

EIR World Food Crisis

HUMANITY IS IN MORTAL DANGER!

Instead of Wars of Starvation, Let Us Double Food Production

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

The fiery letters of an unprecedented human catastrophe already stand flickering on the wall, and it will be fatal for the world as a whole, if we do not succeed *immediately*, in the coming *days and weeks*, to declare globalization a failure, and to set everything into motion to double agricultural production capacity in the shortest possible time!

This is of the utmost urgency: Since October 2007, there have been food riots in over 40 nations. According to Rajat Nag, managing director general of the Asian Development Bank, 1 billion Asians (!) are already at serious risk from the hunger crisis, and in Africa, Ibero-America, and among the poor on the other continents, an additional 1 billion face the same fate. But according to Jacques Diouf, head of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), since December his organization has been unable to raise 10.9 million euros (\$15.1 million) in order to purchase seed for poor farmers in developing countries. The rich states are simply not willing to support the developing countries with money, seed, and investment in infrastructure, Diouf told an FAO conference on Latin America in Brasilia in mid-April.

Jean Ziegler, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, pointed to an additional aspect of the crisis; namely, that the use of food for biofuels is a “crime against humanity.” In order that we might fill our gas tanks with ethanol with clear ecological conscience, people in the Third World must starve (and also die—HZZL). Speaking of the resulting food riots, Ziegler said, “These are riots of utter despair by people who fear for their lives, and who, nagged by deathly fear, take to the streets.”

And that’s only the beginning. Because, as long as the current policy of the “rich” nations—i.e., the free-trade doctrine of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the European Union Commission, and so on—continues, the food cartels and

speculators will take advantage of the conditions created by the escalating systemic crisis of the world financial system, to maximize their profits and to feed price inflation, without the farmers reaping any benefit therefrom. And if the world’s central banks continue their practice of using tax revenues in an attempt to make up for the speculative losses of private banks, then we are going to see hyperinflation *à la* Weimar Germany spread around the globe.

Under these circumstances, the entire planet will be swept by the storm winds of food riots, until humanity descends into a new dark age of chaos, gang warfare, and climbing death rates—or, until justice and life with human dignity are established for all human beings on this planet.

The Oligarchy’s Malthusian Axioms

For the year 2050, the UN forecasts a population growth of 33%, that is, from the current 6.7 billion to approximately 9 billion human beings. The demand for food will rise correspondingly, and if we add the approximately 2 billion who are currently undernourished, then a doubling of food production is a good rough measure on which we can orient our planning efforts.

One would be hard put to find another issue which more effectively unmasks the oligarchical axiomatic state of mind, as this one. The U.S.-Eurocentric outlook regards the prospective population growth as a threat, bringing with it the challenge of mass immigration of poor people into the developed countries, and the struggle to secure raw materials (most of which are located in the poor countries). This viewpoint was most recently expressed by Michael V. Hayden, U.S. Director of Central Intelligence, at a speech at the University of Kansas. He asserted that this growth will occur chiefly in the nations of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, places where this



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A child in Manila, the Philippines, reaches for rice, while his exhausted mother rests beside him. The worldwide food shortage is the result of deliberate, Malthusian policies of genocide.

cies in the developing countries”; Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker’s 1979 high interest rate policy; the policies of “Reaganomics” and “Thatcher economics” in the 1980s, including the mergers and hostile takeovers typifying a process of ever greater cartelization; Alan Greenspan’s invention of miraculous “creative credit instruments” following the Crash of 1987; and the unfettered globalization following the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991; and the transfer of industrial production into “cheap production countries”—all these were further mileposts in the same direction.

Behind Today’s Hunger Catastrophe

It is in this context that we must consider today’s exploding hunger

population growth cannot be sustained economically, thus leading to a heightened danger of violence, rebellion, and extremism.

This same oligarchical axiomatic outlook underlies the unspeakable strategy paper issued by five retired generals, who count as the first among the six primary challenges to the world community, population growth and the unequal distribution of the demographic curve in the various continents. This poses the greatest threat to prosperity, responsible government, and energy security, these generals say. The model for this neo-Malthusian, imperial world-view is the infamous National Strategic Study Memorandum 200 (NSSM 200), drafted by Henry Kissinger in 1974, which declares all raw materials around the world to be a U.S. strategic security interest.

The truth is, that the oligarchical model which Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, and George Shultz set into motion on Aug. 15, 1971, with the end of Roosevelt’s Bretton Woods system and of fixed currency exchange rates, thereby systematically guiding the economy into the direction of unregulated free trade, has now completely failed. This 1971 paradigm-shift away from production and into speculation—unregulated credit generation in the so-called offshore markets such as the Cayman Islands, where 80% of all hedge funds are headquartered—ushered in the emergence of today’s casino economy.

Since that time, step by step, each new precedent has gone in the direction of the neo-liberal model: the creation of the eurodollar market; the 1974 oil price swindle; the 1975 hardening of “IMF conditionalities”; the assaults by the Carter Administration, beginning in 1976, against “mercantilist tenden-

catasrophe. Formerly, since 1957, the European Economic Community’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) had been designed to supply the population with sufficient foodstuffs at reasonable prices, so that farmers had an appropriate income and agricultural production could be increased. But with the introduction of unfettered globalization, other, entirely different criteria took precedence. With the 1992 agricultural reform, consumer price reductions were instituted, for example: beef –20%, grains –30%, and milk –15%. But there were no provisions for corresponding compensation to the farmers. Instead, they were offered financial assistance tied to compliance with “ecological criteria.”

The farmers had been talked into this deal with the argument that they “must hold their own on the world market,” i.e., they must be able to compete with cheapened production abroad. In practice, however, it meant that many farmers had to shut down completely, while others could run their farms only as a part-time occupation, such that a career in farming became unattractive for the young generation, resulting in the loss of many family farms.

This trend in the direction of free trade was escalated by the so-called Uruguay Round, the final negotiation session of the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), which ended their former practice of considering the rules of agritural production from the standpoint of food security, and instead bound themselves to the strict rule of free trade, and thus to the food cartels’ demand for maximization of profit.

Since that time, millions of farms have gone bankrupt, and the process of cartelization has taken hold to such an extent, that in five months, the FAO has been unable to pull together a pitiful 10 million euros so that, in the midst of this

hunger catastrophe, the poor countries might be able to sow seed—seed which is controlled by only three companies!

The replacement of GATT—which still had the form of a multilateral agreement among states—by the World Trade Organization, a supranational bureaucracy with far-reaching independent powers, portended a further round of deregulation, abolishment of all trade barriers not bound by collective bargaining agreements, and “harmonization” of member-states’ standards. The chief beneficiaries of these measures in the direction of free trade, were, once again, the food cartels. Since then, completely anonymous WTO boards of experts have enjoyed the right to impose penalties on violators against free trade, without these “experts” being obliged in any way to account to voters for their actions.

For the European Union, the Agenda 2000 and the agricultural reform of 2005 further stepped up the tempo in the direction of reduction of surpluses (and thus the destruction of foodstuff reserves and exports). Instead of setting fair producer prices which could cover production costs, compensatory payments were made for leaving land fallow—“set-aside” policy—and for completely arbitrary environmental protection measures. And so, the trend toward sell-offs of independent family farms proceeded apace.

Former German Agriculture Minister (and later Consumer Protection Minister) Renate Künast, and EU Agricultural Commissioner Franz Fischler, were correct when they spoke of a systemic change being introduced with this agricultural reform. Fischler cynically observed at the time, that the compulsory price reductions would also bring about a reduction in the intensity of cultivation, because the farmers would not have any money left for fertilizer or pesticides.

A bit later, some farmers fared better financially for a while, because of the EU subsidies for cultivation of plants for biofuels—but with the above-mentioned catastrophic consequences. And it should be pointed out the pioneer in the use of foodstuffs for the production of ethanol, was Benito Mussolini.

Under the WTO and EU Commission regime, production capacity was reduced in the industrial nations, while at the time, the developing countries were forced to export cheap foodstuffs in order to earn cash to repay foreign debt—and this, frequently, even though their own population was not adequately supplied with food. And so, today, the economic and moral bankruptcy of this system of British free trade and Manchester capitalism is plain for all to see.

Fortunately, there is also resistance against the genocidal policies of WTO and EU free trade. In recent weeks, French Agriculture Minister Michel Barnier and German Consumer Protection Minister Horst Seehofer have begun a campaign aimed directly against the EU policies. Barnier started a European-wide campaign in defense of the CAP, a policy which some free-trade fanatics (such as David Spector, an Associate Professor at the Paris School of Economics, and the *Financial Times*) are demanding be completely abolished, despite the

hunger crisis. Barnier attacks the idea that the poorest countries should export food to the rich countries, as a total departure from reality, since it is precisely such a policy which has ruined subsistence agriculture and local production in the poorest countries. Instead of this, Barnier demands that Africa, Latin America, and Asia likewise institute their own CAPs—i.e., a protectionist parity system.

Emergency Measures Needed Now

There can be only one answer to the obvious bankruptcy of murderous free trade: We need a worldwide mobilization for the most rapid possible doubling of agricultural production.

The WTO itself must be dissolved, immediately.

Leading up to the FAO conference in Rome on June 3-5, all means, including unconventional ones, must be made available for enabling the FAO to set a program into motion to increase agricultural production worldwide. This must include a new “Green Revolution,” as well as medium-term measures for the expansion of infrastructure, the building up of food-processing industries in developing countries which do not have them, and for water management.

The topic of a new and just world economic order must be put onto the agenda. In view of the existential significance of this issue for the future of all humankind, a special session of the UN General Assembly must be convened on this theme.

The New Bretton Woods system, and a New Deal for the entire world, in the tradition of Franklin D. Roosevelt—measures which many heads of state and economists have been calling for—must immediately become the subject of an emergency conference of heads of state, who must decide upon a new world financial system which would permit all nations to develop. The building of the Eurasian Land-Bridge must be agreed upon as the keystone for reconstructing the world economy.

In the U.S. Declaration of Independence—which the Schiller Institute’s founding conference in 1984 adopted as its charter by making it applicable for all nations of this world, by just a few wording changes—it says:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

This Declaration of Human Rights must hold true still today—for all human beings on this planet. What we need today, is men and women who fight with passion and love for the idea of a just world order, one in which the community of nations can live together in peace and human dignity. Life, Liberty, and Happiness mean, above all, that all people have enough to eat and that poverty is abolished—something which we have all the technological means to bring about. Whether we can make this vision into reality, or whether we instead speed humanity into collapse, is how each one of us will be measured by history.