

Food cartel puts market 'rights' over human rights

by Marcia Merry Baker

The policy of the cartels of companies now dominating all major domestic and world food markets, is to command power over who eats, who farms, even who pursues agro-science, and patents seeds and vital technologies. The accompanying article (p. 36) summarizes the prominent cartel names, and documents their degree of control over trade, ranging from 40 to 90%.

The common rationalization for cartel looting rights, over and above national sovereignty and human rights, has been stated in mainstream economics dogma, in terms of "market rights," especially beginning in 1986, with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade Uruguay Round agriculture "reform" talks. The sophism is, that citizens of any nation should *not be limited* by the constraints imposed by a national government and a national economy; citizens in the "global" community have the right to partake of, and participate in, the "world free market"—meaning, everyone must be exposed to control by the cartel companies. No exceptions.

You see this globalism construction throughout the U.S. Position Paper to the Rome Food Summit, for example, in the expression that farmers in all nations should be "part of the world farmers' market." Who says? The cartels.

The fact that the regime of cartel-control of vital commodities (food, fuel, chemicals, etc.) is now at the stage associated with national economic breakdown, and mass suffering, has been no deterrent to cartel demands for even more extensive free trade rights. Just the opposite. Both in national capitals, and at various international gatherings, commodities cartel interests are demanding the freedom to exercise their "free trade rights," over and above even the human right to exist.

- G-7 Summit, Lyons, France. The supremacy of the right to "free trade" was a prominent plank in the Economic Communiqué released at the Lyons Group of Seven Summit, on June 29, 1996. This directly reflected the input by the "Gang of Four"—the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO), and the United Nations—the international agencies associated with serving cartel political and financial interests.

- World Food Summit, UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome. The U.S. official delegation itself was packed with cartel representatives, such as Dr. G. Edward Schuh, dean of the Hubert Humphrey Institute, which was created in

Minnesota in 1977 with funds from Archer Daniels Midland and other cartel sources. Schuh was recently named to serve on a new commission, formed by the National Center for Food and Agriculture Policy, in Washington, D.C., which commission is chaired by former Cargill CEO Whitney Mac-Millan. In early 1997, this Cargill-Humphrey Institute commission will present its findings to Congress on "international trade and economic assistance."

- World Trade Organization ministerial conference, Dec. 9-13, 1996, Singapore. The agenda of the first ministerial conference of the WTO, which now has 123 nations, and 30 more candidates for membership, including China, is on topics of concern to the cartels overriding national barriers to movements of cartel money, labor, commodities, and "intellectual property rights."

On Sept. 30, WTO Director Renato Ruggiero delivered a speech to the IMF-World Bank Development Committee, titled "Defining the Singapore Message," which previewed the December WTO meeting. He stated, "The whole political logic of trade has changed. By this I mean that, especially in the newer areas of the trade universe [financial services, investment flows, telecommunications], industrialized and developing countries are on the same side of the table. . . . This change reflects the inescapable reality of global economic integration. Globalization certainly presents countries with challenges of adjustment—though these are outweighed by the tremendous opportunities it offers. In many countries it is not uncommon to see a defensive reaction to these challenges, one which plays up the supposed threat from developing country imports or industrialized country investment. How are we going to counter this? By emphasizing the benefits of globalization and the interdependence it brings with it."

Typical of the "free market" view from London, was an editorial on the World Food Summit and WTO conference, entitled "Feeding the Hungry," in the Nov. 14 *Journal of Commerce*, the U.S. business daily owned by the London *Economist*: "To experts, the problems underlying Third World hunger are largely self-inflicted. Many developing countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, have misplaced the emphasis of their economic policies on industrial, rather than agricultural, development." The editorial states, "The root cause of Third World hunger is misguided government policies that waste domestic resources and inhibit trade. . . . The ultimate solution is in the hands of the developing countries themselves. They must adopt market-based reforms."

Cargill demands free rein in Africa

On July 31, Michael Davies, manager of Cargill's Africa Division, which is based in England, in testimony to the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, encapsulated the cartel food policy position for the world—demanding "market rights" over and above national rights, and basic human rights.

"Cargill has been active in Africa since 1981. We focus

on countries where a free market environment is developing. . . . Today we have offices and facilities in 10 African countries—Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—and employ some 2,800 people, including more than 1,800 seasonal employees.

“Our African businesses include commodity trading—from cocoa beans and coffee to petroleum; breeding, production and sales of high-yielding, early-producing, disease-resistant maize and sunflower seed; processing vegetable oil for cooking, cotton and rice; and warehousing and distributing food and agricultural products. The central management of Cargill Africa is located in Cobham, Surrey, England. . . .

“Investors [Cargill and cartel companies] struggle when governments try to control the economy. Governments in Africa have fallen into the habit of attempting to set prices, especially food and currency prices. This has been a recipe for economic disaster. Governments are awful at trying to guess what farmers should be paid, or what the price of bread should be, or what level the kwacha/naira/shilling should be against the dollar. It’s not their role. And as long as they try, they are going to cause more confusion, more economic chaos. . . .

“And, they struggle with aid. When foreign assistance displaces the private sector, it undermines investment. Aid is rarely, if ever, sustainable, although sustainability is very much a buzz word in the various aid agencies. This has important implications when we consider Africa’s chronic food problems.”

Windsors’ cartel controls food supply

by Richard Freeman

When speakers at the Rome World Food Summit proposed that nations should have “equal access” to food—instead of the right to, and the material conditions for, food self-sufficiency—they were proposing that entire populations obtain their daily bread from a non-existent “free market” in food. By forcing nations onto this mythological free market, the Malthusian food engineers are delivering them into the arms of a very un-free food cartel, guaranteeing a continuation of inadequate food supplies and starvation.

The cartel’s domination especially applies to America. In 1983, Robert Bergland, President Jimmy Carter’s agriculture secretary in 1977-81, told an interviewer concerning Cargill, the world’s largest grain company: “Cargill’s view is. . . [that] they generally regard the United States as a grain colony.”

There is very little food produced anywhere in the world that does not come under the control of the food cartel. Countries that used to have food self-sufficiency find their food

chain ripped open, and subordinated to the cartel. Food which had been moderately priced and relatively plentiful, becomes expensive and in short supply.

Ten to twelve companies, assisted by another three dozen, run the world’s food supply. They are the arms and legs of the Anglo-Dutch-Swiss food cartel, and are grouped around Britain’s House of Windsor. Led by the six leading grain companies—Cargill (Minneapolis and Geneva); Continental (New York City); Louis Dreyfus (Paris); Bunge and Born (São Paulo and the Netherlands Antilles); André (Lausanne, Switzerland); and Archer Daniels Midland/Töpfer (Illinois and Hamburg, Germany)—the food cartel has complete domination over world cereals and grains supplies, from wheat to corn and oats, from barley to sorghum and rye. But it also controls meat, dairy, edible oils and fats, fruits and vegetables, sugar, and all forms of spices.

One should keep in mind that, while different companies are cited as controlling this or that percentage of food production and/or marketing, the individual firms are actually legal fictions, each part of a single interlocked syndicate. These three dozen cartel companies control the food production, processing, and especially export marketing in four critical regions of the world, which account for the overwhelming majority of food exports. By controlling these four regions, they control who gets food and who does not. The four regions are: the United States; the European Union, particularly France and Germany; the British Commonwealth nations of Australia, Canada, the Republic of South Africa, and New Zealand; and Argentina and Brazil. Almost all world food export trade originates exclusively from these four regions.

The foods to sustain life

Grains and grain products, milk and dairy products, edible oils and fats, and meat provide the majority of the intake of vitamins, proteins, and calories, which keep people alive.

Grains. Grains, or cereals as they are often called, consist of wheat, and other small grains; the coarse grains, including corn, barley, oats, sorghum, and rye; and rice.

The Anglo-Dutch-Swiss cartel’s control over wheat exports is shown in **Figure 1**. For the crop year 1994-95, the cartel’s four food export regions produced and traded 88% of the world’s wheat exports of 97.2 million metric tons.

But, the four cartel food export regions, while accounting for 88% of worldwide wheat exports, accounted for only 39% of all the world’s wheat production of 522.4 million metric tons in the 1994-95 crop year (Figure 1). That is, their share of world wheat exports was more than double their share of world wheat output. This underscores the point that the cartel built up four regions as the chokepoints over the world’s food supply, even though these regions, collectively, are often not the largest producers.

Figure 2 shows, for the 1994-95 crop year, the percentages that the cartel’s four food export regions control of the exports of the leading coarse grains. They control 95% of world annual corn exports, some 69.9 million metric tons; 76% of world bar-