

SOWING THE SEEDS OF DESTRUCTION

With Rockefeller family funding, the Green Revolution laid the groundwork for the Gene Revolution, allowing a handful of Anglo-American agribusiness giants to gain worldwide control of the food supply.

Part 1 of 2

by Stephen Lendman

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A Review of
Seeds of Destruction: The Hidden Agenda of Genetic Manipulation
by F. William Engdahl

Email:

lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net

Blogsite:

<http://www.sjlendman.blogspot.com>

F. William (Bill) Engdahl is a leading researcher, economist and analyst of the New World Order who has written on issues of energy, politics and economics for over 30 years. He is also a frequent speaker at international conferences and is a distinguished research associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization, where he's a regular contributor. He is author of *A Century of War: Anglo-American Oil Politics and the New World Order* (Pluto Press, 2004) and *Seeds of Destruction: The Hidden Agenda of Genetic Manipulation* (Global Research, 2007; see <http://globalresearch.ca/books/SoD.html>), which is the subject of this review article. He can be contacted by email at info@engdahl.oilgeopolitics.net.

— Stephen Lendman

Genetically Engineered Foods: An Experiment on the Masses

In 2003, Jeffrey Smith's *Seeds of Deception* was published. It exposes the dangers of untested and unregulated genetically engineered or modified (GE/GM) foods that most people in the USA eat every day with no knowledge of the potential health risks. Efforts to inform the public have been quashed, and reliable science has been buried.

Consider what happened to the world's leading lectins and plant genetic modification expert, UK-based Arpad Pusztai. He was vilified and fired from his research position at Scotland's Rowett Research Institute for publishing industry-unfriendly data that he was commissioned to produce on the safety of GM foods. His Rowett Research study was the first ever independent one conducted on them anywhere. He undertook it, believing in their promise, but became alarmed by his findings. His results were startling and have implications for humans eating genetically engineered/modified foods.

Pusztai found that rats fed GM potatoes had smaller livers, hearts, testicles and brains, as well as damaged immune systems; they showed structural changes in their white blood cells, making them more vulnerable to infection and disease compared to other rats fed non-GM potatoes. It got worse. Thymus and spleen damage showed up, as did enlarged tissues, including the pancreas and intestines. There were cases of liver atrophy as well as significant proliferation of stomach and intestinal cells that could be a sign of greater future risk of cancer. Equally alarming was that all this happened after only 10 days of testing, and the changes persisted after 110 days—that's the human equivalent of 10 years.

GM foods today saturate our diet, particularly in the USA. Over 80 per cent of all processed foods sold in supermarkets contain them. Other GM foods include grains like rice, corn and wheat; legumes like soybeans (and a range of soy products); vegetable oils; soft drinks; salad dressings; vegetables and fruits; dairy products including eggs; meat and other animal products; and even infant formula. There's also a vast array of hidden additives and ingredients in processed foods (such as in tomato sauce, ice cream and peanut butter). They're unrevealed to consumers because such labelling is prohibited—yet the more of these foods that we eat, the greater the potential threat to our health.

Today, we're all lab rats in an uncontrolled, unregulated, mass human experiment, the results of which are as yet unknown. The risks from it are beyond measure, and it will take many years to discover them. Once GM seeds are introduced to an area, the genie is out of the bottle for keeps.

Despite the enormous risks, however, Washington and growing numbers of governments around the world in parts of the UK, Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa now allow these products to be grown in their soil or imported. They're produced and sold to consumers because agribusiness giants like Monsanto, DuPont, Dow AgriSciences

and Cargill have enormous clout to demand it and a potent partner supporting them—the US government and its agencies, including the Departments of Agriculture and State, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and even the defence establishment. The World Trade Organization's (WTO's) trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS) patent rules also back them, along with industry-friendly WTO rulings like the 7 February 2006 one.

The WTO favoured a US challenge against European GMO (genetically modified organisms) regulatory policies in spite of strong consumer sentiment against these foods and ingredients on the continent. It also violated the Biosafety Protocol that should let nations regulate these products in the public interest—but it doesn't because WTO trade rules sabotaged it.

Nonetheless, anti-GMO activism persists, consumers still have a say and there are hundreds of GMO-free zones around the world, including in the US. All this, and more, is needed to take on the agribusiness giants that so far have everything going their way.

Washington Launches the Gene Revolution

Engdahl explains that the science of "biological and genetic modification of plants and other life-forms" first came out of US research labs in the 1970s. The Reagan administration was determined to make America dominant in this emerging field, and the biotech agribusiness industry was especially favoured. Companies in the early 1980s raced to develop GMO plants, livestock and GMO-based animal drugs. Washington made it easy for them with an unregulated, business-friendly climate that has persisted ever since under Republicans and Democrats alike.

Leading the effort to develop GMOs is a company with a "long record of fraud, cover-up, bribery", deceit and disdain for the public interest: Monsanto. Its first product was saccharin, which was later proved to be a carcinogen. It then got into chemicals, plastics and became notorious for Agent Orange that was used to defoliate Vietnamese jungles in the 1960s and 1970s and exposed hundreds of thousands of civilians and troops to deadly dioxin, one of the most toxic of all known compounds.

Along with others in the industry, Monsanto is accused of being a shameless polluter. It has a history of secretly dumping some of the most lethal substances known into water and soil and getting away with it. Today on its website, however, the company ignores its record and calls itself "an agricultural company [applying] innovation and technology to help farmers around the world be successful, produce healthier foods, better animal feeds and more fiber, while also reducing agriculture's impact on our environment". Engdahl proves otherwise in his thorough research.

In spite of its past, Monsanto and other GMO giants got unregulated free rein in the 1980s and especially after George H. W. Bush became president in 1989. His administration opened "Pandora's box" so that no "unnecessary regulations would hamper them". Thereafter, "not one single new regulatory law governing biotech or GMO products was passed then or later [despite all the] unknown risks and possible health dangers".

In a totally unfettered marketplace, foxes now guard the henhouse because the system was made self-regulatory. An elder

Bush executive order assured it, ruling that GMO plants and foods are "substantially equivalent" to ordinary ones of the same variety like corn, wheat or rice. This established the principle of "substantial equivalence" as the "lynchpin of the whole GMO revolution". It was pseudoscientific mumbo-jumbo but was now law, and Engdahl equates it to a potentially biologically catastrophic "Andromeda strain"—but no longer science fiction.

Monsanto chose milk as its first GMO product, genetically manipulated it with recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH) and marketed it under the trade name Posilac. In 1993, the Clinton-era FDA declared it safe and approved it for sale before any consumer-use information was available. It's now sold in every US state and promoted as a way that cows can produce up to 30 per cent more milk. Problems, however, soon appeared. Farmers reported their stock burned out up to two years sooner than usual, serious infections developed and some animals couldn't walk. Other problems included the udder inflammation mastitis as well as deformed calves being born.

The information was suppressed and rBGH milk is unlabelled, so there's no way consumers can know. They also weren't told that this hormone causes leukaemia and tumours in rats, and that a European Commission committee concluded that humans

drinking rBGH milk risk breast and prostate cancers. The European Union thus banned the product, but the US did not. Despite clear safety issues, the FDA failed to act and it allows hazardous milk to be sold below the radar. It was just the beginning.

Data Manipulation

Engdahl reviews the Pusztai affair, the toll it took on his health, and the modest vindication he finally received. Pusztai was already out of a job when in 1999 the 300-year-old British Royal Society attacked him,

claiming that his research was "flawed in many aspects of design, execution and analysis and that no conclusions should be drawn from it". This criticism had no basis in fact, and the attack was made because Pusztai's bombshell threatened to derail Britain's hugely profitable GMO industry and do the same thing to its US counterpart.

As for Pusztai, after five years, several heart attacks and a ruined career, he finally learned what had happened after he announced his findings. Monsanto was the culprit. The company complained to US president Bill Clinton who, in turn, alerted the British prime minister Tony Blair. Pusztai's findings had to be quashed and he had to be discredited for his discoveries. He was nonetheless able to reply with the help of the highly respected British scientific journal, *The Lancet*. In spite of Royal Society threats against Pusztai, the editor published his article but at a cost. After publication, the society and the biotech industry attacked *The Lancet* for its action. It was a further shameless act.

As a footnote, Pusztai now lectures around the world on his GMO research and is a consultant to start-up groups researching the health effects of these foods. Along with him and his wife, his co-author, Professor Stanley Ewen, also suffered. He lost his position at the University of Aberdeen, and Engdahl notes that the practice of suppressing unwanted truths and punishing whistleblowers is the rule, not the exception. Industry demands are powerful, especially when they affect the bottom line.

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The Blair government went even further. It commissioned the private firm Grainseed to conduct a three-year study to prove the safety of GMO food. London's *Observer* newspaper later got hold of UK Ministry of Agriculture documents which showed that the tests were rigged and produced "some strange science". At least one Grainseed researcher manipulated the data to "make certain seeds in the trials appear to perform better than they really did".

Nonetheless, the Ministry recommended a GMO corn variety be certified, and the Blair government issued a new code of conduct under which "any employee of a state-funded research institute who dared to speak out on findings into GMO plants could face dismissal, be sued for breach of contract or face a court injunction". In other words, whistleblowing was now illegal, even if public health was at stake. Nothing would be allowed to stop the agribusiness juggernaut from proceeding unimpeded.

The Rockefeller Plan for Agribusiness

In the Cold War era, food became a strategic weapon by masquerading as "Food for Peace". It was a cover for US agricultural interests to engineer the transformation of family farming into global agribusiness, with food the tool and small farmers eliminated so their land could be used most effectively. Domination of world agriculture was to be "one of the central pillars of post-war Washington policy, along with [controlling] world oil markets and non-communist world defense sales". The defining 1973 event was a world food crisis.

The shortage of grain staples, along with the first of two 1970s oil shocks, advanced a "significant new Washington policy turn". Oil and grains were rising threefold to fourfold in price at a time when the US was the world's largest food surplus producer with the most power over prices and supply. It was an ideal time for a new alliance between US-based grain-trading companies and the government. It "laid the groundwork for the later gene revolution".

Enter what Engdahl calls the "great train robbery", with Henry Kissinger the culprit. He decided that US agriculture policy was "too important to be left in the hands of the Agriculture Department", so he took control of it himself. Readers will know the type of future that Kissinger had in mind when he said in 1970: "Control oil and you control nations; control food and you control the people". The world desperately needed grain, America had the greatest supply, and the scheme was to use this power to "radically change world food markets and food trade". The big winners were grain traders like Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) and Continental Grain; they were helped by Kissinger's "new food diplomacy [to create] a global agriculture market for the first time". Food would "reward friends and punish enemies", and ties between Washington and business lay at the heart of the strategy.

The global food market was being reorganised, corporate interests were favoured, political advantage was exploited and the groundwork was laid for the 1990s "gene revolution". Rockefeller interests, including the Rockefeller Foundation, were to play the decisive role as events unfolded over the next two

decades. This reorganisation began under President Richard Nixon as the cornerstone of his farm policy; free trade was the mantra, corporate grain traders were the beneficiaries, and family farms had to go so that agribusiness giants could take over. Bankrupting family farms was the plan to remove an "excess [of] human resources". Engdahl calls it a "thinly veiled form of food imperialism" as part of a scheme for the US to become "the world granary". The family farm was to become the "factory farm" and agriculture was to become "agribusiness", dominated by a few corporate giants with incestuous ties to Washington.

Dollar devaluation was also part of the scheme under Nixon's New Economic Plan (NEP), which included closing the gold window in 1971 to let the currency float freely. Developing nations were targeted as well with the idea that they forget about being food-self-sufficient in grains and beef, rely on America for key commodities and concentrate instead on small fruits, sugar and vegetables for export. Earned foreign exchange could then buy US imports and repay International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank loans that create a never-ending cycle of debt slavery. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was also used, as was later the WTO with rules written by corporations to suit their own bottom-line interests.

Drastic Population Reduction

In the midst of a worldwide drought and a stockmarket collapse, consider Kissinger's April 1974 classified memo. National Security Study Memorandum 200 (NSSM 200) was shaped by Rockefeller interests and aimed to adopt a "world population plan of action" for drastic global population control, i.e., reduction. The US led the effort, making birth control in developing countries a prerequisite for US aid. Engdahl sums it up in blunt terms: "if these inferior races get in the way of our securing ample, cheap raw materials, then we must find ways to get rid of them". The Nazis also aimed big and sought control. Population culling or "eugenics" was part of their scheme to target "inferior" races to preserve the "superior" one.

Kissinger's scheme of "simpler contraceptive methods through bio-medical research" almost sounds like DuPont's old slogan, "Better things for better living through chemistry". Later on, DuPont dropped "through chemistry" as evidence mounted on the toxic effects of chemicals, and a changing company in 1999 began using a new slogan, "The Miracles of Science", in its advertising.

NSSM 200 was tied to the agribusiness agenda that began with the 1950s and 1960s "Green Revolution" to control food production in targeted Latin American, Asian and African countries. Kissinger's plan had two aims: securing new US grain markets and controlling population, with 13 "unlucky" countries chosen including India, Brazil, Nigeria, Mexico and Indonesia. Exploiting their resources depended on instituting drastic population reductions to reduce home-grown demand.

The scheme was ugly and was pure Kissinger. It recommended forced population control and other measures to ensure US strategic aims. Kissinger wanted global numbers reduced by 500

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million by the year 2000 and argued for doubling the 10 million annual death rate to 20 million thereafter. Engdahl calls it "genocide", according to the strict definition of the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide statute that defines this crime legally. Kissinger is guilty under it for wanting to withhold food aid to "people who can't or won't control their population growth"—in other words, if they won't do it, we'll do it for them. The strategy included fertility control, called "family planning", that was linked to the availability of key resources. Rockefeller family members backed the plan; Kissinger was their "hired hand" and he was well rewarded for his efforts, e.g., he was kept from being prosecuted where he's wanted as a war criminal and could be arrested overseas.

Besides his better-known crimes, consider what Kissinger did to poor Brazilian women through a policy of mass sterilisation under NSSM 200. After 14 years of the program, the Brazilian Health Ministry discovered shocking reports of an estimated 44 per cent of all Brazilian women between ages 14 and 55 being permanently sterilised. Organisations like the International Planned Parenthood Federation and Family Health International were involved, and USAID directed the program. USAID has a long, disturbing history of backing US imperialism, yet it claims on its website that it extends "a helping hand to those people overseas struggling to make a better life, recover[ing] from a disaster or striving to live in a free and democratic country".

Even more disturbing is that an estimated 90 per cent of Brazilian women of African descent were sterilised in a nation with a black population second only to Nigeria's. Powerful figures backed the scheme, but most influential were the Rockefellers, with John D. III having the most clout on population policy. In 1969, Nixon appointed him head of the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future. The commission's earlier work laid the ground for Kissinger's NSSM 200 and its policy of extermination through subterfuge.

The Brotherhood of Death

Long before Kissinger (and his assistant, Brent Scowcroft) made population reduction official US foreign policy, the Rockefellers were experimenting on humans. JD III led the effort. In the 1950s, while Nelson was exploiting cheap Puerto Rican labour in New York and on the island, brother JD III was conducting mass sterilisation experiments on Puerto Rican women. By the mid-1960s, Puerto Rico's Public Health Department estimated the toll: one-third or more of unsuspecting poor women of child-bearing age had been permanently sterilised.

JD III expressed his views in a 1961 UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) lecture: "To my mind, population growth [and its reduction] is second only to control of atomic weapons as the paramount problem of the day". He meant, of course, reducing unwanted parts of the population to preserve valuable resources for the privileged. He was also influenced by eugenicists, race theorists and Malthusians at the Rockefeller Foundation who

believed they had the right to decide who lived or died.

Powerful figures as well as leading American business families were behind the effort. So were notables in the UK, then and earlier, such as Winston Churchill and John Maynard Keynes. Alan Gregg, the Rockefeller Foundation Medical Division chief for 34 years, said that "people pollute, so eliminate pollution by eliminating [undesirable] people". He compared city slums to cancerous tumours and called them "offensive to decency and beauty". Better to remove them and cleanse the landscape.

This was Rockefeller Foundation policy, and it is "key to understanding [its later efforts] in the revolution in biotechnology and plant genetics". The foundation's mission from inception was to "[cull] the herd, or systematically [reduce] populations of 'inferior breeds'". The problem for supremacists is that too many of a lesser element spells trouble when they demand more of what the privileged want for themselves. Solution: remove them, using anything from birth control and sterilisation to starvation and wars of extermination.

JD III was right in step with this thinking. He was nurtured on Malthusian pseudoscience and embraced the dogma. In 1931 he joined the family foundation, where he was influenced by eugenicists like Raymond Fosdick and Frederick Osborn, both of whom were founding members of the American Eugenics Society. In 1952 he used his own funds to found the New York-based Population Council, at which he promoted openly racist studies on overpopulation dangers. Over the next 25 years, the council spent US\$173 million on global population reduction and became the world's most influential organisation promoting these supremacist ideas. However, it avoided the term "eugenics" because of its Nazi association and instead used language like "birth control", "family planning" and "free choice"; it was all the same.

Before World War II, Rockefeller associate and foundation board member Frederick Osborn enthusiastically supported Nazi eugenics experiments that led to mass exterminations which were later vilified. Back then, he

believed eugenics was the "most important experiment that has ever been tried", and later he wrote a book, *The Future of Human Heredity* (1968), with "eugenics" in the subtitle. He stated that women could be convinced to reduce their births voluntarily and he began substituting the term "genetics" for the now out-of-favour "eugenics".

During the Cold War, population culling drew supporters that included the cream of corporate America. They backed private population reduction initiatives like Margaret Sanger's International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). The major media also spread the notion that "over-population in developing countries leads to hunger and more poverty [which, in turn, becomes] the fertile breeding ground" for international communism. American agribusiness would later get involved through a policy of global food control. Food is power. When used to cull the population, it's a weapon of mass destruction.

Consider the current situation with the UN FAO reporting

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sharply higher food prices along with severe shortages and warning that this condition is extreme, unprecedented and threatens billions of people with hunger and starvation. Prices were up 40 per cent in 2007, after a nine per cent rise in 2006, which forced developing states to pay 25 per cent more for imported food and be unable to afford enough of it.

The FAO cites various explanations for the problem, including growing demand, higher fuel and transportation costs, commodity speculation, the use of corn for ethanol production (taking one-third of the harvest, which is more than what's exported for food) and extreme weather, while ignoring the above implications: the power of agribusiness to manipulate supply for greater profits and "cull the herd" in targeted Third World countries. Affected nations are poor, and the FAO lists 20 in Africa, nine in Asia, six in Latin America and two in Eastern Europe that in total represent 850 million endangered people now suffering from chronic hunger and related poverty. They depend on imports, and their diets rely heavily on the types of produce that agribusiness controls—wheat, corn, rice and soybeans. If current prices stay high and shortages persist, millions will die—maybe by design.

The Subterfuge of "Food for Peace"

American elites in the late 1930s began planning an American century in the postwar world—a *Pax Americana* ("American Peace") to succeed the fading British Empire. The New York-based Council on Foreign Relations War and Peace Studies group led the effort, financed by Rockefeller Foundation money. As Engdahl puts it, they'd be paid back later "thousands-fold". First, though, America had to achieve world dominance militarily and economically.

The US business establishment envisioned a "Grand Area" to encompass most of the world outside the communist bloc. To exploit it, they hid their imperial designs beneath a "liberal and benevolent garb" by defining themselves as "selfless advocates of freedom for colonial peoples [and] the enemy of imperialism". They would also "champion world peace through multinational control". Sound familiar?

Like today, it was just subterfuge for their real aims that were pursued under the banner of the United Nations, the new Bretton Woods framework, the IMF, the World Bank and the GATT. They were established for one purpose: to integrate the developing world into the US-dominated Global North so its wealth could be transferred to powerful business interests, mostly in the US. The Rockefeller family led the effort, the four brothers were involved, and Nelson and David were the prime movers.

While JD III was plotting depopulation and racial purity schemes, Nelson was working "the other side of the fence...as a forward-looking international businessman" in the 1950s and 1960s. Preaching greater efficiency and production in targeted countries, he in fact schemed to open world markets for unrestricted US grain imports. This became the "Green Revolution". Nelson concentrated on Latin America. During WWII, he coordinated US intelligence and covert operations there, and those efforts laid the groundwork for postwar family interests. They were tied to the region's military because friendly strongmen are the type of leaders preferred in order to guarantee a favourable business climate.

From the 1930s, Nelson Rockefeller had significant Latin American interests, especially in areas of oil and banking. In the early 1940s, he sought new opportunities and along with brother Laurance bought vast amounts of cheap, high-quality farmland so the family could get into agriculture—but it wasn't for family farming: the Rockefellers wanted global monopolies, and their scheme was to do in agriculture what the family patriarch had done in oil, along with using food and agricultural technologies as Cold War weapons.

By 1954, the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, known as PL 480 or "Food for Peace", established surplus food as a US foreign policy tool. Nelson used his considerable influence on the State Department because every postwar department secretary, from 1952 through 1979, had ties to the family through its foundation: namely, John Foster Dulles, Dean Rusk, Henry Kissinger and Cyrus Vance. These men supported Rockefeller views on private business and knew that the family saw agriculture the way it saw oil—as commodities to be "traded, controlled, [and] made scarce or plentiful" to suit the foreign policy goals of dominant corporations controlling their trade.

The family got into agriculture in 1947 when Nelson founded the International Basic Economy Corporation (IBEC). Through it, he introduced "mass-scale agribusiness in countries where US dollars could buy huge influence in the 1950s and 1960s". Nelson then allied with grain-trading giant Cargill in Brazil, where they began developing hybrid corn seed varieties with big plans for them. They would make the country "the world's third largest producer of [these] crop[s] after the US and China". It was part of the Rockefellers' "Green Revolution" that by the late 1950s "was rapidly becoming a strategic US economic strategy alongside oil and military hardware".

Latin America was the beginning of a food production revolution with big aims: to control the "basic necessities of the majority of the world's population". With agribusiness in the 1990s, it was "the perfect partner for

the introduction...of genetically engineered food crops or GMO plants". This marriage masqueraded as "free market efficiency, modernization [and] feeding a malnourished world". In fact, it was nothing of the sort. It cleverly hid "the boldest coup over the destiny of entire nations ever attempted".

Agribusiness Goes Global

The "Green Revolution" began in Mexico and spread across Latin America during the 1950s and 1960s". It was then introduced in Asia, especially in India. It was at a time when Americans claimed that their aim was to help the world through free-market efficiency. It was all one way, from them to us, so that corporate investors could profit. It gave US chemical giants and major grain traders new markets for their products. Agribusiness was going global, and Rockefeller interests were in the vanguard helping industry globalisation take shape.

Nelson worked with his brother, JD III, who in 1953 set up his own Agricultural Development Council. They shared a common goal: "cartelization of world agriculture and food supplies under their corporate hegemony". At its heart, it aimed to introduce modern agricultural techniques to increase crop yields under the false claim of wanting to reduce hunger. The same seduction was later used to promote the "gene revolution", with Rockefeller

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interests and the same agribusiness giants backing it.

In the 1960s, President Lyndon Johnson also used food as a weapon. He wanted recipient nations to agree to administration and Rockefeller preconditions that population control and opening their markets to US industry were part of the deal. It also involved training developing-world agricultural scientists and agronomists in the latest production concepts so they could apply them at home. This "carefully constructed network later proved crucial" to the Rockefeller strategy to "spread the use of genetically engineered crops around the world", helped along with USAID funding and CIA mischief.

"Green Revolution" tactics were painful and took a devastating toll on peasant farmers, destroying their livelihoods and forcing them into shantytown slums. These people, desperate to survive and easy prey for any way to do it, provided cheap, exploitable labour.

The "Revolution" also harmed the land. Monocultural practices displace diversity, destroy soil fertility and decrease crop yields over time. The indiscriminate use of chemical pesticides can eventually cause serious health problems. Engdahl quotes an analyst who called the "Green Revolution" a "chemical revolution" that developing states couldn't afford. This revolution began the process of debt enslavement from IMF, World Bank and private bank loans. Large landowners could afford the latter; small farmers couldn't, and as a result were often bankrupted. That, of course, was the whole idea.

The "Green Revolution" was based on the "proliferation of new hybrid seeds in developing markets"—seeds that characteristically lack reproductive capacity. Declining yields meant farmers had to buy seeds every year from large multinational producers that control their parental seed lines in house. A handful of company giants held patents on them and used them to lay the groundwork for the later GMO revolution. Their scheme soon became evident: traditional crops had to give way to high-yield varieties (HYV) of hybrid wheat, corn and rice, with major chemical inputs.

Initially, growth rates were impressive but they didn't last for long. In countries like India, agricultural output slowed down and fell into decline. They were the losers so that agribusiness giants could exploit large new markets for their chemicals, machinery and other product inputs. It was the beginning of "agribusiness", and it went hand in hand with the "Green Revolution" strategy that would later embrace plant genetic alterations.

Two Harvard Business School professors were involved early on: John Davis and Ray Goldberg. They teamed up with Russian economist Wassily Leontief, got funding from the Rockefeller and Ford foundations and initiated a four-decade revolution to dominate the food industry. It was based on "vertical integration", of the kind that Congress outlawed after giant conglomerates and trusts like Standard Oil used them to monopolise entire sectors of key industries and crush competition.

This vertical integration was revived under President Jimmy Carter, a Trilateral Commission founding member, and disguised as "deregulation" to dismantle "decades of carefully constructed... health, food safety and consumer protection laws". These laws would now give way under this new wave of industry-friendly vertical integration. A propaganda campaign claimed that government was the problem, that it encroached too much on our lives and had to be rolled back for greater personal "freedom".

From early in the 1970s, agribusiness producers controlled US food supplies but soon they would go global on a scale without precedent. The goal: to make "staggering profits" by "restructur[ing] the way Americans grew food to feed themselves and the world". Ronald Reagan continued Carter's policy and let the top four or five monopoly players control it. It led to an unprecedented "concentration and transformation of American agriculture", with independent family farmers driven off their land through forced sales and bankruptcies so that "more efficient" agribusiness giants could move in with "factory farms". The remaining small producers became virtual serfs as "contract farmers". America's landscape was changing, with people trampled on for the sake of profits.

Engdahl explains the gradual process of "wholesale merger[s] and consolidation...of American food production...into giant corporate global concentrations" with familiar names: Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland, Smithfield Foods and ConAgra. As they grew bigger, so did their bottom lines, with annual equity returns rising from 13 per cent in 1993 to 23 per cent in 1999.

Hundreds of thousands of small farmers lost out; their numbers dropped by 300,000 from 1979 to 1998. It was even worse for hog farmers, with a drop from 600,000 to 157,000 in the same period,

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so that three per cent of producers could control 50 per cent of the market. The social costs were staggering (and continue to be), as "entire rural communities collapsed and rural towns became ghost towns". Consider the consequences. By 2004:

- the four largest beef packers controlled 84 per cent of steer and heifer slaughter: Tyson, Cargill, Swift and National Beef Packing;
- four giants controlled 64 per cent of hog production: Smithfield Foods, Tyson, Swift and Hormel Foods;
- three companies controlled 71 per

cent of soybean crushing: Cargill, ADM and Bunge;

- three giants controlled 63 per cent of all flour milling;
- five companies controlled 90 per cent of the global grain trade;
- four other companies controlled 89 per cent of the breakfast cereal market—Kellogg, General Mills, Kraft Foods and Quaker Oats;
- Cargill, having acquired Continental Grain in 1998, controlled 40 per cent of national grain elevator capacity;
- four large agrichemical/seed giants controlled over 75 per cent of the nation's seed corn sales and 60 per cent of it for soybeans, while also having the largest share of the agricultural chemical market: Monsanto, Novartis, Dow Chemical and DuPont;
- six companies controlled three-fourths of the global pesticides market;
- Monsanto and DuPont controlled 60 per cent of the US corn and soybean seed market—all of it patented GMO seeds.

In addition:

- 10 large food retailers controlled \$649 billion in global sales in 2002, and the top 30 food retailers accounted for one-third of global grocery sales.

Continued next issue...

About the Author/Reviewer:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago and can be reached by email at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. Visit his blogsite at sjlendman.blogspot.com.