In 2006–08, food shortages became a global reality, with the prices of commodities spiraling beyond the reach of vast numbers of people. International agencies were caught flatfooted, with the World Food Program warning that its rapidly diminishing food stocks might not be able to deal with the emergency.

Owing to surging prices of rice, wheat, and vegetable oils, the food import bills of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) climbed by 37 percent from 2007 to 2008, from $17.9 million to $24.6 million, after having risen by 30 percent in 2006. By the end of 2008, the United Nations reported, "the annual food import basket in LDCs cost more than three times that of 2000, not because of the increased volume of food imports, but as the result of rising food prices."¹ These tumultuous developments added 75 million people to the ranks of the hungry and drove an estimated 125 million people in developing countries into extreme poverty.²

Alarmed by massive global demand, countries like China and Argentina resorted to imposing taxes or quotas on their rice and wheat exports to avert local shortages. Rice exports were simply banned in Cambodia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, and Viet Nam. South-South solidarity, fragile in the best of times, crumbled, becoming part of the collateral damage of the crisis.

Global Crisis, Global Protests

For some countries, the food crisis was the proverbial straw that broke the camel’s back. Some thirty countries experienced violent popular actions against rising prices in 2007 and 2008, among them Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Egypt, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Mauretania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia, Uzbekistan, and Yemen. Across the continents, people came out in the thousands against uncontrolled rises in the price of staple goods that their countries had to import owing to insufficient production. Scores of people died in these demonstrations of popular anger.

The most dramatic developments transpired in Haiti. With 80 percent of the population subsisting on less than two dollars a day, the doubling of the price of rice in the first four months of 2008 led to “hunger so tortuous that it felt like [people’s] stomachs were being eaten away by bleach or battery acid,” according to one account.³ Widespread rioting broke out that only ended when the Senate fired the prime minister. In their intensity, the Haiti riots reminded observers of the anti-International Monetary Fund (IMF) riots in Venezuela — the so-called Caracazo — almost two decades ago, which reshaped the contours of that country’s politics.

The Perfect Storm?
The international press and academics proclaimed the end of the era of cheap food, and they traced the cause to a variety of causes: the failure of the poorer countries to develop their agricultural sectors, strains on the international food supply created by dietary changes in China and India’s expanding middle classes who were eating more meat, speculation in commodity futures, the conversion of farmland into urban real estate, climate change, and the diversion of corn and sugarcane from food production to the production of agrofuels to replace oil.

The United Nations’ World Economic Situation and Prospects spoke about the crisis being the product of a “perfect storm,” or an explosive conjunction of different developments. Speculative movements that brought about the global financial crisis that broke out in the summer of 2007 were implicated in the food crisis. According to the United Nations, the impact on food prices of speculation by financial investors in commodities and commodity futures markets “has been considerable.” It could be argued, said the report,

“that increased global liquidity and financial innovation has also led to increased speculation in commodity markets. Conversely, the financial crisis contributed to the slide in commodity prices from mid-2008 as financial investors withdrew from commodity markets and, in addition, the United States dollar appreciated as part of the process of the de-leveraging of financial institutions in the major economies.”

Others, like Peter Wahl of the German advocacy organization WEED, were more emphatic, claiming that, in fact, speculation in agro-commodity futures was the key factor in the extraordinary rise in the prices of food commodities in 2007 and 2008. With the real estate bubble bursting in 2007 and trading in mortgage-based securities and other derivatives collapsing, hedge funds and other speculative agents, they asserted, moved into speculation in commodity futures, causing a sharp increase in trades and contracts unaccompanied by little or no increase in production of agricultural commodities. It was this move into commodity futures for quick profits followed by a move out after the commodities bubble burst that triggered the rise in the FAO food price index by 71 percent during only fifteen months between the end of 2006 and March 2008 and its falling back after July 2008 to the level of 2006.

The Agrofuel Factor

Speculation was certainly among the factors that created a “perfect storm” in 2006–08. An even more prominent explanation was the diverting of cereal, especially corn, from serving as food to being used as agrofuel or biofuel feedstock.

On July 3, 2008, the Guardian came out with an exposé on a secret report made by a World Bank economist that claimed that U.S. and EU agrofuels policies were responsible for three quarters of the 140 percent increase in food prices between 2002 and February 2008. This figure was significantly higher than the 3 percent previously reported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Oxfam's estimate of around 30 percent, the IMF figure of around 20 to 30 percent, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) 60 percent. The report’s conclusion was straightforward:

“[T]he most important factor [in the food price increases] was the large increase in biofuels production in the U.S. and the E.U. Without these increases, global wheat and maize stocks would not have declined appreciably, oilseed prices would not have tripled, and price increases due to other factors, such as droughts, would have been more moderate. Recent export bans and speculative activities would probably not have occurred because they were largely responses to rising prices.”

Completed as early as April 2008, the Mitchell report — named after the lead economist of the World Bank research team, Donald Mitchell — was allegedly suppressed by the World Bank out of fear of embarrassing former U.S. president George Bush and his aggressive agrofuel policy.

The agrofuel factor affected mainly U.S. farming, where much of corn production was shifted from food to agrofuel feedstock. This is hardly surprising since over the last few years, the Bush administration’s generous subsidies, made in the name of energy “independence” and combating climate change, has made conversion of corn into agrofuel feedstock instead of food very profitable.

Pushed by a corporate alliance that included some of the biggest names in the energy and agrifood industries, such as ExxonMobil, Archer Daniels Midland, and Cargill, Bush made agrofuel development one of the pillars of his administration’s
energy policy, with the announced goal that renewable sources should comprise a minimum of 20 percent of the energy portfolio in the transport sector within ten years.

In 2007, with the administration’s active lobbying, the U.S. Congress passed the Energy Independence and Security Act that focused on promoting agrofuels and the automobile fuel industry. The act targeted the increase of agrofuels production by more than eightfold from 4.7 billion gallons in 2007 to at least 36 billion gallons in 2022 — unusually high standards that would evoke significant changes in agricultural production. As of late 2007, there were 135 ethanol refineries in operation and 74 more being built or expanded.9 Midwestern America saw itself slowly being transformed into a giant agrofuels factory. In 2008, around 30 percent of corn was allocated for ethanol, with rapid increases occurring since 2006. Not surprisingly, the strong mandate and generous subsidies, as well as high tariffs against imported sugar-based Brazilian ethanol, ensured that such a large portion of U.S. corn was being allocated for agrofuel feedstock, with a not inconsiderable impact on grain prices.

While the actual impact of agrofuel production was bad enough, the future impact in developing countries was even more worrisome. Huge land lease deals are said to be taking place with land-rich countries like the Philippines, Cambodia, and Madagascar.10 There are widespread reports in international media of private firms and governments from countries that lack arable land striking lease agreements. Some of these deals are for food production, others for agrofuels, but with land being commodified, what is produced on the leased lands will ultimately depend on what is most profitable to bring to the global market at a given time.

The most controversial of these deals was the Korean firm Daewoo Logistics’ plan to buy a ninety-nine-year lease on more than three million acres of land in Madagascar for agrofuel production. Maize and palm oil were to be cultivated on almost half of the arable land in the country.11 There are reports that the new government that came to power in a coup in March 2009 has cancelled the Daewoo contract owing to popular opposition. There is no certainty, however, that it will not be renegotiated.

Similarly, Cambodia and the Philippines are negotiating “agricultural investment” projects. Kuwait is trading loans for Cambodian produce. The Philippines and Qatar are currently negotiating the lease of 100,000 hectares of land.12 In effect, the food crisis and energy crisis are causing countries to secure food supplies and agrofuel feedstock in unconventional ways. It is no longer sufficient to import grains. The land that produces that grain must be secured through contracts. Land is now the desired commodity, to the detriment of local populations who depend on the land for their own food consumption. Political elites in land-rich countries appear to be all too happy to oblige at the expense of their own country’s food security. Multimillion dollar leases, such as those being offered by the Chinese to the Philippine corporate groups, are a strong incentive.

Structural Adjustment and Trade Liberalization

While speculation on commodity futures and the expansion of agrofuel production have been important factors contributing to the food price crisis, long-term processes of a structural kind were perhaps even more central. The role of these factors accounted for the fact that in the years leading up to the food price spike of 2006–08, demand for basic grains — rice, wheat, barley, maize, and soybeans — exceeded production, with stocks falling to 40 percent of their levels in 1998–99, and the stocks-to-use ratio reaching record lows for total grains and multi-year lows for maize and vegetable oils.13 A key reason behind the fact that “production has fallen woefully short of growth in food demand,” asserted the United Nations, was the degradation of the agricultural sectors of developing countries owing to the marked “weakening [of] investment and agricultural support measures in developing countries, resulting in a condition in which “productivity growth for major food crops has stalled, and there has been no significant increase in the use of cultivated land.”14

As a result of supply constraints resulting from lack of investment, the FAO reported, "even before the recent surge in food prices, worrisome long-term trends towards increasing hunger were already apparent," with 848 million people suffering from chronic hunger in 2003–05, an increase of six million from the 1990–92 figure of nearly 842 million.15

In short, there were a combination of structural and policy ingredients in the mix that led to the food price spike of 2006–08, and certainly, a key element was the massive economic reorientation known as “structural adjustment.” This program, which was imposed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund on over ninety developing and transitional economies over a twenty-year period beginning in the early 1980s, was most likely the conditio sine qua non for the global food price crisis.
Eroding the Mexican Countryside

When tens of thousands of people staged demonstrations in Mexico early in 2007 to protest a sharp increase of over 60 percent in the price of tortillas, the flat unleavened breads that are Mexico’s staple, many analysts pointed to agrofuels as the culprit since Mexico had become dependent on imports of corn from the United States, where subsidies were skewing corn cultivation towards agrofuel production.

However, an intriguing question escaped many observers: How on earth did Mexicans, who live in the land where corn was first domesticated, become “dependent” on imports of U.S. corn in the first place?

The Mexican food crisis cannot be fully understood without taking into account the fact that in the years preceding the tortilla crisis, the homeland of corn had been converted to a corn importing economy by free market policies promoted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and Washington. The food price crisis in Mexico must be seen as one element in the concatenation of crises that have rocked that country over the last three decades and brought it to the verge of being a “failed state.” The key link between the food crisis, the drug wars, and the massive migration to the North has been structural adjustment.

In the countryside, structural adjustment meant the gutting of the various reformist government programs and institutions that had been built by the Partido Revolucionario Institucionalizado (Party of the Institutional Revolution) from the 1940s to the 1970s to service the agrarian sector and cater to the peasantry that had served as the base of the Mexican Revolution. The sharp reduction or elimination of the services they provided, such as credit, extension, and infrastructure support, had a negative effect on agricultural production and productivity.

The erosion of the capacity of peasant agriculture was further eroded by the program of unilateral liberalization of agricultural trade in the 1980s and the North American Free Trade Agreement in the mid-1990s, which converted the land that domesticated corn into an importer of the cereal and consolidated the country’s status as a net food importer.

The negative effects of structural adjustment and NAFTA-imposed trade liberalization were compounded by the halting of the five-decade-long agrarian reform process as the neoliberals at the helm of the Mexican state sought to reprivatize land, hoping to increase agricultural efficiency by expelling what they felt was an excess agrarian population of fifteen million people.

Over twenty-five years after the beginning of structural adjustment in the early eighties, Mexico is in a state of acute food insecurity, permanent economic crisis, political instability, and uncontrolled criminal activity. It may not yet be a “failed state,” to use a fashionable term, but it is close to becoming one.

Creating a Rice Crisis in the Philippines

Like Mexico in the case of corn, the Philippines hit the headlines early in 2008 for its massive deficit in rice.

From a net food exporter, the country had become a net food importer since the mid-1990s, and the essential reason was the same as in Mexico — that is, the subjugation of the country to a structural adjustment program that was one of the first in the developing world. The program involved a massive reduction of funding for rural programs that were set up during the Marcos dictatorship in the latter’s effort to convert the peasantry into a pillar of the regime.

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The deleterious effects of structural adjustment, which sought to channel the country’s financial resources to the payment of the foreign debt, were compounded by the entry of the country into the World Trade Organization in the mid-1990s, which required that it end the quotas on all agricultural imports, except for rice. In one commodity after another, Filipino producers were displaced by imports.

Contributing to the decline of agricultural productivity was the grinding to a halt of the agrarian reform program, which was not only successfully stymied by landlords but was not accompanied by an effective program of support services such as those that aided successful land reforms in Taiwan and Korea in the 1950s and 1960s.

Today, the status of the Philippines as a permanent importer of rice and a net food importer is implicitly accepted by a government that does not see agriculture playing a key role in the country’s economic development, except perhaps to serve as a site for plantations rented out to foreign interests to produce agrofuels and food dedicated for export to the
Destroying African Agriculture

As a continent that imports some 25 percent of the food it consumes, Africa has been at the center of the international food price crisis. In recent years, understanding of the roots of the crisis has been derailed by the fashionable notion that the reason Africa has a massive food deficit is its not having undergone the Green Revolution that Asia and Latin America experienced.

As in Mexico and the Philippines, structural adjustment, with its gutting of government budgets — especially its drastic reduction or elimination of fertilizer subsidies — was key factor that turned relatively underpopulated Africa from a net food exporter in the 1960s to the chronic net food importer it is today. As in Mexico and the Philippines, the aim of adjustment in Africa was to make the continent’s economies “more efficient” while at the same time pushing them to export-oriented agricultural production to acquire the foreign exchange necessary to service their burgeoning foreign debts.

This doctrinaire solution, which was applied with the World Bank and the IMF micromanaging the process, created instead more poverty and more inequality and led to significant erosion of the continent’s agricultural and industrial productive capacity. In Malawi, it led, earlier this decade, to famine, which was only banished when the country’s government reinstated fertilizer subsidies.

As in the Philippines and Mexico, the right hook of structural adjustment was followed by the left hook of trade liberalization in the context of unequal global trading rules. Cattle growers in Southern Africa and West Africa were driven out of business by the dumping of subsidized beef from the European Union. Cotton growers in West Africa were displaced from world markets by highly subsidized U.S. cotton.

The World Bank now admits that by pushing for the defunding of government programs, its policies helped erode the productive capacity of the agriculture. The 2008 World Development Report contained the following damning admission:

“Structural adjustment in the 1980s dismantled the elaborate system of public agencies that provided farmers with access to land, credit, insurance inputs, and cooperative organization. The expectation was that removing the state would free the market for private actors to take over these functions — reducing their costs, improving their quality, and eliminating their regressive bias. Too often, that didn’t happen. In some places, the state’s withdrawal was tentative at best, limiting private entry. Elsewhere, the private sector emerged only slowly and partially — mainly serving commercial farmers but leaving smallholders exposed to extensive market failures, high transaction costs and risks, and service gaps. Incomplete markets and institutional gaps impose huge costs in forgone growth and welfare losses for smallholders, threatening their competitiveness and, in many cases, their survival.17 ”

Rather than allow Africans to devise indigenous solutions to the continent’s agrarian crisis, however, the Bank is currently promoting a new development strategy relying on large-scale corporate agriculture while creating “protected” reserves where marginalized populations would eke out an existence based on smallholder and communal agriculture, for which the Bank does not see much of a future.18

Capitalism versus the Peasant

The World Bank’s promotion of corporate agriculture as the solution to Africa’s food production problems after the devastation of structural adjustment is a strong indication that, whether the designers of structural adjustment were conscious of it or not, the program’s main function was to serve as the cutting edge of a broader and longer-term process: the thoroughgoing capitalist transformation of the countryside.

That the dynamics of capitalist transformation is what lies at the heart of the food crisis is essentially what Oxford economist Paul Collier contends in presenting the orthodox account of the causes and dynamics of the food price crisis in Foreign Affairs.19 A large part of the blame for the crisis stems from the failure to diffuse what he calls the “Brazilian model” of commercial farming in Africa and the persistence of peasant agriculture globally.

Despite what he knows to be the negative environmental impacts associated with the Brazilian model, Collier uses the term to underline his claim that capitalist industrial agriculture, introduced in the United States and now being perfected by
Brazilian enterprises for developing country contexts, is the only viable future if one is talking about global food production keeping up with global population growth. The peasantry is in the way of this necessary transformation. Peasants, he says, are not entrepreneurs or innovators, being too concerned with their food security. They would rather have jobs than be entrepreneurs, for which only a few people are fit. The most capable of fitting the role of innovative entrepreneurs are commercial farming operations:

“[R]eluctant peasants are right: their mode of production is ill suited to modern agricultural production, in which scale is helpful. In modern agriculture, technology is fast–evolving, investment is lumpy, the private provision of transportation infrastructure is necessary to counter the lack of its public provision, consumer food chains are fast–changing and best met by integrated marketing chains, and regulatory standards are rising toward the holy grail of traceability of produce back to its source.”

In his dismissal of peasant agriculture, Collier is joined by many, including scholars otherwise sympathetic to the plight of the peasantry and rural workers such as Henry Bernstein, who claims that advocacy of the peasant way "largely ignores issues of feeding the world’s population, which has grown so greatly almost everywhere in the modern epoch, in significant part because of the revolution in productivity achieved by the development of capitalism.” Indeed, some progressives have already written off the peasantry, with the eminent Eric Hobsbawm declaring in his influential book *The Age of Extremes* that "the death of the peasantry" was "the most dramatic and far-reaching social change of the second half of [the twentieth] century," one that cut "us off forever from the world of the past.”

The Brazilian agro-enterprise that Collier touts as the solution to the food crisis is a key element in a global agrifood system where the export-oriented production of meat and grain is dominated by large industrial farms with global supply chains like those run by the Thai multinational CP and where technology is continually upgraded by advances in genetic engineering from firms like Monsanto. The global integration of production is accompanied by the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to facilitate the creation of a global agricultural supermarket of elite and middle-class consumers serviced by grain-trading corporations like Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland and transnational food retailers like the British-owned Tesco and the French-owned Carrefour. These processes of integration and liberalization are governed by multilateral superstructure, the centerpiece of which is the World Trade Organization.

According to Harriet Friedmann, the “dominant tendency” in the contemporary agrifood system

“is toward distance and durability, the suppression of particularities of time and place in both agriculture and diets. More rapidly and deeply than before, transnational agrifood capitals disconnect production from consumption and relink them through buying and selling. They have created an integrated productive sector of the world economy, and peoples of the Third World have been incorporated or marginalized — often both simultaneously — as consumers and producers.”

Indeed, there is little room for the hundreds of millions of rural and urban poor in this integrated global market. They are confined to giant suburban *favelas*, where they have to contend with food prices that are often much higher than the supermarket prices, or to rural reservations, where they are trapped in marginal agricultural activities and are increasingly vulnerable to hunger. In their deconstruction of *World Development 2008*, Kjell Havnevik and his associates assert (as noted above) that, indeed, the World Bank’s view of the future of Africa is one where agriculture is dominated by large-scale corporate agriculture while “protected” reserves are created where marginalized populations would eke out an existence based on smallholder and communal agriculture. The bank does not see much of a future for this arrangement, as it is reminiscent of the Bantustans of apartheid-era South Africa.

These developments constitute not simply the erosion of national food self-sufficiency or food security but what some students of agricultural trends call “de-peasantization” — the phasing out of a mode of production to make the countryside a more congenial site for intensive capital accumulation. This transformation has been a traumatic one for hundreds of millions of people, since peasant production is not simply an economic activity. It is an ancient way of life, a culture, which is one reason displaced or marginalized peasants in India have taken to committing suicide. In the state of Andhra Pradesh, farmer suicides rose from 233 in 1998 to 2,600 in 2002; in Maharashtra, suicides more than tripled, from 1,083 in 1995 to 3,926 in 2005. One estimate is that some 150,000 Indian farmers have taken their lives over the last few years, and global justice activist Vandana Shiva explains why: “Under globalization, the farmer is losing her/his social, cultural, economic identity as a producer. A farmer is now a ‘consumer’ of costly seeds and costly chemicals sold by powerful global
corporations through powerful landlords and money lenders locally.  

Resistance

Yet peasants have refused to go gently into that good night to which Collier and Hobsbawm — not to say Marx — would consign them. Indeed, one year before Hobsbawm’s book was published, in 1993, La Vía Campesina was founded, and over the next decade this federation of peasants and small farmers would become an influential actor on the agriculture and trade scene globally. The spirit of internationalism and active identification of one’s class interests with the universal interest of society that was once a prominent feature of workers’ movements is now on display in the international peasant movement.

Vía Campesina and its allies hotly dispute the inevitability of the hegemony of capitalist industrial agriculture, asserting that peasants and small farmers continue to be the backbone of global food production, constituting over a third of the world’s population and two-thirds of the world’s food producers. Smallholders with farms of under two hectares make up the bulk of the rice produced by Asian small farmers.

The food price crisis, according to proponents of peasant and smallholder agriculture, is not due to the failure of peasant agriculture but to that of corporate agriculture. They say that, despite the claims of its representatives that corporate agriculture is best at feeding the world, the creation of global production chains and global supermarkets, driven by the search for monopoly profits, has been accompanied by greater hunger, worse food, and greater agriculture-related environmental destabilization all around than at any other time in history.

Moreover, they assert that the superiority in terms of production of industrial capitalist agriculture is not sustained empirically. Miguel Altieri and Clara Nicholls, for instance, point out, that although the conventional wisdom is that small farms are backward and unproductive, in fact, “research shows that small farms are much more productive than large farms if total output is considered rather than yield from a single crop. Small integrated farming systems that produce grains, fruits, vegetables, fodder, and animal products outproduce yield per unit of single crops such as corn (monocultures) on large-scale farms.”

When one factors in the ecological destabilization that has accompanied the generalization of capitalist industrial agriculture, the balance of costs and benefits lurches sharply towards the negative. For instance, in the United States, notes Daniel Imhoff,

“the average food item journeys some 1300 miles before becoming part of a meal. Fruits and vegetables are refrigerated, waxed, colored, irradiated, fumigated, packaged, and shipped. None of these processes enhances food quality but merely enables distribution over great distances and helps increase shelf life.”

Industrial agriculture has created the absurd situation whereby “between production, processing, distribution, and preparation, 10 calories of energy are required to create just one calorie of food energy.” Conversely, it is the ability to combine productivity and ecological sustainability that constitutes a key dimension of superiority of peasant or small-scale agriculture over industrial agriculture.

Contrary to assertions that peasant and small-farm agriculture is hostile to technological innovation, partisans of small-scale or peasant-based farming assert that technology is “path dependent,” that is, its development is conditioned by the mode of production in which it is embedded, so that technological innovation under peasant and small-scale farming would take different paths than innovation under capitalist industrial agriculture.

But partisans of the peasantry have not only engaged in a defense of the peasant or smallholder agriculture. Vía Campesina and its allies have actually formulated an alternative to industrial capitalist agriculture, and one that looks to the future rather than to the past. This is the paradigm of food sovereignty, the key propositions of which are discussed elsewhere in this collection.

The Conjuncture

To be fully understood, the global food price crisis of the last few years, which is essentially a crisis of production, must be seen as a critical juncture in the centuries-long process of displacement of peasant agriculture by capitalist agriculture. Despite its dominance, capitalist agriculture never really managed to eliminate peasant and family farm-based agriculture,
which has survived till now and continues to provide a substantial share of the food for the national population, particularly in the South.

Yet, even as capitalism seems poised to fully subjugate agriculture, its dysfunctional character is being fully revealed. For it has not only condemned millions to marginalization but also imposed severe ecological costs, especially in the form of severe dependency on fossil fuels at all stages of its production process, from the manufacture of fertilizers, to the running of agricultural machinery, to the transportation of its products.

Indeed, even before the food price crisis and the larger global economic crisis of which it was a part, the legitimacy of capitalist industrial agriculture was eroding and resistance to it was rising, not only from the peasants and small farmers it was displacing but from consumers, environmentalists, health professionals, and many others who were disconcerted by the mixture of corporate greed, social insensitivity, and reckless science that increasingly marked its advance.

Now, with the collapse of the global economy, the integration of production and markets that has sustained the spread of industrial agriculture is going into reverse. "Deglobalization" is in progress "on almost every front," says the Economist, adopting a word coined by one of the authors nearly a decade ago. The magazine, probably the most vociferous cheerleader of globalization, warns that the process depends on the belief of capitalist enterprises "in the efficiency of global supply chains. But like any chain, these are only as strong as their weakest link. A danger point will come if firms decide that this way of organizing production has had its day." The next few years — nay, months, given the speed with which the global economy is plunging into depression — will provide the answer.

As the capitalist mode of production enters its worst crisis since the 1930s, peasants and small farmers increasingly present a vision of autonomy, diversity, and cooperation that may just be the key elements of a necessary social and economic reorganization. As environmental crises multiply, the social dysfunctions of urban industrial life pile up, and globalization drags the world to a global depression, the "peasant's way" has increasing relevance to broad numbers of people beyond the countryside.

Indeed, not only in the South but also in the North, there are increasing numbers who seek to escape the dependency on capital by reproducing the peasant condition, one where one works with nature from a limited resource base to create a condition of relative autonomy from the forces of capital and the market.

The emergence of urban agriculture, the creation of networks linking consumers to farmers within a given region, the rise of new militant movements for land — all this, according to Jan van der Ploeg, may point to a movement of "repeasantization" that has been created by the negative dynamics of global capitalism and empire and seeks to reverse them. Under the conditions of the deep crisis of globalization, felt widely as a loss of autonomy, "the peasant principle, with its focus on the construction of an autonomous and self governed resource base, clearly specifies the way forward."36

Notes
2. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), "Briefing Paper: Hunger on the Rise" (United Nations, September 17, 2008), ix. Go back
3. Reed Lindsay, "Inside Haiti’s Food Riots,” Al-Jazeera, April 16, 2008. Go back
4. Ibid., 46. Go back
5. Peter Wahl, "Food Speculation: the Main Factor of the Price Bubble in 2008" (Berlin: WEED, 2009). Go back
8. Chakrabortty. Go back
12. "Global trends.” Go back
14. Ibid. Go back
15. FAO. Go back


20. Ibid., 71. Go back


23. Ibid., 272. Go back

24. Havnevik, *et al.* Go back


31. Miguel Altieri and Clara Nicholls, "Scaling up Agroecological Approaches for Food Sovereignty in Latin America," *Development* 51, no. 4 (December 2008), 474. Also see Peter Rosset’s essay in this issue. Go back


33. Ibid., 426. Go back


35. Ibid., 61. Go back

Throughout the years, Souma developed a passion for entertaining his customers with his creative, skilled, and daring culinary creations. His dream is to someday own his family’s restaurant as its head chef. The institution is famous for its “Shokugeki” or “food wars,” where students face off in intense, high-stakes cooking showdowns. As Souma and his new schoolmates struggle to survive the extreme lifestyle of Tootsuki, more and greater challenges await him, putting his years of learning under his father to the test. Food Wars! Shokugeki no Soma Season 4 will have Erina and Soma teaming up for the epic conclusion of the Regiment de Cuisine. Will the real Food Wars! Shokugeki no Soma Season 4 please stand up? The last season of the popular ecchi/cooking anime series, Food Wars! The Third Plate, was a bit confusing to some fans since it was one of those rare split-cour seasons where a single season takes a three-month broadcasting break before resuming. His follow-up series, Food Wars!: Shokugeki no Soma, is his first English-language release. Shun Saeki made his Jump NEXT! debut in 2011 with the one-shot story “Kimi to Watashi no Renai Soudan.” Food Wars! Shokugeki no Soma, Vol. 27. All six chefs in the second bout of the team shokugeki finish their dishes simultaneously, making judgment imminent. In a battle between dishes that defy the imagination, which team’s inventiveness will reign supreme and bring home victory—the resistance or Central?
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