



## Food Crisis in the Americas

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### Intro

- [Introduction: Food Crisis in the Americas](#)

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### Taking Note

- [Venezuela's Opposition: Back Into the Frying Pan](#)

Pablo Morales

If the Venezuelan right remains committed to electoral politics, it must confront a new reality after a decade under Chávez: Thousands of nonprivileged Venezuelans, enfranchised and energized, now constitute a voting bloc too significant to ignore.

### Updates

- [Guadeloupe on Strike: A New Political Chapter in the French Antilles](#)

Yarimar Bonilla

Although labor strikes are common in the French Antilles, the wide impact, mass support, and broad agenda of the LKP strike was unique in Guadeloupe's history. For many, this episode marks the beginning of a new chapter of political and social activism in the French Antilles.

- [A New Model With Rough Edges: Venezuela's Community Councils](#)

Steve Ellner

The councils put into practice the "participatory democracy" embodied in the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution drafted by Chávez's followers. Some of their activities also reflect Chávez's discourse, which minimizes the importance of "experts" or "technocrats" and stresses the will of the people and their capacity to solve all problems, even highly technical ones.

### Report

- [Food Sovereignty in Latin America: Confronting the 'New' Crisis](#)

Peter Rosset

The sudden crisis of high food prices in 2008 was the latest manifestation of a long-standing rural crisis that stems from the corporate takeover of agriculture. As we enter a new era of increasingly volatile commodity prices, food sovereignty offers the only comprehensive solution.

#### 🌱 [Voices From Maputo: La Vía Campesina's Fifth International Conference](#)

Annette Aurélie Desmarais and Luis Hernández Navarro

More than 500 delegates attended the fifth conference of La Vía Campesina, the transnational peasant movement, in October. High on the agenda was analyzing the food crisis, as well as codifying a statement on women's participation in the movement and denouncing sexist violence.

#### • [Building a Transnational Peasant Movement](#)

Annette Aurélie Desmarais

#### 🌱 [Is Biotechnology the Answer? The Evidence From NAFTA](#)

Gerardo Otero and Gabriela Pechlaner

While biotechnology industry boosters would have us believe that more transgenic crops are what we need to solve the food crisis, the evidence of how they have affected food consumption in North America offers little to be hopeful for.

#### • [Eating to Dream: A Tortillería in Oaxaca](#)

Deborah Poole and Benjamín Alonso Rascón

In the following excerpts from a conversation in December, Ramírez Leyva, a Mixtec restaurant owner in the southern Mexican city of Oaxaca, calls for a profound rethinking of the market-based models of profit and trade that lie at the heart of capitalist understandings of food policy.

#### • [Soy: A Hunger for Land](#)

Evan Abramson (photographs and text)

In this photo essay, small-scale farmers in the Paraguayan departments of Alto Paraná and San Pedro face off over land with industrial soy. Large-scale Paraguayan landowners have, with government collusion, displaced thousands of families in the last decade for their sprawling soy plantations.

## Reviews

#### 🌱 [Tears Learning to Be Cried: Profiles of Femicide in Ciudad Juárez](#)

Irene Ortiz

Bajo Juárez is a film that opens broader lines of questioning: Who are the people ultimately responsible for the murders? What lies behind the "femicides" and violence against women in Mexico? How will this violence end? Can a measure of justice ever be provided to the victims and their families?

#### • [‘A Great Feeling of Love’: Hilda and Che](#)

Hobart Spalding

Most works on the Cuban Revolution concentrate on larger political issues, breakthrough moments, and endless political debates, but this book strikes a more personal, day-to-day note without ever neglecting the political. It reminds us of the ties between the political and the personal, which are often overlooked in writings about famous personages.

#### • [New & Noteworthy](#)

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The Conquest on Trial, by Carlos A. Jáuregui; Cannibal Democracy, by Zita Nunes; and Twenty Theses on Politics, by Enrique Dussel.

## Open Forum

#### 🌱 [Snubbing Davos: The Presidents at the World Social Forum](#)

Marc Becker

Five of Latin America's presidents skipped this year's World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, instead making appearances at the World Social Forum in Belém,

Brazil. Signaling a deepening disengagement from neoliberal institutions, the presence of Rafael Correa (Ecuador), Hugo Chávez (Venezuela), Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Brazil), Fernando Lugo (Paraguay), and Evo Morales (Bolivia) generated excitement among social forum participants, but also tension.

## MALA

### ■ The Fun House Mirror: Distortions and Omissions in the News on Bolivia

Dan Beeton

Bolivia's history, both recent and distant, is, of course, unique, complex, and worthy of careful analysis. When it pays attention to Bolivian politics, however, the U.S. press sometimes offers coverage that treats the current government of Bolivia as a threat, and one that perhaps lacks appropriate popular support. One can only hope other U.S. media outlets will be more even-handed in their future treatment of Bolivia.