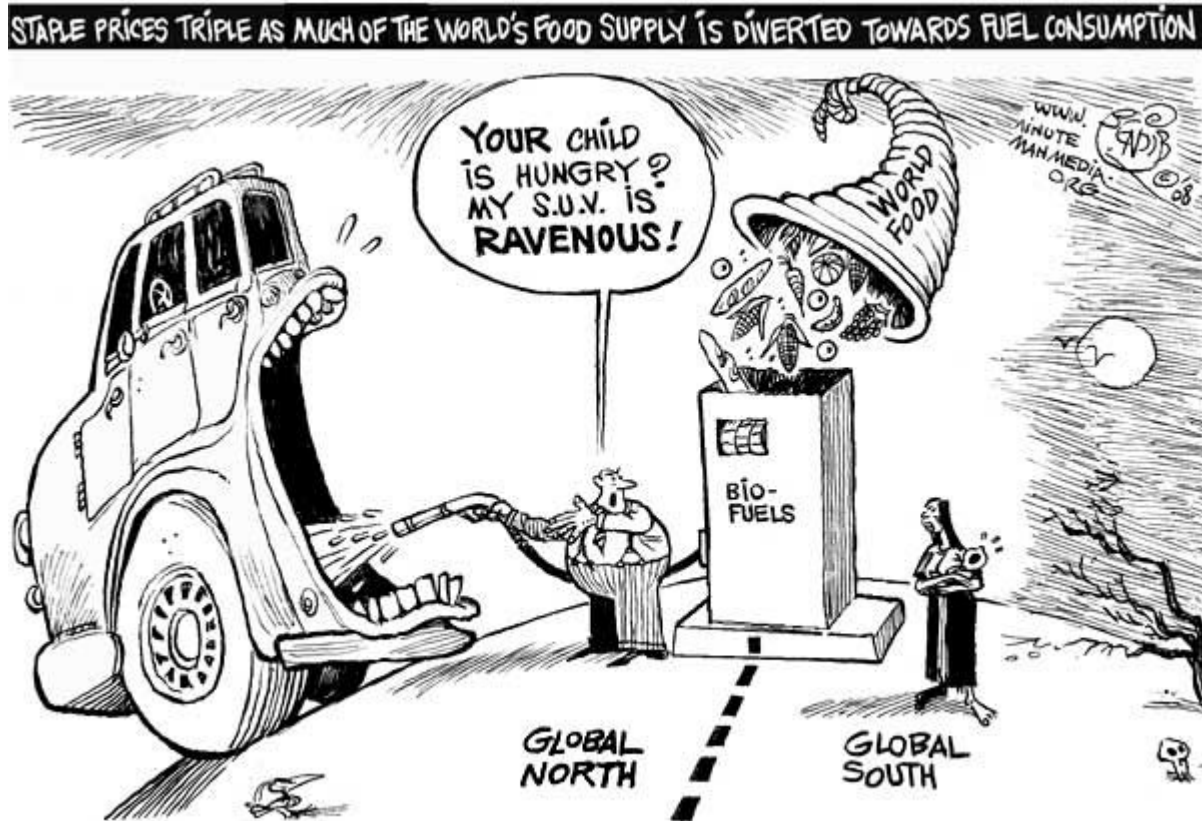


4 THE LIBERATION OF KEMET
1 MAY 2008



FOOD WARS

[col. writ. 4/21/08]
By MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

Like a shadowy echo out of history, angry throngs massed at the Big House in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. But this time, they were not clamoring for freedom.

Or, if they were, it was for freedom from hunger.

Their protests shook the government, and forced the Prime Minister, Jacques-Edouard Alexis, to step down.

Several years ago, we saw massive protests in Oaxaca, Mexico, against exorbitant hikes in corn prices, the grain which forms the basis, and is the staple of the national diet (tortillas and tacos).

In Egypt, bread prices are so high that the army has been called in to stifle dissent, and to

distribute bread.

Wheat, corn and other such grains are becoming so expensive that millions of people around the world are seriously threatened by hunger.

The cause? In truth, there are many, but perhaps chief among them is speculation and anticipated demand for bio fuels, or the use of grains to produce fuel to run cars.

Many grains are held off the food markets, to await better prices for bio fuels. In other words, people are going hungry -- facing starvation - so that people can pump fuel into cars.

If ever there was an encapsulated image of the mercenary nature of capitalism, it can be seen in this one example: filling cars instead of feeding people.

This is also a window into what we have come to call globalism.

There are 5 major companies that control some 85% of the world's grain trade, and nearly half of the world's grain production. As huge multinationals, will they utilize this power to feed the people of the world, or to maximize profits?

The answer is obvious.

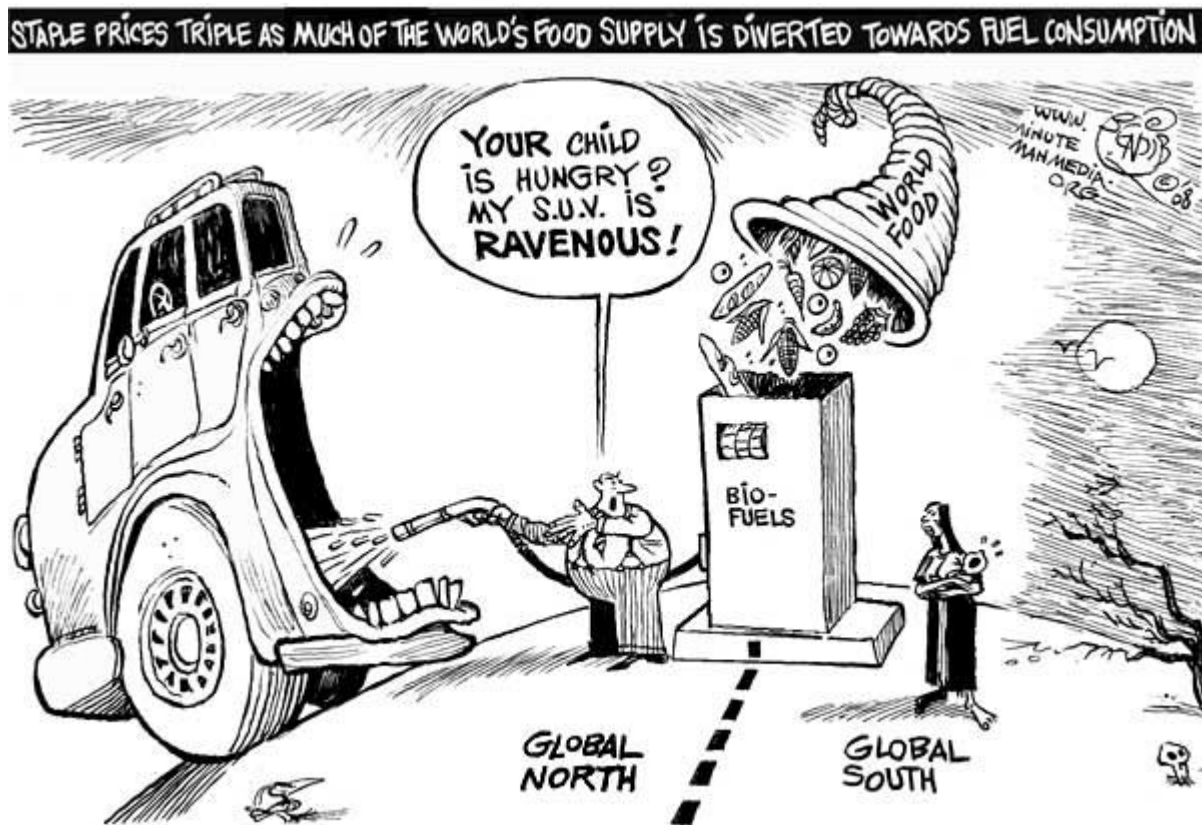
And even though kids in American schools aren't taught this truth, the fact of the matter is we all live closer to the age of gasoline than the age of the atom. For every item we purchase, from food to coats, from jewelry to DVD's, bears the cost of transportation in its price, and as the price of gas soars, that price is passed on to the consumer.

So fuel exacts a kind of double tax when it comes to grains. Through speculation and transfer to bio fuels, all such grain prices rise. To this is added the price of transport.

The logic of the market leads to mass starvation.

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[Source: Esteva, Gustavo and Madhu Suri Prakash, "From Global to Local: Beyond Neo liberalism to the International of Hope," in *The Globalization Reader*, 3d ed. Frank J. Lechner & John Boli, eds., p.455]



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