

THE Round Table

Fall
2001

"...a path from where we are to where we should be." --Peter Maurin



Why This Issue?

While many people in the U.S. and in Saint Louis are now rightly concerned about terrorism and how to respond to it, it seems to me that this issue's focus on the global economy retains a crucial importance.

I have heard many people speak of us Americans as living in "a bubble," that is, until September 11th. Many of us are now doing crash courses in Islam, U.S. policy in the Middle East, and the varieties of terrorism. All this is to the good, if we realize the vast power and influence the U.S. government and our corporations wield all over the world.

Hence, the continued relevance of the global economy in the changed political landscape since September. We must find ways to educate others and ourselves about the growing disparity between rich and poor, which is a result of these global economic decisions and arrangements.

In this issue, Teka Childress retrieves some of the teachings and resources of the Catholic Worker Movement, which can help us in responding creatively to the many local, national, and global issues we face. Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day articulated a vision and championed specific practices that can be an energizing alternative to the American lifestyle of materialism and consumption. Mary Ann McGovern reflects on how the global economy has affected Saint Louis jobs and manufacturing. As in so many pressing issues, it's not that we lack solutions or even money; it's a matter of political will. Genevieve Cassini offers a helpful guide to the powers of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which can go so far as to privatize water. Suzanne Renard examines many issues related to the globalization of the economy, from the domination by transnational corporations to the costs of the car culture. Finally, Sarah Heyman profiles the courageous resistance of Rodolfo Montiel to the destruction of Mexican forests. Michelle Born, Tony Hilkin, Mary Ann McGovern and Barb Prosser round out the issue with our regular columns.

Two quotations summarize the challenges we face. First, from an Argentinean businessman Enrique Pescamorna: "Asians work twenty hours a day for eighty dollars a month. If I want to compete, I have to turn to them. It's a globalized world. The Filipino girls in our offices in Hong Kong are always willing. There are no Saturdays or Sundays. If they have to work several days straight without sleeping, they do it, and they don't get overtime and don't ask for a thing." Second, from Saint Augustine: "Hope has two beautiful daughters. Their names are anger and courage: anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they do not remain the way they are."



Front cover art by Jeff Finnegan, centerfold by Bill Rehg, SJ

--Mark Chmiel

The centerfold is a pictorial representation of the global gap between rich and poor nations. The solid line running across the globe represents the GNP of each country, while the dotted line represents the external debt of each country. The nations are listed either below or above the map, and the points on the line correspond to the name of the nation they are closest to. For example, Honduras, the fifth name from the left, corresponds to the fifth point from the left (be sure to note that Argentina is listed above and is the second name from the left). As you can see, Honduras' GNP is very low compared with its external debt, represented by the fifth point from the left on the dotted line. The situation is reversed for the following name, the USA, (sixth name and point from the left). There the GNP skyrockets almost as high as Honduras' debt, and its debt plummets almost as low as Honduras' GNP.

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Faith and Resistance

by Teka Childress

"Happiness waits at the Stuff Mart. All you need is lots . . . more . . . stuff." These words from a little song might be familiar to those with small children. I heard them on a *Veggie Tales* video about Madam Blueberry, while I was hanging out with Gabriel and Anna Rehg-Miller one Sunday morning. Poor Madam Blueberry doesn't know what to do. She is so blue because her things are not as nice as those of her neighbors. Two visitors from the newly built, nearby Stuff Mart come to her rescue. They promise her that happiness is waiting right outside her very window at the Stuff Mart. She joyfully skips over to the new store and literally stuffs her basket with every goodie she finds there. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, the things she finds there do not bring her happiness, but cause her tree house home to topple over.

The moral of this children's tale can be aptly applied to the global economy. While the global economy will create lots more stuff and move it effectively (if not justly) around the world, it will not ultimately bring happiness to the world's people nor will it be good for the natural world itself. Mary Ann McGivern's definition of globalization is simply "capitalism's domination of the world." Advocates of a global economy, such as corporate leaders and members of the global trade bureaucracy, boast that \$250 billion more will be produced in the expanded world economy due to the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the passage of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). They argue that the benefits of this expansion will eventually affect everyone. In *The Case against the Global Economy*, Jerry Mander points out, though, that while these advocates (who also happen to be beneficiaries) of the global economy, are happy because they are being given free reign through deregulation and new free-trade rules to carry out their policies, these are the same policies that

have failed for decades. He argues that they have actually produced many of the problems of poverty and environmental destruction we have today.

The poverty created by the global economy is well known by those who have experienced it, such as residents of indebted countries who have been victims of enforced Structural Adjustment Programs. Even some in the United States have been poverty victims of the global economy: those who can no longer find a job paying much beyond minimum wage because jobs previously available to them are being done by Third World peoples at a fraction of the cost to companies. This movement of companies to places where labor is cheap and environmental standards are minimal allows those companies to reap greater profits at the expense of the workers and the environment. Thus, the economic decisions of the last several decades have led to a greater gulf between the rich and the poor. This is the problem with "trickle down" economics where lots of wealth and power are given to a few with the thought that their use of it will eventually help the many. As Ellen Rehg, writer and editor for *The Round Table*, used to point out, wealth might trickle down, but it's just that, a trickle, that comes down. What unfortunately does not seem to trickle down, but pours down, is the environmental destruction caused by economic growth that is driven by "free" market forces with no respect for the social costs and consequences. In order to expand rapidly, and produce more stuff, we use greater amounts of un-renewable resources at an ever-increasing rate while polluting our earth beyond what it will be able to bear. The dangers of this can be seen in, among other things, the alarming signs pointing to global warming.

Other problems have grown with the globalization of the economy. A very serious one is the subversion of democratic processes due to new rules and power struc-

Teka Childress has moved a couple of blocks from Karen House to be part of the Dorothy Day Co-Housing Community described in Mary Ann McGivern's *From Little House*.

tures that are being established and controlled by unelected trade bureaucrats. These rules and structures supersede local governments and long-striven for and hard-won environmental and labor protections. Furthermore, the global economy offers an unprecedented homogenization of cultures with McDonalds being established in country after country. Other serious dangers of the global market include the loss of control over such elemental necessities as our food supply and its safety, and our access to healthcare.

In the pursuit to create more wealth and to give in to the temptations of materialism, we have simply inverted what should be our real values and allowed things to be more important than people. In contrast to this, a personalist is called to do just the opposite, to put people ahead of things. Goods are goods because they enhance human life. So it is a personalist's duty to resist the evils of globalization that do not enhance human life.

The beauty of the Personalism, which both Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day advocated, is that it gets back to the proper ordering of our relationships with God, with one another and with the earth. It sees each person as irreplaceable because of their very personhood, a reflection of the person of God, imbued with Christ, able to be Godlike in loving and it sees the natural world as part of creation given by God. It advocates a different way of ordering life and living it than the lure of this culture and economy. Peter Maurin's three-point program of Clarification of Thought, Houses of Hospitality, and the Green Revolution are all essential extensions of Personalism that offer an alternative to the evils of globalization.

With the admonition to clarify our thinking, we are encouraged to understand, analyze and name the realities of our times. This is especially called for when the effects of globalization and the myriad struggles in the world can simply numb us. It is essential to clarify the ways in which we are participating in things harmful to others and the earth and to strive to avoid and resist these things.

Further, the practice of living in Houses of Hospitality offers us the greatest antidote to the lure of the successes promised by unregulated capitalism. By living with folks who are victims of the system, we can understand it from their perspective in a way we never could if we did not know and love them. Also, we can refuse to accept the common wisdom offered by globalization that we are ultimately on our own in our responsibility to survive.

And finally, Peter was prophetic in his call for a Green Revolution, even though this is perhaps the part of his program that the Catholic Worker, as a whole, has done least well in implementing. (This is not to be mistaken with the "Green Revolution" undertaken by corporate agribusiness). For we are losing control over the food we eat, seeming to have less and less to say about how and where it was produced and with what processes and chemicals and with what kind of labor. We've lost our sense of seasons and the rhythm of nature that are so essential to a good life. And so, resistance to the evils of globalization



photo by Mev Pulco

must include a love of the earth and all that that invites us to.

In addition to the three elements of Peter Maurin's program, several other traditions have been important aspects of the Catholic Worker and its practice of personalism and offer help in the resistance to the destructiveness of capitalism. Especially relevant to this discussion of resistance to the evils of globalization is the importance of faith, the centrality of community, the need for non-violent activism and, the call to voluntary poverty. Dorothy saw prayer, and actually, daily communion, as essential to her ability to live a Christian life. For those of us who see ourselves as Christian personalists, prayer helps us to remain close to God and better able to keep the vision of Christ in one another, which Dorothy believed we could only maintain as a matter of faith. Especially in our hurried world, we can get so easily derailed from this path. It is faith, prayer and vision that keep us from getting lost.

In *The Long Loneliness*, Dorothy writes, "We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community." Having a vision of God being in one another, and of our being bound together in community, is one of the most radical ways to resist the global order today, which can so easily pit us against one another. It is the reason we, in the St. Louis Catholic Worker, have formed a co-housing community with some of our former guests and families. We are renting apartments with some of them nearby Karen House and are sharing prayer, meals, and resources, hoping to garden, and offering tutoring and

after-school activities for the children. In this world, where so many people live on the edge, we must remember that we are one body and if any of us suffers, we all suffer. And so, we have come together to share our joys and sorrows and our resources to provide a better life for all of us.

Activism has been at the heart of the Catholic Worker vision and was especially embodied by Dorothy Day throughout her life. The evils of globalization call for a variety of activist responses from the our daily decisions and purchases we make to our protests of the IMF and World Bank. The ways we participate in the global economy call for a lot of clarification of thought, but as personalists our guiding principle must always be the sacredness of each person. We must consider this both in

what we buy and in the way we protest. Thus, nonviolence is a key component of personalism and our activism. It is important in calling us forth to resist structural violence and injustice and in calling us to do so in a way that enhances the life of all people.

Last, and certainly not least, voluntary poverty has to be an essential part of resistance to the global economy. We must refuse to value things more than people. We must refuse to think we need things that are not only superficial, but whose very acquisition causes suffering to others. This is not easy. Let us join Madam Blueberry, though, who at the end of her tale learned to value what really mattered. Perhaps, then, we will find happiness waiting for us.



Think Locally, Act Locally

by Mary Ann McGivern

Since World War II, cities have rarely traded with one another, despite all the geographic charts of nations' imports and exports. St. Louis used to export steel (Skullen and East St. Louis), beer (Busch, Falstaff), automobiles (Ford, GM, Chrysler), car parts (Carter Carburetor), lead, generic aspirin (Monsanto), corn, wheat, soybeans, pet food (Ralston), tank radar and helicopter engines (Emerson Electric), and fighter airplanes (McDonnell Douglas) to cities around the world. Barges, trucks, rail cars and airplanes transported not only food and heavy manufactured goods but also hybrid seeds (Monsanto) and the engineering know-how to construct the U.S. army's water purification system for the Gulf War (Sverdrup and Engineered Air).

But our steel processing markets and the freight rail infrastructure gradually declined as the automobile com-

panies began to manufacture cars in foreign markets, instead of exporting to them. Slowly the region stopped mining lead and Anheuser Busch opened breweries in other countries. It used to be that the St. Louis banks, Mercantile and First National, were regional money markets, underwriting these exports, big construction, farm equipment and new business development. Now Bank of America and FirStar rule from the coasts. Our river port infrastructure has never been upgraded to load containers and transfer goods among trucks, trains, and boats, so the barges pass us by, preferring to load farm products at better equipped ports. Emerson Electric spun off its military products and gradually moved its production lines to non-union, low-wage regions, in and out of the United States.

Only our fighter planes remain as significant St. Louis exports. And because Boeing views its St. Louis produc-

Mary Ann McGivern, SL has been helping channel aid to a religious order of Pakistani women who are able to enter refugee camps and provide direct material assistance to Afghan women and their children.

tion lines as a military cash cow, even if Boeing wins the joint strike fighter and star wars contracts, many of the new military products will probably be manufactured elsewhere.

We've become a backwater, relying on our hospitals and sports teams to fuel our economy. To a great extent, the corporations made this decision in consideration of their profits. But Civic Progress, which used to be comprised of the chief executive officers of the top twenty-five or so companies, also made the political decision to put the city's economic development eggs in the entertainment basket. They didn't invest seed and venture capital into development of new technologies here. McDonnell Douglas refused to release any of its shelved patents, developed with tax dollars, for creation of a local entrepreneurial peace economy.

Of course, neither city, county, nor state has taken any creative steps such as fostering development of conservation products like solar or wind energy generation. A government commitment to invest in new technologies and then purchase the new products underwrote the computer industry. And the subsidized construction of roads, rails, and airports is what made this country run for a hundred years. Now we're walking.

So has globalization benefited us here in St. Louis? I'd say the non-profit side: creation of knowledge, utilization of communications links, and appreciation of the joys and sorrows of our farther neighbors have been a great gift. Who can forget the day Nelson Mandela was released from prison to certain political leadership? Or the day the Berlin Wall came down? Or the horror of child soldiers and child amputees in Sierra Leone?

But we've lost control of our own money. We manufacture less and less of the goods our community uses. We grow less and less of the food we eat. Instead of reaping the rewards for generations of industrial competence — leisure, quality health care, good housing, a guarantee of life-long educational opportunity — we work harder and longer for less wages and fewer benefits.

Do we have any options?

Things could be different, but my hopes feel more and more "pie in the sky." Back in 1978, when James McDonnell, company founder, met with the St. Louis Economic Conversion Project about economic conversion opportunities, visions of a peace economy seemed possible. These visions are possible today too, but they are further off.

A healthy economy depends on a community's ability to create some wealth (grow it, mine it, or make it). The St. Louis region has machine tool and manufactur-

ing competence. The region has scientific knowledge and the capability of making goods that would improve our lives. What we lack is investment capital, but we could find the money. The greater lack is political will.

We could control the corporations, demand useful products, reverse global warming, and alleviate and reduce the impact of AIDS on individuals and societies. It's not a mystery how to do these things. But the United States citizenry doesn't seem to want to. Economics is called the dismal science not because it's boring and grim to study numbers but because economics is about decision-making. Thomas Carlyle who coined the term considered that the economic decision-making process is pretty dismal. That seems true.

Machine shops used to dot the street corners of our cities. Twenty years ago Chicago developed vigorous policies to keep light industry within the city limits. St. Louis actively discourages manufacturing with its onerous tax and licensing policy. Taxes aren't higher in St. Louis, but they are incredibly complex. Local politicians don't like machine shops in their districts and neither do community organizers. They say, "Why should we have a factory across the street when people in the county don't have them?" I say, "Because they pay well, provide benefits and advancement opportunities, make useful products and are in walking distance." When a community doesn't make at least some of what it uses (and grow at least some of what it eats), that community is in trouble.

Some years back I did a study for the Economic Conversion Project of economic planning throughout the St. Louis region. I looked at municipal and county plans, regional plans, and church and neighborhood plans. None of them offered any strategies for developing living wage jobs. The African American scholar, William Julius Wilson, now at Harvard, wrote a book about Chicago's inner city entitled *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. What happens is that social structures collapse. People not only become impoverished but they lose cultural cohesiveness.

That's what's happened in St. Louis. Sports arenas, hotels, gambling boats and shopping malls don't provide living wages or satisfying jobs. Manufacturing, like every other human endeavor, even farming, brings with it plenty of ills. But its benefits make participation in our society possible. The shift that is taking place in the entire St. Louis region, not just the city, from wealth creation to service provision, has been caused by the global transfer of manufacturing to the cheapest production sites. It's hurting us.



Water Belongs to the Earth and All Species

by Genevieve Cassani, SSND

"Let me say this before rain becomes a utility that they can plan and distribute for money. ...The time will come when they sell you even your rain."

More than forty years ago, Thomas Merton sat in his hermitage listening to the rhythms of the rain, celebrating its granularity and its meaninglessness, wondering and writing about a world that had "progressed." I have always loved the essay "Rain and the Rhinoceros," for the simple lyric quality of his words and the sheer delight he seems to take in something so common as rainfall. What clarity of insight he was able to convey then in his comments about economic arrangements and the people who profit from them. And now "the time" of which he writes has come, is already here. Indeed, our world is running out of fresh water sources at an alarming rate due to over-pumping groundwater, depleting and contaminating aquifers and engineering feats that dismantle and disrupt ecosystems. While I am only beginning to comprehend the freshwater crisis on this planet, a handful of transnational corporations, backed by the World Bank (WB), are moving in on economically strapped nations, and, in the name of charity, commodifying water for profit. And they that "plan and distribute for money" our most precious resource – water – have placed upon it a price tag, the cost of which should not be calculated in dollars and cents, but in human lives and all species of the Earth community.

A few months ago, I read an e-mail sent by a person

unknown to me, but whose message clearly showed concern about the human need and right to water and the power of transnational corporations, namely, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. What caught my eye were the words: "...and the peasants and small farmers even had to buy permits to gather rainwater on their property. Is this really happening?" Like a thunderbolt Merton's words came back to me, filled me with sadness and confirmed once again the fact that large financial systems in our world are at work on a global economy that designedly puts the interests of corporations before the interests of people and the planet.

Ten years ago, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were not in my everyday vocabulary and I knew little of the role they play in the global financial economy. In fact, the entire global economic picture was something rather daunting, complex, and uninteresting except that I knew how people suffer in impoverished countries from economic injustice, how they rarely ever reach their potential, much less their full potential. These people have faces and names and histories and over the years I have been privileged to get to know some of them personally. Even though I cannot write in depth of foreign trade and investment as such, I CAN grasp what is happening to people, and like the person who wrote the e-mail, *disbelief*, more often than not, is my response – "*Is this really happening?*" How does it happen then that the World Bank has recently adopted a policy of water privatization and full-cost water pricing?

Genevieve Cassani, SSND, a long-time friend of Karen House and Social Justice Coordinator for the SSNDs, has worked faithfully these last several years to cancel the Third World foreign debt.

What is the IMF and World Bank?

The IMF and the World Bank were created at the end of World War II by the U.S. and the British governments at a UN Conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. They are the World's largest public lenders, and sometimes not so fondly referred to as "the world's largest loan sharks."

Initially developed to help Europe rebuild after World War II, the World Bank's primary focus for the last 40 years has been to provide longer-term loans to Third World countries in support of economic development. The World Bank is comprised of five agencies that make loans or guarantee credit to its member countries. World Bank literature states that their mission is "to reduce poverty and improve living standards through sustainable growth and investment in people." "Our dream is a world free of poverty," is their motto. The Bank manages a loan portfolio totaling U.S. \$200 billion and has loaned up to \$28.9 billion to over 80 countries in one year. In addition to financing projects such as roads, power plants and schools, the Bank also makes loans to restructure a country's economic system by funding structural adjustment programs (SAPs).

The IMF was established as a short-term lender to supply countries with money to help them overcome their balance of payment difficulties. The loans come from funds contributed by the 183 member countries. Governed by an executive board that consists of representatives of member countries, the board sets broad policy and approves loans. Such money is only made available, however, only after the recipients have agreed to policy reform in their economies – in short, to implement a structural adjustment program.

Voting at the IMF is weighted, with bigger contributing countries having more votes. The largest shareholder, you might guess, is the U.S. (18% of the vote) which maintains veto power over major decision at the Fund with the seven largest industrialized countries (G7) holding a total of 45% of the votes.

By tradition, the President of the World Bank is a white, male American, and the IMF President is a white, male European. There is no chance for the developing world to have a say about who runs these institutions. Extremely secretive in their operations, in their documents, their demands from countries, and refusing to accept public input on the policies they impose on borrowing countries through structural adjustment (until recently when the IMF announced it is seeking comments on streamlining conditions), the IMF has been severely criticized for its lack of transparency and serving as a "proxy for the U.S."

What is the Relationship between the IMF and WB?

The current relationship between the IMF and WB is such that it is almost impossible for troubled economies to get access to foreign credit unless they have a deal with the IMF – the unofficial "gatekeeper" who determines how much countries get and when they get it. And typi-

cally, IMF agreements require countries to adopt "structural adjustment" policies as the condition for the loan. The World Bank's structural adjustment programs are not much different from those of the IMF since the 1980s when the World Bank began shifting its loans toward structural adjustment loans. Together, they jointly administer a program called the Heavily Indebted Poor Country/Poverty Reduction and Growth Fund (HIPC/PRGF) – modest debt relief to the world's poorest countries.

Even though both institutions have the resources to easily cancel unpayable debts owed by poor countries, the IMF and WB have refused to do so. Debts owed to the WB and IMF give the Bank and IMF leverage to keep control over the indebted countries' economies. It is no wonder the people of the global south name what is happening the "new colonialism," or the debt problem, "a modern form of slavery."

Is there a relationship between the WTO and the IMF and WB?

The World Trade Organization is the international body which implements agreements governing world trade and administers a binding mechanism to resolve trade disputes between nations. Generally speaking, the WTO operates independently from the IMF and the World Bank but each of these international financial institutions share a common commitment to "free trade" and the goal to integrate developing nations into the global economy.

"Seattle." The word alone signals a watershed in which a new future was called for at the November 1999 WTO meeting and an end to global economic arrangements as we know them. The coming together of a diversity of people in an organized resistance movement representing all facets of society for the purpose of calling for a redesign of the global economy was consistently lost on the media as they showed violence perpetrated by a small group who called themselves anarchists. At the same time of the WTO meeting, the IMF, World Bank and WTO announced a new "coherence agreement" in which they pledged to coordinate future activity. Once again, there is a secret code of words, unclear and inspiring fear that the very particularized elements of WTO agreements may become part of the IMF and World Bank's lending conditions.

What are structural adjustment programs – *conditionalities* – and how is the impact felt on people and the land in indebted countries?

Structural adjustment programs are a set of economic policies required by the World Bank and IMF as a condition of loans, or in the restructuring of loans that these institutions make to developing countries. The policy package includes:

- ♦ privatization of government-owned enterprises and government-provided services
- ♦ slashing government spending
- ♦ orienting economies to promote exports
- ♦ trade and investment liberalization

- higher interest rates
- eliminating subsidies on consumer items such as foods, fuel and medicines
- and tax increases

The money comes, but always with "strings attached." According to the IMF and WB, these "strings" are necessary market reforms but instead they have devastating effects on the majority of people who are poor in debtor countries. Such policies tend to keep wages low and repress unions. In addition to promoting sweatshops where the majority of workers are women, structural adjustment policies have forced governments to cut services such as education, childcare, health care and environmental protection. This increases the burden of women's unpaid labor while simultaneously pushing them into the formal work market where they are paid much less than men.

Structural adjustment causes indebted countries to

easily. They are heavy bands of control, shackles, if you will, that enslave and stifle real economic interdependence leaving people and the web of nature exposed and vulnerable.

Bolivia's story of water privatization and resistance

One of the most destructive features of structural adjustment is the selling off of publicly owned assets such as mines, mills, forests, telephone, electricity and water companies in a process known as "privatization." "Privatization" means that a developing country with less expensive labor and less restrictive infrastructures could have any transnational corporation come into that country and make their own rules for participation in that country's economy. Enter Bechtel, a U.S. multinational onto the Bolivian landscape.

According to Sandra Postel, author of *Pillar of Sand*,

serious water problems do exist on every continent and are spreading rapidly. Ironically, it was a vice-president of the World Bank who said that the wars of the 21st century will be about water. To respond to the crisis, the World Bank has recently adopted a policy of water privatization and full-cost water pricing. This policy created the first of the "water wars" in Bolivia last year (that Ismail Serageldin, the Bank vice-president, predicted. It is a story now two



photo by Merv Pulco

steadily lose control over their own land, precious natural resources, factories and services by requiring that they open their economies to foreign corporations which have access to workers and resources at "bargain basement prices." At the same time, structural adjustments adversely affect low-income workers, people of color and women here in the U.S. as well, who have seen their wages erode and employers move, or hire recent immigrants.

Large land-owners, large-scale businesses and corporations, the privileged and well-positioned in indebted countries often benefit from the structural adjustment programs. The rural and urban poor, small-scale domestic producers, the uneducated and, in particular, women are the most hurt by the economic changes, along with irreparable damage and loss to the environment. These "strings" are not really strings at all which can be broken

years old, but well worth retelling because it has a happy ending (at least for the time being).

Bolivia's third-largest city, Cochabamba, needed a loan to refinance its water services. The World Bank refused to guarantee a \$25 million loan unless the government sold the public water system to the private sector and passed the costs on to the consumers. A subsidiary of Bechtel, the giant engineering company implicated in the infamous Three Gorges Dam in China (which caused the forced relocation of 1.3 million people), was the only bid considered. And so, in January of 1999, International Waters LTD., of London, with hardly a toe-hold in the country, announced it would double water prices. For the average Bolivian this meant that *water would cost more than food*; for those on minimum wage or unemployed, it

meant that water bills suddenly accounted for close to half of their monthly budgets. If the damage the World Bank had done was not enough, it granted absolute monopolies to private water concessionaires, announced its support for full-cost water pricing, pegged the cost of water to the US dollar and declared that none of its loan could be used to subsidize the poor for water services. All water, even from community wells, required permits to access, and peasants and small farmers even had to buy permits to gather rainwater on their property.

A coalition of 14 economists, lawyers, parliamentarians and community leaders accepted a government invitation to discuss the IWL price hikes. It was not long when the discussion turned to protest and hundreds of thousands took to the streets led by Oscar Olivera, a humble Bolivian shoemaker and trade union official. The city was brought to a halt from the general strike and transportation stoppage. Peaceful demonstrations were met with police violence and arrests. One 17-year old youth lost his life when police retaliated with a gunshot to his face. Martial law was declared. Activists were arrested in the night and radio and television programs were cut off in mid-program. With the support of Cochabamba's Roman Catholic Archbishop, the people participated in a showdown with the government. On April 10, they won. The Bolivian government booted Bechtel from the country and revoked its water-privatization legislation.

A quick review of IMF loan policies in forty countries reveals that during 2000, IMF loan agreements in 12 countries included conditions imposing water privatization or full cost recovery. What is the significance of such a discovery? In the hierarchy of the international financial architecture, the IMF is at the top. If a country agrees to IMF conditions that means it has gained the "seal of approval" for further loans from creditors and investors. World Bank loans are conditioned

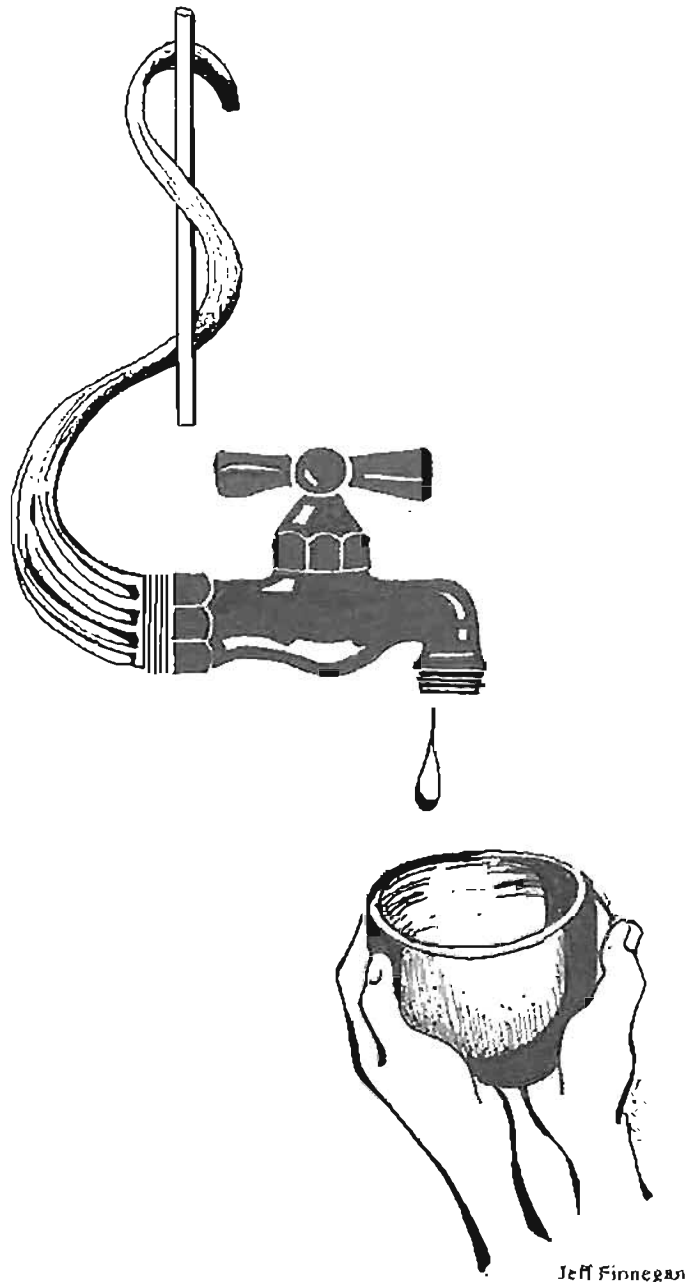
on compliance with IMF conditions. Does this read like double-speak? The phenomenon is known as "cross conditionality." That means that in every country where IMF loan conditions include water privatization of full-cost recovery, there are corresponding World Bank loan conditions and water projects that end up implementing the details for the so-called "re-structuring."

The collusion between the World Bank and transnational corporations is far from subtle. It was reported that at the second World Water Forum in the Hague last year (sponsored by the UN and WB) a few conglomerate water and food corporations dominated the event. An underlying assumption at the conference was that the mounting world water crisis is the occasion for the promotion of the corporate control of water.

It is well-documented that when municipal water services are privatized customer rates are doubled or tripled; corporate profits rise as much as 7 percent; corruption and bribery flourish; water quality is weakened; and customers who can't pay are cut off. And it might come as no surprise to know that the smallest, poorest, most debt-ridden countries being subject to water privatization and full recovery cost are in Africa.

Bolivian leader of the resistance, Oscar Olivera spoke at one of the recent IMF/WB meetings saying that if water is privatized and commodified for profit, it will never reach the people who need it but only serve to make a handful of water corporations very rich. The alternative is to revert to unsafe wa-

ter sources or more distant sources. When privatization hits the Third World, those who can't pay, pay with their lives. They die. The most immediate impact of reducing the accessibility and affordability of water falls on women and children. Worldwide, more than five million people, who bear most of the burden of daily household chores, must travel farther and work harder to collect water – often resorting to water from polluted streams and orga-



Jeff Finnegan

nized greed and uncontrolled competition.

Having only touched on one of the key elements of conditionalities, that of "privatization," and with a brief brushstroke at that, what can we say? What can be done? Shut down the IMF and WB, some say. Radically reform these institutions, others say. Even the IMF has questions and raised them early in April of this year. The IMF is inviting comments from outside the institution on a set of papers that review the evolution of IMF conditionality, the conditions attached to IMF financing, and discuss issues associated with streamlining and focusing it.

If there are people of ill-will at the IMF and WB, I don't know about it. But I do know the people who run these international financial institutional systems need to pay more attention to poverty and the effect of their lending on people who are poor, and on the environment. I do know the IMF could draw on its existing resources and cancel the debt for the poorest countries and should do so immediately. I do know that future lending has to be "delinked" from the types of structural adjustment conditions as they now exist.

When money moves more freely than people, capital has more rights than human beings, and transnational corporations are more powerful than nation states, then something is radically wrong, is morally wrong. As I see it, the price the poor pay sums up the profound moral challenge we face in addressing the problem, namely, how the global economic policies of a few affect the human dignity, the human rights and the human welfare of some of the most vulnerable human beings in the global community and impact the home we know as Earth, our only home.

I believe we have within us the spiritual energy, moral integrity and imagination to seek solutions for new processes that would introduce discipline and justice into international lending and borrowing. Considering the rights of citizens to participate in the formulation of national development policies that ultimately affect their daily lives, such as gathering of rainwater, would be to start in creating alternatives to the current policies of globalization experience in the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF.

Water belongs to the Earth and all species. Commodifying it for profit, whether in the form of the bottled water we buy from our grocery shelves, or a country's sale of their water system to a transnational corporation is exploitative, dangerous and ultimately a theft from a gracious and bountiful God who gave us this precious resource for all species to benefit from and enjoy. Living in an interdependent and increasingly integrated world community as we do means we have the responsibility to see to it that the time comes, and comes soon when no one has to pay for rainwater ever again.



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"Raids on the Unspeakable" by Thomas Menon

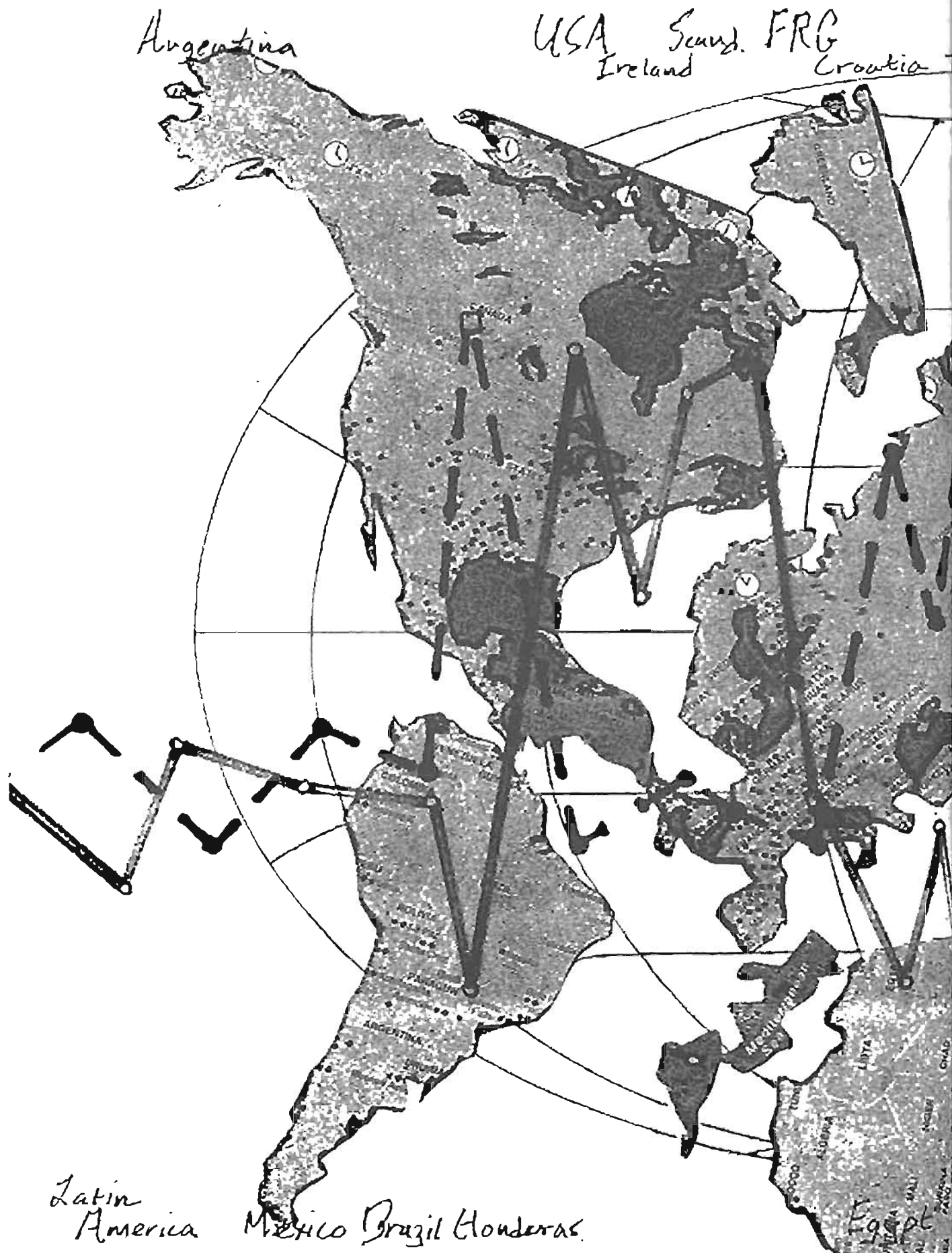
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The Hidden Costs of the Global Economy

by Suzanne Renard

The global economy has abolished the separation of church and state by usurping the realms of both. To question the universal goodness of its aims is to blaspheme. This new religion, based on the Free Market Credo, promises to unite all humanity in one endless check-out line. Earth herself is up for sale.

Both conservatives normally opposed to big, central government and liberals beholden to corporate money profess faith in the new order. Efficient coordination of all production and distribution of goods and services by a world-wide absentee governing body, the World Trade Organization (WTO), is being heralded as the path to unprecedented wealth. But for whom? Mainstream measurements of economic wealth (i.e., GDP) account only for growth while denying the true costs of doing business on a finite Earth. Financial optimists may soon learn that a dead planet is a poor market. Of course, they are already eyeing them. In the meantime, corporations have colluded to extend the provisions of NAFTA for their own short-term gain, collecting the profits without paying the price. They aim to turn the whole world into a huge Free Trade Zone, all workplaces into maquiladoras. Increased affluence from the global economy can accrue only at the cost of accelerated ecological destruction, and an ever more miserable existence for the world's poorest who suffer most from losses in the natural world.

**Transnational Corporations –
The New Conquistadors**

The powerful have long oppressed the humble. Monied nations suddenly take an interest in non-acquisitive societies when the imperialists catch the scent of coveted "raw materials." Currently, the United States of North America (US) is courting the native villages in the Arctic Circle for easier access to oil in their pristine land. But whether they comply or not, Big Oil will rape and run from the sacred breeding ground of the caribou. Most wealth extraction campaigns, from early colonization through the Global Economy, have certain goals in common. Cecil Rhodes, (who named Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia, for himself) expressed them frankly: "We must find new lands from which we can easily obtain raw materials and at the same time exploit the cheap slave labor... from the natives of the colonies. The colonies would also provide a dumping ground for the surplus goods produced in our factories." Sometimes, as with the opening of China by France and Britain, wars were fought to force entry. In Latin America in the late 19th century, the US achieved de facto colonization by addicting a small cadre of elites to a protected middle-class lifestyle in return for guarantees that the demands such as those articulated by Rhodes would be met.

As always, the poorest have suffered from all of these arrangements. They have, as Rhodes predicted, become the dumping ground not only for wasteful, absurd products (Coca-Cola and MTV...), but for all the detritus of the modern world: a sense of shame for their ecologically-sensitive traditions, and toxic wastes that the North refuses to "internalize" as costs of industrialization. The

Suzanne Renard did most of the research for this article from the book of life: about two gillion hours among goats and in a quiet garden.

Third World is where the so-called Green Revolution dumped leftover DDT, found too lethal to sell at home (it's returning to us on imported produce). This is where the State Department defoliated the jungles with Agent Orange, leaving a toxic medium in which over 500,000 conjoined Vietnamese fetuses have been delivered unforgivably malformed. It's where the US sent Roundup

their sole concern. Limitless growth is their modus operandi. Technology is their vehicle and smokescreen. This transfer of power didn't happen overnight. Still, it does feel as though we woke up one day to find that Wal-Mart had Super-sized Mainstreet. Since WWII our elected officials have been facilitating the corporate coup. Patriotically misquoting Adam Smith's 1776 econo-classic



photo by Mev Puleo

herbicide to "clean up" rice paddies, destroying super-nutritious companion plants Monsanto viewed as "weeds." PCBs, ubiquitous as they are, are found in the highest concentrations in areas of people who had nothing to do with their creation. PCBs cause severe neurological damage to people, and may bring on the wholesale extinction of marine mammals.

Finally, the South must endure a constant military presence disguised as "security assistance" as required to defend the elite classes from uprisings by the poor.

Gradually, corporations began gobbling up small businesses unable to compete with "economies of scale." At first, they operated within nations. But their scale has become obscene.

Corporations have no true corporality. They can deplete and pollute one place with impunity, vaporize, and re-materialize anyplace on the globe. Their quest is for cheap labor and a dearth of environmental protections; these latter had never been needed until the multinationals arrived to assault the land.

So Transnational Corporations (TNC's) have become the new conquistadors, colonizing as they please—including within the nation of their inception. The largest TNC's command more capital than most nation-states. Profit is

Wealth of Nations, Nixon put corporate demands on the Fast-Track, and Reagan and Bush I unraveled worker and environmental safety nets through Deregulation and Quayle's Council for Competitiveness. Now with Clinton and Bush II's support of the Uruguay round of GATT, (and, by the way, Gore owed favors to the same contributors), TNC's wield more influence than any government. Free-Trade advocates seem to overlook that Adam Smith never linked the words "free" and "market." As David C. Korten explains, Smith promoted a system which would root capital in

localities, and in which no single entity would have a noticeable influence on the market. He knew nothing of corporations. He would surely have been horrified at the TNC attempt to control the free flow of ideas through "Intellectual Property Rights." In Smith's world, small businesses operating locally had to pay the freight for their productivity. They did not foul their own nests. Their towns or villages held them accountable.

TNC's now approach control of the world's food supply and pharmaceuticals ("Pharming"), the massive transport infrastructure on which trade depends, the energy sources that fuel it, and the mass communication by which they preach their catechism.

Food - Keep 'Em Comin' Back For More

TNC's did not newly discover the vulnerability to hunger upon which they now capitalize. Harry Truman coined the term "underdeveloped areas," legitimizing efforts to rectify the perceived deficit, American-style. Vice-President Hubert Humphrey once said, "If you are looking for a way to get people to lean on you and to be dependent on you, in terms of their co-operation with you, it seems to me that food-dependence would be terrific." A few de-

acades later, former Monsanto CEO Bob Shapiro appealed to the World Bank with what may be a cosmic echo of those words: "It is truly easy to profit from very basic needs: Food, shelter, clothing." Clearly the first job in opening a market is to crush the local agriculture and traditions that have sustained people and protected their natural systems. Then the colonial power offers high-tech solutions to the poverty its policies induced. The people's self-sufficiency and pride are submerged under the eternal burden of debt repayment.

Mainstream economic theory is used to justify the imposition of export priority. David Ricardo, 19th century British architect of free trade, called it "comparative advantage." Each locality should produce and export only what it does best. Everyone will thus be supplied with the best of everything, at the cheapest price. This means, of course, that everyone imports all but the one cash item for export.

In Somalia, since the '50's, export of livestock has displaced the ecologically appropriate nomadic grazing which formed the basis of the culture and prevented soil depletion. As a result of concentrating on exports of "what they do best," the Somali people have lost what was good for themselves. The land yields famine and a brutal fight for survival. Such tragedies are legion. In Brazil, where exports of cash crops (soybeans, cotton, tobacco) have supplanted food crops (rice, beans, manioc, etc.), half of the population is malnourished. Monoculture makes everyone more vulnerable. As David Morris, director of the Institute for Local Self-reliance in Minneapolis, says, "In the global village, a nation survives by starving its people."

The "Green Revolution" betrayed us. Bob Shapiro, a champion of heroic technology, sums up the failure his company helped to ensure in modern farming: "Current agriculture practice isn't sustainable; we've lost...15% of our topsoil over the last 20 years...irrigation is increasing the salinity of our soil, and the petrochemicals we rely on aren't renewable." Technocrats nevertheless congratulate themselves on higher yields. But they were only temporary. Yields ultimately fell, as did protein content. We killed our land in the process.

Synthetic nitrogen fertilizer severely pollutes streams and groundwater. In Taiwan, among other places, the water is not only unfit to drink, it is flammable. The soil around the abandoned Monsanto chemical factory in East St. Louis glows at night. This is Better Living through Chemistry.

Biotechnology – The Ultimate Control

Sensing that the chemical warfare model has begun to erode industry credibility, chemical companies have morphed into the Life Sciences business. The new wave in killing, biotechnology destroys at the cellular level. It aims to fix what is "wrong" with nature, or even to replace it altogether. Splicing a trait or traits from a donor organism into a host deemed somehow to be deficient, the lab scientist reduces living plants and animals to the

mechanical level of Eli Whitney's cotton gin. At least Eli knew exactly where his interchangeable parts fit; genetic "engineers" have no idea where their introduced gene will wind up in the genome. They completely ignore established relationships among genes, and the life in general of a cell. Their disruptions have caused unforeseen (since no one even took a look) consequences. Genetically Engineered (GE) cotton dropped its immature bolls before harvest. In response, farmers are forming class-action suits. Marc Lappe's studies have shown losses of up to 15% with GE seed. Many others corroborate this.

Far worse than the ad hoc losses to farmers using GE seeds are the probable long-term, irreversible ecological consequences. Crops designed to withstand direct applications of chemicals or to produce their own toxins have, in less than a decade, tripled the use of the chemicals proponents claimed they would reduce. GE crops may confer their traits on wild, weedy species. The organic purity of many farmers' fields has already been polluted by cross-pollination with GE crops via wind, birds and rain. Most GE seeds cannot be saved for replanting, either because they will not breed "true," or because farmers can be sued by the seed vendor if they try it. But the most hideous assault on the autonomy of subsistence cultures is the Biopiracy of pharmaceutical and agri-crops. They are robbing specimens from biologically rich regions and enshrining them, with or without some modification, as patented property. They then demand royalties for use of seeds with which indigenous farmers have been intimately connected for generations. They will use the WTO to enforce these so-called (Trade-Related) Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

The Global Economy will continue to propagate the wrong approach of the "Green Revolution." Even the World Bank, financier of the mega-projects – the failed irrigation dams, supplies of agri-chemicals and inappropriate hybrids imposed in the Third World – acknowledged that subsistence farmers have reliable practices. These should be respected. It said, "Smallholders in Africa are outstanding managers of their own resources – their land and capital, fertilizer and water." By contrast, our techniques have utterly failed our land and our farmers; 9 million rural people in USA live in poverty due to farm foreclosures. How dare we push our disasters on those who had been managing without our "help?" Could it be because the well-being of all people, creatures, the land, air and water, has become subordinate to the profit-making of TNC's?

Jobs vs. Environment – The Auto Industry

The powers would like us to believe that the endless expansion of trade is good. And inevitable. It's as though it has evolved naturally, and that we have no choice but to accept it. The only "choice" we are permitted is Jobs vs. Environment. Just as the Banana Republic mentality turned the "haves" in Latin America against their own people, the economic growth imperative pits workers against environmentalists. Care of the land has been de-

picted by the corporate-coerced media as an elitist luxury. In reality, however alienated we may be from the sod, all of us must somehow wrest a living from the generosity of Gaia. Social justice and ecological justice are united in Right Livelihood, and cannot be achieved apart from one another.

If big timber corporations or the auto industry truly had workers' interests in mind, they would face the facts: when the last old growth tree falls and the fossil fuels run out, the job question will be moot. In *The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility*, Pope John Paul II elucidates the union between Earth stewardship and human dignity:

Often, the interests of production prevail over concern for the dignity of workers, while economic interests take priority over the good of individuals and even entire peoples. In these cases, pollution or environmental destruction is the result of an unnatural and reductionist vision which at times leads to a genuine contempt for [human-kind]. On another level, delicate ecological balances are upset by the uncontrolled destruction of animal and plant life or by a reckless exploitation of natural resources. It should be pointed out that all of this, even if carried out in the name of progress, is ultimately to [humankind's] disadvantage." (my emphasis)

In the match of Humans vs. Nature (both within and without us), both sides lose. World trade has increased twelve-fold since 1950, and economic growth fivefold. During that time we have witnessed an unprecedented increase in poverty, unemployment, despair, social breakdown and environmental degradation. Continued growth will exacerbate all of these ills. Many who deny this blame it all on population expansion in the Third World. This is misleading. Certainly population density contributes to disease and squalor. But in the equation balancing human activity and Nature's decline, the developed nations, at only 20% of the people, have caused 80% of the problems. It is our over-development that is at fault.

By a twisted form of accounting called the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), we count the disasters resulting from our frenzied life as gain. The spill of the Exxon Valdez despoiled pristine shoreline and polluted breeding grounds of vanishing species. But the cleanup caused vast sums of money to change hands, bringing temporary jobs to Alaska. You've gotta give a little to get a little, as they say.

Oil spills are just one risk too often realized for the benefit of the massive transportation infrastructure that makes trade flow. Cars and trucks kill over 40,000 Americans each year. 40% of urban land must be kept paved to accommodate them. Cars initiated and perpetuate urban sprawl and the loss of wetlands and farm fields. On the taking side of the ledger, they deplete fossil fuels. On the other side, their carcasses fill dwindling landfill space (Earth's "sink" down which we pour our trash.)

But don't you love how they take you where you want

to go? Pity you can barely breathe when you get there. Road vehicles and planes are prime contributors of greenhouse gas emissions. They have helped to tear a massive hole in Earth's protective ozone layer, suggesting that we have indeed exceeded our only planet's restorative capacities. We are reaching the end of the line. Barry Commoner and others have been trying to tell us for a long time that, instead of lines, we ought to be aspiring for circles.

All of the aforementioned costs are borne by taxpayers. This is why Ralph Nader decries the transport industries as the biggest welfare recipient on the dole.

Currently only about 8% of the world's people own cars. The global economy would have billions more trading in their bicycles and good cardio-vascular health for the mind-whacking, isolating, ozone-eating routine of commuting. Yet another spiritual loss produced by the car is the modern assembly line. Modern high-tech jobs—on the automated line or in the lab, reducing life's mysteries to a genomic ABC—are the soul-sucking demeritors of Harry Potter's world. We should recall that, prior to the industrial revolution, joblessness did not occur. The car industry, in the very name of work and progress, downsizes two million plus jobs a year. Jeremy Rifkin, activist, author and thoughtful critic of the thoughtless life, predicts the end of jobs altogether, should the global commerce continue on its present course. In soul-less work, we are no match for machines. In the global economy, we don't choose between jobs and environment at all; we can kiss them both bye-bye.

The Information Highway: Hurry Up and Wait

The most devastating effect of the car us is what is most widely celebrated about it: Speed. Expressing second thoughts about the virtue of alacrity is like saying you don't believe in breathing out after you breathe in. But speed is anathema to a healthy rapport with the natural world. It suffocates reflection. It makes the unthinkable do-able before we can even contemplate its consequences. In the gene-splicing world of Bio-tech, scientists are able to conjure alien species and set them loose on millions of acres without enduring even the short wait of one mere F1 hybrid generation.

All of the tools of the global economy—from quick-fix bio-tech vaccines that replace tending to the causes of disease, to roads, to toxic nukes, to weapons shields to the information highway—hurry life along to the point of absurdity. One stroke of a keyboard can level an old grown forest. The litany of loss is all too familiar to us, and it grows daily. I suggest that we turn our date with the nightly news into a prayer of atonement. After each newly-intoned sin, I chant this refrain: "Creator who mourns, have mercy on us."

The media present the daily atrocities as a bunch of unrelated events, failing to make connections between our ills and the corporations financing shows and "educating" us through the commercials. This adds to our despair as we wait to become the next victim of random

evil. The media are themselves a key tool of the global economy. One hundred corporations control 75% of TV time in the USA, and are the major providers of "educational materials" to schools. We are teaching a new generation to view nature as a mine and dump for the eternal growth of TNC's. It's a very handy set-up for them.

Before corporations consolidated their power, citizens had real hope of change by working with their legislators. The WTO charter, rushed through national legislatures before electors had time to read it, has changed all that. Speed promoted ignorance. The convoluted, 500+ page document had not even been translated into the majority of involved languages in time for the vote. In a brilliant experiment, Ralph Nader found only one US official who had read it. This official said that knowing what was in it (sorta standard equipment, no?) caused him to change and vote against it.

As Nader puts it, GATT "was little more than rubber-stamped by the very elected officials whose democratic powers it was designed to usurp." From now on, laws around the globe will have to be viewed as GATT-friendly and WTO compliant if nations wish to avoid sanctions or banishment from the world market. In signing the WTO agreement, lawmakers handed over the power to enact safeguards for local traditions and ecosystems against the damage of unchecked corporate incursion.

Choosing A New Direction — Gandhi's *Swadeshi*

Charlie Chaplin's worker in *Modern Times* showed us the absurdity of accepting life as a cog. Jacques Tati's bicycling postman trying to emulate the American speedy delivery system also showed us how silly "Rapidité!" can be. It's time to slow down.

Turning away from total destruction does not mean returning to the stone age. It means saying "no" to the corporate definition of who we are. Reclaiming communal life, with each other and all the creatures of Earth, will take time. Wendell Berry says that each local culture must work, gradually, to revitalize its own identity. Only then can we realize true multiculturalism in the face of global cultural cloning. We must reinstate respect for producers of what we truly need: our farmers, artisans and sages. We must begin to retain capital within communities and aim for local self-sufficiency — not to be confused with the American illusion of independence.

Berry, in all of his writing, gives us a couple of caveats for the recreation of community: We will have to shed some of the excess "comforts" that actually enslave us; and we will have to develop again the lost skills that we have turned over to hapless "experts."

Far from being dry and ascetic, the possibilities for renewal are enchanting. Imagine a genuine cuisine practiced in real kitchens, smell wafting out to embarrass the stench of deep-fat from the Golden Arches. The food would fit the local soil and climate. Traveling only a short distance from a Community Supported farm (CSA) to table, it would have no need of 2000-mile journeys in air-

conditioned trucks. We could learn to sew again, craving not to be "in style" but to celebrate our own style. We could make some of our own entertainment, reawakening the storyteller, singer and dancer hidden inside. Our work would become jobs which, because they are necessary to the stewardship of our own place, could not be eliminated by mandate of the GDP.

These images echo Mahatma Gandhi's principles of *swadeshi*, or home economy. Gandhi said, "It is a tragedy of the first magnitude that millions of people have ceased to use their hands as hands." In *Swadeshi*, machines serve, and never replace humans. People, not technology, determine the pace of life. Many villages cooperate in a fluid federation, in which big cities do not overwhelm the collective character. In *swadeshi*, wasteful transportation is avoided. The people together determine who they are and which external forces, if any they choose to grant a hearing. As my own Papa always quipped at the start of a simple family meal, "We have an elegant sufficiency. Any more would be superfluity."

It is essential in resuscitating our communal life that we heed Gandhi's words: "There is enough for everybody's need, but not enough for anybody's greed." Gandhian scholar Satish Kumar summarizes the tension between the "Free Trade Über Alles" adherents and the masters of right livelihood thus: "The economists and industrialists of our time fail to see when enough is enough. Even when countries reach a very high material standard of living, they are still caught up with the idea of economic growth. Those who do not know when enough is enough will never have enough, but those who know when enough is enough already have enough." It's time to say it to the architects of the global economy: "Enough is enough!"



Principal books that formed the ideas in this article:

Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture & Life is a Miracle*
 Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*
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 Casey Walker, *Made Not Born—The Troubling World of Biotechnology*

Defending the Environment and Human Rights

by Sarah Heyman

Leaders of North, South and Central America recently concluded talks in Quebec City focusing on the construction of a Free Trade Zone extending from Nome to Tierra del Fuego. The now anticipated demonstrations materialized as they have at every world trade meeting since Seattle. But why are these activists willing to risk tear gas and rubber bullets? What is it about the global economy that stirs such a strong reaction?

According to environmentalists, this style of economic development breeds the worst sort of exploitation of natural resources and communities. The agreements reached in these major trade talks remove local input and control, shifting the power to multinational corporations far removed from the production/work site. These multinationals are no longer bounded by local laws, traditions or sound environmental practices.

A case in point is the situation in the Mexican state of Guerrero, north of Acapulco, where Boise Cascade has started cutting virgin timber stands in the mountains as a direct result of NAFTA. The trade agreement allowed companies to make deals with the ejido which are often controlled by political operatives/bosses. This system ignored the people living near by who work as day laborers and subsistence farmers. Because Boise Cascade had made the deal through several powerful individuals, they could essentially run the operation free of any controls. Boise Cascade took everything, all the trees in the area regardless of size, species or condition. As a result, the rivers dried up and the fish died out.

A local campesino, Rodolfo Montiel, organized a grassroots ecological alliance 'The Ecologist Campesinos of the Sierra of Petatlan and Coyuca de Catalan' in response to the problems he saw developing. In spite of only having a first-grade education, he wrote letters to the governor of Guerrero and authorities in Mexico City pointing out Boise Cascades' abuses. The authorities noted his letters. They labeled him as a troublemaker, but there was no response to his pleas for intervention. Boise Cascade continued the destruction. Montiel and the other 104

day laborers who made up 'The Ecologist Campesinos of the Sierra of Petatlan and Coyuca de Catalan' began demonstrating and blocking the logging trucks. Direct action is something of an institution in Guerrero. It has been employed since the 1950s to protect the forests.

At this point, Montiel and his group were labeled narco-guerrilleros, and, rather than negotiating or investigating, the military was sent in. The campesino ecologists were harassed, some of the leaders turned up dead. When Montiel was arrested, the army killed one man and subjected Montiel and Cabrera, another campesino ecologista, to five days of brutal torture. Montiel wound up in prison in Mexico City accused of trumped-up drug-running and weapons charges. The charges are so blatantly fraudulent that the army officers contradicted themselves and each other during his trial. Montiel's lawyer Digna Ochoa, who specialized in Human Rights Law, was kidnapped and beaten on two separate occasions for defending him.

The link between human rights and environmental issues is becoming more apparent. As Ms. Ochoa put it, "The charges against Montiel and Cabrera are a pretext. They are really in jail because they disturbed the economic interests of local and transnational timber companies." She sees the issues as inseparable. "The right to a healthy environment is fundamental. Human Rights are not just limited to the abuses of the judicial system...they [human rights] are environmental, cultural, social, economic. We must look at them as a whole." It should be noted that Montiel's work and extreme hardship has been recognized. He was awarded the esteemed Goldman Prize for environmental activism.

Rodolfo Montiel's story is illustrative of what can happen if the World Trade Organization's global logging pact becomes a reality. That is why activists are willing to risk tear gas and rubber bullets. It is much more dangerous to stop the logging trucks once they are on your mountains. Just ask Montiel. ✦

Sarah Heyman is a long-time friend of Karen House.

From Abroad

by Michelle Born



Chile is hailed as being an exemplary model of the "free-market miracle" of capitalism in Latin America, courtesy of General Augusto Pinochet's crusade to eliminate communist ideology and anyone associated with it during his 17-year military regime. Quite a few Chileans would agree with this generous assessment of Pinochet's contribution to the welfare of the nation. However, others continue to ask, "But at what price?" Thousands were detained, tortured, executed and disappeared as a result of the *mano dura* [iron fist] with which Pinochet implemented these reforms. And I myself, having accompanied for two years the families of the 100 children of the Hogar de Cristo's *centro abierto* in Arica, must ask, "What miracle?"

Of course, we all know that distribution of income and quality of life for all are rarely taken into account when making sweeping generalizations about the well-being of a nation's economy. This is especially true when considering the case of Arica, the northern-most city of this long, narrow South American country.

Recently the backlash of globalization and privatization has made itself felt within Arica's economy like never before. A succession of large companies such as General Motors and Wrangler withdrawing from the area, as well as the inconsistency of available work in the fishing industry of this coastal city, have created an alarming and extreme situation of unemployment and poverty. Companies take their business elsewhere to avoid the well-organized labor unions and stricter regulations of this more developed Latin American country, among other motives. For example, several months ago Chile began to enforce certain environmental regulations for the fishing industry, adhering to an international standard that was set. As a result, the fishing companies in Arica took their business a few hours further north to Peru where these regulations are not enforced, thus leaving many jobless and exacerbating the city's devastating unemployment. This is just the latest in a series of events that have made the

hope of a dignifying job with decent wages nothing more than a pipe dream for the thousands of un- and underemployed laborers in Arica.

The secret to economic success in Arica – leave. Many men must leave their wives, children and hometown to go work in the mines in the interior of Chile. They go for weeks or months at a time, leaving the women to raise the kids and maintain the home. Needless to say, this situation produces many broken families – women find other partners who actually live in the same city; men come home and disrupt the family's routine leading to dissension in the home and, at times, domestic violence; children feel remorse toward their fathers who are never around to see them grow up; and the men gamble or drink away their earnings while holed up in the mines leaving their families penniless.

One lucrative activity in the city itself is drug-dealing. Being a port city right on the border with Peru and only a few hours from Bolivia, Arica often serves as a point of entry for drug supplies to these three countries. It's accessible, cheap, and easy. There's so much micro-drug trafficking that the law enforcement can really only concentrate on the large-scale suppliers and sellers. Though not sufficient to fill the need, drug rehabilitation programs do exist. However, when dignifying work cannot be found upon re-entry into the community, even after months of developing job skills within the treatment center, many people turn once again to the escape that drugs provide, and to the income that drug-dealing offers. I have never been more angry with one of the moms from our center as when as we found out she had dealt drugs to one of the other kids from the center. All those drug-prevention activities and workshops with the kids AND the parents and here one of our own parents was selling to our kids! So many times instead of feeling that we were taking a few steps forward in the prevention work with the kids and families, I felt that we were being shoved backwards by high-speed bulldozers and the forces of

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deprivation and lack of opportunities.

If nothing else, the economic situation in Arica definitely spawns creativity and resourcefulness. Whether selling pastries on a bike, popsicles out of a home, or shoelaces on the street, it's a living — if only a meager one. Many people work hard to make ends meet, and, when they can't, they don't hesitate to appeal to their neighbor, friend or family member for assistance—knowing that, more than likely, they will have the opportunity to return the favor someday when the other is in need.

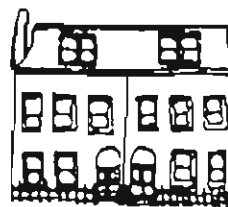
Thanks to the warm welcome of the families of the

kids at the Hogar de Cristo, host families, and families of friends, co-workers and parish members, I had the privilege of sharing in this special space of acceptance, love and sharing. Whatever the composition, families and communities (parish, neighborhood, and workplace) are the fuel that feed the Chilean spirit of solidarity, hope, generosity, hospitality, celebration and sidesplitting humor. As of yet, in that aspect, Arica refuses to be marked by the values of individualism and personal profit that globalization too often espouses.



From Little House

by Mary Ann McGivern, SL



For the last decade there's been talk among us of community housing, cottage industry, a clinic, urban farming on the vacant lots that surround the St. Louis Worker houses. Talk is cheap, but last year the Dorothy Day Co-Housing Community formed.

There have been a number of families that stayed at Karen House or the Little House during hard times, got things together and moved out, and missed the Worker. Lorraine, Tish, Dorothy, Priscilla, and Sandra came back often, helped cook on holidays, visited, shared meals. They stayed in touch because they wanted the kind of community that is rare in our culture. So gradually we became extended family for one another. But all these women had found housing at a distance from Hogan Street. They had jobs and their kids were in school, but it was lonely out there.

The vision had been to build some sort of housing, but gentrification was happening around the Worker and some neighbors didn't like having shelters and food pantries in the area. None of us were prepared to do heavy construction: we had no capital, land, skills, or inclination to become contractors.

Then a small miracle happened. A row of low-income apartments were being rehabbed on 19th Street and the investment corporation was willing to let the Dorothy Day Co-Housing Community rent them as a group.

And DeSmet began rehabbing a house on the same block with the Greater Pruitt Igoe Development Corporation for the Catholic Worker. We had housing.

So the members began to meet and developed a philosophy about money, community, decision-making, prayer, and shared commitment to the work of Karen House. It was at about this point that I joined up. The families at the Little House haven't got their lives sorted out and they are not ready to make a commitment to our co-housing community; but they too long for community, and I'm ready and eager to be a part of this commitment to one another. Five families have moved in so far and Teka moved out of Karen House and into one of the apartments. We had a hot dog (veggie, lean, and real) barbecue here at the Little House to kick off monthly pot lucks. One of our goals is to know the names of all the children in the four-square block area by autumn.

Our big goal is to be community to one another and to share our lives, crossing the barriers of class, race, and age as best we can.



Mary Ann McGivern, SL has been helping channel aid to a religious order of Pakistani women who are able to enter refugee camps and provide direct material assistance to Afghan women and their children.



From Karen House

by Tony Hilkin

How do I, as a member of the Catholic Worker, try to live out a resistance to globalization? I feel like I am constantly compromising my own efforts as I work for change. Even as I type this article, I struggle with using the computer as I realize how technology propels the global market. With every choice I make to participate in the system, I personally perpetuate globalization.

This conflict is indicative of the struggles I encounter daily as I try to grow in my resistance. Even at the Catholic Worker, where we strive to simplify our lives, I am surrounded by a plethora of amenities that tempt me with unnecessary and privatized comforts. I am disappointed with my degree of resistance when I support Ameren UE by turning on a light, or when I support Laclede Gas by cooking my vegetables. Yet, electricity and gas are just two staples of American life. Rarely does anyone question the consumption of these resources while considering their deplorable effects on the environment. Nor do we acknowledge the absence of these conveniences in the lives of people outside of our own paradigm. This indifference to consumption is only one facet of the culture of consumerism that drives the global market and feeds profit to transnational corporations.

Ideally, I would eliminate from my life those elements that are not necessary but, rather, only provide me pleasure or make my life faster or easier. I feel driven to live a disciplined life. I know many of the restrictions I would need to place on myself to do this, though I have yet to accomplish it.

I am compelled to shape my life in this way to withdraw from the systems that oppress, globalization among them. Unfortunately, sometimes my own negativity overwhelms me. I chastise myself again and again for the

choices I make because they affect millions of people and our precious environment. Moreover, I righteously critique the actions of those around me and analyze their complicity in this culture of consumerism. I can become burdened by my resentment, and I too often forget the beauty of this work.

The beauty, however, is abundant. My resistance to consumerism has filled my life with simplicity. My life is no longer confined by traditional structures. This has been very liberating. Since I have left my job, and minimized my commitments, I have been able to allocate my time to what I see as meaningful. I can work in the garden as long as I want, and spend as much time as I would like with the children at Karen House. Not only are my activities now more meaningful, but I am able to be more mindful of what I am doing and why. This presence of mind renders me more peaceful.

I am grateful for the past year and a half at Karen House where I have been able to discover these truths. Struggling with the Catholic Worker's philosophy, I have been able to make changes to improve upon myself. In the midst of these changes I am empowered in my efforts of resistance and I have found a fulfillment in centeredness.



Tony Hilkin is a member of the Karen House community who has greatly encouraged us all with his example and challenge of simple living.

by Barbara Prosser

September 11th. Ages ago. An atrocity we cannot imagine. And the worst of it is that it does not come and then go. It had crept into our very beings and it lingers in our daily lives.

We deal with questions. What drives such acts of violence? What perception of our country lives in the minds of fellow humans and drives them to such intense hatred? What do we need to hear, and to acknowledge, whether we believe it to be true or not?

There is fear of the unknown. We feel grief for all those whose family members left in the morning only to never return. We feel helplessness, anger and fear.

We look for ways to respond. For some, this means action. For many, it means prayer. There are churches, temples, mosques and synagogues everywhere, who have opened their doors for people to pray.

I hear people talking about how to understand and how to respond. In my closest circle of people, I hear strong voices for no military intervention. It is not an unexpected response for it is in keeping with the commitment my friends have made to seek peace through non-violence.

This commitment to nonviolence is still the minority response. But, the concern about whether an eye for an eye will really solve the underlying problems seems to be growing. I hear others in the broader community questioning, sometimes with a tentative voice, the ineffectiveness of a violent response to violence. There are discussions, articles, reflections, even talk on call-in shows, in which people ask for restraint. One mother, explaining to her friends, says, "I am mother and I simply cannot condone any war in which my son or any other mother's son might die in."

The question remains - what are we to do? In another small circle of women, I hear one say, "It is all so big. I think that the only thing I can do right now is to be more peaceful with my family and myself. But that seems

insignificant." I respond, "Oh no, this is exactly what we should do." We need to demonstrate small acts of non-violence, peacefulness and healing in every gesture with ourselves, our families, our friends, the person behind the checkout counter, the neighbor, the stranger. We need peaceful, respectful dialog with those who disagree. We need real listening followed by thoughtful response. Think of the significance. It could be huge - a small circle touching another circle and then another and another. Fr. Dominique Pire has observed: "There is perhaps no surer road to peace than the one that starts from little islands and oases of genuine kindness, islands and oases constantly growing in number and being continually joined together until eventually they ring the world."

In a time when our government chooses to respond to a complex dilemma with military intervention, there is a need for many to continue to call for dialogue about and exploration of alternative responses, to pray and to act for peace. But we must also find ways to keep ourselves grounded in these times of escalating violence. My neighbor Louise reminds me that it is equally important to pray and to meditate as it is to keep vigil and to march. My friend Jane seems on track when she looks within herself and her family first to begin the search for how to respond peacefully.

I look forward to John McCutcheon's visit to St. Louis on October 20. His words continue to ring true: "Step by step the longest march can be won, can be won. Many stones can form an arch, singly none, singly none. In union what we will, can be accomplished still. Drops of water turn a mill, singly none, singly none."

I will continue to be buoyed by the hope that we are more aware of the fragility of human life and of community that we were a year ago. I am convinced that those praying for peace for all people will continue to grow circle by circle by circle.



Barbara Prosser is a longstanding member of the *Roundtable* staff. She lives on Gibson Avenue with her family and is celebrating her 10th wedding anniversary with her husband Phil and two sons.

Volunteer Opportunity:

Singles, couples, and families willing to bring and share a Christmas meal with a prisoner at the Missouri penitentiary at Pacific. Almost a quarter of the inmates have no family and so are not allowed "food visits" except once a year in December.

If you are interested and want to learn more, call:
Agnes Wilcox
Prison Arts Project
314-862-5516.

Globilization Film Festival

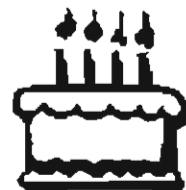
The New Rulers of the Earth
a documentary film by John Pilger
Sunday November 25th
1:30 to 3:00 p.m.
Center for Theology and Social Analysis
1077 South Newstead
533-4114

Welcome new community members:

Tish Chaney
Elizabeth Madden
Terry McNamee, Carolyn
and Gana Griffith

Welcome home from Angola:

Annie Schifelbein



House Needs:

- ◆ Tutors for children
- ◆ Housetakers
- ◆ Fair Trade Coffee

The Round Table is the quarterly journal of Catholic Worker life and thought in St. Louis. Subscriptions are free. Please write to *The Round Table*, 1840 Hogan, St. Louis, MO. 63106. Donations are gladly accepted to help us continue our work with the poor. People working on this issue include: Joe Angen, Teka Childress, Mark Chmiel, Carol Giles, Bill Miller, Barbara Prosser, Ellen Rehg, and Mark Scheu. Letters to the editor are encouraged; we'll print as many as space permits.

The Round Table

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