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Deep Food Autonomy

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They say that we do not know anything
That we are backwardness
That our head needs changing
for a better one

*They say that some learned men
are saying this about us
These academics who reproduce
themselves
In our own lives*

*What is there on the banks of
these rivers, Doctor?
Take out your binoculars
And your spectacles
Look if you can.
Five hundred flowers
From five hundred different types
of potato
Grow on the terraces
Above abysses
That your eyes don't reach
Those five hundred flowers
Are my brain
My flesh*

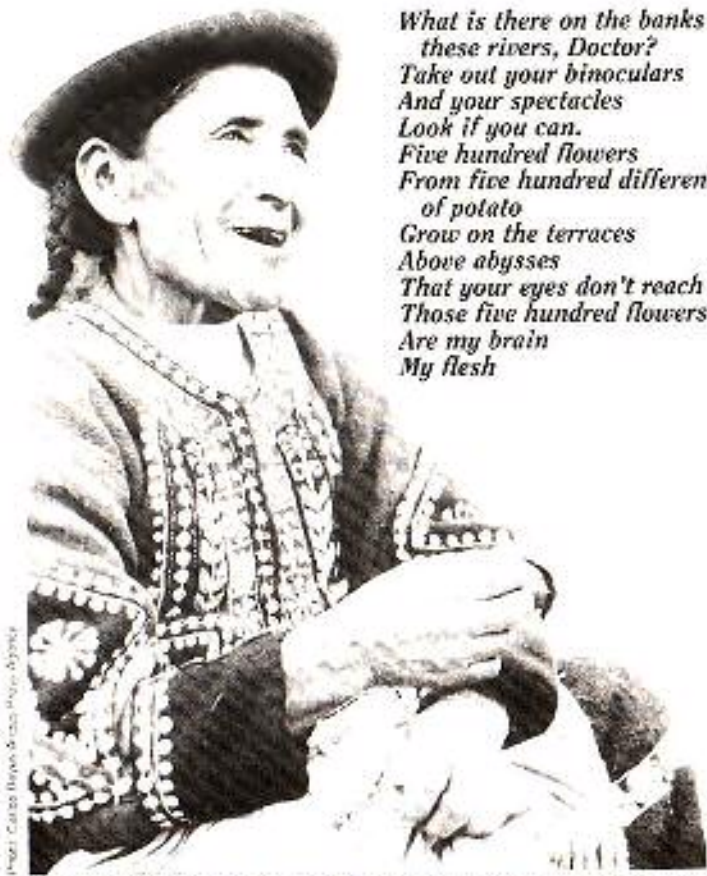


Image: Gallego Bayan, Maria Ines, 2010

From *A call to certain academics* by José María Arguedas. Translated from the Quechua by William Rowe.

"Above all, to decolonize is to reaffirm our Andean culture and to reject the imperialist pretension of homogenizing peoples, overwhelming one's own culture. Therefore, to decolonize is to break with the world development project, which imperialism has set up to affirm its power and dominance of the world market to homogenize and normalize, as it pleases, the behaviour of peoples, thus facilitating its dominating role."

Eduardo Grillo Fernandez

"One of the primary results - and needs - of industrialism is the separation of people and places and products from their histories. To the extent that we participate in the industrial economy, we do not know the histories of our families or of our habitats or of our meals."

Wendell Berry

DEEP FOOD AUTONOMY

Definitions

Deep: as in Deep Ecology, creating profound changes based on holistic values and beliefs, in particular those of Indigenous people, as opposed to simply technical changes or damage containment such as sustainable development.

Food Autonomy: a people's or a community's ability to independently and fairly control both the quantity and the quality/appropriateness of their food as well as their collectively owned knowledge about food.

The term food security tends to fall short of this ideal and refers mainly to sufficient quantity or improved production, or in worse cases: "The definition of 'food security commonly used within the WTO context is much narrower. It is often taken to relate primarily to the adequate supply of imported food to member states." (WTO, 2000:51) While the term "*soberanía alimentaria*" has been used by some Latin American analysts as a response to this domination, this could be interpreted as only the *right* to maintain and develop a nation's own food production, a juridical stance, while autonomy indicates independent choices and practices. In light of GATT/WTO agreements, which override local laws in favor of international trade, it would seem that even the state of California could have trouble establishing its own sovereignty in the area of food trade.

However, it should be underscored that Indigenous nations never signed any of those global trade agreements. It would seem that a more grassroots, localized, self-reliant approach could be more effective and far-reaching for Indigenous communities.

Domination: Non-indigenous people face many problems from the industrialized food system: food grown and cooked inappropriately for human health, decreasing nutritional value, individualized and hasty eating habits, lack of consumer information as well as depleted soils, pollution from agriculture and transportation, and hidden social costs. However, for Indigenous people these problems are an extension of and exacerbated by their "post"-colonial situation.

Food as weapon: Historically, food and hunger have been used as a weapon on more than one occasion in history. For example, the British continued exporting potatoes as the Irish starved during the famous potato blight that started the massive flights of the "wild geese" (emigrants) while keeping those at home hungry, desperate and often dependent on meaningless government sponsored jobs. Both Kit Carson and Guatemala's military regime of the 1980's used the scorched earth tactic to weaken and control Indigenous people, and similar methods were later used to remove the Navajo from their land in order to install mining. "Indeed, hunger among U.S. Indians is shockingly high and reflects a long and shameful history of the deliberate use of food as a weapon. Hunger was a primary contributor, for example, to the genocidal reduction of the California Indian population, from about 150,000 to 20,000 in a matter of just three decades in the mid-1800's. Today, even when caloric intake is sufficiently high, other forms of chronic malnutrition contribute substantially to lower life expectancies and higher infant mortality rates - lasting tributes to the total disruption of the cultural and spiritual links that once tied these Indigenous peoples to their primary food sources." (Shields, 1995:3) On the other hand, "renegades" such as the Zapatistas have, at times, been unexpectedly able to resist or elude pursuers when their ability to procure food has been greater than that of their pursuers.

Colonization, with its encomiendas, haciendas, missions, removal, reservations, fur trade and other resource exploitation, largely devastated Indigenous ways of attaining food. Assimilation has further affected the Indigenous foodways. While the global food industry is homogenizing non-Indian culture as well, assimilation of Indigenous culture by Western culture has often

aimed for ethnocide whether in the guise of post-independence mestizaje/miscegenation, boarding schools, relocation programs, development aid, or cultural encroachment. Further, although many Europeans and Euro-Americans prefer organic food or support ecological movements for small farms and sustainable agriculture, the industrial food system is not philosophically foreign to them, nor do many question the value system or worldview behind food industry and trade.

The individualism of the trade in food, which creates the opportunity for homogenization, is discussed by Esteva and Prakesh in relation to the loss of the communal *comida* and hearth in society. "This communion of growing and cooking communal food is alien to 'industrial eaters', using the metallic sound and plastic screen images of the TV sets to fill the void and loneliness of humans without commons." (Esteva and Prakesh, 2000: 51) These habits do not coincide much with Indigenous values, speaking in very broad terms, and it seems that not only land relationships, food choices and food-related customs have been colonized and assimilated, but also the community organization around communal food.

Through intellectual colonization, Indigenous knowledge about land, food and their own economy has been relegated by believers in Western Science to the category of backwardness or nostalgic/romantic lore, as has much of the culture of Indigenous peoples. Science has become a replacement for belief systems, even for Euro-Americans, and non-believers are now blasphemers. Science and a scientific approach to economics have also become part of the free-market belief system and have been used to support the industry/market tenets. Only recently, science has recently been proving, through its own way of knowing, that many examples of Indigenous knowledge can be scientifically confirmed. Grimaldo Rengifo Vasquez of PRATEC (Proyecto Andino de Tecnologías Campesinas) distinguishes abstract science as quite different from Indigenous thinking: "This operation supposes a world capable of being disassembled, a machine-world made of essential and accessory parts...This way of seeing life is different from the Andean cosmo-vision, which is of a living world where one is part of nature, with everyone being important in its re creation." (Apfel Marglin, 1998:189) An Indigenous ideology, specific to its own place and people, such as that described above, can lay the foundation for an independent and culturally appropriate food system.

What are the effects of colonial and "post"-colonial encroachment on Indigenous foodways? The terms hunger and malnutrition can sometimes be too generic to address the food-related problems in Indigenous communities. While some, like the Tarahumara, have insufficient land to live with/on, others in more temperate or even sub-tropical areas, such as San Pablito in Puebla, Mexico have a good deal of food growing close by (agricultural, horticultural or animal), although it might not compose a perfectly balanced diet in its current make-up. While in the United States and Canada there are cases where Indigenous people, for instance some of the

elders of the Navajo nation, do not have enough food by volume to sustain good health, many are eating the recommended caloric intake but have such inappropriate foods, often a mismatch with their physical activity, that they are malnourished. Some unfortunately suffer from both insufficient volume and inadequate quality.

While those who face true hunger are susceptible to tuberculosis, cholera and other opportunistic diseases, urban Indians suffer from "affluence" or "westernized" diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure and dental problems. Nina W. Kay of Southern Methodist University wrote in her dissertation that, "The urban diet appears to be maladaptive for the health and nutritional well-being of Indians." Noting that the pre-contact diet was healthier, she says, "Change from the traditional, pre-reservation diet to the present one has been heavily influenced by years of receiving 'commodities,'...Cultural destruction of American Indians by the United States government extends to their diet, and the Federally-regulated environment in which Indians live has never been conducive to the practice of good dietary habits." (Kay, 1992: vi) In a sample of 100 urban Indian women, her research showed 74% were overweight, 55% had poor eyesight, 54% had dental problems, 41% were anemic, 40% had digestive disorders, 34% had high blood pressure, 12% had diabetes, 7% had tuberculosis and 6% had heart disease. (Kay, 1991:95) To her credit, Kay notes that dietician or anthropological information-gathering methods were often awkward or inappropriate with Native American families and that there had been no holistic studies done to date that connected health, culture and nutrition.

In any case, due to the cultural destruction of foodways, "Contemporary American Indians and Alaskan natives, in a statistical context at least, find that they can expect a poorer quality of life in relation to health and disease than any minority has experienced in the twentieth century. Today the life expectancy of American Indians is five years less than that of the general population..."(Kay, 1992: 2)

While food gathering/preparation in Indigenous communities was once a central event tied to identity, roles and education, among other aspects of society, the industrial food system has created distance between sources and eaters. Continued encroachment on family, traditions and community has diverted the focus of meals away from women and hearth, men as providers and children as helpers and has rearranged the relationship to the environment and other living things. Grimaldo Rengifo Vasquez writes about these disappearing reciprocal and inter-related circles in terms of nurturing and being nurtured: "In the Andes it is common to hear farmers who raise alpacas say, 'In the same way that we raise alpacas, they also raise us', or 'just as we raise potatoes, the potatoes raise us'. ...This reciprocal nurturing is what recreates life in the Andean world..." (Apfel-Marglin and PRATEC, 1998,:174) Greta Jimenez Sardon writes that "...it can be perceived that in the Aymara world families include the animals and plants that are nurtured, as much as the plains and slopes, the mountains and rivers, the lakes and lagoons, the birds and

clouds, *Pachamama* (Mother Earth), the *Apus* (mountain deities), the ancestors...Love and respect among these forms of relations and life of the Andean world constitute its intense rituality." (Apfel-Marglin and PRATEC, 1998:146) Cash crops, and changes in technology and practices, as northern Natives learned with the fur trade, disrupt this relationship. While the average Euro-American meal has been reduced to a scant quarter of an hour's consumption of some pre-packaged food product far removed from its source and context, the communal cultivation, gathering, preparation and enjoyment of food traditionally had a greater presence in Indigenous traditions, storytelling, and spirituality. For example, "Ricing serves the Ojibway as a marker of time. Anecdotes from previous seasons are incorporated into the joking and teasing that characterize group banter when all are in good spirits and waiting for the rice to ripen. People recall upset boats with occupants forced to swim to shore or someone who cheated an unwitting rice buyer with a sack of oats topped with a layer of wild rice, or those who customarily brought so much lunch they scarcely had time for harvesting." (Vennum, 1988:59) Ricing camps were also the stage for dancing, gambling and other games, songs, and visiting. Some of this sense of rice as part of Ojibway identity has been lost with involvement in a cash crop business. "Ironically, white people came to grow wild rice scientifically about the time these tales became extinct. Wild rice, discovered by Wenabozhoo for the benefit of the Indians, has become a marketable commodity on a scale so grand that wild rice eclipses the Ojibway involvement in the harvest. Still, the belief that wild rice was a spiritual gift persists, as Ojibway people give thanks each year for its return, mark important events by feasting on it, and memorialize the departed with wild rice as an offering." (Vennum, 1988:80)

Economic changes in favor of predominantly cash crops and wage work change not only food independence but also values, as Indigenous people have adapted to dealing with outsiders who do not always share their views. For instance, as mentioned above, Ojibway ricers eventually learned to fill rice sacks with cheaper materials to sell to unwary buyers. "Such deception is seen as emulating white business dealings. Indian people view it as beating whites at their own game in the world of the almighty dollar...Little wonder, then, that such a climate discourages the social interaction once characterizing Ojibway rice camps." (Vennum, 1988:231) In the 1800's, traveler Charles Whittlesey observed many rice-trading Ojibway becoming addicted to alcohol, but also noted that the Grand Fourche band, who had retained their land, rejected assistance from the government and refused pork and bread, were comfortable, well-supplied and healthy and did not trade with him for alcohol. (Vennum, 1988:209)

Leaving a self-sustaining food system for reliance on cash crops is risky at best, according to Vandana Shiva, an anti-globalization activist from India: "Cash crops, especially for export, are subject not just to ecological risks, but to financial risks as well, because cash crops for export do

not produce much cash over time. The growth of export-oriented cash crop agriculture is a primary reason for Africa's food crisis...First, cash crops are encouraged over food production by an export oriented agriculture policy. As the area under commodities for export grows, prices fall and returns decline instead of increasing." (Shiva, 1991:221)

Coffee and other cash crop fluctuations and market manipulations demonstrate instability and a lack of control for the farmer (or the eater) in addition to normal agricultural risks. If this is one's sole source of income for food, as Indigenous and other coffee farmers have seen when Nestle dumped cheaper coffee into their market and lowered buyers' prices to where it was no longer viable to pick coffee at all, a cash crop can suddenly turn extremely precarious.

"In the first place, nobody who has seriously studied the coffee crisis can ignore the fact that this case is typical of the tropical products for which demand is less than supply and therefore prices drop off. The same occurs with sugar and with the now widely promoted African palm, all of which are subject to the evolution of the business. This last, whose global market is handled by nearly the same multi-nationals as the coffee industry, is experiencing the same process of falling prices. In one region of the Americas, in the state of Chiapas in Mexico, where the expansion of this produce has been the greatest, the Indians that were seduced to change from growing corn to oil palms are already complaining of being at the mercy of the voracity of the buyers, who are the owners of the extracting plants and pay whatever they want per ton." (Director Ejecutivo de Salvación Agropecuaria, Aurelio Suárez Montoya)

Of course, this is no different than exploitation of any other resource, such as coal or hydropower, that leaves ecological and social repercussions and dependence for Indigenous people without producing useful goods for their own direct benefit. Those who have become disconnected from their foodway in favor of a crafts economy or to become wage laborers are also at the mercy of the market (where crafts designs quickly saturate demand and are copied in China). Wage jobs also leave little time or resources for food production, but where possible a small family plot can provide at least some food security for a working family.

Involvement in cash crop business almost invariably becomes connected to importing, often from distant manufacturers who have much more control over the exchange in terms of quotas, tariffs and prices:

"Mexico has also joined, since the FTA, the group of large food importers. Between 1997 and 2001 it has bought from abroad 5 million tons of basic grains. It is now dependent for 50% of rice, 40% of meat and 20% of milk. Two thirds of the 25 million rural inhabitants are in poverty and 500,000 people are displaced each year, more than those attributed to the conflict in Colombia." (Suárez Montoya, 2002)

Many of these imports, such as coffee, refined sugar, white rice and beef and dairy products, are not indigenous to the Americas' peoples but have begun to displace other indigenous foods, even though they may not be beneficial or appropriate for Indigenous people's health.

The economic and land issues that have developed from this scenario have led in some cases to reliance on aid and welfare for Indigenous people. For the Tarahumaras of Mexico, who have very little workable land, "...it is clear that the government's programs don't have the intention of attacking this problem from the roots, so their programs are just like a T.V. top show. There are some institutions where the people (another Mexican people) send food, mainly canned food, water, etc., but the problem is that the people of this organization exchange the food for work to the Tarahumara people...of course it attacks their pride. The Tarahumara have a different conception of the society, for example they have a word "KORIMA" that mean to share, and in Chihuahua city, the children don't asking for alms, they just want that the people share (like in the community)their food. (Personal communication from Nestor Gutierrez, graduate student in Food Sciences working in Chihuahua, Mexico, 11/02)

There is also some stigma attached to certain types of aid and payments, sometimes in relation to corruption in the aid agencies, but especially as concerns others' perception of Native Americans. A recent editorial in the *Black Hills People's News* titled "Don't Let These 'Poor' Farmers Make Fun of Welfare Recipients", named neighboring farmers and listed their rather large farm subsidies (the lowest being nearly \$60,000 over 4 years) that ensured income whether they farmed or not. The indignant author points out that some farmers have looked down on Native Americans for accepting assistance, even though this was an agreement in return for land. (Mesteth, 2000)

Does aid lead to or reinforce poverty? Robert Snow and Joseph Morris ask this question in "Cultural Survival Quarterly", writing that the herding and semi-nomadic Turkana people of Kenya received aid after famine struck, but the externally caused crisis led to emergency measures that then became policy and displaced traditional methods. "As plans call for the families who participate in irrigation projects to settle and continue to work the land which they have improved, this would mean the permanent settlement of a large proportion of the Turkana people. If this is indeed the outcome of the scheme, famine relief may well have begotten renewed famine. At best, this would demonstrate bad planning; at worst, the tendency for bureaucracies to generate self-perpetuating plans with little regard for the intended beneficiaries." (Snow and Morris, 2002)

Top-down assistance from large international organizations may offer substantial support for infrastructure, but cannot deeply know the land or the people they are supporting and must work within their own knowledge and values, sometimes treating the developing world as one "region". The World Bank and other agencies will often base financing on the possibility of good returns on investments and ability to compete in global markets, feeling that in the developing world, the post "debt-crisis" situation requires privatized infrastructure and more technology (World Bank, 1995:4), or in other words, how much a target group will "fit" into the market system. It is an uneven and skewed relationship. Esteva and Prakesh write of Indigenous

people's relation to state service agencies, saying that, "It is no secret to 'masses' that they cannot depend upon the latter; with their promises of modern security: of jobs, pensions or health plans. The 'lucky' few who wangle their way into acquiring these, even in the best of times, form crippling dependencies upon salaries that come and go with the vagaries of international currency markets - totally outside their own communal control." (Esteva and Prakesh, 1998:113) According to Vandana Shiva, non-Indigenous development "... leads, in effect, to turning one's back to the soil as a source of meaning and survival, and turning to the state and its resources for both. The destruction of organic links with the soil also leads to destruction of organic links within society... Scarcity, not abundance, characterizes situations where nothing is sacred but everything has a price... Instead of being rooted spiritually in the soil and the earth, uprooted communities root themselves in models of power presented by the nation state." (Shiva, 1991: 190)

Global agencies' approaches also differ from Indigenous solutions in that they apply macro-economics, global and anthropometric statistics, short-term relief goals, and standard, globally available and shippable food products to alleviate hunger in a crisis.

Criteria and measurements on food security and stability track "core indicators" (which is not a holistic term, and fails to reflect natural inter-connections): productivity, index of variability of supply stability, weight gain rather than nutrition, health gain, GNP, production volume, export price movements, variability of food prices, and food production indices (www.fao.org, 12/9/02), as they need measurable results for funders and supporters.

These criteria do not always give a realistic picture of local quality of life and have no relation to land, plants, animals or culture. For example, as Vandana Shiva explained, high production in a region lowers prices for each producer and emphasis on calorie intake and weight gain, often from emergency foods at first, change traditional views and lead to obesity

The WTO is, after all, a trade organization and the World Bank is a bank. They can only judge a situation by trade and banking criteria, for example: "The most important macroeconomic policy for the international dimension of food security is the exchange rate." (WTO, 2000:30) Their reporting can often seem completely removed from people, land and culture and does not often look at locally appropriate diet or food quality in its reporting. As Esteva and Prakesh write, this kind of "thinking globally" is largely ineffective in the long run, but based on international banking and trade perspectives, the WTO is a strong advocate of liberalizing and globalizing world food supply, as key to stability. (WTO, 2000) However, in a globalized food system, large amounts of food resource dollars are invested in real estate, advertising, transportation and chemistry that add their own variables, demands and side-effects (social costs) to the equation. These are positive outcomes in trade and banking terms. In this sense, the WTO's belief that the answer to hunger is globalizing the world's food supply seems perfectly coherent, although

globalization brings many side-effects that do not show up in macro-economic spread-sheets. However, just as they have their particular point of view, food cultivators and eaters must establish criteria make their own demands and standards.

Even with international support, good intentions and solid plans, competitive results and outside sponsors' commitment are not guaranteed, nor is a stable income for a community's cash crops. In 1972 General Mills supported an Ojibway rice cooperative, offering to sell the rice on a non-profit basis in the United States, but flooding, market problems, a shortage of canoes and lost quality control kept sales from meeting expectations. When General Mills, who had hoped to improve their minority relations through this project, was partially blamed for not marketing aggressively, they pulled out. (Vennum, 1988:247) One can only wonder what might have happened if the cooperatives had built a direct sales network, working from a local base outward.

The Green Revolution is one example of top-down assistance or development that, by attempting to apply Western agricultural technology to other peoples' lands and by failing to address the poorest of the poor, created more problems than it solved. In the 1940's, this international campaign was promoted to increase the productivity of the land in developing countries, assuming that yields could be much higher if only the Indigenous people had the benefit of superior technology. Mixed and rotating crops for local consumption were replaced with cash crop monocultures while internal resources were replaced with imported machinery and chemicals, perhaps in the ulterior interest of creating consumers where few had previously existed. Activist Vandana Shiva writes, "The American strategy of the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations differed from the indigenous strategies primarily in the lack of respect for nature's processes and people's knowledge. In mistakenly identifying the sustainable and lasting as backward and primitive, and in conceiving nature's limits as constraints on productivity that had to be removed, American experts spread ecologically destructive and unsustainable agricultural practices worldwide." (Shiva, 1991:34) The result in her region of Punjab was competition, centralization, polarization of communities and violence as well as "diseased soils, pest-infested crops, water-logged deserts and indebted and discontented farmers," (Shiva, 1991:12) and "...conflicts over river waters, class conflict, the pauperisation of the lower peasantry, the use of labor displacing mechanisation, the decline in profitability of modern agriculture, etc..." (Shiva, 1991:174) Shiva indicates that hunger issues originally stemmed from social injustices rather than backwardness and that "by-passing the goals of equality and sustainability led to the creation of new inequalities and new scarcities." (Shiva, 1991:57)

Are all aid and development programs intentionally trying to assimilate, homogenize and consumer-ize Indigenous people? Lana Hall suggests aid comes with a mixture of motivations, including humanitarianism, creation of markets, and security concerns. She states that the bill P.L.480 was passed in 1954 in order to dispose of surplus food commodities while providing

more food to developing countries and thus freeing up foreign exchange for use in development. However, "shipments were increasingly directed toward countries perceived as important for national security...maintaining political stability with food aid was undoubtedly an objective in the cases of Brazil and Colombia." (Hall in Super and Wright, 1985:136) Some similar political thought on control through dependence and disposal of surplus might be ascribed to the distribution of commodity foods to U.S. reservations. Outside assistance, whether intentionally or not, affects community values and assessment of QOL. However, the degree to which a community adopts (adapts or rejects) Western goals will depend on many factors. Esteva and Prakesh insist that community members are aware of the limitations implicit in their invitation to Westernize: "Not being fools, they are all too aware that their 'incorporation' into the 'global economy' implies their 'inclusion' as castoffs - in real words, being excluded." (Esteva and Prakesh, 2000, 84)

On a macro-economic or purely financial level, raising apparent productivity and stability or creating jobs in the global factory, chemical inputs for agriculture, or massive herd management may seem to make sense on paper. However, **trans-genics** (bio-tech foods, terminator seeds, etc.) effect sacred and staple plants and ways of thinking about them, as well as adding to input costs, yet they have not proven to be more productive or nutritious in the long run or to serve any particular consumer needs. Still, there is plenty of criticism for those who try to be independent: African leaders who reject GMO foods have been labeled as blindly following extremist activists from Europe (can't make educated decision themselves?) and as *causing* famine by rejecting these foods. The UNFAO director general cautioned, "Countries in Southern Africa whose populations are facing a devastating drought should carefully consider current scientific knowledge before rejecting food aid containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs), Dr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), said. Addressing a press conference at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Dr. Diouf said that 13 million people were estimated to be in need of food assistance in coming months to avoid widespread starvation in the region. He noted that there were currently no international agreements in force covering trade and aid involving food containing GMOs. An ad hoc committee of Codex Alimentarius, the joint FAO-WHO Food Safety body, was working to develop appropriate standards. (Jacques Diouf, <http://www.fao.org/english/newsroom/news/2002/8844-en.html> 12/9/02) However, Deborah Harry, Executive Director of the Indigenous Peoples Council on Biocolonialism, cautions that, "Indigenous peoples worldwide are now at the forefront of a new wave of scientific investigation: the quest for monopoly control of genetic resources that will be useful in new pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, and other bio-engineered products. The genetic diversity that exists within the veins and territories of indigenous peoples is threatened by expropriation." (Harry, 2001) In

"Life, Lineage and Sustenance," Stephanie Howard (2001) states, "Companies such as Monsanto are offering some of their technologies "free" to small and subsistence farmers. One example is a technique that the company claims will increase the level of nutrients such as beta-carotene in the oils from genetically engineered crops. While Monsanto is donating the technology free, US Government resources will be used to transfer this technology to the targeted communities. These are resources that could be used to support local diet and food security in another way than bringing a high-risk technology that will probably not address the real needs of the communities. Furthermore, it is not clear how long the 'free offer' lasts, and when the company will start charging farmers for seeds on which they have grown dependent. Emergency aid: US food aid packages – some of which may come through the World Food Program – are increasingly likely to include genetically engineered seed and foods."

Not only are bio-tech food products being imported into developing peoples' food systems, Indigenous knowledge is being patented for industrial profits that are not shared with the real developers of the cultivars in question: " For thousands of years the grain quinoa has been a staple of life for indigenous peoples in the Andes. Today, millions of small-scale farmers in Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Chile and Argentina depend on quinoa as a central part of their diet. In 1994, more than 40 varieties of the grain became the exclusive property of the State University of Colorado, after two U.S. researchers, Duane Johnson and Sarah Ward, took out a U.S. patent." (Craig, 1997:24)

Another issue that must seem to work in a financial advisor's plan but fails to feed people, care for the land or respect living things is the issue of Feed vs. Food. Many Indigenous people have already been displaced from their lands in order to make room for cattle or seen the ecological effects of overgrazing and water contamination, while those that work with this kind of farming can rarely afford to feed meat or dairy products on their family's table. Furthermore, the gross commodification of living things inherent in this business, undermines respect for nature. The promotion of fatty meat consumption in the USA has also added to the indices of heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes, diseases which affect large numbers of Native people. While traditional food procurement and production mixed animal foods with plants in a beneficial way, increasing economic pressures have led to intensive livestock systems and supporting monocultures. "The number of animals kept has been increasing world-wide, with a global meat production nearly quadrupling since 1950. Around 40% of world grain production is fed to livestock, and animal fodder for export is an important cash crop for many of the poorest countries. This can divert resources that could better be used at home, as well as often resulting in soil impoverishment and erosion. Laying hens and farmed fish both need high protein diets, normally provided by feed containing fish meal. It has been estimated that 30% of the world's fish catch is converted into fish meal, wasting a limited and dwindling natural food resource."

(Andrew Johnson in Mephram, 1996: 58-59) The wastefulness and commodification of animal life imposed by a production-based and materialistic view are not helping to feed the human population nor are they at all in keeping with Indigenous values.

In the end, Indigenous communities or nations must analyze "development" projects and proposals based on their own values and criteria. Food autonomy requires locally/environmentally and culturally specific methods. Dean Howard Smith writes that, "A holistic understanding of nature and a reverence for the land can lead tribes to make environmentally and culturally sound decisions. When an incompatibility between development and the other subsystems exists, the *tribe* must reach a point of compatibility by either altering or refusing the development strategy." (Smith, 2000:79) However, Smith's statement implies that the tribe is receiving proposals instead of making proposals and that development (including growth, productivity and Western technology) is an automatically acceptable goal for that tribe.

On the level of **international civil society**, some positive movements are taking place to counter effects of industrialized, globalized fast food system. As important as it is for food autonomy to be a local and culture-specific approach, perhaps Indigenous communities can adapt these to precisely fit their situation.

The slow food movement is mainly a European movement encouraging people to choose, prepare, savor and digest food with more time and care and encourages more connection between food and family or friends. This approach is not too distant from some Indigenous ways, as highlighted by Esteva and Prakesh in describing a meal around the fire during a visit to a Triqui home: "The whole community's life is in fact organized around such fires, the center of kitchens, the source of *comida*. The very essence of the *milpa* is here, and not in the corn emerging in the fields - the only element of the *milpa* researched by the experts, the agronomists. The essence of their 'we', their *milpa*, is precisely here: around the communal fire, in the very heart of the family." (Esteva and Prakesh, 2000:58)

There is also a movement to make small, family farms more viable and a more active part of the local food system. Farmers' markets, which often accept WIC (Women, Infants and Children) vouchers or food-stamps, become a regular community gathering centered on fresh foods and home-made items. While this is much like the Latin American plaza or *tianguis*, this custom has not taken root among Northern tribes, perhaps because eating habits may be less vegetable-oriented owing to post-commodity food habits. Community Supported Agriculture programs, a sort of subscription to farm produce, and Farm-to-School programs are now connecting local food producers directly to eaters while educating neighbors about local environment, food, nutrition and health. All of these get the freshest food to consumers while keeping the business

within the community and creating a connection between farmers and eaters that assures communication and accountability.

Outstanding activists, such as Vandana, Shiva (quoted earlier on the Green Revolution but more recently an ardent advocate against bio-engineering and a centralized/globalized food system), Wendell Berry, and Jose Bove, are also basing their work on personal philosophies that may overlap to some degree with Indigenous ideals and that demonstrate deep ties to the land and respect for experiential and autochthonous knowledge. Berry, a Kentucky farmer and poet, advocates thinking small and knowing the land intimately: " To the extent that we participate in the industrial economy, we do not know the histories of our families or of our habitats or of our meals. This is an economy, and in fact a culture, of the one-night stand. 'I had a good time,' says the industrial lover, 'but don't ask my last name.' Just so, the industrial eater says to the svelte industrial hog, 'We'll be together at breakfast. I don't want to see you before then, and I won't care to remember you afterwards.' In this condition, we have many commodities, but little satisfaction, little sense of the sufficiency of anything" (Berry). Jose Bove, a French farmer who drove his tractor into a McDonalds restaurant in protest of the invasion of globalized food, said in an interview, " Agro-business, with its over-production and its inevitable reliance on exportations, must not be used to feed these agriculturally poor countries and thus destroy their agricultural markets, including those outside Europe. Each country has to develop its own agriculture so it won't be dependent on another country and thus lose its freedom. When Americans try to produce for the whole world, exportation becomes a political weapon. Poor countries import food so cheaply it destroys all incentive to create local markets." (A World Struggle Is Underway; an interview with Jose Bove by Lynn Jeffress (with Jean-Paul Mayanobe) Z magazine, June 2001) Shiva, Berry and Bove are among the few non Indigenous activists who address food issues at the level of empire, local strengths and knowledge, and human values systems.

Indigenous style: Self development solutions will need to balance between traditionalism, self-reliance and participation in the mainstream of the 21st

century. Traditional food practices can be reevaluated and adapted to today's needs and possibilities, since traditional production, quality and balance were historically more than adequate until interfered with. Knowledge of soils, companion planting, water use, mulching, weather and astrology were and can still be highly developed and effective. Storage practices were also appropriate: "Before the advent of canning, food preservation techniques included drying, salting, pickling, smoking, freezing, and cooling... which permitted exchanges between communities, even when distant, as well as insurance against shortages... The availability of foods for preservation means that basic requirements of the nutritional regime have been satisfied." (Super, 1985:14-15) Recently, the California Indian Basketweavers Association has been practicing wildcrafting of traditional materials in conjunction with education and conservation programs, and this approach could be applied to food as well.

Buffalo and other **traditional foods** are being introduced into Native Americans diet, particularly in the Lakota area, but there is also a need to also change eating habits and attitudes. There is no point to simply recovering a material part of the equation if one is going to super-size the buffalo burger and have it with fries and a shake while driving down the highway to work or watching television.

Traditional foods conferences and workshops are currently addressing diabetes, obesity, blood pressure in conjunction with dietitians, doctors, anthropologists and traditional medicine people. For example, the local clinic in the Otomi town of San Pablito in Mexico has been documenting traditional food and medicinal plants.

Registered dietician Kibbe Conti has worked on the Pine Ridge reservation, and from her experience there and with help of local elders, she developed the Medicine Wheel diet. This is considerably more appropriate, seeking lower carbohydrates and fats and a better balance of protein and healthier preparation. In many respects this is a great solution, especially since it is easy to teach and foster pride. It's weaknesses perhaps are that it doesn't distinguish between simple and complex carbohydrates, and is based on a traditional 40 % protein but doesn't account for physical activity change, use of plant protein, the difficulty of getting low-fat meats from commercial sources, or toxins in animal products. There is some loose appropriation of symbology, but in general it seems to be a good idea, a good cause, and to be making improvements. (Potter, 2002)

Recently, *campesino*, ecologist and Indigenous groups held a conference Mexico on World Food Sovereignty Day.

Different farmers', Indigenous and environmentalist organizations and others from civil society met on the 15th of October in Mexico City, in the seminar-workshop "In Defense of Corn Against Bio-piracy and in Favor of Food Sovereignty", in order to analyze the problems brought about by pollution of native corns by transgenic corn. This took place in the frame of the World Food Day, called by these and thousands of other farmers' organizations around the world "World Food Sovereignty Day" (La Jornada/FZLN, 2001).

Ideas for taking back Autonomy: It is simply not enough to meet "first world" standards, applying correcting measures such as sustainable agriculture and fair trade networks rather than replacing the system.

"En años recientes, inspirada en la mejor buena voluntad, ha surgido una corriente que intenta abordar la seguridad alimentaria desde el modelo de desarrollo sostenible, destacando la inclusión de la variable ambiental y fomentando la producción limpia en la agricultura. El fundamento de esta "agricultura orgánica" está en el paradigma del bajo costo de los insumos, producidos in situ, y al servicio de la producción de los géneros que brindarían la dieta alimentaria necesaria a los hogares rurales. Se refuerza en la experiencia cubana a la cual hubo de recurrir ese país ante el bloqueo que ha sufrido por las firmas productoras de agroquímicos.... Pero tampoco este es un mercado que se escapa del control de las economías más poderosas." (Suárez Montoya, 2002)

Eduardo Grillo Fernandez of Peru's PRATEC includes the following as means to real agricultural independence: "To show that in the Andes both the improvement of the quality of life of the great majority of the human population and the improvement of nature's health are only possible within an endogenous process of vigorization and growth of Andean culture, which does not compromise with modernization and which points to decolonization...To show that the present resistance movements in the West are not alternative to the imperialist mainstream dominant there, but only variations not sufficiently differentiated...they are not ready to sacrifice even a part of their excessive privileges to contribute to the fraternal harmony of the peoples of the world." (Apfel-Marglin, 1998:236-237)

It seems that communities sometimes adopt development programs because they are available and feasible at that moment, better than doing nothing, and sold convincingly. This happens in Mexico with INI (Instituto Nacional Indigenista) programs, some health campaigns, and some agricultural programs developing cash crops. Tourism and casinos may also fall into this pattern, as they are dependent not only on government agreement/support and outside demand, but do not produce anything (other than money) that is useful for the community. They also parallel the problems of an exclusive cash crop system, where the spread of this sort of development lessens income for each group by dividing demand. However, these programs provide an opportunity to

use new skills and other capital to create programs that can more deliberately and deeply address how to diversify internally and inter-tribally and cover the basics for the entire community.

Based on cumulative experience, a community can assess their skills pool, resources, networks and QOL criteria. Perhaps a good place to begin an assessment is at the juncture of Quality and Quantity; the community must establish appropriate criteria for QOL on their own terms after their own research and discussion. Some considerations might include these:

- Quality - appropriate for traditions, physical particularities (many Indigenous people cannot eat dairy, wheat, sugar etc.), activity, freshness/seasons, storage etc. This is not just a discussion of vitamins and minerals, but is also about sharing, contentment, center of family and friends' activity.
- Quantity - should be appropriate for the population, resources (work, land, money) budget, activity, and energy needs.
- Variables? - Cash, land and workers, resources and location, knowledge of farming and traditions, reach of "modern" ways into community, pressures to produce other items, pressures to import, urban vs rural base and connections, more affluent/less affluent/ and north/south, etc.

Additional technology may be needed to remake a feasible foodway for an indigenous community, and it might be both practical and invigorating to try other Indigenous knowledge first as it has at least a similar worldview or values system at its foundation. Conceivably, Indigenous people could create an IK food information bank.

In the North, these approaches might be worth considering:

- Revive traditional cooking, horticulture and agriculture knowledge, as well as related ceremonies and values
- Buy land where possible via conservation easements and work with organic certifiers, lease cheaply to those who want work, including neighboring tribes (share crop) and subsidize as part of community health plan/IHS . Protect water sources before shortages occur.
- In the case of surplus food, a community could create a distribution network with community members living in nearby cities or could exchange with other cultivators or artisans. can supply casino and hotel restaurants. Farmers' markets (allowing WIC vouchers and foodstamps), CSAs, or a web-based exchange with urban Indians (for their acquired skill and services) of less perishables such as rice, dry beans, dried fruit, maple syrup, etc. are also possibilities.

In South and Central American nations, while some temperate regions provide a great deal more food with little effort, others, such as the Tarahumara's lands barely provide "enough grass for the dogs to purge themselves." (Nestor Guitierrez, personal communication, 11/2002) In many cases, Indigenous community members migrate either to the cities or to the North (USA), often

leaving their own lands uncultivated. Those that fare well might be organized to support a food autonomy program either through contributing "seed money" or by lending their land in return for produce for those family members left behind. Those who migrate to the cities often become the poorest people in the Americas, begging on the streets or forced into demeaning and dead-end jobs, with little opportunity to get adequate quantities of food, much less control of quality in their food or reconnect with land and community. Perhaps self-sufficiency and pride in Indigenous knowledge could prevent more people from leaving their communities.

- Small, simple, low-maintenance family *huertas* can supplement cash and crops/crafts.
- Educate each other regarding effects of *comida chatarra* - waste of family budget, connection to diseases - as opposed to appropriate traditional diet, as well as the costliness of chemicals
- Revive traditional farming and horticulture practices where possible: diversification is of utmost importance. Certify organic/fair trade wherever possible. Exchange locally for goods and services.
- Solutions should be locally initiated and specifically suited to both land and community values and possibilities.

Deep Food Autonomy would support other aspects of autonomy and revitalization. Just as the hearth is at the center of the family and food at the center of many community traditions, we might say that food issues are at the center of autonomy. Deep food autonomy would encourage family and community gatherings, which in turn supports language use and conversation regarding traditions and history as opposed to precarious economies that lead to migration, competition and polarization in the community. Smith writes that, "In order to engage in cultural activities, it is first necessary to provide for basic needs: food shelter, and clothing. Once the basic needs are taken care of, a certain amount of disposable resources must be available for cultural activities. Resources may be measured in dollars, hours, sweat, physical energy or interest. Furthermore, the individual engaging in cultural activities must have enough self-interest and self-esteem to participate in those activities." (Smith, 2000: 72) Of course, Smith must be envisioning larger activities such as dances or larger communal meals and ceremonies, but there are probably many personal, small-scale cultural and spiritual activities that should be done in order to assure that basics are covered. In both cases, culture or spirituality and food support each

other. "At Mille Lacs, explained Fred Jones, 'There is a right way and a wrong way...One group that was clean, they'd go out and they'd pick their day's picking, and maybe half a day, then they'd come home and then they [clean] it up, and thrash it out. Then they'd call all those that lost some relation, or relative through the year, and the last harvesting time, they'd get him in there and get them all together and then they'd treat him in this new...batch of rice. Then after they fed him and then they were free to go out and pick it. It wouldn't hurt the crop.'" (Vennum, 1988:77) These simple, respectful observations that keep the relationship between humans and rice in balance cost nothing but a little time and dedication. Having enough and the right kind of food can even support not only a healthy work-force, but learning (properly nourished brains focus and absorb better), identity, recognition of IK, pride in identity, ecological knowledge and connection - all reinforcing culture and quality of life.

If we can generally say that the goal of Indigenous self-development is to autonomously sustain or improve the community's well-being and that some main indicators of this quality of life could include health and freedom from anxiety about survival, ability to exercise traditions-spirituality-identity, and an appropriate relationship with the environment, then food autonomy should clearly play an important role. Conversely, a lack of food autonomy perpetuates or creates dependence and a breakdown of the community - not to mention hunger and malnutrition in the case of inadequate quantity, obesity, heart disease poor dental health and diabetes in the case of inadequate quality. Deep food security, like deep ecology, must build from the very roots of an intimate relationship between humans, nature and food, and from the heart of the community to ensure a long term improvement in quality of life for Indigenous people.

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