

Now, the food crisis LaRouche predicted

by Chris White

It was just over a year ago, July 14, 1988, in the draft platform he wrote for the Democratic Party's convention which was then about to convene in Atlanta, Georgia, that Lyndon LaRouche warned of the food crisis that would hit the world during the course of 1989, and outlined as the alternative, the "Food For Peace" economic and infrastructure development effort which would be required to overcome the man-made shift in weather patterns then appearing as an intensified global cycle of drought. The same global economic development approach, he wrote, would be required to deal with the strategic consequences of the foreseeable shortfall in food supply.

Now, the same LaRouche, incarcerated in the federal prison in Rochester, Minnesota, is running for Congress in Virginia's 10th Congressional District on a platform for dealing with the evils he warned of the year before. Meanwhile, the first reports of the catastrophic food shortage he warned of are coming in.

LaRouche warned of a global crisis affecting especially the North American granary, the nations of the Southern Hemisphere brutalized by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Russian-ruled East bloc. Shortages would be such, he warned, that producers would be in the position of supplying either selected Third World nations or the Russians—but not both. On top of the danger of famine and starvation of hundreds of millions, conflict over diminishing food supply and reserves could also lead to war.

The food is not there

This is the exact profile of the crisis that is now beginning to come to the surface. Depleted by last year's drought, North American supplies of grain and other foodstuffs, accounting for about 50% of the total traded globally, are insufficient to

meet both domestic consumption requirements and the export levels of recent years. On top of this, the drought pattern, as predicted, has continued in key growing areas. The Russians, on top of their hide-bound incompetence in these matters, find themselves bedeviled for the third year in a row by serious drought in some parts of their vast territory, with what they call good harvests in other parts, and with a breakdown of the means permitting the transport of foods from surplus to deficit regions. The Communist Party newspaper *Pravda* has begun to attack Ukrainian peasants for withholding grain from Russian consumers as bargaining leverage for economic concessions from the central government. Third World countries, such as Mexico and Peru, are beginning to report catastrophic shortfalls in this year's food production levels. They, and others, will require more imported foodstuffs. The necessary supplies will not be there.

If LaRouche had been heeded, and not thrown in jail by his powerful enemies, then none of this need have come about. Now, day-to-day management of the crisis is in the hands of those who have insisted, "LaRouche is wrong, LaRouche exaggerates," while the one man who knows what to do, and whose record proves the case, languishes in federal prison because of their frameup persecution.

On the side of the producers, Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Jim Nichols, according to a report in the *St. Paul Pioneer* on Aug. 6, said that the United States is now facing an absolute shortage of soybeans. Nichols said that, according to the latest figures from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), there are 125 million bushels of soybeans in stock in the United States. With 60 million bushels required per month for domestic use, and no new supply coming to market until Nov. 1, after this year's crop is harvested, the United States will not have enough of the beans

to meet both domestic consumption and export orders. Winter wheat harvest results from the Dakotas—with North Dakota reporting at least a 38% wipe-out—follow the pattern established earlier in Kansas. USDA crop projections released Aug. 10 follow the same pattern for other major crops; anticipated production, if not over such a short time-frame, is not sufficient to satisfy internal demand and maintain export levels.

Now that it is almost too late, the USDA's Economic Research Service has chosen to issue an occasional publication, evidently prepared some time ago and kept in the ice-box, warning of "a new cycle of shortages and famine." This is the same USDA which spent the last year insisting that the devastating drought of 1988 would have no appreciable effect on food supply.

The global picture

Mexico is also reporting significant shortfalls in its spring and early summer harvests. The results for sorghum, corn, and beans are 3.5 million tons less than normal. Returns from individual states are beginning to come in. These results come on top of the IMF-dictated destruction of Mexico's food production, documented in the findings of a three-day seminar entitled "The Agricultural Sector and the Future of the Mexican Economy," held at the Autonomous University of Mexico July 27-29. Among other shocking facts, the seminar reported the following:

- The harvest of basic grains (wheat, corn, and rice) was down 34.9% in per capita terms in 1988 compared to 1981; its absolute volume was down 21.4%;
- Per capita production of beef, pork, and milk is down over the same period—37.3%, 45.6%, and 32.5%, respectively;
- Federal investment in agriculture has declined from \$2.2 billion in 1982 to only \$394 million in 1988;
- Credit for agriculture from the commercial and investment banks is at levels below that of the 1970s;
- The irrigation systems of dams, canals, and drains, which irrigates 6 million hectares, is very deteriorated and in need of \$4 billion in investment.

Not only is the food shortage likely to be worse than any present projections, but, not yet reported in Mexico, there is every reason to doubt that the country will even be able to find what it needs, at any price, on the world market, given the worldwide food shortage. Peru is beginning to publish the same kind of reports.

The same pattern is emerging in the Soviet Union, as LaRouche said it would. On July 28, the Kremlin leaders held a special meeting on their harvest situation, involving Mikhail Gorbachov, Central Committee Secretary responsible for agriculture Yegor Ligachov, Agriculture Minister Nikhonov, and representatives from food-producing districts around the empire. According to the official reports, western and southern grain-growing areas have produced a fine crop, but northern and central areas of the Russian Republic and

central Asia continue affected, for the third year in a row, by serious drought. Gorbachov ordered that the "maximum output possible from regions where good harvests have been grown" be gotten to the other regions. The other regions include some of the Soviet Union's most important industrial centers—the Urals and western Siberia, where workers have already taken strike action against the economic breakdown. The government newspaper *Izvestia* adds to this picture that the southern grain-producing regions lack the railroad equipment and river barges to move their grain to storage and processing facilities.

In July 1988 LaRouche had also warned that the drought of 1988, as a global, not a local North American phenomenon, would be continued into 1989. The USDA and others insisted that this year would be different. They even argued that the effects of drought, reducing what they call "food surpluses," would be beneficial overall. They have, of course, been wrong on both counts.

The changing weather patterns

LaRouche insisted a year ago that there was nothing "natural," in the global change in weather patterns. The drought is the result of man-made alterations in the world's weather system. These alterations have been caused by more than 25 years of destruction of the tropical rain forests of Brazil, Central Africa, and Southeast Asia, combined with the associated refusal to maintain capital investment in agriculture and infrastructure. The tropical forests, and well-maintained agricultural land, pump water up into the atmosphere. Destruction of the forests, and the degradation of the equipotential of agriculture, have degraded that pumping function, and shifted the world's weather. Though there is a natural drought cycle, to which the USDA refers in its cited publication, the latest drought is out of phase with that cycle.

To effect the changes that will permit this situation to be reversed, both in regard to the short-term catastrophe affecting the world's food supply, and in regard to the longer-term disaster that has caused the change in weather patterns, LaRouche insisted that the monetary arrangements that impose the looting against nature and the economy be scrapped, to clear the way for collaboration among nations in the large-scale infrastructural projects, especially water-management, power generation, and transportation, that will permit the situation to be reversed.

Back in July 1988, LaRouche warned, "If we do not make this change in direction, the 1990s may see the eruption of worldwide warfare over scarce food. If we make the needed changes soon enough, we shall have the means to deal with the Soviet food crises of the coming period, and thus remove at least that potential trigger for terrible warfare. We need a policy of 'food for peace.' "

The catastrophe that is now beginning to come to light shows once again how right he was, and the idiocy of all those who insisted he was wrong, to the point of throwing him in jail in order to silence him.