Foods, a subsidiary of a Canadian frozen foods conglomerate, is now the largest blueberry grower in Maine, owning or managing over 12,000 acres of land. It once hired 800-1,200 rakers per season. It now makes do with 250. Mechanical harvesters are more cost-effective even though they are prone to tearing plants from their roots and recover as little as 60 percent of the berries that a hand raker gets. Such is progress in the era of globalization.
A walk around the farm bears that out. This is what a farm looks like. The barns smell of hay, manure and motor oil mingled near the garbage bear-
ing fire-engine-red tractors. Sparrows careen about after a cooling summer downpour, ignoring a lone chicken scratching the moist earth by a molly, dull-silver silo.

Next to the 50-foot-tall silos, bright-eyed calves with clean, almost shiny, fur lounge under an open-air metal and wood shed three to a pen. Piglets sniffle in the back half of the barn, where a monstrous fly drifts into the roiling mud. Hundreds of yards in the distance, the rows of boxy cows bob above the brush as they forage by the waterside. Turnip, both another calf, seems oblivious to it all. She’s only interested in gnawing on a shrivelled potato. Turnip will one day join Hawthorne Valley’s herd of 60 dairy cows. Because it doesn’t use industrial methods, like penicillin injections or bovine growth hormones, Hawthorne Valley produces half the amount of milk of a conventional dairy farmer,” says Schneider. “One cow produces on average 18 to 20,000 pounds of milk on a conven-
tionally fed cow. Our average is 10 to 11,000.”

But while “conventional milk sells for $10-$13 per hundredweight,” explains Schneider, “organic milk is $25-$30 per hundredweight.” Schneider says, “We’ve determined with our 250 acres we can support 60 cows. They produce milk, but more importantly, from a biological point of view, they produce manure that we compost for the crop lands, pasture land and vegetable gardens.”

The use of manure on fields that grow hay for the cows, which produce more manure for the vegetable gardens, scrap from which feed the pigs, underlies the concept of “biodynamic farming.” Hawthorne Valley Farm is one of dozens of biodynamic farms scattered across the country.

The role of manure and composting is critical to biody-
namic farming, explains Aaron Hulme of the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association. In biodynamic farm-
ing, says Hulme, “all of the inputs are supposed to come from one’s farm. The farm is a self-contained unit.”

“Biodynamic farming,” says Hulme, “came from a series of eight lectures given by Austrian Rudolf Steiner to a circle of farmers in 1924. They worried that the mechanization of the other aspects of human life would obliterate farming.” Peter Brady, the head farmer at Phillies Bridge Farm in New Paltz, points out that New Paltz, by his definition, is an “attempt to make the farm more inclusive, with less inputs, less fertilizer and more diversity.” Phillies Bridge, says Brady, practices organic farming and “dynamizing biodynamically, in part by bring-
ing in cows, goats and expanding its flock of 33 chickens. Like Hawthorne Valley, Phillies Bridge is a non-profit, has an educational aspect and runs a CSA. The Phillies Bridge CSA currently has 75 local members, at $500 for a full share. Hawthorne Valley has 220 shares and distributes its produce to members at 15 local and 1 long Island and the Bronx.

What’s especially impressive is the small amount of land used to feed so many people. Hawthorne Valley has 12 acres of vegetable gardens, while Phillies Bridge has five. Both make weekly deliveries to their members from June to November. Brady says Phillips Bridge can “grow more per acre than conventional, scale-farmers partly because we aren’t growing 3,000 acres,”

CONSUMER IGNORANCE AND APATHY are problems fac-
ing non-industrial farming. One farmer noted how and said “don’t know the difference between a horse and a cow.”

Yet these two farms raise a intriguing question: How viable are they as models? Both of them are non-profit, unusual among farms, which gives them tax advantages. Brady says for Phillies Bridge, “agriculture brings in 75 percent of the revenue and education 25 percent.”

Brady admits, “We’re a non-profit, one competing with other CSAs. We get Americorp volunteers. Other farmers feel it may not be a level playing field.”

Hawthorne Valley expects to generate $5 million in revenue this year, two-thirds of that from its bountiful store. But Schneider says it eats only at most $20,000 a year in profits—not even one percent.

One couple in New Paltz, Ron and Kate Khosla, are trying to go the commercial route while maintaining high agricultural standards. Dominated by the Shawangunk Mountains, the 77-acre Hugenot farm was purchased by the Khoslas almost four years ago. Ron says, “Farmers in the Valley are just getting out of farming. For instance, if you put out your crops by May 19, you’re 90 percent assured they won’t die from frost. This year, though, a lot of people lost crops” due to an unusual cold snap in late May. “We maybe worth of organic strawberries, and we’ll never make it up,” he notes.

Because of the economic pressures, the Khoslas live in decidedly Spartan conditions. “We’ve been camping out for four years. The first year, we lived in the green-
house. We didn’t even have indoor plumbing.” Their hard work is paying off slowly. They’re now in the process of building a house after turning a profit of $18,000 last year, explains Ron. But “we made less than $3 an hour.”

The couple says their farming goes beyond organic, in large part because of federal guidelines that have watered down what organic means. Organic food is no longer the work of some idealistic back-to-the-landers, but a billion-dollar business that is often dominated by agribusinesses. And they have an interest in making “organic” compatible with their industrial scale.

While the U.S. Department of Agriculture backed off guidelines two years ago that would have allowed generic engineering, sewage sludge and radioactive waste used in the production of “organic” food, it still allows controversial practices. It allows manure and waste from conventional factory farms to be used on organic farms; it essentially allows fac-
tory farm crowding for organic livestock, and it has imposed an inspection program that is cost-prohibitive for the small, organic farmers.

“Organic is the same as it used to be,” says Ron. “The process is so time-consuming, so expensive, that the small farmer is left.”

What gets Ron particularly incensed is the waste issue. “You can use chicken carcasses, diseased parts, and waste” from conventional factory farms. As a result, “there are measurable levels of herbicides, steroids, hor-
mones, antibiotics and pesticides in the soil” of farms that are ostensibly organic.

In response, the Khoslas have started to use the term “Certified Naturally Grown (CNG)” and are trying to establish a new trend. “We just went public at the begin-
ing of July. We already have 50 applicants from all over the country,” says Ron.

“Organic is now being administered by people who don’t know anything about organic. With CNG, it’s farmers inspecting farmers,” he explains.

All the farmers interviewed agree that some of the biggest problems facing non-industrial farming is con-
sumer ignorance and apathy. Peter Brady says he gets kids at Phillips Bridge who “don’t know the difference between a horse and a cow.”

Ron Khosla says, “As much as I want to complain about subsidies, the biggest problem is consumer apathy. All they want is cheap vegetables.”

It’s been devastating,” Alba says. “When the dust settles we expect about 1,000 people will be displaced.”

While others are demoral-
ed, Carl Hultberg, director of the Village Green Recycling Team, says he’s re-energized and ready to launch a citizen-run recycling program that will pro-
vide a model for the city. With a multi-compartment truck and customers willing to sort their materials and spend $1.55 for his weekly service, he hopes to show that recycling, done the right way, is profitable.

“I think it will blow people’s minds,” Hultberg adds. “We should be able to really give the city a lesson in recycling that will not soon be forgotten.”

JEN NEUMANN

For more on how to get involved with alternative recy-
cling efforts, contact: Village Green Recycling Team (212) 473-4227; Recycle This! (212) 592-4184, recycleThis@nyc@msn.com; New York City Waste Prevention Coalition (212) 239-8882, owen@nyceja.org; We Can (212) 262-2222.

A “RECYCLE IN” PROTEST will be held on Aug. 20 at City Hall to oppose Mayor Bloomberg’s cuts in recycling.

“It’s been devastating,” Alba says. “When the dust settles we expect about 1,000 people will be displaced.”

While others are demoral-
ed, Carl Hultberg, director of the Village Green Recycling Team, says he’s re-energized and ready to launch a citizen-run recycling program that will pro-
vide a model for the city. With a multi-compartment truck and customers willing to sort their materials and spend $1.55 for his weekly service, he hopes to show that recycling, done the right way, is profitable.

“I think it will blow people’s minds,” Hultberg adds. “We should be able to really give the city a lesson in recycling that will not soon be forgotten.”

A non-profit organization called We Can collects redeemable bottles and cans from businesses and apart-
ment buildings and donates all proceeds to the homeless.

And Recycle This!, a waste reduction and recycling advocacy group, hopes to raise awareness by launching a
campaign of creative protest and artistic activism. Their upcoming “Recycle In” protest on Aug. 20 at City Hall will feature the creation of a public art piece from the plastic and glass bottles of passersby. Swan, an organizer for the group, plans to finally make meaningful use of the mountains of “garbage” accumulat-
ing in her apartment.

Recycle This! member Kate Crane expects strong support for the participatory protest, suspecting much of the public is just as frus-
trated as she is.

“When they cut recycling, I felt fury and grief,” Crane said. “So many people are angry about this issue, and just need a bullhorn to voice their dissatisfaction.”

For more on how to get involved with alternative recy-
cling efforts, contact: Village Green Recycling Team (212) 473-4227; Recycle This! (212) 592-4184, recycleThis@nyc@msn.com; New York City Waste Prevention Coalition (212) 239-8882, owen@nyceja.org; We Can (212) 262-2222.

AUGUST 2002       THE INDYPENDENT     PAGE 17
By Patrick Bond

Flying in to Africa’s main commercial complex of Johannesburg, delegates to the upcoming United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) will break through a thick brown cloud of particulates. The cold dry season and temperature inversions are the natural reasons Johannesburg’s 5000-foot elevation and brisk winter winds still don’t provide clean air in August. Viewed from the air, smudges of human fingerprints are everywhere: concentrated industrial pollution over the east-west strip of factories and power plants; gold-mine dumps to the south, perpetually blowing sand and dust over the city; periodic bush fires; and the ongoing use of coal and wood for cooking and heating in black mesh-ash baskets of Soweto and Alexandra.

From the air, summitgoers will be protected from the re-emergence of tuberculosis and other rampant respiratory infections that further threaten the lives of South Africa’s 5 million plus HIV-infected people.

STINGY POLICIES, LESS SERVICES

Just before landing, delegates may notice the silvery glint of thousands of tiny metal-roofed shacks in the bright sun, like cauterized wounds on the yellowish skin of a wintry Africa. The township slums stretch to the horizon, and house the majority of Gauteng Province’s 10 million inhabitants. But because Nelson Mandela’s fledgling administration implement ed a stingy policy in 1994 based on World Bank advice, Johannesburg’s post-apartheid squatter camps and meager new formal residential areas for low-income black residents are actually further away from job opportunities and have even less community amenities, schools and clinics than apartheid-era ghettos.

Looking down, eyes are soon drawn to the bright green of well-watered English gardens and thick alien trees that shade traditionally white — now slightly desegregated — neighborhoods. Of well-watered English gardens and thick alien trees that shade traditionally white — now slightly desegregated — neighborhoods. The Johannesburg landscape is also being defaced by other greed-driven processes, including bank “redlining” (denial of loan access) in many townships and inner-city sites of racial desegregation such as cosmopolitan but poverty-stricken Hillbrow, Berea and Yeoville.

In addition, the old Central Business District was virtually emptied of professionals in the 1990s, with more than two-thirds of office space vacant at one point and Africa’s largest prestige building — the Carlton Centre — sold in 2000 at 50 percent of its 1974 construction costs.

CAPITAL FLIGHT

Where, then, aside from London and the smart money flee? Ten rules northeast of the old business district, the edge-city of Sandton, attracted billions of dollars worth of 1990s commercial property investment, as well as world-class traffic jams, nouveau-riche conspicuous consumption and discordant postmodern architecture.

The environmental destruction, malgovernance, political repression, social hypocrisy and parasitical financial activity together are causing a backlash. What was by all accounts the world’s most impressive urban social movements, the South African “civics,” were systematically demobilized during the mid-1990s but have arisen again in several Johannesburg townships through the Anti-Privatization Forum network. Municipal workers and other public sector unions often demonstrate against grievances. Mass anti-privatization marches of workers and residents are not uncommon.

Repeated attacks by Johannesburg’s elite on both ecology and the poor will likely lead to a genuine “Social Forum” process, as in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, though the major political players—the trade unions, churches and the more independent social movements — remain fragmented.

And like the corporate-controlled summit itself, Johannesburg will continue to undermine the very idea of “sustainable development” — until grassroots, work-place, women, youth, church and environmental com-munities get their acts together and take power away from those old and new rulers who have made such a mess of Africa’s wealthiest city.

Patrick Bond’s recent and forthcoming books on South Africa include Cities of Gold (Elite Transition; Against Global Apartheid; Fanon’s Warning; and Unsustainable South Africa).
ZAPATISTA-INSPIRED FARMERS WIN

MASSIVE PROTESTS FORCE MEXICO TO HALT AIRPORT PLANS

BY RAMOR RYAN

Last Oct. 2, when the Mexican government announced the expropriation of 5,000 hectares of farm-land around San Salvador Atenco, 20 miles outside Mexico City, they presumed everyone was on board for their big airport plans. Addressing the campesinos who were about to lose their land, President Vincente Fox gushed how they had in effect “won the lottery…”

Ten months later, the campesinos have indeed won, not the lottery but the rights to their own land. On Aug. 1, in a shocking decision, the government abandoned its airport plans following massive protests and the death of Jose Espinosa. A farmer and activist from Atenco, Espinosa died in the hospital July 24 from injuries received at the hands of the federal police at an anti-airport demonstration.

The $2 billion airport project was a key element, along-side the Plan Puebla-Panama, of Fox’s plan to modernize the country and to make the economy more competitive. Or the year-long student insurgency and police are involved in illegal fishing; they take a cut of the profits.”

The commercial vessels use illegal methods: electrocution, poisons, explosives, water pumping, scoops, nets and fences. These practices overfish the lake, destroy aquatic life and wreck locals’ gear.

In defiance of a law that guarantees family fishers open access to communal areas within the commercial fishing lots, lot owners frequently post guards and charge fees.

The prime minister attempted to resolve the growing conflict in late 2000 by restoring more than half of the privatized fishing lots to the communities. But without Department of Fisheries officials monitoring the field and without maps demarking the newly-drawn boundaries, the situation became chaotic.

Confrontations between family and commercial fish-eries publicly available, the situation became chaotic. Confrontations between family and commercial fish-ers increased.

And so in the Atenco conflict, the shadow of the Zapatistas loomed over the Fox administration. Indeed Zapata-inspired was everywhere in the Atenco rebellion.

The victory in Atenco has the prospect of kickstarting the mass protests in the countryside and to make the economy more competitive within the NAFTA and proposed FTAA trade zones.

The issue of the officially decreed expropriation of the land was not expected to be a hurdle — the campesinos were offered just seven pesos per square meter (only pennies per square foot) and promised employment at the air-port as “janitors or security guards.”

“Even if they offered us millions for our land we would not accept it,” said one Atenco campesino. In November, thousands of them descended on the capital, many on horseback, masked like Zapatistas and wielding machetes. Fierce clashes with the police ensued.

Under the government decree, 4,375 families would have to lose their land — ejido (commu-nal) land held by Indigenous Nahua communities since the Mexican revolution of 1910.

The village of Anlong Raing consists of a few dozen floating houses on the edge of the Great Tonle Sap Lake, the largest lake in Southeast Asia. Fishers here are used to catch enough fish to eat, plus some to trade for rice. But, because of commercial competition and the degradation of the lake itself, the fish they now catch are too small to sell, and must be kept in cages until they are big enough to market.

“If we cannot make enough money to buy rice…there are fewer fish now that big fishers come and fish this area, and we cannot do anything about them,” said Vang Thy Viet, a mother of five.

The commercial fishers are support-ed by Cambodia’s fish- ing ministry and other authorities, said Mao Vanna, head of the Anlong Raing commu-nity fishery. “The min-istry and police are involved in illegal fish-ing; they take a cut of the profits.”

The commercial vessels use illegal methods: electrocution, poisons, explosives, water pumping, scoops, nets and fences. These practices overfish the lake, destroy aquatic life and wreck locals’ gear.

In defiance of a law that guarantees family fishers open access to communal areas within the commercial fishing lots, lot owners frequently post guards and charge fees.

The prime minister attempted to resolve the growing conflict in late 2000 by restoring more than half of the privatized fishing lots to the communities. But without Department of Fisheries officials monitoring the field and without maps demarking the newly-drawn boundaries, the situation became chaotic.

And so in the Atenco conflict, the shadow of the Zapatistas loomed over the Fox administration. Indeed Zapata-inspired was everywhere in the Atenco rebellion.

The residents began to govern themselves autonomously through Popular Assemblies (similar to the Community Assemblies in Argentina). In a gesture of both respect and economic necessity, they declared themselves an ‘Autonomous Municipality in Rebellion’ on Dec. 31, 2001, marking the eighth anniver-sary of the Zapata Uprising.

Election took a dramatic turn on July 11. A hundred campesinos went to demonstrate in a nearby town where the state governor was preparing a speech. The federal police ambushed the delegation, seriously injuring several and hauling 11 off to the state jail, including two ‘leaders.’

In response, the campesinos in Atenco rose up, fought pitch battles armed with molotov cocktails and machetes, burnt police vehicles and took 19 government officials and police hostages in exchange for the prison-ers. A siege developed as 3,000 police and soldiers sur-rounded the town.

For three days, the standoff continued, riveting the nation. Solidarity came in the form of the formation of a ‘Peace Cordon’ with volunteers from a wide range of local civil society organizations, campesino groups, trade unions, human rights activists and students. Other com-munities in the region blocked roads in wildcat actions.

On July 15, the government made a tactical retreat and Fox offered the rebels a better financial deal.

David Pajaro, spokesperson for the Atenco delegation spelled out their total rejection: “Not for 7 pesos a square meter, nor for 700 pesos…”

The victory in Atenco has the prospect of kickstarting an even greater wave of anti-globalization protest across the nation. As one masked rebel, the barbies said, “What is happening in Atenco is like the effect of one, two, many Chiapases.”
Top U.S. military advisers, international leaders, economists, and former United Nations weapons inspectors have criticized the Bush administration's plan to topple Saddam Hussein's regime by sending upwards of 250,000 troops into Iraq.

With widespread support, Bush has been desperately seeking a connection between Iraq and the U.S. To argue otherwise is dishonest," says Hans von Sponeck, former UN humanitarian aid coordinator for Iraq.

The Washington Post reported recently that the U.S. has not identified a "single factory or lab known to be actively producing [weapons of mass destruction]."

But former CIA Director James Woolsey warned CBS News that Saddam Hussein "poses the same threat to anyone in the region, let alone in the United States." The preemptive "will not only backfire, it will lead to Iraq's invasion and occupation," he said.

Economists are also concerned. The New York Times estimates a full rein of the Gulf War would cost the U.S.$80 billion, roughly six times the $13 billion the U.S. spent on the Gulf War when Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Japan picked up most of the $60 billion tab. And if Hussein is overthrown, the Pentagon estimates 25,000 to 50,000 troops may be needed for a decade or more to maintain stability.

"The U.S. Department of Defense and the CIA know perfectly well that today's Iraq poses no threat to anyone in the region, let alone in the United States. To argue otherwise is dishonest," says von Sponeck, former UN humanitarian aid coordinator for Iraq.

"The Washington Post reported recently that the U.S. has not identified a "single factory or lab known to be actively producing [weapons of mass destruction]."

But former CIA Director James Woolsey warned CBS News that Saddam Hussein "poses the same threat to anyone in the region, let alone in the United States." The preemptive "will not only backfire, it will lead to Iraq's invasion and occupation," he said.

Economists are also concerned. The New York Times estimates a full rein of the Gulf War would cost the U.S.$80 billion, roughly six times the $13 billion the U.S. spent on the Gulf War when Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Japan picked up most of the $60 billion tab. And if Hussein is overthrown, the Pentagon estimates 25,000 to 50,000 troops may be needed for a decade or more to maintain stability.

SHARON, BUSH, U.S. COMPANIES SUED FOR ATROCITIES IN ISRAEL USING U.S. AID

Solidarity International for Human Rights, a Palestinian-American organization, has filed a lawsuit against Israel and the Israeli-American shareholder, President George Bush, Secretary of State Colin Powell and the United States defense contractors.

The suit, invoking the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, demands that the President and Secretary of State "cease providing military assistance to Israel until they have reported to Congress the misuse of American military aid, which is used, inter alia, to pay the salaries of teachers and health workers.

The tactics are always the same: Israel provides some documents presumably linking the PA to terror. Any aid to the PA is, by Israel’s definition, aid to terror.

"UNRWA's aid is the next target. The Relief Agency has become a major source of food for Palestinians — not only in the refugee camps, but also in towns and villages. The amount of food UNRWA supplies has increased four-fold in two years. Recently, "Israel has begun a campaign in the United States and the United Nations to urge a reconsideration of the way the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, which runs the Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza, operates."

Israel charges that UNRWA workers simply ignored the fact that Palestinian organizations were turning the camps into terrorist bases and it is demanding that UNRWA's funding could seriously disrupt its operations; its "defensive Shield" plan was fully spelled out in the Israeli media back in March 2001, soon after Sharon entered office.

"The new stage of Israel's 'separation' can no longer be compared to the Apartheid of South Africa. As Ronnie Kasrils, South Africa's Minister of Water Affairs, said in an interview with Al Ahram Weekly, "the South African apartheid regime never engaged in the sort of repression Israel is inflicting on the Palestinians." We are witnessing the daily invisible killing of the sick and wounded being deprived of medical care, the weak who cannot survive in the new poverty conditions, and those who are bound to reach starvation.

"The Palestinian people are fighting for their freedom. The crimes of Palestinian terror do not remove our culpability for our own crimes."

Before Oslo, as well, there was a wave of horrible terror attacks. But at that time, after each such attack, the call was heard: Get out of the territories! Then it was still understood that, when you leave people no hope, there is no way to stop the madness of suicide bombing. It is not too late to get out of the territories."

A version of this article appeared in Yedioth Aharonot, June 30, 2002.

"DUH... IT'S HOT:" GLOBAL TEMPERATURES SET RECORD HIGHS

The first six months of the year were the second-warmest ever and average global temperatures in 2002 could be the highest recorded in 130 years, according to the British Meteorological Office.

Global temperatures were 1.03 Fahrenheit higher than the long-term average of about 59 Fahrenheit in the period from January to June. In the nearly 150 years since recording began, only in 1998 has the difference been higher, 1.08 Fahrenheit, and that was caused by the influence of the El Nino weather phenomenon.

The figures also showed that the northern hemisphere had its warmest half year, with temperatures 1.31 Fahrenheit above the long-term average.
On June 26, Jordan's King Abdullah II issued a royal decree pardoning former parliamentarian Toujan Faisal, who had been sentenced on May 16 to 18 months in jail for "sedition and libel" and "spreading information deemed harmful to the reputation of the state.

Faisal was detained in March after accusing Prime Minister Ali Abu Ragheb, in an open letter, of "benefiting personally" from a government decision to double car insurance premiums, in one of a series of temporary laws called "essential" to the country's security. Wasn't it curious, she asked, that Abu Ragheb's family dominates the car insurance industry in Jordan?

It took the arrest of the outspoken Faisal, who is Jordan's only elected female deputy (1993-1997), to attract international attention to the dramatically deteriorating civil and political liberties in Jordan. The kingdom remains one of Washington's favorite Arab countries, a moderate, mostly Muslim country whose ruler is more fluent in English than in Arabic.

It has democratized "enough," legalizing political parties and holding elections, but manipulating the electoral system to prevent opposition voices from gaining any real power and quashing anti-American and anti-Israeli demonstrations. Jordanians are eager to support the U.S. in its wide-ranging and ill-defined "war on terrorism" in exchange for more foreign aid. Yet as Washington calls for democracy in the Middle East, it's turning a blind eye toward the deterioration of political freedoms in what should be a model for a moderate, democratic Arab nation.

BRIEF LIBERAL EXPERIMENT

Jordan's most recent experiment with democratization began under the late King Hussein in 1989, after an International Monetary Fund-led structural adjustment program sparked a series of riots. The regime opted for limited political liberalization as a way of channeling and deflating the dissent.

Although the initial openings were quite promising, the retreat began in 1994, when Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel. Since then, civil and political rights outlooks in the United Nations and the National Charter have been steadily revoked. "Free and fair" elections are manipulated through changes in the elections law. Civil society organizations are pressured to avoid dealing with "sensitive" issues such as human rights, sanctions against Iraq, press freedoms and tensions between Jordan's majority Palestinian population, many of whom live in refugee camps, and the East Bank tribes that make up the regime's support base.

With King Hussein's death in early 1999 and Abdullah II's subsequent ascent to the throne, the retreat from democratization accelerated. To solidify his own regime, the young king has relied on tribal support and the secret police, alienating not only Palestinians but also many long-time supporters and former government officials committed to democratic reform.

With the outbreak of the second intifada in September 2000, the government began to violently repress hundreds of demonstrations throughout the country in support of the besieged Palestinians. Dozens were arrested and hundreds detained, while at least two protesters were killed in clashes with security forces. In June 2001, the parliament was dissolved in preparation for the elections in November.

PRE-SEPT. 11 SHACKLES

Long before the Sept. 11 attacks, it was clear that Jordan's government did not intend to hold the elections on schedule. The government was anxious that the intifada was reverberating in Jordan, particularly among the Palestinians. Combined with the potential for a U.S. attack on Iraq, the regime remains concerned that holding elections in such a climate will not return the desired pro-government assembly.

Previously, Washington punished Jordan for its neutrality by cutting off aid during the 1990-91 Gulf War. King Abdullah II will not make the same mistake, but neither does he want to face the thousands of Jordanians who will protest another U.S. assault on Baghdad.

In August 2001, the government began to effectively shackle the few remaining democratic practices. Press freedoms were harshly restricted, newspapers were closed and editors arrested for defying restrictions on content. A new public order law requires organizations to publicize events a permit three days in advance. Most requests are denied. Organizers are now held liable for any property damage deemed by the state to be linked to the event. Despite these restrictions, political parties, professional associations and other civil society organizations continue to organize demonstrations. As recently as April, thousands of Jordanians rallied in opposition to Israel's reoccupation of Palestinian lands.

JORDAN POSTJERT 11

Sept. 11 provided Jordan with a Washington-friendly justification for increased political repression. Since parliament was dissolved a year ago, more than 100 temporary laws have been passed. The next parliament is supposed to review each law and may accept or reject them. But elections are still on hold, and changes in the electoral law give greater representation to traditional pro-regime regions of the country. Even so, the appointed upper house, still controlled by the conservative former prime minister Zayd Rif'ai, can veto decisions taken by the elected lower house.

Political parties have been frustrated with these changes, and argue that the reforms were made through unconstitutional procedures. Repeatedly, the Opposition Parties Higher Command Council saw its challenges to the elections law rejected by the High Court of Justice without even being heard. Most recently, the High Court rejected a lawsuit brought by a number of political parties against the elections law. The Court stated that for a case to stand trial, the plaintiff(s) must be directly affected; political parties, in the justices’ view, are not directly affected by the elections law.

The resort to these scores of temporary laws further entrenches the traditional elite — a move clearly intended by King Abdullah II to consolidate his authority, which is far less grounded in popular support than his father's. As a result, all activities that contradict the views of the state are restricted or suppressed. The constitution allows for temporary laws only in urgent situations to protect the security of the state, when it would be dangerous to wait for Parliament to reconvene. Was this the case in the decision to cease restrictions on the foreign purchase of land in Jordan? Did internal security require a temporary law that prevented civil servants from signing petitions that might "potentially harm the integrity of the state"?

Above all, the regime has sought to quash all political dissent — in newspapers, through political parties, in demonstrations and rallies, or through legal civil society organizations. Perhaps the last remaining outlet is to vote with the pocketbook by boycotting American products in protest of U.S. policies. This has frustrated the government, because it cannot force consumers to purchase certain products or retailers to sell them.

Most troubling, violations of a wide range of laws are now referred to the State Security Court. Any activity that potentially threatens the integrity of the state — a vague notion — is prosecutable under the harsh penal code. Acts that threaten state security now include journal- izing, illegal public gatherings (of six or more people) and any criticism of the royal family, the government, its allies and "friendly" countries. Moreover, a 2001 temporary amendment to the State Security Court law denied citizens convicted of misde- meanors under the penal code the right to appeal.

HOPE FOR DEMOCRACY?

Toujan Faisal's lawyers sought to contest precisely this temporary law, which prevented her right to appeal to the Higher Court of Justice. More than 150 prominent politicians and political activists signed a letter to the king calling for her immediate release. Just one day prior to the royal pardon, Faisal's lawyers lost their challenge to the constitutionality of the temporary law. Yet while the pardon released Faisal from her penalty, her conviction stands.

Within this context, it is both fortunate and unfortunate that Faisal was let go. Her case drew international attention to the deterioration of civil and political freedoms in Jordan, as numerous international human rights activists circulated petitions calling for her release. Faisal's con- viction in State Security Court on flimsy grounds was an embarrassment to the regime. While her supporters are relieved that she has been released, amendments to the penal code and the scores of temporary laws maintain a stranglehold on political freedoms in Jordan. In this sense, Faisal's release might lessen international attention to Jordan's retreat from democratization.

As with government critic and pro-democracy advocate Saad Eddin Ibrahim's arrest and conviction in Egypt in 2000, Toujan Faisal's case highlighted the severe restrictions on political expression and civil rights.

If democracy in the Arab world is really on the State Department agenda, Jordan stands as a test case. But Jordan more closely embodies how the Bush administra- tion talks about promoting democracy, and then declines to criticize its "moderate" Arab allies' failure to democ- ratize in practice.

Reprinted with permission of Middle East Report and Information Project (MERIP). For the full article, go to www.merip.org. Jillian Schwedler, chair of MERIP's board of directors, teaches politics at the University of Maryland.
35 YEARS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES? U.S. SAYS OK

The US is moving to reiterate ties with Indonesia's armed forces, drawing sharp condemnation from human rights groups who challenge that the armed forces are still committing atrocities. Existing U.S. law cuts aid to the Indonesian military for its role in the devastation of East Timor, following its vote for independence in 1999.

Visiting Indonesia on August 2, Secretary of State Colin Powell announced that the administration would seek $50 million from Congress to "strengthen Indonesia's capacity to deal with terrorism." This follows on the heels of a July vote by the Senate appropriations committee to remove the ban on military training.

"This is a very dangerous move," said Munir, the founder of KontraS, Indonesia's most prominent human rights organization. Munir points to the army's support for the brutal 32-year dictatorship of former President Suharto and the 1999 abuses in East Timor as evidence. Activists also denounce the security forces for resuming a bloody crackdown against separatists in Aceh province this year that has left hundreds of civilians dead.

John Miller, spokesman for the New York-based East Timor Action Network says the move to resume military aid to Indonesia "effectively gives U.S. backing to continued gross violations of human rights."

NIGERIAN WOMEN ROCK CHEVRON TEXACO

Undocumented Nigerian women lifted a siege of four key oil flow stations July 26 when Chevron/Texaco agreed to provide more jobs, business loans, schools and hospitals for their communities. It marked the second time in less than two weeks that the world's fourth-largest oil company had bowed to the demands of local activists in the Niger Delta.

The peaceful, all-women protests were a departure for the oil-rich Niger Delta, where armed men frequently use kidnapping and sabotage against oil multinational companies.

"History has been made," Esther Tolari told the Associated Press. "Our culture is a patriarchal society. For women to do this and achieve what we have is out of the ordinary."

BERENSON TRIAL GOES TO INTERNATIONAL COURT

The Peruvian government has decided that an Organization of American States' court will decide the case of New Yorker Lori Berenson, according to Reuters. Berenson was arrested in 1995 under ousted President Fujimori laws is preposterous...Lori should be released a resolution favorable to the interests of Peru."

"to defend the Peruvian state with the aim of obtaining The government, however, says it has appointed lawyers member state Peru, could order her freed or retried in Peru. The court, whose decision would be legally binding on environmental groups on whether to honor some 40,000 signatures collected by Krasnoyarsk Region residents hoping to force a referendum on the plan to import some 20 tons of spent nuclear fuel to this region. Last February, the Krasnoyarsk electoral commission disqualified 31,700 signatures and threw out the referendum.

Shortly after the protestors began putting up the first of the tents and hanging a banner that said "A new Chernobyl? No Thanks!" the camp — which is in a glade a quarter-mile from the road to the closed nuclear city of Zheleznozgor, was visited by Col. Alexander Bychkukov of the Russian Regional Police. Flanked by three lieutenants, Bychkukov asked to meet with protest leaders and spoke for some minutes with EcoDefence! co-chairman Vladimir Slivyak.

"Slivyak characterized Bychkukov's familiar manner as "intimidating." "It was obvious that he knew much more about me than he could have from a few phone calls [we had]," said Slivyak. "It was evident that he had looked deep into whatever file he has on me."

After Bychkukov left, a patrol of some 40 officers was brought by bus and posted across the highway from the campsite. Another 10 officers were posted in vehicles on the other side of the campsite and some even patrolled the woods surrounding it. Later the same day, a busload of police officers entered the camp and copied down each protestor's passport information.

It was difficult for many of the younger campers — many of whom are new to Russia's environmental movement — to understand why the police would take such an interest. Trying to assuage the group's fears, Slivyak said, "We have to understand that, by standing up against imports of nuclear waste to Russia, we are to some degree taking of my own friends call me a spy," she said.

Among the protestors holed up in tents were the Dubinin sisters, Darya, 18, and Olga, 16, who had grown up in the closed city of Seversk, home to two of Russia's last remaining three plutonium reactors — the other one at Zheleznogorsk. They became involved with the environmental movement when the bottom fell out of their hometown.

"We saw the depression of the people and of the environment settle in our city and we wanted to find out more," said Darya.

"Our parents used to work in the nuclear industry [in Seversk] and when they lost their jobs, not only was there no money, but we found out the cheaper pleasures like swimming were off limits because the water was too polluted from the nuclear reactors."

"It's as if," her sister Olga rejoined, "everything became known at once — there's no money to pay your parents — who used to be respected in this society — and the land and the water are polluted, so you can't even enjoy that."

To the people of Beryozovka, down the road from Zheleznogorsk, the ravages caused to the environment, and particularly the central Siberian Yenisey River, are an open secret.

"Swimming in the Yenisey?" said one villager who identified himself only as Vladimir. "Forget it — unless you know of the two or three places you can go around here."

But worse, said Vladimir is the fishing. "I drove in a 2000-kilometre circle trying to find a place on the Yenisey or one of its tributaries to fish, places my father and I once caught pike, salmon," he said. "I got nothing on this trip — guppies mostly — and wore tires."

WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF THE INDPYDEN DEN T???
Por Silvia Arana

Dice el economista chileno Patricio Maltravieso, que el gobierno de su país “ha elegido gobernar para los empresarios y construir una democracia con una cascara griega, es decir sin ninguna de sus grandezas, pero con esclavos”. Esto se aplica a la mayoría de los gobiernos latinoamericanos cuyas “democracias” entregan los patrimonios nacionales al capital extranjero, enriqueciendo a las clases altas y hambreeando a sus pueblos. Algunos ejemplos y una propuesta alternativa.

URUGUAY

Los últimos arreglos pactados entre el gobierno y el FMI, que aumentaron considerablemente la deuda externa, tuvieron como fin financiar la disputa de los bancos causada por la fuga de capitales al exterior. Para salvar a los bancos privados y extranjeros, el Estado los ha intervenido, concentrando un 70% de la actividad bancaria. El salvataje de la banca privada le ha costado al pueblo uruguayo más de 600 millones de dólares. El FMI ha dado los préstamos con la condición de que los bancos sean devueltos a sector privado en menos de seis meses. El Estado ha entrado en una cesación de pagos a ministerios, administración y otros organismos, y también en el pago a los acreedores. El fantasma de la suspensión del pago de salarios y jubilaciones es cada vez más real. Esta situación favorece a los organismos financieros internacionales y EE.UU. Si Uruguay no puede pagar los intereses de la deuda, éstos le exigirán que pague con las empresas del Estado. El gobierno parece dispuesto a privatizar a pesar de la oposición de las fuerzas populares.

CHILE

El precio del dólar ha subido, la entrada de capitales extranjeros ha sido negativa durante los cuatro primeros meses del año y el valor de las empresas más importantes cotizadas, sin ningún tipo de escrúpulos nacionales al capital extranjero, enriqueciendo a los latinoamericanos cuyas “democracias” entregan los patrimonios nacionales al capital extranjero, enriqueciendo a las clases altas y hambreeando a sus pueblos. Algunos ejemplos y una propuesta alternativa.

BRASIL

El país más poderoso de la región padece uno de los problemas de endeudamiento y asfixia creados por el FMI, tras una crisis que consumó 3.600 millones de dólares. Hasta esa alta la totalidad del déficit en cuenta corriente era financiado por inversión extranjera, que poco a poco se sustituyó por préstamos que incrementaron la deuda externa a 39 mil millones de dólares. El índice de desempleo es del 14% y no es mayor porque trabajadores que cobraban 300 mil pesos (equivale a 429 dólares) por mes, hoy aceptan la mitad. Los “logros” del modelo neoliberal en Chile, se consiguieron con nueve millones de pobres y cientos de miles de desocupados. Y con la venta del patrimonio público, como la desnacionalización del 70% del cobre, la principal riqueza del país.

ARGENTINA

Los lineamientos económicos iniciados por la dictadura militar argentina y continuados por los gobiernos democráticos consistieron en crear una enorme deuda externa y al mismo tiempo destruir la industria nacional y privatizar las empresas estatales. Hoy, la mitad de la población vive en pobreza y es uno de los 15 países con por mayor distribución de la riqueza en el mundo. Hay un 25 por ciento de la población desempleada y un 25% de la población que gana menos de 15 dólares. El índice de desempleo es del 14% y no es mayor porque trabajadores que cobraban 300 mil pesos (equivalentes a 429 dólares) por mes, hoy aceptan la mitad. Los “logros” del modelo neoliberal en Brasil, fueron conseguidos con nueve millones de pobres y cientos de miles de desocupados. Y con la venta del patrimonio público, como la desnacionalización del 70% del cobre, la principal riqueza del país.

Si quieres colaborar en EL INDEPENDIENTE, envía un email a: imc-nyc-espanol@lists.indymedia.org o visita a una de nuestras reuniones en Nueva York los martes a las 7.

Si quieres colaborar en EL INDEPENDIENTE, envía un email a: imc-nyc-espanol@lists.indymedia.org o visita a una de nuestras reuniones en Nueva York los martes a las 7.

Una cacerelera pide para su jubilación.

Los destinatarios de un plan de reindustrialización deben ser los desempleados, trabajadores, agricultores, comerciantes y cooperativistas, pero nunca los grandes empresarios. Los trabajadores son los principales artífices de un plan viable de reconstrucción económica y en su lucha por prohibir los despidos, reabrir las empresas y distribuir las horas de trabajo ya han desarrollado importantes experiencias de gestión directa.

Nuestra propuesta propicia, a mediano plazo, la expropiación del conjunto de las empresas privatizadas, sin ningún tipo de indemnización, para remodelar por completo su funcionamiento poniéndolo al servicio del pueblo, abaratando las tarifas, asegurando la inversión y reclamando las ganancias y la renta dentro del circuito productivo nacional.

Un plan productivo con un programa de inversiones públicas decididamente socialmente y orientado hacia la reabsorción de la fuerza de trabajo desocupada. Debería desarrollarse un plan de recuperación de las economías regionales sacudidas por la decadencia productiva y la situación generalizada de endeudamiento y asífica impositiva e implementarse una política de recolocación de tierras y de reforma agraria.
El nombre “Bonita” le queda bien a esta fruta casi impecable expuesta en los anaqueles de Costco y de otras tiendas y supermercados del país. La marca Bonita pertenece a Álvaro Noboa, el principal exportador de plátanos de Ecuador, quien envía más plátanos a Estados Unidos que a cualquier otro país. Pero Bonita no es la palabra que usan cientos de trabajadores para describir su experiencia cultivando, cosechando y empaquetando esa fruta perfecta.

El pasado mes de abril, 1,400 de esos trabajadores organizaron un sindicato en siete plantaciones de Noboa en la Hacienda Los Alamos. Pedían un aumento del sueldo. El promedio de sueldos es inferior al mínimo establecido por ley, y querían reconocimiento legal para su sindicato, un derecho reconocido en las leyes de Ecuador.

Casi ninguno de los 150.000 trabajadores bananeros de Ecuador, la mayor fuerza laboral en esta industria en América Latina, está sindicalizado, y la reacción de la empresa fue inmediata. Unos 124 trabajadores fueron despedidos de inmediato A otros de carácter temporal les fue comunicado que ya no había trabajo para ellos. Esfuerzos para negociar con la empresa no dieron resultados y después de que otros tres activistas sindicales fueran despedidos, los trabajadores iniciaron una huelga el 6 de mayo. Nueve días después, en la noche del 15 de mayo, 400 hombres enmascarados y armados con rifles llegaron a una de las plantaciones en huelga en camiones de la empresa Noboa. Invadieron las casas de los huelguistas y robaron pertenencias de muchos de los trabajadores. Jan Nimm, una observadora escocesa de BananaLink (organización internacional de apoyo a los trabajadores de la industria) dijo que los huelguistas le contaron lo siguiente: “abrieron las puertas a balazos, sacaron a los trabajadores de sus camas, arrastrándolos y golpeándolos. Semidesnudos... los llevaron en camiones a la radio donde fueron obligados a colarse boca abajo con las manos en la espalda...” Cuando los huelguistas quisieron resistirse fueron baleados. A la noche siguiente, con las manos en la espalda...” Cuando los huelguistas quisieron resistirse fueron baleados. A la noche siguiente, con las manos en la espalda...”

Una venganza muy conocida en el mundo de los trabajadores de la industria: emplean a las fuerzas armadas para acabar con cualquier huelga y cualquier resistencia. Y si falla eso, el primer plan de acción es el desalojo. Una vez que los trabajadores y sus familias han sido desalojados, se les pide que se sumen a la fuerza laboral en las plantaciones de Bonita. Al día siguiente, 260 miembros de la plantación Río Culebra, que vivían en las casas de la compañía ya habían sido contratados para reiniciar la producción.

El nombre Noboa significa poder en Ecuador. Álvaro Noboa. El mayor atractivo de Ecuador es la falta de sindicatos. Más del 90 por ciento de los trabajadores de Colombia y Panamá están sindicalizados, y 40 por ciento en Guatemala. Solamente Costa Rica, con el seis por ciento de los trabajadores bananeros sindicalizados se acerca al minúsculo uno por ciento de trabajadores ecuatorianos que están organizados (1650 personas). El éxito de la huelga actual en Ecuador contribuirá más que a duplicar el número de trabajadores sindicalizados. También le quitará a los empleadores la ventaja del trabajo bajo salario. Además, los sindicatos desafiarán el actual sistema de trabajo por contrato, que casi no existe en otros países productores. O sea que mientras todos los trabajadores del plátano en diferentes países se beneficiarán si FENACLE gana la huelga, los productores buscan evitar dicho triunfo, no solamente Álvaro Noboa.

En esta huelga de Noboa, lo que más está en juego es el porvenir de los hijos de los huelguistas. El trabajo combinado de dos adultos por familia cubre las necesidades básicas. ¿El pescado que compró estaba pasado? Es el derecho de cualquier consumidor de exigir que el alimento que compre esté en buen estado. Pero en varias ocasiones, los productos no son precisamente de la calidad esperada.

El Departamento de Sanidad de la ciudad de Nueva York ofrece dos teléfonos para presentar quejas. Si la queja va dirigida contra supermercados, bodegas o comercios, se debe llamar al 718-722 7576. Si es delicios o restaurantes, al 212.676 1600. Simplemente se les pregunta su nombre y el del comercio donde les vendieron el producto/comida de mala calidad. El Departamento manda a un inspector para que verifique la calidad y las condiciones sanitarias. En caso de no ser correctas, se procede por vía administrativa a sancionar al comercio en cuestión.

Otra de las opciones que existen es la vía legal. Se trata del procedimiento de Small Claims Court (Corte para reclamar menores). En Nueva York, el límite para reclamar mediante este sistema es de 2000 dólares. La clave de este proceso es su sencillez al tratarse esencialmente de un juicio oral en el que una mera descripción escrita de los hechos basta para iniciar el proceso, incluyendo los mismísimos hechos.

¿El pescado que compró estaba pasado? Es el derecho de cualquier consumidor de exigir que el alimento que compró esté en buen estado. Pero en varias ocasiones, los productos no son precisamente de la calidad esperada. El Departamento de Sanidad de la ciudad de Nueva York ofrece dos teléfonos para presentar quejas. Si la queja va dirigida contra supermercados, bodegas o comercios, se debe llamar al 718-722 7576. Si es delicioso o restaurantes, al 212.676 1600. Simplemente se les pregunta su nombre y el del comercio donde les vendieron el producto/comida de mala calidad. El Departamento manda a un inspector para que verifique la calidad y las condiciones sanitarias. En caso de no ser correctas, se procede por vía administrativa a sancionar al comercio en cuestión.

Una de las opciones que existen es la vía legal. Se trata del procedimiento de Small Claims Court (Corte para reclamar menores). En Nueva York, el límite para reclamar mediante este sistema es de 2000 dólares. La clave de este proceso es su sencillez al tratarse esencialmente de un juicio oral en el que una mera descripción escrita de los hechos basta para iniciar el proceso, incluyendo los mismísimos hechos.