

FOOD, FAMINE AND THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS

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In the last few years a growing number of radical social critics have been studying and writing on the world food crisis that emerged in 1972. They have pored over this period of grain deals and high prices in the West and of starvation in Africa and Asia, trying to understand how the food surpluses of the 1960's turned into the scarcity of the 1970's. Their aim has been to identify causes and locate responsibility so that political pressure can be brought to bear in the proper place to achieve lasting food security. Despite the fact that this work has produced much useful information and has dispelled a number of dangerous myths, it has reached an impasse in failing to identify adequately the sources of the crisis and consequently in pointing at times in directions of struggle that are now counterproductive. We *can* move beyond this impasse, but we must first clearly identify its source and isolate it from the concrete progress which has been achieved.

On the positive side, the most important results of recent research have been: first, to dispel the myth that the food crisis is simply a natural phenomenon due to weather or natural catastrophe; second, to destroy the argument that its origin lies in a growth of population which has outstripped the growth in food supply; third, to demonstrate that there is and has long been more than enough food produced to supply the basic nutritional needs of everyone on earth; fourth, and most importantly, to locate the sources of the crisis in the sphere of the political economy of capitalism. The weaknesses of existing analyses, however, lie in the tendency to focus on a variety of particular institutional arrangements in this sphere without undertaking an analysis of the basic class relations of which all institutions are moments. Radical social critics who do not reason in terms of Marxist categories have tended to discover the causes of the food crisis in the uneven distribution of wealth and the means of production, especially land and other agricultural inputs. They tend to place responsibility for this unequal distribution and the resulting poverty and malnutrition with big, often multinational, business which monopolizes resources, exploits workers and small farmers, uses ecology-destroying, capital-intensive technologies, and, because it is profit-maximizing, produces only for those who can pay (often in distant export markets), thus undermining the welfare of the poor.¹

Marxist critics, of course, agree with such attacks on corporate agribusiness but also identify "imperialism"—especially U.S. imperialism—as a further culprit. Imperialism is generally understood as the international expansion of capitalist business backed by the power of the nation-state.² Common to both of these perspectives—and herein lies their basic weakness—is that capitalism is seen as the only active force. Albeit evil, it emerges as an expanding, dynamic, world-encircling power. The agricultural workers and consumers of the world, by contrast, are mainly portrayed as divided, passive victims (such as in the Sahel) or beneficiaries (better-fed Western workers) of capitalist growth.

Accordingly, the articles and books these critics produce are mainly indignant but essentially pessimistic dirges recounting the horrors which multinational corporations or foreign aid agencies inflict on the world—followed by unconvincing calls to resistance and revolt.³ It is at the very moment when these writers call for revolt that the weakness of their analysis reveals itself. For any thoughtful observer is perplexed by the yawning gulf between the world of hapless workers described and the romantic images of a reformist food movement overthrowing multibillion-dollar corporations, or of a revolutionary vanguard party suddenly leading all those victims in a dramatic seizure of today's Winter Palaces. The contradiction is glaring, and it is no surprise that people do not flock behind the banners based on these analyses. But we must be careful now: the origin of the contradiction does not lie in the portrayal of capitalism as an oppressive force—there is little doubt about that. The advocates of the usual approaches do not see (or care to ignore) the power of workers and the way in which the growth of that power forces capital to change, to reorganize itself technologically and institutionally both at the local level and internationally. Once we begin to recognize this, we can begin to understand that poverty and hunger are not just offshoots of capitalist development, but are functional to capital in its attempts to control working class power. Underdevelopment, like development, is a strategy as well as a process.

The call for struggle for food and against hunger is very much to the point. But it is not a cry in the wilderness. What so many radical social critics ignore is that workers have been and continue to struggle for these very ends. *It is precisely those struggles which have eliminated so much hunger in the world.* The workers of the developed world are not better fed than the workers of the Sahel because of capital's benevolence or because they have been "bought off", but because of their own struggles: they, not capital, forced an end to most malnutrition in North America and Western Europe. This is certainly not to say that workers elsewhere have not struggled, but it is only by building on concrete successes that we can all gain the power to overcome the food crisis and eliminate the hunger that remains. It is only by analyzing how struggles over the production and distribution of food have developed and how they have circulated

that we can evaluate the efficacy of alternative strategies. It is the aim of this article: first, to suggest some elements of a class analysis of food—how to grasp food as a moment of the class struggle—and second, to apply those elements in a brief examination of the major postwar periods of working class struggle and capitalist development throughout the world. This involves a look at both the 1950's and the 1960's, though the major emphasis is on the current crisis. In this article I can only present the beginnings of an adequate analysis, but I hope it is enough to persuade others to approach the "food problem" in a new way—one which by emphasizing a working class perspective will lead to effective strategies in the future. 4

II.

FOOD AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

To undertake a class analysis of food, one must begin with the realization that there are always two sides to the issue, two perspectives corresponding to the two basic classes in capitalist society. Yet at the same time, the two sides are not separate but interact as aspects of the interacting classes. As each side struggles for its own ends, those struggles impinge on and force changes on the other. For the working class, food is above all our basic consumption good—a fundamental requirement for us to live and enjoy life. For capital, food is primarily a commodity like others, and the organization of the production and distribution of food has made agriculture a sector of capitalist industry in which people are put to work and exploited.

Exactly because the working class seeks both sufficient quantity and variety of food to satisfy our desires, capital understands that its control over the production and distribution of food gives it considerable control over workers. The fundamental power of food for capital is the power to force the working class to work to get it.⁵ The need of the working class for food has thus led capital to make scarcity—hunger—a basic ingredient of its social order, so much so that hunger, or the threat of it, is endemic to capitalism. Ultimately, capital attempts to pose "no work, no food" as the condition of life for the working class and so convert all means of subsistence into variable capital. This has been the case since the earliest history of capitalism. The story of primitive accumulation is in large part the story of the separation of workers from their land and thus from their ability to acquire food independently. Today the results are seen both in urban centers, where capital's control over distribution is exercised through retail outlets and prices, and in the agrarian hinterland, where that control is exercised through the manipulation of land.

But the working class is not passive before capital's possession of this power. It too is concerned with agriculture as an industry—both the technical aspects of food production, since it is a sector in which many of us are forced to work, and the quality and price of the product, since we all must consume it. In agricultural areas, the working class struggles to control food production in a variety of ways, including the fight for land; for parity, higher wages,

and better working conditions for agricultural wage-laborers; and even for the direct appropriation of crops. For urban workers, the issue of control means the power to determine the quantity and quality of output and consumption—a fact which points away from the usual notion of physical access to the means of production. The urban worker demands steady availability, high quality, and low price not only through consumer boycotts and ecology protests, but also in wage demands and direct appropriation through daily shoplifting and periodic looting.

The very existence of agriculture as a distinct industrial sector is an element of these struggles between the classes. For capital, the division of labor most basically serves as a division which weakens the working class, and that division begins with the separation of rural workers (food producers) from urban workers (food consumers).

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Price is the focus of the division here, since high income for farmers is made dependent on high output prices, which reduce non-farm real income, while high income for industrial workers is said to necessitate, among other things, high prices for farm equipment and inputs, which reduces farm real income. In general, this division is a hierarchical one (like all divisions in capital), with the income of urban (waged) workers being higher than that of rural (unwaged) workers. Yet at times, the working class either uses this division to fight for higher income by imposing rigidities or forces a recomposition through rural-urban migration.

Within the food-producing sector, the capitalist organization of work and compensation is quite varied and evolves according to the historical development of the class struggle. Food production is only partly based on wage-labor. In terms of numbers, far more important are the unwaged—the hundreds of millions of peasants and small farmers who work the land and the housewives who not only help grow but also generally process the food for consumption in the home. That agribusiness corporations which use wage-labor to grow, process, and distribute food are capitalist institutions is widely recognized. That the unwaged groups involved in food production and processing are not outside capital but integral to it has only recently been recognized. Selma James of the Wages for Housework movement has shown in two seminal articles how seeing housewives and peasants as unwaged parts of the working class is a positive statement about their relation to capital.⁶ Both rural and urban housewives who breast-feed and process food work at reproducing their own and their family's ability to work. That ability is mobilized by capital as labor-power in exchange for access to the means of subsistence (through wages, land, etc.), a portion of which is received

by the housewife through the mediation of her husband or the state (welfare). It is her unwaged condition which puts her in a weaker and dependent position vis-a-vis the waged husband.⁷

Like the housewife the peasantry works at reproducing labor-power, only under somewhat different circumstances. This labor-power, like that produced by the housewife, is only formally a "reserve" in relation to the waged. This is clearest where peasant labor-power is partially mobilized as part-time wage-labor, such as in the gold mines of South Africa. The villages to which such semi-waged workers return during part of the year are equivalent to the households in the cities. It is the domestic and agricultural work done in these villages to produce part of the worker's subsistence which permits capital to pay low wages. Thus the peasants who survive on the land with no wage at all mainly differ from the semi-waged by the higher proportion of time spent on self-reproduction as a "reserve army". Where peasants also produce a marketed surplus, the sale of the output to capital under conditions of unequal-exchange more closely resembles the relation between pieceworkers and their bosses than it does exchanges between independent capitalists. The income of such peasants is a function of the quality and quantity of output and is thus more akin to piece wages than to profit. In fact, the long, intense hours characteristic of piecework are usually found in peasant and small farm production, especially where the producer receives inputs from industrial capital (either directly in contract or putting-out schemes or indirectly through the market) and sells the output to that same capital.⁸ The surplus, of course, may also be expropriated by capital through ground rent, usury, or taxes. In conclusion, then, all of this unwaged labor is integral to the continued reproduction of capital. *The wageless are accumulated right along with the waged in the expanded reproduction of capital.* And yet it is not simply through their function in production that these wageless workers find their place in the working class, but rather it is through their struggles against capital that they have forcefully asserted their place in the class struggle and thus in theory.

Central to the struggles between capital and that part of the working class involved in agricultural production is the distribution of land. In Marx's *Capital*, land ownership under capitalism was analyzed as the province of landlords, and the use of land as the province of the capitalist who employs wage-labor. Land ownership is shown to give the landlord class a "right" to a portion of surplus value, namely rent.⁹ For Marx, and for his major interpreters in this area, Kautsky and Lenin, the development of agriculture in capital was essentially a one-way process of increasing transformation of precapitalist (unwaged) agrarian relations into wage relations—the supposed *sine qua non* of capitalism—along with the increasing concentration of land ownership in the hands of landlord/capitalists.

Today, after a century of new developments in the role of land distribution under capitalism, we can usefully modify Marx's perspective in the following way. The basic insight that land itself is not productive of value is, of course, still true. But as distribution of land has come under capital's direct control, it has become a central

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issue of struggle with the working class. For capital, land has become a fundamental tool in its attempt to divide the class, to pit the unwaged against the waged and the different groups of the unwaged against one another. For the working class in the countryside, land has become a 'guarantee' of income in an environment of low wages and extensive 'unemployment'. What recent decades have revealed is not only the fact that the struggle for land may be an important part of working class struggle, but also *the ways capital will often preserve, restore, or even create unwaged relations in various circumstances*. Particularly dramatic in this regard was the support of capital for far-reaching land reform in the early postwar period (see below). In Japan, Germany, and Taiwan, land was widely redistributed in response to peasant struggles. At the same time, the distribution of resources was made so uneven that a hierarchy was created among landholders, thus undercutting their unity.

The key issue in these struggles is the *availability for work*. If land concentration can generate an active reserve army when needed, it may be implemented; if the reserve army refuses to function as such, rejects work as the condition for eating, and turns to rural revolution, then capital may resort to land reform. The experience of recent years in both urban and rural areas as demonstrated that the unwaged often indeed make themselves not available for work. In fact, this unavailability (for waged work) became one of the key elements of the crisis of capital in the 1960's as blacks, women, and students in the West turned to rebellion instead of jobs, and peasants in many countries undertook guerrilla warfare rather than present themselves to capital for development.¹⁰

We now see how the struggle over the production and distribution of food is by no means one-sided: it is not simply a matter of capital oppressing workers, but also of worker struggles forcing capital to reorganize. This must also be seen as an international phenomenon. It was the success of waged workers in demanding higher wages and the success of peasants in Europe and family farmers in North America in demanding higher income and in resisting pressure to leave the land which helped to force capital to seek unwaged labor in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It was the struggle over the availability for work, as much as the search for raw materials and new markets, that forced capital to annex ever-larger portions of the globe. At the same time, the slave trade, colonialism,

and finally the "neocolonialism" of today, which have served to unite the world into a capitalist totality, have also ended up creating linkages between workers everywhere. The students of "imperialism" see only capital moving in the world. We must see the international character of the working class and the circulation of its struggles for more, better, and varied food. ¹¹

These are the fundamental politics of food in the struggle between capital and the working class over the conditions of production and consumption, over the conditions of life. Each side is active—sometimes on the offensive, sometimes on the defensive. The form of struggle depends on the particular characteristics of the division of labor and the organizational forms of work. It is the evolution of these struggles which explains the structure of the global "food system". As we will see in what follows, virtually all aspects of this system are moments of and are transformed by the class struggles, including not only technology, but even diet and the development of international trade.

The postwar evolution of the global struggle over food and the origin of the current world food crisis are sketched below in terms of three sequential periods of struggle: first, the early postwar period extending into the 1950's, in which capitalist plans for industrial reconstruction and development were confronted by a new surge of working class struggle throughout the world, including the postwar strike wave in the U.S., the anticolonial and revolutionary movements of Africa and Asia, and the growing power of workers and peasants against the state in the socialist countries. The failure to contain this wave through industrial development the exploitation of agriculture led to the second period—the Development Decade—which included investment in human capital and the Green Revolution, new pressures for farm centralization in the U.S. and Western Europe, and new investment in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The working class rejection of this global strategy through an international cycle of struggles in the 1960's and early 1970's brought on the third period: the present crisis.

III.

THE POSTWAR EMPHASIS ON INDUSTRY AND THE EXPLOITATION OF AGRICULTURE

The victories of the U.S. and the Soviet Union in World War II not only made both countries dominant in their respective spheres of influence, but gave both the role of overseeing postwar reconstruction and development. Planners in both countries were faced with the problem of launching a new cycle of growth and accumulation out of the devastation of war. Yet their problems nevertheless had marked differences. Whereas the Soviet planners had to direct reconstruction in areas (domestically and in Eastern Europe) where the working class had been decimated by war, occupation, and death camps, the U.S. planners were faced at home with a militant working class whose wartime struggles had greatly increased its power, and abroad with the problem of worker unrest in Western Europe and ex-colonial

Asia. In both East and West, the availability of food and the relation of agriculture to industrial development would be at the center of considerable class struggle.

THE U.S. AND POSTWAR EUROPE

Even before the war ended, it was obvious that the manipulation of food would play an important role in postwar class politics. In the U.S., the continuation during the war of working class struggle had impressed on planners the necessity of a full employment domestic recovery program to avoid another politically dangerous slump. This working class-imposed imperative (along with U.S. interests already established overseas) was behind U.S. efforts to guarantee economic stability abroad not only to create outlets for U.S. exports, but also to find areas in which restricted working class demands could allow investments to be made more easily.¹² As the Allied armies advanced through Europe and Asia, the military phase was followed by food relief and reconstruction to achieve just that stability. These programs of "human" reconstruction were launched not simply out of capitalist sympathy for the problems of refugees, famine, and epidemics, but because of the threat of European working class unrest at the end of the war.¹³

The major institutions for organizing postwar food planning at first appeared destined to be international ones. In 1943, two such organizations were created within the emerging United Nations system: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). Although the FAO was more comprehensive than UNRRA in its stated goals and was concerned with longer-run planning, it was to be the experience of UNRRA which would prevent the FAO from becoming the major focal point of capitalist food planning. Although UNRRA was set up officially as a multinational organization, its food supplies came through the Combined Food Board, which was controlled by the U.S. and Britain, and it was itself staffed primarily with officials of those two countries. That it was essentially a politically rather than humanitarian agency was clear from the outset. The meetings which led to its creation were held in late 1943 during the Bengal famine in India, which was still under British rule. When a delegate proposed a discussion of that famine, the British delegate in the chair ruled the suggestion out of order. Between one-and-a-half and three-and-a-half million people starved to death in Bengal.¹⁴

Once in operation, UNRRA not surprisingly channeled food and other relief supplies to the newly liberated areas according to clear political criteria. In Europe the bulk of the aid was sent where the threat of upheaval was greatest—Western rather than Eastern Europe and Russia. In Asia, relief mainly went to areas under Western control or areas in China controlled by the Nationalist Chinese rather than those held by the Red Army. Nevertheless, the distribution of this aid left a great deal to be desired in the eyes of U.S. officials. In China, especially, large amounts of UNRRA food, clothing, and equipment were sold by Kuomintang officials on the black market for private profit, thus wasting the political usefulness



of the material in the struggle. What food was not sold was used mainly to mobilize millions of Chinese in "reconstruction" projects that usually turned out to be quite useful to Chiang Kai-shek's military efforts—the most notable case being the redirection of the Yellow River to flood Communist areas.

This sort of difficulty in controlling UNRRA and the allocation and flow of food in China and elsewhere led the U.S. to limit its dependence on such multilateral bodies and rely instead on more easily controlled bilateral programs. This shift in policy was indicated in 1946 when the U.S. successfully opposed both the refunding of UNRRA and the proposals by FAO Director-General Sir John Orr and ex-UNRRA head F. LaGuardia for a new international organization (the World Food Board) to maintain reserves and regulate global food trade. This plan was opposed both by private U.S. groups and by Truman and his Cabinet.¹⁵ With the passing of UNRRA, food aid to mainland China and Chiang Kai-shek was supplied directly by the U.S. until the victory of the Red Army in 1949. In Western Europe, UNRRA aid was also replaced by U.S.-controlled relief, in this case the Marshall Plan.¹⁶ The plan was announced in 1947 and extended until 1952. A major component of its \$13 billion in subsidized U.S. exports was the use of food to stem worker unrest and promote reconstruction. This special support to capital in Europe allowed it to overcome United Front opposition in the decade following the war and to launch, in combination with U.S. investment, a new period of growth.

THE STRUGGLE OVER FOOD AND AGRICULTURE IN THE U.S.

The food resources for capital's strategy in Europe came from U.S. farm surpluses maintained through various price support policies. Such price subsidies have constituted an important part of U.S. capital's response to political pressures coming from both farm and non-farm workers. The growth of working class power in the 1930's and during the war forced capital to meet urban worker demands for cheap and plentiful food, just as it was forced to provide full employment and rising wage levels.¹⁷ This required a significant increase in farm productivity, which could only be accomplished by keeping farm income up through price supports—without the guarantee of which farmers would refuse to invest in productivity-raising new technologies. In all, the continuing increase in the access of the U.S. working class to a growing quantity and variety of food must be understood as the fruit of its struggles, not simply as a quirk of geography or capitalist calculation.

The Marshall Plan and other export subsidies added to the upsurge in domestic demand based on the rise of worker income through postwar wage gains. The result was a dramatic increase in food prices, which in turn fueled further industrial wage struggles. The food price index jumped from 106 in 1945 to 196 in 1948 as average hourly earnings in manufacturing increased from \$1.02 in 1945 to \$1.41 in 1949.¹⁸ In light of the price supports and a booming output, one might expect to find growing farm income and perhaps

even increased employment in the farm sector. What we do find, however, is that not only was average farm income over the period 1948-1958 35 percent *below* the 1942-1947 period, but there was a steady *reduction* in farm employment—a fall from 10.0 million in 1945 to 7.1 million in 1960.¹⁹ The explanation for this is in the way price supports helped mainly large farmers, while small farmers and farm workers were forced to leave the land. This outmigration was further encouraged by productivity-raising technological changes, especially in mechanization and agrichemicals.

The 1940's and 1950's was the period of the "American fertilizer revolution" caused by the rapid substitution of inorganic fertilizer for nitrogen-fixing legumes and manure. Fertilizer availability grew rapidly after the war as factories producing nitrogen for TNT bombs switched over to fertilizer production and the giant oil companies began investing in the expanding industry. Facilitating the development of new fertilizer varieties and the sales of the growing output (by persuading farmers to switch from traditional plant nutrients to inorganics) were the research and demonstration programs of the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Land Grant Colleges.²⁰ This shift added inorganic fertilizer to farm demand for fuel oils, gasoline, and electricity, thus increasing agricultural dependence on the energy sector and thereby converting the latter more than ever into a part of agribusiness. Although inorganic fertilizer is only marginally labor-displacing, the rising productivity it afforded to those who could pay for it helped to squeeze out those who



could not. This "revolution" was also the prelude for the subsequent fertilizer push into the Third World and the basis for the growing ecological problems of soil deterioration and water eutrophication associated with the inorganics.

The second major method of raising productivity was with labor-displacing machines. This change in agricultural technology developed partly in response to farm worker struggles dating back to the 19th Century. The mechanization of the harvesting of crops like cotton and sugar beet followed the earlier pattern in grain with reapers, threshers, etc. in the 1800's and tractorization in the 1900's. A major result of this trend was the massive migration of blacks out of the South. Overall, *capital* per unit of labor input in U.S. agriculture rose 5.6 percent annually from 1948 to 1966, while *output* per unit of farm labor input rose 6.2 percent in the years from 1948 to 1953 and 4.1 percent from 1953 to 1960.²¹

With the displacement of labor from the farm, there was also a rise in the off-farm food producing industry. This was partly the

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result of rising working class income and the demand for more readily available and varied foods, and partly the result of capital's manipulation of that demand through product differentiation, deceptive advertising, and product adulteration. On the one hand, the development of a non-farm food processing industry (plus expanded retail outlets, etc.) once again split that part of the working class involved in food production; on the other, it vastly increased the organic composition (capital-intensiveness) of food production as increasingly sophisticated machinery and technology were developed to produce new products and to replace processing workers whose factory conditions of work led to increased wage struggles. At the same time, the rise in working class income and the demand by housewives for labor-saving food-processing devices also led to a rapid increase in the use of refrigerators, home freezers, electrical appliances, etc. in the home as well as preprocessed, store-bought food. The manipulation of both factory-made foods (adulteration, etc.) and of housewives' kitchen work were part of the reason for the women's movement and the consumer revolt which surfaced in the 1960's to fight these aspects of capital's strategy.

The development of U.S. agriculture can only be accurately

understood within a global perspective. This is not only because of its export-orientation in circulation, but also because of the use of large numbers of imported alien workers in production. Although many of these workers have come from Asia (and more recently from the Middle East), the major source for "foreign" labor has been Mexico. U.S. capital has turned again and again to the pool of cheap labor in that country. Whenever rising wages in U.S. industry have made cheap labor scarce, the border has been opened and Mexicans have been imported in massive quantities. But when wages have been relatively low and labor supplies in the countryside have been plentiful (as in the Depression), the border has been closed, and Mexicans, made into scapegoats, have been deported in numbers as large as the ones in which they were imported. Perhaps nowhere else has a population of "peasants" been forced so clearly to serve as such a fluid reserve army. The continual flux of workers back and forth across the border has made them a classic case of mobile "abstract labor", whose cheapness has been based on the unwaged subsistence work carried out in the villages. At the same time, this process has clearly revealed the role of the national border as a tool for the control and manipulation of the working class.

In the postwar period, the upsurge in industrial strikes, the general rise in wages, and the renaissance of farm worker struggles in 1947 in California (the DiGeorgio strike) and elsewhere were followed by a massive expansion of the official *bracero* program. Beginning with 25,000 workers in 1948, the program expanded to more than 400,000 workers a year from 1956 to 1960.²² This official program of labor importation was supplemented with an even larger flow of illegal immigrants.²³ This large movement of workers into U.S. rural and even urban (East Los Angeles, etc.) areas was kept under control through the time-honored methods: exacerbating divisions between legal (higher waged) and illegal (lower waged) workers, rapid turnover, and political repression, as in Operation Wetback and the assault on organizing attempts in the fields and the barrios through the McCarren Acts.²⁴ These forms of immigration, both planned and unplanned, and terrorism, which presaged a similar situation with foreign workers in Europe in the 1960's, constituted more than an international link. It destroyed the First World (U.S.)-Third World (Mexico) ideological dichotomy as the unity of the Chicano working class on both sides of the border was forged (Aztlán)—a unity which would explode in various forms later.

THE U.S. AND REVOLUTIONARY ASIA

Meanwhile, in the former colonial countries, U.S. capital was faced with new areas of rural hinterland in which it now had influence but little familiarity. So it drew on its experience at home and in China to fashion a strategy aimed at facilitating the expansion of industrial capital based on tapping labor and surplus food from agriculture.²⁵ But the collapse of the colonial powers, which opened the way for the U.S., was caused not only by the war; it was also the result of the revolt of workers in the colonies, a revolt which threatened not only the success of U.S. expansion, but the very future

of capitalist control in many parts of the world. The rapid deterioration of the situation in China, soon to be followed by the victory of that phase of the peasant revolution, was undoing decades of largely private capitalist efforts to "save" the country. As the 1940's drew to a close, much of Southeast Asia was alive with rural guerrilla war: in Malaya the British were involved in an extensive fight with insurgents; in the Philippines the Hukbalahap were putting the U.S.-supported government on the defensive; in Korea rural uprisings were shaking another U.S.-created state apparatus; and in Indochina the French were rapidly losing ground to the Vietminh. This wave of insurgency became the central concern of capitalist planners once the stabilization of Europe was completed. Where the problem was active insurrection, the U.S. or its surrogates fought with military force. But the recognition that military action can only be a temporary response to the growth of working class power also prompted the development of various programs of rural reform and "nation building".

Dominating the long-term efforts was the lesson of China: without rural stability there could be no permanent overall stability in a predominantly agricultural society. The source of instability was universally deemed to lie in the growing power of peasants to refuse poverty and inability of colonial and postcolonial governments to stimulate food production sufficiently to meet peasant demands. Low agricultural productivity was seen as an unavoidable consequence of reactionary land tenure relations as well as backward technology and education. Thus the architects of U.S. policy called for short-term land reform and long-term technological and cultural development.²⁶

This was outright "rice politics"—the peasants were forcing capital to try and provide them with enough food to reduce, it was hoped, their propensity to revolt. "The major struggle to keep South and Southeast Asia free of Communist domination," wrote John King in 1953, "is the standard of living of their peoples. The struggle of the 'East' versus the 'West' is, in part, a race for production, and rice is the symbol and substance of it."²⁷ The long-run project of laying the basis for increased productivity in agriculture was undertaken by the private U.S. foundations—the institutions of far-sighted planners of international capital—which set out to create new elites of economists, agronomists, and policy makers—the administrators of the new era of food production—through the financing of education abroad and the creation of local agricultural colleges and research institutes. These were modeled on the previous efforts of the foundations, especially those of the Rockefeller Foundation in fostering the U.S. Federal Extension Service, in supporting agricultural colleges in China in the 1930's, and in developing food research in Mexico in the 1940's.

During the 1950's, support was provided for both counterinsurgency and social engineering by the U.S. food surplus, which jumped to one billion bushels in 1954. The tool for making the surpluses available to underwrite capitalist strategy around the world was Public Law 480.²⁸ This "Food for Peace" program accounted for over 25 percent of U.S. agricultural exports from 1954 to 1960 and bought

time for the foundations in their quest for a permanent solution to rural working class struggle in Asia. Although these facts are now fairly well known, what is often overlooked about both government and private programs during this period, which were aimed at increasing food availability for political aims, is that they were a response to widespread worker struggles: the new technologies these programs developed and the increased food they provided were not simply capital's initiative but also its reaction to the intensification and internationalization of class demands.

The end of the 1950's saw many changes in the open struggle in Asia. Despite some land reforms, food subsidies, military interventions, and attempts to build new local elites, this mixed bag of rice politics failed to achieve anything like universal success. The guerrillas were temporarily beaten in Malaya and the Philippines, but Korea could only be stabilized by instituting "socialist" order in half the country; the leftist Sukarno regime in Indonesia expropriated Dutch private business; the community development program failed in rural India while continual urban struggles hindered capital accumulation in the cities; and most importantly, the U.S. began to get bogged down in what would be a disastrous excursion in Indochina. Overall, while the working class had suffered some setbacks, it was by no means defeated. What was defeated was U.S. capitals strategy of transforming its military in World War II into a successful new era of accumulation. It would be up to the planners of Kennedy's New Frontier to develop a new approach.

STRUGGLES OVER FOOD AND AGRICULTURE IN RUSSIA AND EASTERN EUROPE

While the policy architects of U.S. capital were preoccupied with their new responsibilities at home, in Western Europe, and in much of the Third World, the Communist bureaucrats under Stalin were busy renewing their customary approach to controlling the agrarian working class and providing food for the cities: collectivization. This process, adopted since 1928, involved repression and forced labor on the collective (*kolkhozy*) and state (*sovkhozy*) farms, and constituted an organizational form designed to limit autonomous peasant activity and facilitate the appropriation of a maximum agricultural surplus to feed industrial workers and to finance industrial imports.

This organization of the peasantry not only divided them sharply from urban workers, but also divided them among themselves. The laborers of the *kolkhozy* were generally unwaged and lived off their private plots and a small share of the collective product. The workers of the *sovkhozy* were state employees and were paid wages. The divisions were, as in the West, hierarchical, with the income of the urban worker generally being above that of peasants while the income of the *sovkhoz* worker was substantially higher than that of the *kolkhoznik*. In addition, on both *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy*, as in the villages of Asia and the farms of the West, sex divisions served to increase the stratification, with women finding themselves at the lower levels of heavy and poorly paid labor in addition to their responsibility for housework. The major change introduced in the

system by Stalin after the war was the intensification of government control over the *kolkhozy* through their forced amalgamation into a smaller number of larger units.²⁹ The wartime devastation and the previous experience of forced collectivization and concentration camps made such a continued high degree of exploitation possible. But it also led to a repetition in the late 1940's (according to Khrushchey's memoirs) of the widespread rural famines of the 1930's and the consequent peasant unrest.

The Soviet policies in Eastern Europe were just as harsh. While Russian exactions of war reparations, which stripped Eastern Europe of much of its industrial capacity, were followed by some investments in human capital (increased medical care, education, etc.) to the benefit of urban workers, the treatment of the peasantry was again brutal: the early postwar land redistributions designed to win peasant support for the Communists soon gave way to forced collectivization—a process aided by the Soviet occupation army's breaking of the independent power of rural workers. As in Western Europe the primary focus of Russian efforts to the east was on industrial rather than agricultural development. But whereas Western Europe could draw on U.S. food to meet the demands of the working class, Russia refused to collaborate with the Marshall Plan strategy, preferring instead to squeeze the peasants dry in order to finance industrial accumulation.³⁰

This Soviet strategy of repression and maximum exploitation led to a variety of forms of resistance and revolt. In Russia itself, peasant struggles included the refusal of work in such forms as the diversion of work from production for the state to work on private plots for personal consumption, migration from rural areas into the cities for higher wages, and even isolated guerrilla actions. The success of the diversion of work is seen in the fact that despite strict government limitations on the size of private plots, the labor expended on these parcels even today is estimated to account for as much as 30 percent of total Russian agricultural output (mainly in vegetable and livestock products), and for *Kolkhoz* families, over 40 percent of their real income. As far as migration was concerned, the movement of people from the countryside after the war soon went far beyond the population shifts planned by the state to meet the needs of industry. Between 1929 and 1959, some 43 million peasants moved to the cities, helping to swell the urban population to over 100 million.³¹ The struggles of the peasants circulated to the cities both through their actual migration and through the food scarcities resulting from uncooperative and unproductive behavior on the part of those who remained on the farms. In the newly annexed regions of the Western Ukraine and Lithuania, peasant resistance took the form of armed guerrilla struggle by groups such as the Ukrainian Partisan Army.³² In Eastern Europe, the same dynamics were at work, and after Stalin's death in 1953, the struggles erupted in a major series of uprisings that forced the end of collectivization in Hungary and East Germany in 1953 and Poland in 1956. Where peasants were joined by urban workers, as in the Hungarian revolt of 1956, the Soviet government intervened militarily—much the same way as the U.S. in Asia. But despite intervention, the struggles in Eastern Europe

reverberated with the Soviet Union itself in the form of sympathy strikes and noncooperation with the repression, thus forcing the Russian planners, like those of the U.S., to embark on programs to increase the standard of living.

These struggles led to two major changes in Soviet strategy.³³In the mid-1950's, the Soviet leadership began to seek increases in grain output through the plowing up of fallow and grass lands and the expansion of cultivation into new areas of Siberia and Kazakhstan. While initially requiring substantial capital investments, this strategy sought to increase output and thus meet worker demands for higher income without making major investments in new technology and thereby raise the organic composition of capital in agriculture. The "Virgin lands" and "plow up" campaigns were accompanied by a continued push to amalgamate *kolkhozy* and convert them into *sovkhozy* under more direct state control. The second major change in strategy was to allow significant increases in peasant income to the extent that in the period from 1953 to 1967 the total income of the Russian agricultural population is estimated to have more than doubled. In order to try to use the increased income to get increased work, there was a vast expansion of the use of the wage on the *kolkhozy* as the year-end division of the net product after state procurement was replaced by a monthly cash payment, usually based on piece rates.

In terms of short-term increases in output, the virgin lands program was at first a success: by 1958, agricultural output was up 50 percent from 1953. However, during Khrushchev's last years in power, the limits of this approach became clear as monoculture in the new lands and reduced fallow led to declining yields; and despite somewhat lower wage and farm-price increases from 1958 to 1965, payments to labor were found to have greatly exceeded the increases in productivity. Moreover, during the period from 1953 to 1963, despite the increase in payment for collective labor, there was an *increase* in the proportion of time spent on private plots; there was also no substantial slowdown in migration to the cities. The failure of Khrushchev's agricultural policies to meet the demands of city workers became quite obvious with the food riots of 1959 and 1960. The further production failures of the early 1960's and the consequent renewed food protests in 1962 following a government attempt to raise prices forced the Kremlin to import large quantities of food (partly from the U.S.) in 1963 and contributed to Khrushchev's ouster in 1964.³⁴

To summarize: the period of the 1950's was one which saw working class struggle in much of the world force capital to increase food output at the same time that it was trying to achieve that increase without major technological change in agricultural production. It was only in the 1960's that the rest of the world would follow the U.S. example of productivity-raising investment in agriculture, and that change would come only because the accumulation strategies which have priority to industry failed to contain the struggles either of industrial workers or farmers and peasants.

IV.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE DEVELOPMENT DECADE

The Development Decade was initiated in response to the failure of previous policies to stem or harness working class struggle. It was a period of unusual unity in the food strategies adopted by capital in many areas of the world. In the place of the search for stability and surplus extraction from a more or less traditional food production technology, capital was forced globally to adopt the "American solution"—the introduction of major productivity-raising innovation to permit both increased income for the working class and increased surplus for industrial accumulation. This development strategy for food, which was implemented in both West and East in the 1960's, constituted an extension to agriculture of the Keynesian principles of the productivity deal, i.e., the attempt to use working class struggle for higher income to promote accumulation by linking increased wages to increased productivity. The beginning of the Development Decade in the West was signaled by the arrival to power in the U.S. of John Kennedy and his brain trust, while its best known product was the Green Revolution in Asia. In the East, the timing varied, but first in the Soviet Union (and China) and then in Eastern Europe, the character of the changes initiated were very similar: a new priority for capital investment in agriculture and higher incomes for both food producers and consumers in exchange for (hopefully) more work.

FOOD STRUGGLES IN THE U.S.

U.S. capital during this period faced three major internal problems on the food front: first, the rebellion of Southern and then Northern blacks; second, the growth of the consumer movement throughout the country; and third, a new round of farm worker organizing and the expansion of the Chicano movement in the Southwest.

Capital's response to the first problem included both further repression and more subtle development strategies. Alongside the military suppression of riots and COINTELPRO subversion of the Black Panthers and other militant groups were the poverty programs, which sought to undermine the welfare struggles being led by black women with schemes (including food stamps) designed to supply the wages demanded from the state in ways that would control and channel the movement in directions favorable to economic growth. Yet the black women and the young unemployed managed to take the money and the food without being made into disciplined waged workers. By building their strength in the ghettos, they began to confront the division between the unwaged community of housewives and street youths and the waged factory workers.³⁵

The second problem—the emergence of the consumer movement—was closely linked to both the women's and the ecology movements. Essentially a reaction to capital's attempts to convert working class income gains into profits for business, the movement attacked the myriad of adulterations in the "chemical feast" being

served to people as well as the false advertising and pricing schemes used to sell overpriced, useless, and dangerous products. With the rise of inflation the price aspects of the movement took on added importance but never reached the level of mass struggle as was represented, for example, by the self-reduction movement in Italy. Nevertheless, although much of the movement was channeled by Ralph Nader and others away from a confrontation in class terms, it amounted to a working class demand for qualitative as well as quantitative control over the availability of food.³⁶

The end of the *bracero* program in 1964 removed one tool of agribusiness for dividing Chicanos against themselves and against others. With the "threat of outside labor" decreased—but not eliminated, since the importation of "illegal" workers continued—the campaign to organize farm workers grew rapidly in the 1960's. This campaign included the initiation of the consumer boycott strategy that created a producer-consumer link between the United Farm Workers (UFW) and millions of other, mainly women, workers across the country. With this backing of housewife/shoppers and students, the successes of the UFW in California in 1965 and 1966 were dramatic. In response, capital devised a counterattack in the form of mechanization to get rid of troublesome workers, a *company union* to replace the UFW, and the substitution of the *migration of capital* for the migration of labor.

Under the threat of farm worker struggles, the development of labor-displacing technology for vegetables and fruits had been under way for some time, financed and researched by agribusiness and the government through the Land Grant Colleges and state agricultural experiment stations. Following the mechanical cotton picker was one of the first major breakthroughs in fruits and vegetables: the mechanical tomato picker along with a new breed of tough tomatoes which could withstand its bruising treatment. As long as cheap Chicano labor was available, the expensive machines made few inroads: in 1961 only one percent of the tomato crop was harvested by machine, and by 1964 that figure had risen to only 3.8 percent. But with the explosive growth of farm worker struggles there was a rush to adopt the new technology. By 1966 *nearly 66 percent* of the crop was harvested mechanically, and by 1969 the transition was virtually total with *99.5 percent* of tomatoes being picked by machines. The use of these devices did not eliminate field labor completely, but such work was substantially reduced and restructured. The number of field hands working the tomato harvest fell from about 50,000 in 1964 to about 18,000 in 1972 while production *increased 50 percent*. At the same time, less organized local housewives were substituted in large numbers for male workers (who had done stoop labor in the fields) to do the sorting work on the machines.³⁷

Farm worker struggles and successes have been greatest among those crops that pose the most difficult technical obstacles to mechanization, the outstanding case being the UFW battles concerning California grapes. In these cases the growers resorted to another tactic: the promotion of deals with a union that would be more cooperative than the UFW, namely the Teamsters. Under the guise of "competitive unionism", deals between the growers and the

Teamster bureaucracy resulted in "sweetheart" contracts that largely ignored the needs of the workers themselves. The UFW response was a massive strike/boycott against Perelli-Minetti, the first grower to sign with the Teamsters in 1966. The next year the Teamsters were forced out, and by 1970 the UFW succeeded in winning major contracts with California growers of both wine and table grapes.³⁸

The third aspect of capital's response to the farm workers was the movement of investment across the border into Mexico—a movement that was not entirely new but which accelerated rapidly in the 1960's. While this movement which resulted in an increase of U.S. vegetable imports from Mexico from \$36 million in 1964 to \$176 million in 1973, has been much commented on as a way capital has

President Johnson withheld PL 480 food shipments and allowed starvation to do the work of persuading the Indian government to accept the Green Revolution strategy.

tried to undercut the power of farm workers, what is amazingly ignored, as with changes in technology, is that this movement was *forced on capital* by farm worker struggles: it was a *flight* of capital from growing workers' power, not simply another crafty capitalist plot.³⁹ In addition, this maneuver of agricultural capital, like that of industrial capital with border industries, has also served to accelerate the circulation of struggle on the other side of the border, thus helping to build the power of farm workers in Mexico itself.

Furthermore, Chicano struggles were not limited to the fields and supermarkets: a movement was growing that engulfed La Raza as a whole. In the cities, Chicano groups began to fight for their share of poverty funds. In East Los Angeles, the Brown Berets emerged as an organization similar to the Black Panthers, while brown unwaged women joined black women in the welfare struggle. At about the same time, Reies Lopez Tijerina launched a land seizure movement in New Mexico and Jose Gutierrez and others founded the Mexican-American Youth Organization (MAYO) and began organizing the structure which would lead to La Raza Unida and the takeover of Crystal City and Zavala County in Texas in 1970. By the end of the 1960's, the farm and Chicano movements generally were, like the movements of blacks, women, students, soldiers, etc., rapidly getting entirely out of hand.

In the U.S. as a whole during this period, agricultural policies similar to those of the 1950's prevailed. The Kennedy farm policy continued price supports while moving somewhat more forcefully than previous administrations to control production. Along with the acceleration of mechanization and the increasingly expensive use of chemical and biological inputs, these policies resulted in ever-

increasing farm ownership concentration and labor force decline. The total number of farms fell from 3.96 million in 1960 to 2.95 million in 1970; the agricultural labor force fell from 5.49 million to 3.46 million in the same period as agricultural employment fell from 8.3 to 4.4 percent of total employment.⁴⁰ This continuing concentration of the food industry, especially in grain production and trade, guaranteed the existence of steady food surpluses to support the new strategy of U.S. capital abroad.

GREEN REVOLUTION VERSUS RED REVOLUTION

The prospect of continued instability abroad as well as at home—ranging from the persistent insurgency in Indochina and Africa to rural and industrial unrest in South Asia and Latin America—forced U.S. planners in the late 1950's and early 1960's to reformulate their theories and associated strategies for food and agriculture. The unrest that was limiting the possibilities for capital expansion continued to be associated with the revolt against poverty and hunger. Yet the ideology of the planners increasingly attributed the propensity to revolt not to deprivation as such, but to the dissatisfaction experienced by workers during periods of limited economic growth in which traditional social structures are crumbling and the new organization of production has not yet been able to meet popular demands. The implications of this view for agricultural strategy were four-fold: slow down social restructuring such as land reform and community development; increase investment in agriculture to raise productivity and food supplies; develop a new counterinsurgency capability involving the military in economic and social programs; and later, promote family planning and birth control to limit the growth of a working class that refuses to work productively at profitably low wage rates. This, in general, was the Third World's share of Kennedy's new "flexible response" strategy with the New Frontier. For the control of overt agrarian unrest there was the *stick*—counterinsurgency—which was used extensively in Southeast Asia and Latin America. To provide the *carrot* of increased consumption, there was the Green Revolution.⁴¹

The previous research financed by the Rockefeller Foundation proved immensely useful in this regard. New high-yielding varieties (HYV) of wheat developed in the early 1950's had converted Mexico from a net importer to a net exporter of wheat by the early 1960's. Building on this success, the foundation launched a global effort to introduce the new food technology to all the wheat-growing areas of the Third World. The Ford Foundation, meanwhile, began to shift its efforts in India from community development to the raising of agricultural productivity, initiating in 1960 the Intensive Agricultural Districts Program, which made resources available to the most modern, creditworthy, and wealthy farms in order to boost gross output. In 1962 the two leading foundations joined forces in establishing the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines, which gave even quicker results than the Mexican effort. Within barely three or four years, "miracle" rices of all sorts were boosting yields in the Philippines and were ready for export.

Parallel to the development of the HYV's of grain was the expansion of the use of one of the principal inputs—fertilizer—as we began to see above. The vast growth in the 1950's of the fertilizer industry in the U.S. and Europe led not only to an export capacity which would be necessary to the HYV strategy (since very high levels of fertilizer input were essential for the new strains), but also to a complementary quest by the oil/fertilizer corporations, faced with an overproduction problem at home, to open new markets for their products. Besides the efforts of corporate salesmen overseas, the industry as a bloc decided to use the UN's new Freedom from Hunger campaign as a vehicle for its expansionary aims. A group of U.S. and European representatives of various fertilizer industry associations told the FAO in 1960 that the industry would provide free fertilizer if the FAO would set up thousands of demonstration projects around the world. The FAO agreed and thus put its organization at the disposal of the fertilizer industry.⁴² As the foreign demand consequently grew, the industry would later try to move from exporting to overseas production. In all, this expanded use of fertilizer ended up increasing the dependence of Third World agriculture on the energy sector (inorganic fertilizer being produced from petroleum) and its vulnerability to fluctuations in supplies and prices in that sector—a situation that served capital well in the course of its energy-shortage offensive of the 1970's.

The effort to impose the Green Revolution on Third World governments was full of intrigue and bound up with policies and developments. One of the most notorious episodes was in India during the drought and famine of 1965-1967. Government resistance to the Green Revolution scheme was dissolved when U.S. President Johnson withheld PL 480 food shipments and allowed starvation to do the work of persuasion. By 1970 more than 15 million acres of Indian wheat lands were planted with the new varieties of wheat and about 11 million acres with the new rice.

The impact of the Green Revolution has now been widely assessed and need not receive detailed treatment here. Overall, the consensus has been that while the project did succeed in raising productivity and total output in many areas, it failed in its ultimate objective of undercutting agrarian and industrial unrest.⁴³ Along with, and partly because of, this failure, the multinational corporations were unable to realize the massive expected profits from input sales. The most obvious case was fertilizer: after all the efforts to expand the market, by 1969-1970 the industry as a whole was once again suffering from severe overproduction, since not only had Third World agriculture failed to grow as rapidly as predicted, but the new U.S. policies of decreasing surpluses (see below) and reducing PL 480 had also cut back demand at home.⁴⁴

By the end of the 1960's, a series of upheavals were sweeping the world the Green Revolution was supposed to stabilize. The second Indochinese war was at full pitch, and there were three growing insurgencies in Thailand. There was a renewed peasant and student movement in the Philippines, while the Naxalite revolt and land seizures were rocking India. There was also rural and urban unrest throughout many other areas of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and

Latin America. And these revolts were not isolated; rather they formed part of a new and massive cycle of international working class struggle which was defeating the aims of the Development Decade and plunging capital into severe crisis.

THE DEVELOPMENT DECADE COMMUNIST STYLE

Although the timing of the "Development Decade" in the socialist countries differed somewhat from that in the West, and although the Communist parties will certainly attack any suggestion of similarity with developments in the imperialist West as erroneous and slanderous, there were nevertheless remarkable similarities indeed. We have already seen how in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe the policies of the 1950's ultimately failed to eliminate the obstacles class struggle placed in the way of rapid accumulation. Within the socialist area, the characteristics of those struggles differed widely. (For reasons of space and relative lack of information, the case of China will not be discussed; yet there is every indication that China, in general, was no exception to the dynamics analyzed here.) But everywhere low agricultural productivity and attempts to raise income, through the wage or land reform, put serious limits on the ability of Communist planners to control labor supplies and surpluses. And sooner or later, in each case, continued worker demands were met by the same fundamental strategy as in U.S. agriculture and its offspring: the Green Revolution—investment in productivity-raising technology, whether mechanical, chemical, or biological.

In the Soviet Union the development decade dates from the last years of Khrushchev's rule and the new emphasis on agricultural development that he initiated in response to the failures and upheavals of 1959-1962. The shift was continued by Brezhnev in 1965 and fixed in the five-year plan for 1966-1970. The basic elements of the new strategy involved granting increased income to peasants and stable food prices for urban workers while increasing investment in constant capital in agriculture. At the same time, peasant income would, as in the past, be restructured so as to promote increased work.⁴⁵

The increase in peasant income took several forms. First, the prices of agricultural output were raised and the prices of investment goods were lowered, thus raising net farm revenue. Second, direct payments to peasants were raised by increasing wages for collective work, guaranteeing minimum income and old age pensions to *kolkhozniks*, improving housing and rural amenities, and lifting the extra taxes and restrictions on private plot production. At the same time, payments were restructured to tie income and work more closely together: the remaining use of labor-day calculation of work was replaced by wage payments for all *kolkhoz* labor. The wage increases served to reduce the rural/urban differential, such that by 1970 *kolkhoz* wages were up to 75 percent of average industrial pay and *sovkhoz* wages equalled 85 percent. Yet, poorer housing, health services, etc. meant that the real income differential was still much larger.

In order to pay for these measures, the shift of investment capital into agriculture was substantial, with large increases in the supply of fertilizer, irrigation, machinery, agrichemicals, etc. and the expansion of scientific research into the development of high-yield crops and improved livestock productivity. As a result, agricultural output and productivity rose 25 percent from 1962 to 1968, and new food production came to be based on capital-intensive methods rather than the new lands/plow up strategy with its long-run instabilities. However, raising farm procurement prices above the fixed retail prices forced the Soviet government to pay out rapidly rising levels of subsidies—the figures reached the equivalent of \$5 billion in 1968.

Although production and productivity increased in the countryside as a result of the new capital investments, peasants continued to fight against exploitation. Not only did private plot cultivation expand, but there was increasing direct appropriation of the "collective" output through such methods as the illegal use of communal grazing land and collective grain for private livestock, which paralleled the rise in the cities of pilfering on the job, smuggling, and black market operations.⁴⁶ The strategy also failed to halt migration to the cities, a trend which reached such proportions at the end of the 1960's that the Soviet government undertook a series of intensive studies to discover its causes. The conclusion, not surprisingly, was that people were fleeing from the farms to escape overwork and low pay.⁴⁷

While much of the above analysis of Soviet class struggles in the 1960's applies as well to many areas of Eastern Europe—especially with respect to low productivity, migration to the cities, stealing from the state, and the lower income position of the peasants—the shift to a development strategy of marked increases in agricultural investment seems to have come much later.⁴⁸ But it came nonetheless in response to that same situation of intensified class struggle among both rural and urban workers.

The first wave of major unrest began in this period in 1968 with the mass movement of unwaged students. Like their counterparts in the U.S. and Western Europe, Eastern European students rose up in defiance of their factory-like conditions of work and the discipline imposed by the state. In March of that year, Polish students took to the streets to protest Soviet colonial policies and censorship. And in June, following the great uprising of students and workers in France in May, Yugoslav students staged demonstrations to denounce increasing income hierarchy and uneven regional development. This wave helped provoke moves toward economic reform designed to solve the problem of financing the increased standard of living demanded by workers. In Czechoslovakia, the severity of the Dubcek reforms led straight to Soviet opposition and intervention. In Hungary, where the reforms were less overtly political, the Kremlin refrained from such a drastic step.

The next explosion in Eastern Europe was in Poland, and it directly concerned issues of agriculture and food. Moreover, it was the turning point in the shift to heavy investment in agriculture and the adoption of policies already implemented in the Soviet Union and around the world.⁴⁹

The 1970 Polish upheaval was the direct outcome of the inadequate investment in agriculture and the policies of discrimination against the peasants which marked the Gomulka years following decollectivization in 1956.⁵⁰ In the face of relatively stagnant procurement prices, peasants refused to increase output. Despite the fact that Poland is Eastern Europe's largest food producer, these limits on productivity and output, coupled with the traditional Soviet-style policies of exporting food (most notably, in this case, Polish hams) to finance industrialization, resulted in an increasing discrepancy between the availability of adequate food supplies and the rising wages of city workers. The immediate cause of the outburst was Gomulka's decision to meet this problem by raising food prices instead of making more food available. His announcement of the price rise came just before Christmas, and the reaction of urban workers was immediate and violent. They exploded in a series of spontaneous work stoppages and riots that swept the country in a manner that recalled Hungary in 1956. The uprising was led by shipyard workers in the northern city of Gdansk but also included workers from other industries, housewives, and students. The Communist Party headquarters in the city were firebombed during a demonstration of some 20,000 people and state stores were looted of food and other goods. Despite government efforts to seal off the city with tanks and troops, the struggle spread to Warsaw, Cracow, and elsewhere, and preparations were being made for a general strike. The momentum of the events forced the ouster of Gomulka, whose replacement, Gierek, froze prices at the new level and announced an 18 percent increase in the minimum wage; but he hesitated to rescind Gomulka's price increase. The measures did not satisfy the Polish people, and strikes and protests continued. The breaking point came in April when 10,000 textile workers in Lodz, mainly women, went out on strike and demanded a 16 percent wage increase to offset the price hikes. Gierek capitulated; with the aid of the Soviet Union—\$500 million worth of credits and grain shipments—he rolled back prices to their pre-December levels.

The whole episode was, to say the least, an incredible victory for Polish workers and an event which has a tremendous impact throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Russian workers demonstrated in support of the Polish struggle and several Eastern European governments moved quickly to prevent the display of working class power from appearing again elsewhere. East Germany moved troops into its Baltic coast towns to prevent sympathy strikes and demonstrations. In Rumania, ostensibly untouched by the wave of upheavals in the late 1960's, Ceausescu quickly announced that his government had plenty of food for the entire winter, while Bulgaria, which supplies both winter fruits and vegetables and agricultural workers to the Soviet Union, took the precaution of announcing that it had no intention of raising food prices.

The complete defeat of the attempt to solve the food crisis by raising prices to cut working class consumption meant that the Polish government was forced to turn to capital investment in agriculture, and this was a major part of the Gierek reforms. In the interim, this

also meant large increases in food subsidies (which rose from 27 billion zloty in 1970 to 100 billion in 1975) and grain imports to expand livestock production. As a result, per capita annual consumption of meat, for example, rose from 53 kilos in 1970 to 70.2 kilos in 1975. The ultimate political failure of these policies, however, was demonstrated by the inability to increase production to keep up with the rises in consumption and the continuing drain on the government's investment budget, which undercut accumulation.

These, then, are a few of the ways in which food and agriculture have been shaped by the class struggle in both West and East. If from 1954 to 1973 world food production rose faster than population growth (2.8 as opposed to 2.0 percent), as the U.S. Department of Agriculture claims, then it was in no small measure the direct and indirect outcome of the power of the working class to force that growth in the means of subsistence.⁵¹ The demand either for more food directly or for higher wages and income to pay for food was an essential part of the struggles whose success both provoked and ruptured the development strategies of the 1950's and 1960's. At the same time, the struggles by both urban workers and peasants to resist attempts to link increased wages to more work were equally important in the working class strategy of pitting income against work. As the examples given in this section have tried to bring out, both the attempt to base development on rising productivity of agriculture and the refusal of that development were worldwide phenomena. Thus the struggle over the production and distribution of food were part of the international cycle of struggle which created the crisis of Western development in the late 1960's, and, as we will see below, the continued circulation of those struggles to the East would eventually force the socialist bloc into the same sort of crisis by the mid-1970's.

V.

THE COUNTERATTACK

The failure of the Development Decade imposed a severe crisis on capital worldwide. The general character of that cycle of struggles and the ensuing crisis was identified in *ZEROWORK* 1 and the previous section of this article analyzed the food and agricultural aspects of the problems facing capital in some detail. We must now turn to an examination of the role played by food in capital's response to the crisis—its counterattack.

What emerges from a close examination of this period is that the "food crisis" as an element of the counterattack was created and developed in a series of steps. *First*, behind the food power rhetoric of the 1970's was the elimination of U.S. food surpluses and the scaling down of PL 480—acts which were aimed at preparing the way for the imposition of shortages and scarcity designed to weaken working class power. The new system was to be based on commodity trade, so that supply would ostensibly depend completely on effective demand rather than need and higher food prices could be brought about to undercut working class real income. *Second*, massive grain deals

between the U.S. and the Soviet Union drove U.S. food prices sky high in 1972-1973 and again in 1975 while allowing the Politburo to cope with the demands of Russian and Eastern European workers for more food. *Third*, the initial impact of the export drive and grain sales was reinforced by monetary devaluation and by the energy crisis, which helped drive up the prices of fertilizers and other agricultural inputs, thus undercutting the income of farmers and peasants around the world. *Fourth*, these general policies were supplemented by specific attacks on the organized power of Western European peasants and farm workers in the U.S. *Fifth*, the attack on the working class through global inflation was buttressed by droughts and floods in the Third World that were converted into famines and used to undermine local peasant and nomad struggles as well as serving as warnings to workers everywhere. *Sixth*, the restructuring of global agriculture has been based on the growth of capital-intensive production in the U.S., new heavy investment in OPEC agriculture, and the restructuring of the famine-devastated areas in order to put rebellious peoples back to work in new and better-controlled ways. *Seventh*, the food crisis has begun to circulate to the socialist bloc, following the same pattern established in the West. We will now examine each of these steps in turn.

FOOD CRISIS AND FOOD POLITICS

To all appearances, the world food crisis and its politics exploded in 1973 and 1974 as global agriculture was rocked by rapid food and fertilizer price increases in the West and by famines in Africa and Asia, while agriculture took center stage in international politics through a series of public political debates about "food power", agribusiness, and North-South relations. This controversy heightened in the period before the World Population Conference in August and the World Food Conference in November 1974. During that period, leading U.S. spokesmen let it be known that as a reaction to the supposed Arab-imposed oil crisis, the U.S. was considering the possible counter-use of food as a weapon.⁵²

Already in the fall of 1973, Kissinger had ordered a National Security Study memo on food and the House of Representatives undertook a study of the potential power the U.S. could attain with food embargoes. Despite the fact that both of the studies were negative (the NSC memo called for more study and the House report concluded that the OPEC states could get their needs met elsewhere), the rhetoric of "food power" continued unabated. In August 1974 the CIA prepared a report pointing to the growth of U.S. agricultural power in low world-production years, such that "Washington would acquire virtual life and death power over the fate of the multitudes of the needy." And yet, a period of food crisis, the report warned, would be a dangerous one to manage: "Whatever choice the U.S. makes in deciding where its grain should go, it will become a whipping boy among those who consider themselves left out or given only short shrift." Furthermore, there might be "increasingly desperate attempts on the part of militarily powerful but nonetheless hungry nations to get more grain any way they could." Massive immigration

backed by force, the report continued, would become a very live issue: even "nuclear blackmail is not inconceivable."

The general outlines of the U.S. administration's response to such warnings emerged in the principle enunciated in and around the World Population and Food conferences: less population and less food. At the population conference, the U.S. delegation worked hard to push the line that population control was the major element in any effort to solve the food problem, while later in Rome, the U.S. representatives were reluctant to make any major new effort in food

"Hungry men listen only to those who have a piece of bread," said Agriculture Secretary Butz. "Food is a tool. It is a weapon in the U.S. negotiating kit."

production and relief. In a speech at that time to the UN, President Ford threatened to use food as a political weapon by denying he would do so: "It has not been our policy to use food as a political weapon, despite the oil embargo." But what would be the policy in the future? Other U.S. spokesmen certainly seemed to indicate that a change was possible. "Hungry men listen only to those who have a piece of bread," said Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz in August, adding in Rome the explicit statement that: "Food is a tool. It is a weapon in the U.S. negotiating kit." And Hubert Humphrey, the visionary of the tactical use of PL 480, declared: "Food is power. In a very real sense it is our extra measure of power."

On another side of the debate, these suggestions were attacked by Third World elites and liberal sympathizers as indications of an overreaction by the West to the raw materials-producing states finally getting a little bigger piece of the pie. For the Left it was another chapter in the history of U.S. imperialism. In both cases, the framework of analysis was based on the dynamics of nation-states, not classes, with the result that liberals and leftists both missed the point completely. Meanwhile, a more sophisticated, influential, and revealing rebuff to the "food power" advocates came from cooler heads in the capitalist elite—a critique based not on morality, indignation, or ideology, but effectiveness and public relations. The food weapon, they said, could not be widely used as a diplomatic weapon in the ways being bandied about: threats and bluffs would work occasionally, but there are limits—and it looks bad as well. Playing God with food was seen as too blatant and too susceptible to provoking popular (read working class) opposition. The real politics of food are more subtle, it was pointed out: no razzmatazz, rather the mundane politics of price and supply in international trade and (to a lesser degree) disaster relief.⁵³ Despite the fact that this analysis was still presented in terms of relations among nation-states, by treating

agricultural pricing and commercial allocation as "political" questions, it got closer to the heart of the class dynamics at work. And it also reveals that well before the diplomatic debates, the food weapon was already being used during the crisis years of the early 1970's. Shifts in production and trade policies had already been made which laid the basis for the effective but camouflaged use of that weapon.

IMPOSING THE PRICE FORM

The beginning of these changes might be dated from the shift to "self-help" and the more limited food aid policies of the Johnson years, but the decisive change came under Nixon and Butz as policies were implemented to virtually eliminate food reserves and promote vastly expanded U.S. exports.⁵⁴ Superficially, this was a "return to the free market" and an exercise in aggressive U.S. expansionism; more profoundly, it amounted to engineering a global shift from food surplus to food scarcity and the imposition of that scarcity internationally through higher food prices and (because of the virtual disappearance of PL480) absolute unavailability for those who could not pay. To make food available only on a commercial basis—that is, to impose the price form—amounted in this period to a global assault on working class access to the fundamental consumption good.

There were several steps in this shift of policy. First, a Presidential commission on international trade and investment policy concluded that a rational use of world food resources should be centered on highly efficient, capital-intensive U.S. agriculture to supply much of world grain needs; that the Third World should concentrate on the production of labor-intensive crops like fruits and vegetables for export; and that Western Europe and Japan should reduce tariff barriers and import more from the U.S. This would increase capital's control over food production at the expense of the working class by concentrating grain production in the almost laborless (and hence easy to control) grain belt of the U.S., while emphasizing the production of labor-intensive crops in those areas where the working class is weakest.

The second step was the direct attack on food surpluses by greater cutbacks in acreage allotments for grain production, and the third was the export expansion drive. Acreage allotments were held down in 1970, 1971, and 1972 even after the massive Russian grain deal. The reduction of output limited the grain available for PL 480, and what was available was used to support the war effort in Indochina. The aggressive push to expand exports and lower foreign barriers was aimed especially at Europe, Russia, and China. This push began, along with much of capital's counterattack, with the dollar devaluation of August 1971, which gave U.S. agribusiness a boost in foreign markets.⁵⁵ A rapid increase in exports followed the devaluation, along with the grain deals and the second devaluation in 1973. Inherent in this policy was the plan to effect a general rise in food prices; a secret document prepared by the Agriculture Department reportedly admitted explicitly to this objective. Superficially, these moves concerned the faltering U.S. balance of

payments. But the source of that problem lay in capital's slipping control over its workforce and the consequent negative impact on productivity and "competitive position."

Domestically in the U.S., this policy was accompanied in 1971 by the first attempts to reverse the welfare gains of the 1960's by reducing food stamp and other cheap food programs. In both 1972 and 1973 the U.S. administration impounded over \$200 million in food stamp funds, and although these direct moves were defeated, the rise in food prices achieved the same effect by undercutting the value of the stamps.⁵⁶

The factor which seemed to be fundamental in making these policies a success was the bad weather of 1971-1973, which hit large parts of Africa, Asia, and the Soviet Union, reducing food output. This made the growing food shortages appear "natural," and there was much discussion for a while (now largely moderated or discounted) of a long-term shift in global weather patterns—a cooling trend in which the U.S. was seen by CIA analysts and other observers as gaining even more dominance over food production.⁵⁷ Yet, as we continue to see, it was not simply nature, but the politics of class struggle that gave the food weapons of price and aid their real clout.

THE RUSSIAN GRAIN DEALS

The story of the Soviet grain purchases in 1972 of some 30 million metric tons from the U.S. is now well known, and the complicity of the U.S. government with the grain trading corporations and its acceptance of the impact on prices has been strongly criticized in many places.⁵⁸

What has been too frequently overlooked in the various analyses of the deal, however, are the reasons why the Soviet authorities went into the market so deeply that they had to sell gold stocks. Besides the obvious weather factor, Western commentators often point to inefficiencies supposedly resulting from "doctrinal rigidities" and the absence of "free competition" as the causes of the Russian agricultural difficulties. But behind the "inefficiencies" has been the failure to control working class struggle in the countryside (which has limited production) and consumption demands in the cities (which have made it politically impossible to respond to the crop failures of the 1970's with the belt-tightening techniques of the 1950's): in other words, exactly those phenomena that forced the Soviet government to pay high food subsidies to keep producer prices up and consumer prices down. With the memory of the 1970 Polish uprising against food prices increases undoubtably still fresh, the planners in the Kremlin sought the grain deal as a way of reducing the threat of a repetition of the food riots of 1959-1962—riots that had previously forced the Soviets into the U.S. market in 1963 and 1965.⁵⁹

The demands of the eastern European and Russian workers which had to be satisfied were not, however, for more bread, but rather for more meat. The massive grain purchase was to be used for livestock consumption, which had been allowed to decline. At the same time that the Russian government decided that increased meat production and consumption was a political imperative, it also

apparently decided that the shift of resources necessary to achieve that end would be done in such a way as to begin to restructure agriculture in the country. Instead of supplying the imported grain to the traditional collective farms or to the private farmers, the government began to emphasize heavily the creation of hundreds of industrial-type livestock complexes with highly mechanized systems for storing and supplying feed and water, and removing and processing manure for fertilizer.⁶⁰ Similar agroindustrial projects have been launched in Bulgaria and Hungary,⁶¹ with the declared aim of increasing labor productivity and lowering production costs. The complexes will not only take care of supplying meat to urban workers, but will also help to deal with the problem of controlling workers on collective farms and private livestock producers; and thus the Soviet government has followed the lead of the U.S. in using mechanization to undermine class struggle over agricultural production and the consumption of food.

INITIAL WORKING CLASS REACTION

This new agricultural strategy and the grain deal produced a sharp round of protest from U.S. workers, whose food bills skyrocketed first for grain products themselves and then for grain-derived products, especially meat. Consumer groups staged boycotts that created pressures that were at least partly the cause of the government's 1973 move to impose export controls on soybeans—a move which infuriated many U.S. customers, especially Japan, where workers depend on U.S. soybeans as a basic foodstuff. When the Russians re-entered the U.S. grain market in the summer of 1975 and quickly bought ten million metric tons, the working class reactions was immediate, and the U.S. government was forced to suspend further sales "while the supply and demand situation was studied." Not only did consumer groups warn against a repetition of the 1972-1973 situation, but members of the International Longshoreman's Union working in Gulf, Atlantic, and Great Lakes ports launched a boycott—a refusal to load grain for Russia—until they were persuaded that the sales would not provoke substantial rises in consumer food prices. The government responded with a pledge to regularize grain sales—the aim was not to limit the sales per se, but to stabilize them over time so the upward pressures on prices would be less cyclical and thus less politically volatile. The pledge was carried out through a five-year agreement in which the Soviet Union will purchase *at least* six million metric tons of corn and wheat each year. The trade and the pressure on prices and world availability was thus institutionalized.⁶²

One of the reasons why consumer groups, especially those made up of housewives, have played such an important role in the protests is that higher food prices not only cause a drop in real income, but they also mean more housework. The work of shopping grows more difficult as the dollar has to be stretched through comparative shopping. The work of food preparation increases as working class consumption shifts to less-prepared foods. Higher prices also encourage increased and more serious gardening work, as well as

expanded work in canning and freezing. (A major protest during this period was against the shortage of canning jars and lids following the rapid spread of this activity in the U.S.) And, of course, the rising costs of food and other goods generally increase family tensions and confrontations, and thus the work of patching them up. All of this means that one essential aspect of the "food crisis" has been the counterattack on women, whose struggles against housework in the 1960's were one of the key elements in that cycle of struggle, just as the reduction in the value of food stamps, free lunch programs, and surplus food distribution was an assault on the welfare gains (primarily of women) in that period.

In all these cases of reduced real income through higher food prices, there is a consequent transfer of value from the working class to food producers and processors. But who in fact receives this value? And what is the real impact on the structure of agriculture? It was discovered after the grain deal that those who profited most were not the mass of grain farmers, but the five giant trading companies who negotiated the deal secretly, enabling themselves to buy cheap and sell dear, and thus reap unusually large profits. When this became known, the farmers protested, but the damage was done. Yet, since prices remained high, more farmers were able to sell later at higher prices and thus make considerable gains in income. In fact, cash receipts from marketing in U.S. agriculture as a whole rose from \$61.2 billion in 1972 to \$86.9 billion in 1973, while net average real income per farm rose from \$5106 in 1972 to \$8434 in 1973.⁶³ (These initial gains were, however, quickly undercut by the "energy crisis" and the rapid rise in the price of energy inputs, especially fertilizer.) As a result, the price index of production input items as a whole rose from 122 in 1972 to 146 in 1973 to 172 in 1974.⁶⁴ This of course meant that through the energy crisis another transfer of value was taking place—from agriculture to input suppliers, especially the highly capital-intensive fertilizer and oil industries. In this way, the superficial transfer of wealth from urban workers to agricultural workers (farmers) masked the more basic transfer of value from the working class as a whole to capital, particularly to the sectors with the highest organic composition. As a result of this outflow, average net income per farm fell from its high of \$8434 in 1973 to \$5721 in 1974 and down to \$5320 in 1975.⁶⁵ Moreover, these general average figures hide the differential aspects of the decline: as always, the biggest farms held their own or made profits, while the average decline resulted from large drops in the income of small farms—an indication of the continuing concentration of agriculture as the small farms went increasingly into debt and often went under.

Although the contribution of artificially high energy prices to capital's strategy goes far beyond its impact on agriculture, that crisis nonetheless contributed substantially to making food scarce—both relatively through prices and absolutely through famine—and to the global restructuring of agriculture. The mechanisms of this are twofold: first, the rise in prices of both energy and fertilizer and the subsequent shortages hit hard at farmers, especially small ones throughout the world. Second, the price rise itself resulted in a massive transfer of capital into the OPEC countries, which gave those



countries the means to invest heavily in highly capital-intensive, import-substitution agriculture. These two phenomena deserve closer attention.

THE FERTILIZER SCARCITY

Within the U.S. the increased use of mechanization and agrichemicals between 1940 and 1970 not only turned agriculture into the second most capital-intensive industry (after petroleum), but also made it highly energy dependent.⁶⁶ Globally, the fertilizer push of the 1950's and 1960's had two major effects. First, it dramatically increased the use and hence the dependence of agricultural productivity on the energy sector. Second, the vast investments in increased capacity which the oil companies had sunk into the fertilizer industry in the optimistic days of the Green Revolution led to a glut in the market and a disinvestment movement by the disillusioned "Seven Sisters" that extended to 1971-1972. As we saw, this trend was accelerated by the drop in food aid; but that drop laid the basis for a shift from glut to shortage. With most food exports on a commercial basis by the time of the grain deal, food prices shot up and stayed high; in consequence so did the demand for and hence the price of fertilizer, with the result that the overproduction condition vanished and in late 1973 shortage first appeared. By mid-1974 the U.S. Agriculture Department and the industry-sponsored Fertilizer Institute were predicting anywhere from a .5 million to a 1.5 million-ton deficit in the U.S. alone. The situation was said to be similar in Western Europe, Japan, and Russia—all of which, along with the U.S., put restrictions on fertilizer exports, exacerbating the impact of the oil squeeze on the importing countries of the Third World: the "fertilizer crisis" had arrived.

Despite the increases in capacity that were bound to emerge in response to the higher prices, the huge financing requirements for such investments were outstripping the capital market's ability to supply funds in many areas; moreover, the permanently higher cost of energy meant that fertilizer prices too would be permanently higher—this was not just a boom/bust cycle. Compounding these factors was the fact that in many countries of the Third World the failure of Green Revolution technology to stem peasant unrest in the second half of the 1960's led to a reversal of agricultural policy in the 1970's. In India, for example, the fertilizer crisis emerged very quickly because local production after 1969 was given a low priority in agricultural development, which itself was subject to a general reduction in the allocation of funds. The switch in policy was so blunt that B.S. Minhas, an advisor to Indira Gandhi who had been pushing the government to adopt land reform along with the introduction of high-yield varieties, quit in disgust. He pointed out that Indian budget outlays for agriculture had dropped steadily between 1971 and 1974 despite the drought and food shortages of late 1973 and 1974. In this situation news stories with headlines like "Rising World Fertilizer Scarcity Threatens Famine For Millions" were not far off the mark; but as usual, the political origins of the conditions were barely mentioned.

Instead, as with food scarcity more generally, the occasion was seized upon to split the working class. Calls went out from so-called humanitarian groups and capitalist planners that the way to provide fertilizer to grow food for the hungry of the world was to drastically reduce its overconsumption by people in the U.S., prompting Congress to pass special resolutions urging the cutting back of "non-critical, non-food-producing uses of fertilizer." President Ford was called upon by the Senate to appeal to Americans to stop using fertilizer on lawns, flower gardens, golf courses, and such. In short, the browning of America was presented as the only hope for the greening of the starving world. In the course of these arguments it was suddenly discovered that fertilizer was not being allocated by need, but by effective demand; that an extra pound of fertilizer in India would produce more food (ten pounds) than in the U.S. (two to five pounds); and that the annual three million tons of fertilizer used in *non-food* production in the U.S. was equal to the entire annual Indian fertilizer use in *food* production. And, of course, the blame for this irrational state of affairs was said to lay, once again, with the thoughtless profligacy of the people of the U.S.—their immorality—not, never with the crisis strategies of capital.

Despite these calls for self-sacrifice to permit greater supplies of fertilizer to be obtained by the oil-poor countries of the "Fourth World," aid-financed fertilizer imports in 1974 remained at the 1973 total of some 1.7 million tons, so that the growth rate of fertilizer consumption in the developing countries fell to half the long-term rate. Even the creation of a new FAO International Fertilizer Supply Scheme did little to improve matters, adding only 380,000 tons to aid-financed supplies.

Given these shortages and their expected continuance, the aid lobby groups also began to promote do-it-yourself remedies in fertilizer, as in other areas of food and health. Their fascination with



China's labor-intensive methods arose again with the new romance of "organic" fertilizers—the logic of which is almost as superb as its potential for absorbing unpaid, wageless labor. Along with composting in the growing number of suburban gardens, the use of village "night soil" and the reconversion of city sludge were presented as the answer for the Third World—not because organic recycling makes good ecological sense (which it does)—but because much of it provides the labor-intensive work capital now needs and because it is seen as posing no threat to the existing fertilizer industry or to capitalist control in general. Either organic fertilizers will not hurt the expanding market or they will become big business

(just like organic foods). Since modern specialized farming geographically separates animal and crop production, the transformation and transportation of city/feedlot wastes into field fertilizer can become a business in itself.

While propagandists moved to pit worker against worker, while the aid agencies failed to provide needed supplies, and while organic gardening was achieving a new popularity among capitalist planners, the fertilizer industry was in fact moving in response to rising prices to expand capacity. But it was moving into just those developing OPEC countries like Indonesia which had the wealth and resources already, not into those areas now subject to increased underdevelopment. There is now talk of creating, once the new capacity permits, a world fertilizer bank, like a world food reserve.⁶⁷ This, firmly under the control of capital, would become at best a new dole and more likely only a means to prevent fertilizer prices from falling again during periods of overproduction. Despite this expected increase in capacity and supply, the U.S. Agriculture Department estimates that developing countries will still be importing over two million tons in 1980, and the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD has stated that the possibility of shortages later in the 1980's cannot be excluded. Clearly, the fertilizer crisis as part of capital's counter-attack is here to stay for some time.

THE ATTACK ON AGRICULTURAL LABOR

Despite the damage already done to small farmers by the energy/fertilizer crunch, the speed of transformation of U.S. agriculture has not been fast enough for some of the top American policy-making groups. The influential Committee on Economic Development called in 1974 for long-range planning that would include the elimination of some 75 percent of remaining farms, which market only 20 percent of total agricultural production. This, the CED suggested, could be facilitated by substituting a federal welfare program for poor farmers in place of agricultural support programs and by encouraging small farmers to move into other lines of work.⁶⁸

This call for the elimination of U.S. small farmers was the counterpart of the Mansholt Plan in Western Europe. A response to the failure of the "Green Plans" of the 1960's to achieve the goals of agricultural restructuring set out in the 1958 Treaty of Rome, the Mansholt Plan was a new attempt to solve the European "peasant problem"—a difficulty for capital that is very similar to what are called the structural problems of U.S. agriculture. The elements of the problem were: 1) the high proportion of the labor force still in agriculture (14.2 percent in the European Economic Community as opposed to 4.8 percent in the U.S.) and still engaged in essentially small scale-family farming rather than large-scale, capital-intensive, wage-labor operations; 2) the political power of these peasants to exact income support through high agricultural prices while they refuse to cooperate with overall capitalist planning; 3) the low out-migration rate from rural areas, which was judged inadequate to meet the demand for industrial and reserve army workers and which

was a contributing factor in the need to import large numbers of foreign workers.

Written as a report by EEC vice president Sicco Mansholt and originally published in 1968, the plan laid out a comprehensive ten-year program for directly reducing the farm population by one-half—from 11 million to about five million in the EEC—primarily through the elimination of small-holding peasants and increasing the productivity of the remaining farms. In France, with one of the larger percentages of the population in agriculture (15.5), the Mansholt Plan was complemented by the Vedel Plan, also issued in 1968, which called for even more drastic reductions.⁶⁹ Both schemes proposed a series of measures to induce farmers to leave the land and to facilitate their transfer to non-farm employment or retirement. When the Mansholt memorandum was finally brought before the EEC Council of Ministers of Agriculture in March 1971, 100,000 angry farmers took to the streets of Brussels in a protest that left at least one person dead and 40 hospitalized. The EEC nonetheless adopted the plan and offered only increased prices to farmers as compensation.

In the years since 1971, the governments and businessmen of all the EEC countries with sizable peasant populations (mainly France, Italy, and West Germany) have moved to put the plan into effect in one way or another. In reaction, not only have peasant struggles multiplied and circulated, but, increasingly, peasants have managed to build links with industrial workers, links which have sometimes taken the form of vertical integration of the class by industry. In such movements the wage character of non-waged farm income has been explicitly displayed; in other cases, links have been made between peasants and workers across all sectoral lines, as in the 1973-1974 campaign to protect peasant lands at Larzac in the French Lozère. Usually opposed by local industrial unions and peasant organizations alike, these movements, like those which broke the local worker/foreign worker division, have been largely rank-and-file ones that are beginning to bridge one of European capital's oldest and strongest set of divisions of the working class: worker/peasant, waged/unwaged.⁷⁰

These designs to eliminate European peasants and American small farmers were complemented increasingly by new attacks on immigrant wage labor in agriculture, especially in the American Southwest. These attacks, which have been a part of a generalized assault on immigrant labor in both Western Europe and North America, have been integral to capital's counteroffensive in two ways: first, during this crisis, as in previous ones (such as the 1930's), capital has sought to divert working class anger by pitting local against foreign workers; second, and more importantly, it was exactly the breakdown of the system of using foreign workers to weaken the wage struggles of local labor which necessitated the shift of labor out of the old centers of accumulation (Britain, New York City, etc.) where the working class had precipitated the crisis and into the new areas of accumulation (the Mideast, etc.). In Europe this meant the expulsion of foreign, predominantly industrial workers and their relocation in such OPEC countries as Iran and Venezuela. In the U.S., it has meant a stepped-up campaign against "illegal aliens,"

especially agricultural workers from the Caribbean and Mexico.

In the agriculture of the U.S. Southwest, the attack on the farm workers during the crisis has taken two related forms. On the one hand, there has been a renewed attack on farm worker organization, especially the UFW, to reverse their victories of the late 1960's. On the other hand, and more recently, a direct campaign of repression is shaping up under the illegal alien question.

The counteroffensive against the UFW in the early 1970's was based primarily on a new attempt to use the Teamsters against the power of farm workers.⁷¹ This began in California's Salinas Valley in 1970, when growers rushed to sign "sweetheart" contracts with the Teamsters to head off an expanded drive by the UFW. This led

The UFW even went so far at one point as to set up its own armed border patrols and perform police functions in rounding up illegals and delivering them to the INS.

directly to a widespread UFW strike that involved a major and violent confrontation between that organization, now backed by the AFL-CIO, and the grower/Teamster alliance.

The growers' attack was renewed in 1972 with help from Presidential candidate Richard Nixon and in 1973 with the Proposition 22 campaign in California and a Teamster assault on UFW grape contracts. The Teamster takeover of contracts touched off the most violent farm labor strife since the 1930's as the UFW struck back with a walkout. The result was a five-month battle in which two UFW workers were killed and hundreds were injured—mainly by the police, Teamster "guards", and local high school athletes, some armed with baseball bats, which the union hired. The UFW strategy was to clog the jails—over 3500 of their members and supporters were arrested. Once again the UFW gained national sympathy, but by the end of the summer it lost almost all its California contracts. The growers were succeeding in replacing UFW contracts with Teamster pacts that were less onerous and that allowed better control over labor.

At this point the UFW was back to ground zero, except for the support it had built over the years; and that support was crucial when Chavez declared war on the Teamsters and stepped up the nationwide lettuce and grape boycotts. Not only did he get official AFL-CIO support, but according to a later poll, the UFW was being backed by some 17 million Americans who stopped buying grapes and some 14 million who stopped buying lettuce. This effort accompanied a UFW drive in support of a new labor law in California that would grant government protection for union elections. The campaign was boosted by the support of Governor Jerry Brown and other national liberal figures, and the legislation was passed in 1975,

providing not only for election supervision, but even some measures of unemployment compensation for farm workers. As a result of the subsequent elections held under the new law in 1975, the UFW won back a great many of its previously held contracts; according to one report, by the end of 1975, the UFW had more than quadrupled the size of its formal membership. The effectiveness of the grower/Teamster assault had been drastically reduced, if not eliminated. This victory has apparently been made official more recently by the signing of a five-year agreement between the Teamsters and the UFW giving the latter jurisdictional rights in organizing farm workers in 13 western states.

In the second aspect of the attack on farm workers, the growing offensive against illegal aliens, the UFW, like the AFL-CIO as a whole, has exhibited complicity. The union even went so far, at one point, to set up its own armed border patrols and perform police functions in rounding up illegals and delivering them to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The arguments used to justify this were the same used in connection the opposition to braceros: that the illegals were strike-breakers whose immigrant status made them weak and difficult to organize. The alternative strategy—the one used so effectively in Western Europe—of organizing the immigrants into alliances with native workers, of beginning to organize across borders, was, to all appearances, never seriously considered. Such consideration has, however, been forced upon Chavez in the past few years as the UFW has come under increasing attack by militant Chicano groups who see that its strategy divided and weakened the Chicano movement as a whole. As a result, the UFW has been forced to change its position, calling for “legalizing” illegals and organizing them—a shift which could have profound implications; for if the farm workers movement can bridge not only the racial and ethnic divisions among native worker, but the national division, this would accelerate the circulation of struggles on both sides of the border.

But as the UFW moved to function less as an agent of capitalist division, this has been countered by the initiation in 1975-1977 of a national campaign against illegals, with attacks occurring throughout the country as well as the Southwest.⁷² The INS has intensified its efforts to round up and deport illegals, and there have been moves to increase INS funding, establish heavier penalties on illegals, and impose effective restraints on employers of illegals. At least two different bills involving these steps, one sponsored by Peter Rodino in the House and one by Edward Kennedy in the Senate, are under discussion in Congress. And the Carter Administration is already moving to support these efforts to tighten up the border and move against illegals. The new secretary of labor, Ray Marshall from the border state of Texas, favors such measures and is expected to mobilize support in the government. Yet, given the critical role played by illegals in weakening farm worker and other Chicano struggles, it seems unlikely that the border will in fact be closed. But what is already happening is that the whole campaign is producing a wave of terror against the Chicano community. Already in the past

year in the Los Angeles area, there have been repeated attacks on aliens, including beatings, rapes, and kidnappings—all with the tacit sanction of the public anti-alien campaign and aided by the failure of the INS, the FBI, and local police to curb these attacks. As new alien control programs are pushed through Congress, the increased threat of official raids will have the effect of making legal workers want to be clearly differentiated from illegals, thus undermining the declared aim of the new UFW policy. Whether the union, which, after all, was *forced* to change its position, will attack this danger head on remains to be seen, as does the outcome of other attempts to organize Mexicans and U.S. Chicanos together. That there is a basis for organizing across the border has been made clear by the development of farm worker and peasant organizations in northwestern Mexico over the last few years—which has led to rapid wage increases (33 percent in 1974 and 35 percent in 1975) and the dramatic land seizures and expropriations in November 1976.

These attacks on workers in agriculture have occurred throughout the West as one element of the capitalist counterattack. As we have seen, they have included moves against both small farmers/peasants and farm workers—partly through the energy crisis/fertilizer squeeze and partly through special government actions. In the case of foreign workers, the attacks have been part of a general assault on immigrant labor in areas where capital unsuccessfully tried to use them to weaken local worker struggles, as in Western Europe and the northeastern U.S.

The other side of these attacks on immigrants as well as of the energy crisis has been the investment of billions of dollars in capital-intensive agriculture and industry in the OPEC countries. In Iran and Iraq, for example, where vast sums are being invested in the expansion of large-scale agribusiness complexes, the labor situation is the reverse of that in Western Europe. There we find the importation of large numbers of workers for both urban areas (e.g., South Koreans and Pakistanis in Iran) and the countryside (e.g., Iraqi plans for importing up to a million Egyptian peasants). As a result of an organization of these investments which largely bypasses local peasants and city workers, there has been a rise in landlessness, joblessness, and unrest. A recent study of OPEC development plans has pointed out that despite the vast amount of capital with which these regimes have been entrusted, the rising unrest is undercutting the accumulation potential of even Iran and Iraq by forcing up social expenditures. In 1974-1975, for example, Iran was already paying \$1.2 billion in food subsidies as rural agitation forced the government to keep producer prices high. And as the peasants move into the cities, the government is finding it necessary to make welfare expenditures to "dissipate social tensions." In light of these phenomena, serious questions are now being raised as to the viability of future OPEC-centered accumulation.⁷³

LETTING THEM STARVE

That capital was willing to create and use famine as a political weapon in the 1970's was presaged by Johnson's callous withholding



of food during the 1965-1966 Indian drought in order to exact concessions from the government of that country. But in that move at least, Johnson and others could later claim that it was made in the interests of promoting the Green Revolution and the Development Decade, which would supposedly end famine for all time. In the 1970's, when famine became a more explicit political weapon, the usefulness of these phenomena to capital, both locally and internationally, started to become clearer. Locally, absolute famine—like food scarcity and high prices more generally—has been a tool for weakening the power of peasants and city workers, of breaking their wage struggles and making both groups more susceptible to capital's control and remolding. Internationally, famine in one part of the world has come to serve as a stern lesson to workers everywhere on the extent of capital's power: if, given today's high agricultural productivity and the sophisticated means of transportation, a group of people can still be allowed to starve, then workers everywhere are threatened by the same possibility. Yet, such bold exercises in power have had to be disguised, since too stark a confrontation with workers often unifies and strengthens the latter. So instead of capital taking this stance openly, its ideologues have sought to shift the blame for famine both onto the working class by accusing it of unrestrained reproduction and onto "uncontrollable nature" by allowing drought and famine to initiate and hide these moments of counterattack and discipline.

The major famines of the 1970's were in East Africa: Somalia (1969 onwards), Kenya (1970-1971), and Ethiopia (1972 onwards); West Africa: the Sahel—including Chad, Niger, Upper Volta, Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal (1972-1975); and Asia: Afghanistan (1971-1972) and Bangladesh (1974-1975). In the Western Hemisphere, by far the most serious case of famine and undernourishment was that imposed on Chile after the overthrow of Allende in 1973.

The most remarkable thing about these famines was that triage was in effect practiced through the decision not to intervene until it was too late to prevent tens and even hundreds of thousands of death. The refusal was on the part of provincial and national governments and such international aid donors as the U.S. and France; yet the reason for slowness and ineffectiveness of the relief efforts lay ultimately not with bureaucratic ineptitude or lack of will per se, but with capital's need to reestablish control of the working class. On the one hand, the international demonstration effect—the intimidation of one group of workers by starving others—is evidenced by the famines themselves and by the campaigns to reduce consumption in the developed countries; on the other hand, the question remains why people *in these particular countries* became the victims.

The answer lies partly in the fact that floods and droughts presented the occasion. But droughts and floods also occur frequently in the U.S. and Western Europe, where the result is usually dislocation, higher food prices, and increased malnutrition—not widespread famine. The reason why the 1976 drought in Europe or the 1977 drought in the western U.S., for example, did not and will not lead to famine, while droughts of equivalent gravity in other countries have, is that the balance of power between capital and the

working class in Europe and in the U.S. make it impossible. That this balance of power is the decisive factor in determining the extent of the impact of droughts and floods can be seen in the cases of the African and Asian famines and even more so in the case of the completely man-made disaster in Chile. There, the force of arms of the military junta took the place of flood or drought to smash a working class whose power to raise wages much faster than productivity had been the real destabilizing factor in the Allende regime. And in Africa and Asia, inadequate and late relief efforts helped to crush groups of peasants and urban workers whose struggles had enabled them increasingly to escape local and international capitalist control.

In the Afghanistan famine, the immediate cause was a two-year drought that destroyed grazing lands and flocks; but the conversion of this situation into a famine occurred because it took place in the western part of the country—an area from which the Afghan government extracts wheat and sheepskins, but one over which it has never been able to establish complete control, neither over peasants nor migrant herdsmen.⁷⁴ So, when the conditions of famine developed, the central government was slow to react either on its own or in requesting international aid. Authorities waited until even the seed grain had been eaten and close to one-half of the country's sheep, goats, and cattle had been butchered for food or had died. And once it did initiate some relief efforts in collaboration with the U.S. Agency for International Development and other donors, it allowed local officials to steal the supplies and sell them on the black market. (Though in at least one province, this practice was blocked when an angry starving mob attacked the governor's office—an act that prompted distribution of free wheat.) The famine probably also served the central government's purposes as an example to the students and urban workers whose unrest in the capital city of Kabul had been growing. At the same time, the U.S. policy, being promoted by Peace Corps volunteers and Nixon's special envoy, John Connally, was to provide aid in the form of *food-for-work* projects in which starving people were compelled to work on road construction or landscaping the local mosque in exchange for their subsistence. But even then, the payment levels were so low that even if the Afghans were learning their lesson, they were dying in the process: In one province with 19 food-for-work projects, during the second year of the scheme about 300 tons of wheat were still owed for work completed the previous year. In all, despite the "aid" efforts, an unofficial government estimate put the number of dead from starvation at nearly 80,000.

Drought was also converted into famine in country after country of Africa, both before and after the Afghanistan debacle. As in that country, the major groups to be decimated were populations which governments had had difficulty controlling—from the desert nomads who had maintained a fierce autonomy to the guerrillas and their overt resistance in northern Chad. The African droughts, which grew more and more serious in the 1970's as the annual rains repeatedly



failed, struck hardest at the nomads who grazed their flocks along the edge of the Sahara (the Sahel) and the subsistence farmers who cultivated marginal lands. It affected least—and therein lay one historical cause of the famine—the commercial farmers of export crops, who monopolized the best lands and most secure water supplies—although in the end they too were often struck. As has now been amply demonstrated, the vulnerability of millions of nomadic and subsistence Africans to the drought was the direct outgrowth of the colonial policies of primitive accumulation: forced labor, high taxes, and especially the appropriation of the best lands and their conversion to export crop production for the benefit of the colonialists. Among the apologists of capital these historical roots have been conveniently overlooked, and what little analysis of the famine there has been has tended to blame the nomads for overpopulation and overgrazing.⁷⁵

What is also not stated is that the drought by no means burst the scene unexpectedly; rather, it grew steadily for almost six years until the people of the Sahel finally began to collapse massively—by the millions—in the autumn of 1972. Moreover, at the international level, for at least four of those years the U.S. government and the FAO each had over one hundred officials working in the area, officials who observed the spread of the drought and the collapse of the people and the economy, and who sent in report after report documenting the steady movement toward catastrophe. And yet both organizations not only did nothing to stem that decline, but made no preparations whatsoever to deal with the coming famine: by their inaction they in effect guaranteed that it would occur.

Nor did the governments of the countries concerned move quickly to stem the effects of the drought. Rather, they ignored the growing problems for the most part and even exacerbated them by continuing to demand that peasants pay their taxes. The officials were quite willing to allow the herds of the nomads to die and the people to begin to starve. It was only when the nomads, their way of life and their independence totally destroyed, began to stream out of the desert and into the villages, and only when village after village fought back against the governments' increasing oppression by refusing to pay taxes and abandoning the production of export crops, that the African governments began to move. Yet, when they did move, it was often further repression, not relief, that came first with troops being sent in to put down the revolts of the starving. It was only these struggles of peasants, nomads, and townspeople against the governments that forced officials to take steps to prevent the disasters from being even more serious.

Though the cases of peasant militancy are numerous, the most obvious point of linkage between famine and the class struggle in the Sahel was Chad, where a guerrilla movement had since 1966 been fighting both the Chad government and the French Foreign Legion. Reports from that country have left little doubt as to the way drought and famine were used against the rebels: as the drought spread, the government not only refused aid to the rebellious regions, but ordered the army to seek out water holes in those regions and fill them with sand! Torn between using famine relief to undercut the

support of the local population for the guerrillas and its desire to starve out the latter, the government opted for the second strategy. As a result, Chad was the last of the Sahelian countries to request foreign aid against the famine.⁷⁶

When both international and local capital finally did move to limit the devastation in the Sahel, the actual aid flows in 1973 and 1974 were slow in coming, limited in quantity, and distributed discriminately against the nomads and other rebellious groups. One reason food aid was slow in coming, aside from the political motivations underlying the general lack of bureaucratic action, was that the same commercial manipulations—such as the 1972 Russian grain deal—which had driven up prices in the West had also swamped available transport facilities and reduced the amount of grain available. And when the grain was purchased and sent to countries such as Chad, it often turned out to be birdseed or coarse animal feed sorghum that was unfit for human consumption, causing widespread debilitating diarrhea, especially among the nomads accustomed to a high protein diet of meat and dairy products. As the distribution of this food (such as it was) was largely left up to the African governments, the discrimination against the nomads was extensive—a situation documented by international observers, including a U.S. official who declared that “the nomads are being wiped.” However, the U.S. government refused to release information on the matter and tried to suppress a report by some of its own observers, thus indicating that the starvation of the nomads was something the U.S. government had little interest in preventing.

East of the Sahel, in Ethiopia, the same story was repeated as the Selassie government used famine against the peasants of Wallo Province at the same time as it used guns and napalm against the Eritreans. The heart of the matter was candidly expressed by Haile Selassie himself: “We have said that wealth has to be gained through hard work. We have said those who don’t work starve...” And starve they did—an estimated minimum of 100,000 in the first two years of the Ethiopian famine alone.⁷⁷

One other example must be noted—that of the Indian subcontinent from 1970 to 1975. In India, after the successes of the Green Revolution raised grain production, output fell drastically in 1972-1973, leading to shortages and food riots in the latter year. Output rose in 1974, but dropped again in 1975—the point at which Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared the state of emergency in which she accelerated the attacks on the working class in the country. Industrial workers were faced with the banning of strikes and the freezing of wages; peasants were faced with the pushing down of producer prices while energy, fertilizer, and other input costs rose sharply—and the weakest sectors of the Indian working class became the target of the government’s compulsory sterilization program.

More dramatic still was the devastation of Bangladesh after the cyclones of 1970 were followed by civil war in 1971, drought in 1972, floods in 1973 and 1974, and finally famine in 1974 and early 1975. It is in the case of the response to the threat of famine in Bangladesh that we find further striking evidence of how triage functions in the 1970’s. When the government of the country was unable early in 1974

to obtain credits to finance the purchase of food supplies at the new, much higher prices and turned to the U.S. government for assistance. Washington stalled. As Emma Rothschild has pointed out, there was much talk at this time in the Treasury Department (and doubtlessly elsewhere in the U.S. government) of the merits of triage.⁷⁸ As this debate continued, conditions grew worse in Bangladesh, and when the U.S. finally decided to act, it was too late to prevent widespread food shortages and famine. The result was thus an unofficial but nevertheless effective case of triage. In addition, the shipments of food which have gone to the country since that time have been used not simply to feed people, but to impose widespread forced labor in the extensive for-work programs. About these brazen schemes for the imposition of work on starving people in Bangladesh, the *Wall Street Journal* has editorialized enthusiastically:

The government has put two million men and boys [and women and girls] to work building canals and levees to control the monsoon floods and channel the water into irrigation. Each worker is paid six pounds of wheat for every ton of earth he moves.

Now there are a lot of things about this program which jar the modern mind. It is hard back-breaking labor in an age when there are machines that could do the job with easy massive gulps. The pay is low. The system is akin to piece work, which American unions detest because it encourages competitive effort...But having said that, there remains the fact that Bangladesh is reaffirming a truth as old as man himself: to eat, you must work...Richer nations might even see a lesson for themselves. ⁷⁹

RECONSTRUCTION

While the above outlines the ways in which famine has been used as a repressive measure against the working class both in underdeveloped areas and through an international demonstration effect, so far nothing has been said about the plans and projects of capital in the second phase of the crisis—the restructuring of these areas. What follows are some indications of that process.

In the Sahel, the peak period of the famine relief effort in 1973-1974 was followed not only by rain in 1974 and 1975, but by long-range planning for the restructuring of the region. Various studies were carried out by such agencies as the U.S. Agency for International Development, the World Bank, and the FAO, all of which concluded that the crisis would continually "reappear" unless massive developments to change much of the social and economic system of the area were undertaken.⁸⁰ The extent of the supposedly needed changes can be judged from the specified production goals to avoid future catastrophes: given existing population growth rates and low consumption levels, output growth rates of more than ten percent a year were said to be necessary—a level unheard of in these areas, even in good years. The main points of agreement of the reports concerning structural changes were: modernization of dryland farming to increase yields with new technology, expanded use of

irrigation, and the transformation of the nomads' animal husbandry methods into more sedentary ones. The last is particularly relevant to the politics of the famine, for although there were some variations among the reports concerning the methods of regulating the nomads, all agreed that the nomads' extensive form of production would have to be supplemented by intensive livestock production. Not surprisingly, several of the studies also worried about how such drastic measures could be introduced into the area and imposed on the population. As was realized in Chile, the planners of the Sahel were forced to recognize that it is one thing to smash a group of workers by overwhelming force or neglect, to reduce their wages or income below the subsistence level. It is quite another to overcome the ultimate weapon of the working class in the face of such defeat: the refusal to work productively.

To develop further plans for the restructuring of the area and to mobilize the financial resources—public and private—as well as the bureaucratic management necessary to carry it out, Western capitalist planners joined together with representatives of the African countries to form the Club des Amis du Sahel in March 1976. The club formulated a basic ordering of priorities (with the transformation of agriculture first) and set up a series of projects to synthesize previous studies and begin additional research on programs and strategies to be implemented.

To the east of the Sahel, we can get a glimpse of the sort of development the Club des Amis may have in mind. In the Sudan, one of the countries bordering the Sahel and one with which the various reports were often partially concerned, a major agricultural development effort is being launched, with the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development planning to invest an estimated \$2.2 billion in some 60 projects over the next five years. According to the head of the technical assistance programs of the Arab Fund, "the main objective is to provide Arab countries with food and agricultural products that now have to be imported from outside the Arab world....We also want to provide a market for the exports of other Arab countries, such as fertilizers, pesticides and machinery. Beyond that, the authority will provide avenues for turning Arab money into commercial agribusiness ventures in the Arab world." According to Chase Manhattan's *Mideast Markets Report*, the fund is also expected to encourage joint ventures with Western companies. But what is considered the material basis for expecting success in such investment? Simply that the Sudan is judged to have plenty of the required factors of production: "It has land, sunshine, people and water aplenty." Yet the recent history of the country suggests that "people" in not a coequal, but the key "factor of production," and the Arab plans are aimed at putting the Sudanese people, especially the black population in the south, to work producing food and agribusiness profits—this is what the restructuring and "development" is all about.⁸¹ (There are similar plans for Afghanistan.⁸²)

But lest one jump to the conclusion that socialism would perhaps constitute a viable alternative to this invading capitalist investment,



let us take a look at Somalia, another of the East African countries hit by drought and famine. There the socialist military government acted much like the other regimes of the area: dislocations caused by the drought and famine besetting Somalia were seized upon by the governing military council to speed up a timetable for resettling nomads—who constitute some 80 percent of the country's 4.5 million people. The main differences seem to be the particular institutions into which the nomads have been forced and the fact that the government has been more efficient in handling relief and initiating the restructuring process. Almost immediately, the nomads in refugee camps were being fed "scientific socialism" along with their food and medical care. The aim, as in the Sahel, is to permanently settle the nomads and to put them to work under more controlled conditions. The difference between Somalia and Chad, for instance, is only a matter of form: in the former, communes of the socialist model under strict military discipline rather than private agribusiness Arab-style or ranching U.S. A.I.D.-style.⁸³

To summarize: through high food prices in the "developed" West and famine in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, capital has used underdevelopment in the form of reduced access to food against the working class. In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, on the other hand, during the period 1971-1975, development in the form of rising food availability and investment in agriculture, albeit under changing conditions of production, continued the agricultural strategies of the 1960's. But if this difference has existed until recently, there are now growing signs that the "Western" counterattack through food and energy price manipulation is now emerging in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union alongside certain continuing aspects of the development policies of the last 10-15 years. Moreover, as elsewhere, the working classes of these countries are responding quite actively and often violently.

CAPITALISTS OF THE WORLD, UNITE

The signs of the beginning of an underdevelopment counter-offensive against the gains made by the working classes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during the early 1970's are numerous. I will discuss only three. The *first* piece of evidence is the Soviet 1976-1980 Five-Year Plan in which the Russians have set the lowest growth rates in the postwar period.⁸⁴ Is this simply realism, or is it the Russian equivalent of a Western engineered recession? The growth rate of fertilizer production, irrigation, and farm implement production are all scheduled to be reduced—despite the recent catastrophic years in agricultural output. The major planned capital investments are for such industries as petrochemicals, not agriculture.

On the consumption side, the planned growth of food supplies is no higher than it was in the 1971-1975 period (3.2 percent), and with the reduced investment in agriculture, even that figure may be little more than an exercise in public relations. The rationale for the abandonment of the promises of the early 1970's to expand rapidly the production of consumer goods is a familiar one in the West—the

goal of price stability, the stifling of "inflationary pressure." The achievement of this, however, clearly requires an attack on wages—yet this is not specified in the plan. Without that attack, continual wage increases in the presence of reduced production of consumer goods will put upward pressures on prices, and government attempts to raise prices have been defeated on numerous occasions in the Soviet bloc. The result then could be a "crunch" in the 1980's, especially if wage gains continue to outstrip productivity gains—a phenomenon which we have seen to be associated not simply with poor technology, but with working class resistance to work on the farms and in the factories of Eastern Europe and the



Soviet Union. The resulting "labor shortage"—exacerbated by continuing migration out of the countryside—has in part been dealt with in the Soviet Union with the importation of labor from Bulgaria, North Korea, and even Finland, thus indicating another parallel to the strategies employed in Western Europe and the U.S.

The *second* piece of evidence of a shift in policy in the East comes from an examination of Eastern European trade relations. First, with respect to the U.S.S.R., the rise in energy/oil prices, which has played so large a part in capital's strategy elsewhere, is rapidly being replicated in Eastern Europe.⁸⁵ Although the Russians had sold their oil within the Soviet bloc at prices well below the world levels, these prices were raised sharply in 1975, producing the same kind of redistribution of value from Eastern Europe to the U.S.S.R. as occurred from Western Europe to OPEC. Prices were apparently raised again in 1976 and are expected to go even higher in 1977. At the same time, a new, more frequent adjustment of intra-Soviet bloc prices has been introduced which will make their changes follow those of the world market more quickly and thus tend to speed the circulation of those crisis mechanisms from West to East. The results of these policies are beginning to have the same impact on Eastern Europe as the earlier OPEC price rises had on the West: a tendency toward economic crisis and underdevelopment.

One of the most seriously affected of the Eastern European

countries is Czechoslovakia, where the increase in energy prices seems to underpin the beginnings of a rollback in the improvements in living standards granted in the aftermath of the 1968 upheaval. Some restrictions on electricity consumption have been imposed, and both Czech economists and government officials have warned of the possibility of expanded austerity measures.⁸⁶ As in the Soviet Union, one of the most prominent reasons for the difficulties in accumulation has been inadequate "labor discipline". A recent report on this problem explains:

Labor morale is a major source of concern. Hardly a day passes without a mention in the press or on the air of time lost through absenteeism, an indirect index of labor discipline. Human ingenuity seems to be unlimited in this context. Radio Prague complained of the dislocation of production caused by the hundreds of thousands who every year celebrate their birthdays, namedays, and other anniversaries during working hours. In addition to those directly concerned, their numerous guests are also absent from work.

According to the Czech minister of labor, an estimated 100 million working hours are "lost" annually in this struggle against work—the equivalent of 55,000 working taking a year-long vacation.⁸⁷ Like the Russians today and the Western Europeans in the 1960's, the Czech government is responding by importing cheap labor from Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Cyprus, and even Vietnam.⁸⁸

The pressures on the governments of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are being further intensified by developments in their trade and financial relations with the West. To facilitate the introduction of the new technological, productivity-raising investments needed to deal with working class struggles, these governments have increasingly turned to imports from the West. And faced with the same problem as many Western countries of rising energy costs along with an inability to raise exports sufficiently, they have been forced to go heavily into debt to the Western private commercial banks and Euro-currency market—a debt which rose from \$8.5 billion in 1973 to \$25 billion in 1976. The situation is expected to worsen as both the need for imports and the difficulties in expanding exports continue. The result is that the creation in Eastern Europe of a debt problem which gives creditor institutions the same kind of power to demand internal austerity and repression of the working class as that already held by the U.S. federal government and the major banks over New York City and by the International Monetary Fund over the oil-importing countries of Western Europe.⁸⁹

A *third* and most dramatic piece of evidence of the circulation of the capitalist counterattack to the Eastern bloc—as well as of its limitation—comes from Poland: the renewed attempt by authorities in that country in June 1976 to raise sharply food prices and thus cut working class real income. The defeat of the previous attempt in December 1970, it will be recalled, forced the Polish government (backed by the U.S.S.R.) to pay enormous and rising food subsidies to both consumers and producers. Between 1971 and 1975 the government eroded some of the real effects of these subsidies by

inflation; real peasant income, for example, dropped 28 percent from 1973 to 1975. Nevertheless, continuing wage increases (real wages in the socialist sector as a whole rose 40 percent from 1971 to 1975) and dragging productivity in both industry and agriculture continued to raise the state's subsidy burden and eventually forced the government to get involved in its own grain deal with the U.S. in 1975.⁹⁰ Moreover, workers continued to stage protests against food shortages, most notably the actions by housewives in 1975 against the meat shortage. One of the main issues in this struggle is the fact that despite the supposed shortage of meat, Poland still exports this commodity—including some 27,000 tons of Polish hams and shoulders to the U.S. annually—to finance capital accumulation.

On June 24th, 1976 the government announced that the food problem would be dealt with by raising farm output prices to stimulate agricultural growth, which in turn would be paid for by even higher consumer price increases—a classic attempt to pit

Infuriated Polish workers walked off their jobs all over the country, and riots broke out at Radom, where the Communist Party headquarters was burned down and food stores were looted.

industrial worker against peasant. Moreover, the way in which some subsidies were to be granted to soften the increase in prices showed who the real enemy was: the subsidies, it was announced, would not be granted to workers "who drift from job to job" or to "loafers" and others guilty of a "lack of labor discipline."

The rapid working class response mirrored that of 1970. Infuriated workers walked off their jobs all over the country, and riots broke out at Radom, where the Community Party headquarters were burned down and food stores were looted. At Ursus, workers tore up railroad tracks and derailed a locomotive. Within 24 hours the government backed down and cancelled the price increases.

This second stunning victory in six years for Polish workers has forced the government into a profound crisis. So far, appeals to the rising costs of energy and other imports have cut no ice with the people of the country. How much leverage rising pressures from the West—especially warnings about erosions in Poland's credit standing—will give the government in the future is unclear. The limits on its room to maneuver at this time became clear when international protests forced officials to reduce prison sentences imposed on "riot" leaders. Defeated so far in the urban areas, the government has turned to the countryside (where the procurement price increases were allowed to stand), pushing mechanization to raise productivity and to try to introduce an Eastern version of the

Mansholt Plan to induce older farmers to sell their land to state enterprises.

While waiting for such measures to bear fruit, however, the Polish government is being forced to continue paying for increased imports of food to satisfy worker demands. In December 1976, after a meeting of the Central Committee to discuss the impact of the June upheaval, Gierek made an announcement which suggested that the Polish government may join with the Soviets in promoting planned recession. He said that because of continuing food imports (which rose to an estimated \$1.5 billion for grain and meat in 1976-1977), investment plans are being cut back in the 1976-1980 five-year plan. Although food production will supposedly increase nonetheless, the government is even considering the introduction of rationing—and this has already been done in the case of sugar—as a substitute for price increases. But such a move, if generalized under worsening economic conditions, is likely to produce not less but increased worker protest. Further trials of strength between the Polish state and the Polish working class will undoubtedly occur.⁹¹

In the rest of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the Polish events have had varying effects. In Hungary, where tensions have been considerably lower, the government was able to impose price increases, but smaller ones. In Czechoslovakia, where the tensions are greater, the government quickly issued "reassuring statements about the stability of Czech prices." In the Soviet Union itself, the Polish situation was doubly worrisome to those in power—both because of the impact of the 1970 uprising on Soviet workers and the fact that there had reportedly already been at least one strike over the food issue recently (in Latvia). To head off further troubles, the Soviet government in early 1977 announced an increase in the production of consumer goods as well as an 18 percent wage hike over four years for certain sectors. At the same time, prices for basic foods continued to be held constant despite the fact that, according to the chairman of the State Price Committee, *in 1975 it cost the government the equivalent of about \$25 billion to subsidize milk and meat prices alone.*⁹²

In conclusion, then, it seems evident that the period in which crisis in the West was compatible with continued development strategies in the East is over. From now on it is likely that the global circulation of both capitalist attack and working class resistance will be accelerated, such that confrontations in any given area will have greater and quicker impact elsewhere in the world.

VI.

CONCLUSIONS

Although the foregoing sketch of the class politics of food is by no means complete, we can nevertheless draw some important lessons from the experiences examined. Perhaps the most basic conclusion which emerges is that the "food crisis" of the 1970's is not simply a problem or deficiency of capitalism. High prices and famines are neither the simple by-product of the profit-maximizing behavior

of capitalist enterprise nor the inescapable results of the trade and direct investment imperialism of national capitals. The "food crisis", while involving all of these elements, is rather one dimension of a direct attack by capital on the working class internationally. Moreover, that attack is not simply the outgrowth of the continued aggressive development of international capitalism, but is rather a desperate response to a profound crisis. That crisis we have seen to be not simply an aggregate of local problems, but a global one imposed by a working class which has affirmed its own international character through the common nature and interrelatedness of its struggles everywhere. The demand for social wealth and the struggle against work—which *ZEROWORK* 1 identified as the bases of the working class strategy—we have seen to be the case with respect to food. In the 1950's, the agrarian part of the working class struggled against capital's attempts to restructure and exploit rural society for the sake of industrialization. In the 1960's, the class—in West and East, in countryside and city alike—rejected the productivity deal, resisting both capital's crude attempt to force it to work more for the same income and its more subtle attempts to tie income gains to productivity—while at the same time posing a challenge to the very future of capital itself.

While the power of different sectors of the working class to improve their food consumption has varied greatly, depending on their position in the wage/income hierarchy, the struggles of the traditionally weaker sectors—especially the unwaged—grew tremendously in the 1960's. In fact, their struggles can be seen to have been the most important factor in forcing a political recomposition of the class and throwing capital into severe crisis. In the West, it was the struggles of women, blacks, farm workers, et al. which were basic to the "crisis of democracy". In Asia and Africa, it was the struggles of peasants—especially in Indochina—which defeated the Green Revolution. In Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, it was again peasants who subverted work on *kolkhozy* and other farms and undermined the efforts of Communist planners to use them to meet the food demands of urban workers. All of these struggles sapped the sources of profit and accumulation by vastly reducing capital's space to maneuver both locally and globally.

The "food crisis" is thus one moment of a worldwide power struggle between the classes brought on by the growth, not the lessening, of working class strength and militancy. What this survey has shown is how it has been working class pressure which has forced capital to develop the new productivity-raising technologies (high-yielding varieties, mechanization, etc.) which have increased per capita output and made higher consumption levels possible. Although I have made no attempt here to trace the longer historical record, what we have seen should be enough to show why it was argued at the outset that the better-fed workers of today are better-fed because of their struggles.

And yet, though the power of the class has been enough to gain increases in food consumption and "standard of living" while subverting capital's development, it has not been enough to prevent a massive counterattack. And it is in capital's successes—during this

response that we discover the areas of working class weakness. The greatest weakness, of course, is among those sectors (for example, areas like the Sahel and Bangladesh) in which peasants could not prevent being starved. But the defeats of the 1970's show more than that: they reveal how division has remained the fundamental tool of capital's power. For even among leading sectors of the class during the cycle of struggles of the 1960's—such as those in Italy, Britain, and New York City—capital has been able to impose austerity, albeit not as severely as in Africa and Asia. The divisions capital has played on, however, are new arrangements which have taken time to study and understand. The so-called fiscal crisis of New York and the sudden rise in food prices have not been seen immediately as tools of repressions, nor have the breakdown of the international monetary system initiated by the devaluation of the dollar and the sudden surge of balance of payments problems consequent to the rise of energy prices been seen clearly as aspects of capital's quest to regain control of the international system. Radical social critics, especially those of the Left, have only obscured the situation further by treating the crisis as one more painful outcome of the mysterious "laws of motion" of capitalism.

But the working class has learned the meaning of what is happening, even if most radicals and leftists have not, and people have begun to fight back. U.S. workers, caught unprepared by the first Russian grain deal, have posed serious obstacles to any more such schemes while at the same time preventing wholesale cuts in the food stamp program. In the U.S. and Western Europe, the attacks on farm workers and peasants have been blunted by the defeat of the Teamsters and the resistance to the Mansholt Plan. The international flight of capital to places such as the Middle East has faced growing difficulties as worker struggles have emerged in the new areas of investment. In the socialist bloc, the violent reaction of Polish workers to austerity, the continuing uncooperative behavior of Soviet workers, and growing unrest among workers in China and Vietnam have deepened the crisis there, too.

The most successful of capital's strategies have been international ones in which attacks on workers in one country seem to originate from outside. This has most notably been the case with the "energy crisis" and the new international manipulation of exchange rates and credit. Yet even in these cases workers are beginning to understand the mechanisms and fight back. The Carter Administration in the U.S. is girding itself for intense opposition to its energy program from a population that no longer responds to propaganda about Arab sheiks and limits to growth. And in Poland, Egypt, and Italy, workers have responded violently to the conditions set by the International Monetary Fund for alleviation of the "money shortage".

Here is where we must turn our closest attention if we are to discover the best strategies for "solving the food crisis". We must study both the mechanisms of capital's attack and, above all, the struggles which are being waged against it. We must discover the weaknesses of those struggles and we must discover and build on

their strengths. We must grasp the fact that the fight for food is part of a larger fight, and that a food movement can only be effective if it addresses itself to the task of accelerating the circulation of the various struggles. We must also learn from the current forms of struggle in order to avoid resorting to obsolete notions about the aims of the struggle. We must see that the object of working class insurgency today is not the state as Winter Palace, but the state as social factory. For the nature of the current international struggle raises serious questions about the "socialist alternative", whatever the variety. And before we proceed with a quest for a "true socialism" that will be unlike anything in the world today, we should be certain that we understand the new demands and needs of the working class. For it is only through examination of (not to mention participation in) concrete struggles that we can determine the appropriate organizational forms to achieve our aims.

May 1977

NOTES

1. Two useful new books which synthesize much of what has been written from this perspective are: Frances Moore Lappe & Joseph Collins, **Food First**, Houghton Mifflin, 1977; and Susan George, **How the Other Half Dies**, Allanheld Osmun, 1977.

2. The most careful and useful work on food which has been done by the anti-imperialist school in the U.S. is that of the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA). See especially "U.S. Grain Arsenal," **NACLA's Latin America and Empire Report**, October 1975, and "Del Monte: Bitter Fruits," *ibid.*, September 1976. The much less useful Soviet Marxist view can be seen in P. Markov, "The World Food Problem," **International Affairs** (Moscow), September 1975.

3. In Lappe & Collins, *op. cit.*, for example, 45 out of 48 chapters are filled with depressing stories of capitalist initiative.

4. The analysis laid out in this article is treated in much more detail in a book on food and the class struggle that the author is preparing for Ramparts Press.

5. In their preoccupation with the **form** of the value relation between capital and labor (exchange value/wage), Marxologists and leftists tend to forget that the **substance** of value is work (abstract labor) and that the imposition of work is the fundamental goal of capital. For many this forgetfulness is undoubtedly a reflection of a political bias in favor of work—a characteristic which reduces all their debates with capital to ones of form alone.

6. Selma James, **Sex, Race and Class**, Falling Wall Press, 1975; and "Wageless or the World," in Wendy Edmond and Suzie Fleming, eds., **All Work and No Pay**, Falling Wall Press, 1975.

7. The basic text on housework as work for capital is Mariarosa Dalla Costa & Selma James, **The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community**, Falling Wall Press, 1972. For an application of the concept of circuits to the analysis of how the reproduction of labor-power is part of the reproduction of capital, see Harry Cleaver, "Malaria, the Politics of Public Health and the International Crisis," **Review of Radical Political Economics**, Spring 1977, appendix.

8. This piecework character of peasant production is also present in housework and schoolwork, where there are no fixed hours and "payment" is dependent on the quality of performance.

9. Karl Marx, **Capital**, Volume III, Part VI.

10. See **ZEROWORK** 1.

11. For further discussion of how capital is moved internationally by working class struggle, see Harry Cleaver, "The Internationalization of Capital and the Mode of Production in Agriculture," **Economic and Political Weekly**, 27 March 1976.

12. For a recent analysis of the intentions and projects of postwar planning by the U.S. government and the Council on Foreign Relations, see Laurence Shoup & William Minter, **Imperial Brain Trust**, Montly Review Press, 1977.

14. On the "failure" of UNRRA, see John Perry, "Why UNRRA Failed," **Harper's**, January 1946; I.F. Stone, "UNRRA's Battle," **The Nation**, 30 March 1946; "UNRRA or Nothing," **New Republic**, 22 October 1945; "Lehman Resigns In Disgust," **New Republic**, 25 March 1946; Vic Schneerson, "UNRRA: A Cause Betrayed," **China Weekly Review**, 3 May 1947. On the Bengali famine, see B.M. Bhatia, **Famines in India**, Asia Publishing, 1967. ch.XI.

15. See "Cabinet Rejects World Food Plan," **New York Times**, 9 August 1946; "World Food Board Endorsed by FAO," **ibid.**, 14 September 1946; "World Food Plan Called a U.S. Peril," **ibid.**, 14 October 1946; and "U.S. Softens View on Relief Set-Up," **ibid.**, 15 November 1946.

16. Not long before the Marshall Plan was announced, the U.S. created the Food Famine Committee and sent Herbert Hoover to Europe to study the situation. Hoover had been one of the pioneers for U.S. capital in the use of food aid to intervene in working class struggles overseas. See Walter Cohen, "Herbert Hoover: Some Food for Thought," **Pacific Research and World Empire Telegram**, November-December 1971.

17. See Mario Tronti, "Workers and Capital," **Telos** #14.

18. M.R. Benedict, **Farm Policies of the United States, 1790-1950**, Octagon, 1967, p. 463.

19. **Economic Report of the President 1977**, p. 292; G.L. Johnson, ed., **The Overproduction Trap in U.S. Agriculture**, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972, p. 169.

20. See "TVA's Educational Campaign on the Application of Fertilizer Called A Winner For Everyone," **Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter**, 6 January 1958.

21. H.G. Halcrow, **Food Policy for America**, McGraw Hill, 1977, p. 4.

R. Acuna, **Occupied America**, Canfield, 1972, p. 172.

23. There is no good data on the number of illegals, but see Vernon Briggs, Jr., "Mexican workers in the United States Labor Market: A Contemporary Dilemma," **International Labor Review**, November 1975.

24. אביא, **op. cit.**, ch. 8.

25. For the history of how the development of postwar agrarian strategy for dealing with peasants grew out of previous experience in the U.S. South and China, see Harry Cleaver, "The Origins of the Green Revolution," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Stanford University, 1975. In terms of economic models of development, the whole literature of the early 1950's on tapping agricultural labor with zero marginal productivity was geared to this. Perhaps the best known model of industrializing on surplus agricultural labor and product is W.A. Lewis, "Development With Unlimited Supplies of Labor," **Manchester School**, XXII (1954).

26. See Cleaver, "Origins," **op. cit.**, and the references therein.

27. John King, "Rice Politics," **Foreign Affairs**, April 1953.

28. There was no doubt at the time of the political potential of PL 480. In the now famous words of Hubert Humphrey, one of those most responsible for the law: "I have heard...that people may become dependent on us for food. I know that was not supposed to be good news. To me that was good news, because before people can do anything they have got to eat. And if you are looking for a way to get people to lean on you and to be dependent on you, in terms of their cooperation with you, it seems to me that food dependence would be terrific..." Hearings: **Policies and Operations Under PL 480**, 85th Congress, First Session, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, 1957, p. 128. On PL 480 see also I. Yost, "The Food for Peace Arsenal," **NACLA Newsletter**, May-June 1971.

29. See P.R. Gregory & R.C. Stuart, **Soviet Economic Structure and Performance**, Harper & Row, 1974, ch. y.

30. For a brief history of Soviet/East European postwar relations, see H. Schwartz, **Eastern Europe in the Soviet Shadow**, John Day, 1973.

31. See Gregory & Stuart, **op. cit.**

32. See G. Saunders, ed., **Samizdat**, Pathfinder Press, 1974, pp. 23-24.

33. The following discussion of the Khrushchev years is based primarily on Gregory & Stuart, **op. cit.**; Alex Nove, "Soviet Agriculture Marks Time," **Foreign Affairs**, July 1962, and "Soviet Agriculture Under Brezhnev," **Slavic Review**, January 1970 (which covers the earlier period also).

34. On the food riots and protests, see M. Holubenko, "The Soviet Working Class: Discontent and Opposition," **Critique**, Spring 1975.

35. See Paolo Carpianno, "U.S. Class Composition in the 'Sixties," **ZEROWORK** 1.

36. The black movement and the welfare struggles as well as the Italian self-reduction actions are discussed in more detail in **ZEROWORK** 1.

37. See W.H. Friedland & A. Barton, "Tomato Technology," **Transaction**, September-October 1976; and W.D. Rasmussen, "Advances in American Agriculture: The Mechanical Tomato Harvester as a Case Study," **Technology and Culture**, October 1968.

38. See Richard Meister & Anne Loftis, **A Long Time Coming: The Struggle to Unionize America's Farm Workers**, Macmillan, 1977, ch. 9.

39. See NACLA, "Del Monte," **op. cit.**, and "Harvest of Anger," **ibid.**, July-August 1976

40. Halcrow, **op. cit.**, p. 172; and Committee on Economic Development, **A New U.S. Farm Policy for Changing World Food Needs**, October 1974, pp. 34-35.

41. For an overview of these changes, see Steve Weissman, "The Many Successes of the Alliance For Progress," in **The Trojan Horse**, Ramparts Press, 1975.

42. See "Fertilizer Industry Proposes Kitty of \$2 Million to Finance World Plant Food Promotion," **Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter**, 8 August 1960; and William & Paul Paddock, **Famine 1975**, Little Brown, 1967, p. 80. The TVA also carried out extensive overseas promotion; see "TVA's International Fertilizer Programs," National Fertilizer Development Center, Muscle Shoals, Alabama, Circular z.7, April 1970.

43. See Harry Cleaver, "The Contradictions of the Green Revolution," **Monthly Review**, June 1972; and the account of a secret Asian Development Bank report in **Seven Days**, 25 April 1977.

44. See "Too Much Fertilizer," **Business Week**, 31 May 1969; and "Oil Companies Bail Out of Fertilizer Surplus," **ibid.**, 13 December 1969.

45. See Gregory & Stuart, **op. cit.** and Nove, **op. cit.**

46. See "Whoever Steals, Lives Better," **New York Times**, 13 April 1976.

47. See D.E. Powell, "The Rural Exodus," **Problems of Communism**, November-December 1974; and "Officials Cite Need for Improved Working Conditions in Agriculture," Radio Liberty Research, RL 410/76, 8 September 1976. Both of these articles indicate that the movement to the cities in recent years has been led by young women escaping farm jobs such as that of "milkmaid," which involves a working day of 13 to 16 hours in addition to housework.

48. See, for example, Helen Pick, "Czechoslovakia Faces A Long Haul to Prosperity," **Manchester Guardian Weekly**, 6 June 1976; "Yugoslavia, Output Off, Cracking Down On Loafers," **New York Times**, 11 September 1975; and P. Ben, "Poor Poland: Making Ends Meet," **New Republic**, 30 January 1971.

49. See Schwartz, **op.cit.**

50. See Adam Bromke, "Beyond the Gomulka Era," **Foreign Affairs**, April 1971; "The Polish Eruption: A Nation in Flames," **Time**, 28 December 1970; "Poland: Repairing a Shaken Regime," **ibid.**, 25 January 1971; "Poland: Wooing the Workers," **ibid.**, 1 March 1971; M. Lucbert, "Poland Under Gierek: New Aspirations and Reshuffled Priorities," **Manchester Guardian Weekly**, 12 July 1975; and A. Bromke & J.W. Strong, eds., **Gierek's Poland**, Praeger, 1973.

51. U.S. Department of Agriculture, **The World Food Situation and Prospects to 1985**, Foreign Agricultural Economic Report No. 98.

52. A sampling of the U.S. rhetoric can be found in the following: "U.S. Food Power: Ultimate Weapon in World Politics?" **Business Week**, 15 December 1975; "Food: Potent U.S. Weapon," **U.S. News & World Report**, 16 February 1976; "CIA Report Says Worsening World Grain Shortages Could Give U.S. Great Power," **New York Times**, 17 March 1975; NACLA, Spring 1974; and Leslie Gelb & Anthony Lake, "Less Food, More Politics," **ibid.**, Winter 1974.

53. For an example of this approach, see Emma Rothschild, "Food Politics," **Foreign Affairs**, January 1976.

54. Much of the story of these shifts can be found in Lappe & Collins, **op. cit.** and NACLA, "U.S. Grain Arsenal," **op. cit.** At this point the problem is no longer one of discovering what happened, but of understanding it in class terms.

55. See the article by Christian Marazzi in this issue for a broader analysis of the new role of devaluation and other monetary manipulations in the crisis.

56. See "Ten Percent Is Impounded in Food Stamp Aid," **New York Times**, 12 January 1972; "2.1 Million to Get Full Restoration of Food Stamp Aid," **ibid.**, 17 January 1972; "Food Stamp Fund Freed by Judge," **ibid.**, 14

October 1974; etc.

57. See J. Collins, "CIA: Changing Weather Can Aid U.S. Foreign Policy," **The Elements**, Transnational Inst., 1975; "Worrisome CIA Report: Even U.S. Farms May Be Hit By Cooling Trend," **U.S. News & World Report**, 31 May 1976.

58. Again see Lappe & Collins, *op. cit.* and NACLA, "U.S. Grain Arsenal," *op. cit.* For more detail and background, see James Trager, **Amber Waves of Grain**, Arthur Fields, 1973.

59. One of the few commentaries to point to the struggles behind the grain deal, however inadequate the analysis, was A. Yanov, "Behind the Soviet Union's Grain Purchases," ("op-ed" article) **New York Times**, 31 December 1975.

60. "Soviet Decrees More Emphasis on Specialized Modern Farms," **New York Times**, 2 June 1976; and Central Intelligence Agency, **USSR Agricultural Atlas**, 1974, p. 26.

61. Radio Free Europe Research: Bulgaria/28/4, November 1976; Bulgaria/26/30, September 1976; Bulgaria/2/21, January 1977; Hungarian Situation Report/42/17, November 1976.

62. **Economic Report of the President 1976**, pp. 91-91.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 268.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 271.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 268.

66. This section draws on the following sources, among others: "Boom in Agrichemicals," **Business Week**, 8 June 1974; Erik Eckholm, **Fertilizer Scarcity and the Food Outlook**, Overseas Development Council Communique No.26, June 1975; H. Hughes & S. Pearson, "Principal Issues Facing the World Fertilizer Economy," Agricultural Development Council Seminar Report, March 1975; "Rising World Fertilizer Scarcity Threatens Famine For Millions," **New York Times**, 1 September 1974; "New Delhi Is Blamed for Worsening Food Crisis," *Ibid.*, 13 September 1974.

67. Current discussions of the establishment of a world food reserve turn around the questions of the size and trigger prices for buying and selling, and of who should hold the reserve. The primary object of the reserves is undoubtedly that of stabilizing grain prices, probably at high levels. Butz's successor, Bob Bergland, gives every indication that he too will try to maintain high prices despite the reemergence of a significant surplus in the U.S. and abroad following two years of favorable weather. See "A New Wheat Glut," **Newsweek**, 14 March 1977.

68. Committee on Economic Development, *op. cit.*

69. "Le Plan Mansholt," Documents Communauté Européenne, supplément au No. 129, Avril 1969 de **Communauté Européenne**; "European Economic Community" (report on riots and the plan), **Agriculture Abroad**, Canada Department of Agriculture, June 1971; S.L. Mansholt, "Farmers Riots and Their Background," **Intereconomics**, No.6, 1971; G. Vedel, "Perspectives A Long Terme de L'Agriculture Francaise, 1968-1985," La Documentation Francaise.

70. See **Le Livre Des Paysans Pauvres**, Maspero, 1976.

71. See Meister & Loftis, *op. cit.* for the story of the conflict between the UFW and the Teamsters. See also B. Barber, "UFW and the Class Struggle," **Southwest Economy and Society**, Spring 1976.

72. The articles describing the "illegal alien problem" are innumerable. For typical examples, see: "Million Illegal Aliens in Metropolitan Area,"

New York Times, 29 December 1974; "A Plan to Slow the Flood of Illegal Aliens," **Business Week**, 11 August 1975; "With Jobs Scarce U.S. Steps Up Efforts to Seize Illegal Aliens," **Wall Street Journal**, 12 August 1975; "Administration Seeks to Widen Effort to Deport Illegal Aliens," **New York Times**, 5 May 1976; "Border Crisis: Illegal Aliens Out of Control?" **U.S. News & World Report**, 25 April 1977. For an example of a hard line close-the-border, jail-the-illegals position, see Vernon Briggs, "Illegal Aliens: The Need for a More Restrictive Border Policy," **Social Science Quarterly**, December 1975. For a taste of Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall's somewhat milder approach, see his "The International Migration of Workers in the United States and Europe," Center for the Study of Human Resources, University of Texas at Austin, June 1976.

73. These observations are made in the important article by T.H. Moran, "Why Oil Prices Go Up: The Future: OPEC Wants Them To," **Foreign Policy**, Winter 1976-1977. A companion piece by V.H. Oppenheim tells the inside story of U.S. complicity in the oil price increases and thus helps to confirm the analysis presented by Mario Montano in "Notes On the International Crisis," **ZEROWORK** 1.

74. On the Afghan famine, see the series of articles in the **New York Times**, 16 June, 21 June, 11 July, 14 November, and 19 November 1972.

75. Besides the innumerable press accounts, a large number of studies have been done on the events in the Sahel. Mostly liberal but still useful are: H. Sheets & R. Morris, "Disaster in the Desert," Carnegie Endowment, 1974; and M. Glantz, **The Politics of Natural Disaster**, Praeger, 1976. Much more important politically are two French studies: Comite d'Information Sahel, **Qui Se Nourrit de la Famine en Afrique?** Petite Maspero, 1975; and J. Copans, ed., **Secheresses et Famines Du Sahel**, Maspero, 1975.

76. See mainly J.-L. Ormieres, "Les Consequences Politiques de La Famine," in Copans, **op. cit.**

77. The quotation was first reported by Oriana Fallaci in the **Chicago Tribune**, 24 June 1973, and it appears again in L. Wiseberg, "An International Perspective on the African Famines," in Glantz, **op. cit.** For more on the Ethiopian government's continued use of famine to control struggle even after the downfall of Selassie, see, for example, "Ethiopia's Legacy is Poverty and Instability," **New York Times**, 31 August 1975; and "Drought Deaths Debated," **Washington Post**, 24 September 1975.

78. See Rothschild, **op. cit.**

79. "Food For Work" (editorial), **Wall Street Journal**, 8 September 1976. For a description of some Food For Work programs, see U.S. Agency for International Development, **War On Hunger**, July 1975; and AID's **Front Lines**, 21 October 1976.

80. For a useful summary of all the Sahel development reports and references, see Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development, **Development Cooperation 1976 Review**, November 1976, Part VIII.

81. On the Sudan, see "Sudan: Regional Development," **Mideast Markets**, Chase Manhattan, 24 May 1976; "Arab Oil Money Backs Sudan's Development As Prime Food Source," **Wall Street Journal**, 25 November 1975; and "Sudan: When God Laughed," **The Economist**, 12 July 1975.

82. As in Ethiopia, policy concerning the nomads changed little in Afghanistan after the military overthrew the parliamentary government responsible for the 1971-1972 famine. Among the first measures announced by the new regime were "steps as far as possible for resettling nomads...and thus the traces of nomadic and tribal life will be eliminated." The development of agriculture will apparently follow the Sudanese direction with

U.S. backing leading to increased Arab involvement. See L. Dupree, "The New Look in American Aid to Afghanistan," American Universities Field Staff Reports, South Asia Series, Vol. XVIII, No. 6, June 1974.

83. See "Famine Speeds Somalia's Drive To Resettle Nomads in Communes," **New York Times**, 22 March 1975; and "Somalia's Scientific Socialism: A Bit Soviet But Still African," **Washington Post**, 18 July 1975.

84. Central Intelligence Agency, "Soviet Economic Plans for 1976-1980: A First Look," Research Aid ER 76-10471, August 1976; "The Soviet Economy: Back On A More Modest Growth Track," Radio Liberty Research Bulletin, No. 37 (2877), 10 September 1976; D.W. Green et al., "An Evaluation of the 10th Five-Year Plan," U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, **Soviet Economy in a New Perspective**, 14 October 1976.

85. P. Marer, "Has Eastern Europe Become a Liability to the Soviet Union—The Economic Aspects," in C. Gati, ed., **The International Politics of Eastern Europe**, Praeger, 1976; and "OPEC Oil Price Change and COMECON Oil Prices," Radio Free Europe Research RAD Background Report/244 (Eastern Europe), 29 November 1976.

86. P. Machlan, "Czechoslovakia's Economic Difficulties," Radio Free Europe RAD Background Report, 5 November 1976.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 9, and *ibid.*, 7 October 1976.

88. See "Labor Shortages Plague Prague," **New York Times**, 20 October 1974; and "Czechoslovakia Is Importing Vietnamese Workers," *ibid.*, 25 April 1976.

89. On the debt problem, see, for example: **International Economic Report of the President 1977**, pp. 65-66; "Banks Open New Windows to the East," **Business Week**, 19 July 1976; "Poland: Huge Debt Stalls Western Ventures," *ibid.*, 17 January 1977; and "The New Sophistication in East-West Banking," *ibid.*, 7 March 1977.

90. Lucbert, *op. cit.*

91. See, for example, "Poles Plan Cutback in Economic Growth," **New York Times**, 2 December 1976.

92. A. Zarins, "Soviet Latvian Press Ignores the Dockers Strike," Radio Liberty Research, 29 November 1976; and "Soviets Overhauling Consumer Durables Production," **Business Eastern Europe**, 4 February 1977.