

EIR Special Report

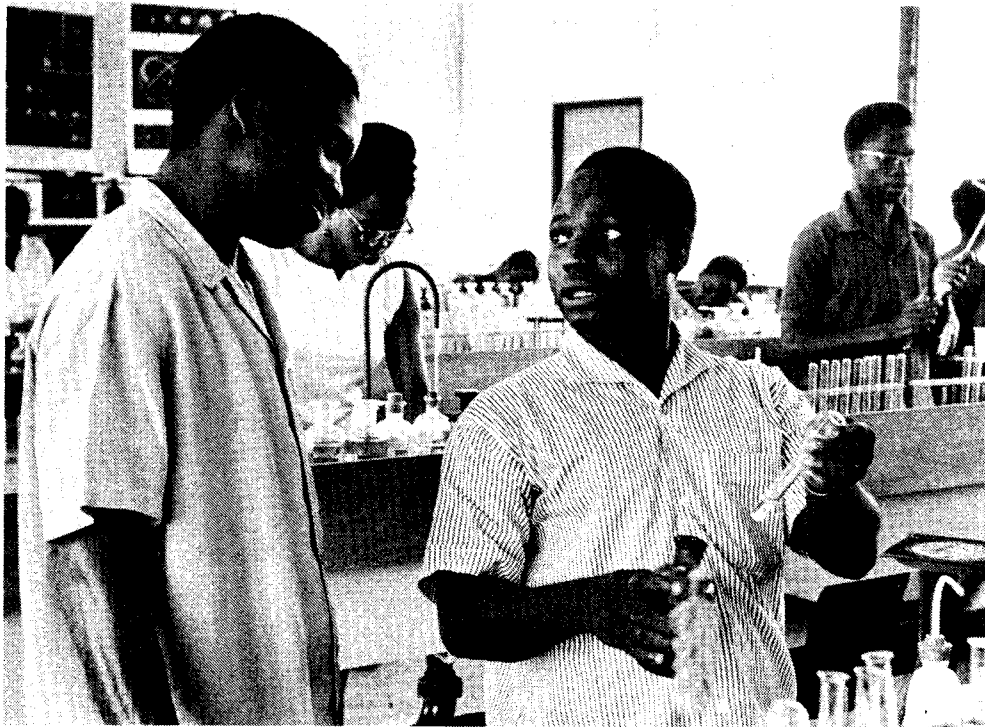
Africa needs great agriculture projects

by Uwe Friesecke

Uwe Friesecke, a member of the Executive Committee of the International Caucus of Labor Committees (ICLC), toured Egypt in October 1983 with a delegation from the Club of Life and the Fusion Energy Foundation. Upon his return, he presented to a conference of the ICLC in West Germany this report on the food crisis in Africa, and on Egypt's ambitious plans for large-scale development projects of the kind which can, with Western help, reverse the holocaust which is now under way throughout the continent.

We are not threatened by a world food crisis—it is already upon us. Were this not true, then every human being in the world would have enough food to eat. Reality, however, is quite different—world agriculture does not produce enough to feed 4.7 billion people. And there is certainly no “over-production problem,” as some people in Europe and the United States would have us believe. Even the distribution of the supposed surpluses of the the European Community (EC) or of the United States could not alleviate the problem. There would still not be enough grain, meat, milk, eggs, and so forth to sufficiently nourish every child and adult in the world. What we actually have is an “under-production crisis,” and only cynical Club of Rome members speak of over-production, since for them the daily fate of billions of human beings in the developing sector means nothing whatsoever.

For normal, balanced nourishment, a person requires approximately 2,400 to 3,500 calories daily. According to a 1980 U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) study, 2.26 billion human beings in the developing countries had no more than 2,180 calories available per day. Today more than half the world's population does not have enough to eat. Seventy-five percent of the world's population lives in the developing sector, and, in contradiction to the FAO study—which estimates the number of undernourished for 1990 as 500 million—there are already today approximately 1 billion who are constantly undernourished and who have less than the minimum daily requirements for life. The lack of foodstuffs is, for example, responsible for the fact that 40,000 children die each day, that is, 280,000 children



Great projects for the development of Africa can reverse the catastrophe now hitting 22 nations. Shown is a laboratory at the Federal Advanced Teachers' College in Lagos, Nigeria.
United Nations

dead per week, 15 million per year. Whoever denies that we now have a food crisis is simply immoral.

But the situation will become much worse, for the level of agricultural production in recent years was relatively high in comparison with expectations for the near future. We have experienced the remarkable history of the success of American agriculture since 1946. Today an American farmer produces enough to feed 65 other human beings. The cooperative agricultural policy of the EC countries has considerably increased production in Europe, so that Europe has moved from being a net-importing country to the position where it can supply more and more agricultural products for the world market outside of Europe. India was also able to increase its agricultural production during the 1970s overcoming its food emergency, and Argentina and Australia are important producers for the world market.

Today we stand at the beginning of a dramatic collapse of world agricultural production. The most alarming sign of that is the decrease in world grain production. For 1983-84, a decrease of 6 percent has been estimated, down from 1.68 billion tons in 1982-83 to under 1.6 billion in 1983-84. The problem becomes even clearer when production per capita figures are considered. World grain production in 1970 amounted to 9 bushels per capita of the world's population; it increased to 9.7 bushels per capita in 1980 and to 10.1 in 1982. This year's harvest will drop, producing merely 9.4 bushels per capita. These figures are alarming because they indicate primarily a drop in production in the agriculturally developed nations; above all, it is the dramatic decrease in the United States which is responsible for the overall drop.

The United States produces 20 percent of the world's grain. U.S. grain production in 1983-84 will fall around 38 percent, to around 210 million tons in comparison to 339 million tons in 1982-83. The reason for this is not a "natural" catastrophe, but the criminally wrong agricultural and financial policies in that country. If this trend is not reversed, the food on our families' tables will gradually disappear by 1985-86.

Reversing the crisis

Considering the technical capabilities which humanity possesses, this food crisis is completely unnecessary. We could without difficulty produce enough food for the entire developing sector. We must merely increase the number of arable acres under cultivation, and then use the successful methods of American agriculture on a broad scale in order to dramatically increase productivity per hectare and per man-year of agricultural workers in the developing sector. The worst crisis could be ended within a few years. Whoever denies that either understands nothing of agriculture or economics or consciously intends to do nothing to change the situation.

The possibilities for increases in productivity are shown clearly by comparison of data from the developed and developing sectors.

The developed sector has undergone a true technological revolution. Although similar progress has been made in a few regions of the Third World, the technological revolution has not been implemented in the Third World to anything like the extent it could have been, with the result that average productivity there has lagged behind that of the developed sector.

Between 1961-65 and 1978, the use of artificial fertilizer increased in the developed sector from 17 kilograms to 40 kilograms per hectare, while the increase in the developing sector was only from 2 to 9 kg. per hectare. The average amount of arable land per agricultural worker increased during the same time period in the developed sector from 5.5 to 8.9 hectares; in the developing sector, the figure decreased to 1.3. While productivity per unit increased threefold in North America and Europe between 1950 and 1980, it increased by only 50 percent in Ibero-America and was either stagnant or decreased in Africa.

The most dramatic contrast in productivity, however, is in agricultural manpower. In a man-year of agricultural work in the United States in 1980, 6,020 bushels of grain were produced; in Western Europe, 800 bushels; by contrast, in Ibero-America, only 98 bushels, and in Africa, only 22 bushels. Because of the generally worsening condition of the world agricultural situation, these trends have even worsened. For all products, there has been notable increases in the developed sector. Thus the yield of corn increased in the United States from 1.4 tons per hectare in 1930 to 1.7 in 1940, and to 4.3 in 1962 and finally to 7 in 1980. Milk production reached record heights. In the 1930s, a milk-producing cow in Germany gave approximately 3,000 liters of milk per year. By the 1950s, the yield had increased to 8,000. In the United States, the average producing cow was already giving 11,000 liters in the 1950s. Since then, breeding improvements have developed prime cows which can give between 40,000 and 50,000 liters per year. That is an amount per month greater than that of an entire year only 50 years before.

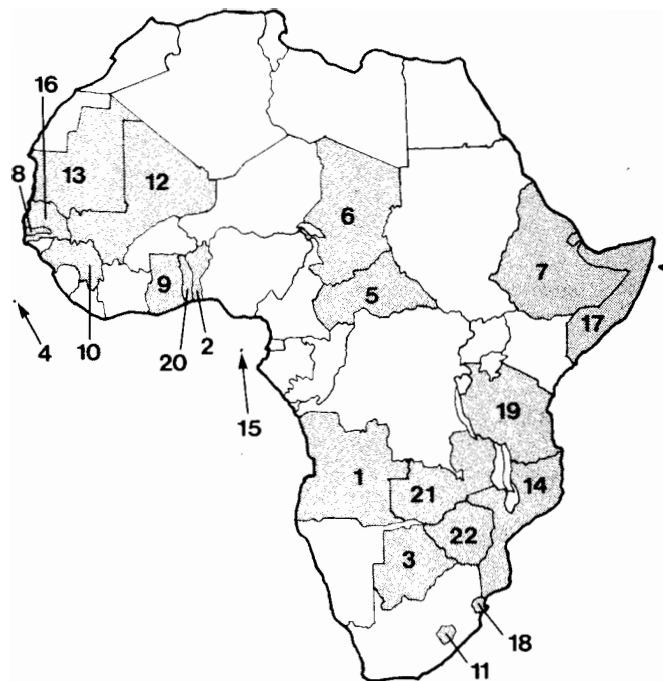
That the same results could be achieved in the Third World has been proved many times. For example, the yield of wheat increased in Sonora, the northern-most state of Mexico, from 2.5 tons per hectare to 5.1. In a demonstration project in Egypt in 1981, 5.5 tons per hectare were produced on 6,000 farms. The Third World, of course, has been denied the opportunity to introduce modern agricultural methods on a broad scale, and therefore the food situation in the Third World has not been significantly improved.

On the contrary: The developed sector has successfully *decoupled* itself from the Third World, leading to a growing disparity between the two sectors and an injustice that cries out to Heaven. Why should Africa, with a population approximately the same as Europe (380 million), but with six times as much arable land, only produce agriculturally one-third as much as Europe? Why should Africa or Ibero-America be damned to be eternally dependent on food supplies from the developed sector?

I will examine the African situation in more detail later. But Ibero-America is also confronted with a catastrophic food crisis. Forty percent of the Mexican population lives under the minimum nutritional level, having just enough to eat to barely stay alive. Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia are

Figure 1

The Drought's Toll In 22 African Nations



Countries suffering from or threatened with food shortages approaching in severity the famine of 1973-74. Information about crop and weather conditions is from a report issued in June by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Rinderpest is an acute infectious disease of cattle and other farm animals.

Source: United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization

facing similar crises, and the hunger revolts in Brazil are well known.

The FAO calculates an increase in the number of the undernourished to 590 million by 2000, and proposes that agricultural production be doubled by then so that the number can be reduced to 260 million. In light of the international agricultural crisis which is already upon us today, these FAO studies are completely incompetent and even absurd. The facts show a process of economic disintegration in the Third World which has already unleashed the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. In the developed sector, we have the beginnings of the destruction of agricultural and foodstuff production.

Who is to blame?

If there is no "natural" cause, then what is responsible for

Country	Prevailing conditions in 1982-83	Major effects on agriculture
1 Angola	Continued drought from 1982.	Crop failures and shortages.
2 Benin	1983 rainy season delayed; rinderpest outbreak at borders.	Below-average crop yields expected; slowed maize planting; cattle losses.
3 Botswana	Rainfall at 50-60 percent of normal in central and southern areas.	Sharply reduced cereal yields expected for 1983; deterioration in livestock.
4 Cape Verde	Drought in 1982 crop season.	40 percent losses in yields in 1982.
5 Central African Republic	Extreme drought in 1983; electricity disruption.	Food shortages in several rural areas.
6 Chad	Severe drought in north for two consecutive years combined with civil war.	1982-83 food deficit of about 188,000 tons; disruption of food aid through Nigeria.
7 Ethiopia	Delayed rains, pervasive drought during 1982; military operations and influx of refugees.	3 million people affected; economic and food production activities severely reduced.
8 Gambia	Prolonged drought from 1982.	Irreversible crop damage.
9 Ghana	Below-average rain; brush fires; influx of settlers from Nigeria; rinderpest outbreak.	Staple cereal crop losses of about 260,000 tons; reduced crop area; livestock losses.
10 Guinea	Continued drought; mealybugs and other pests.	Irreversible crop damage, reduced yields.
11 Lesotho	Continued drought; seasonal rainfall about 50 percent of average; river flow down sharply.	1983 cereal production expected to be 25 percent of normal.
12 Mali	Below-average rain in 1982; low river levels.	Cereal production far below average.
13 Mauritania	1982 rainfall 40-80 percent below average; extremely low river levels.	1982 cereal production down about 40,000 tons; deterioration and losses of livestock.
14 Mozambique	Below-average rainfall since 1982; guerrilla activities disrupting agriculture.	Serious food shortages for 4 million in rural areas; deterioration and loss of livestock.
15 São Tomé	Continued drought from 1982.	Significant food shortages and crop damage.
16 Senegal	Below-average rain in 1982; low river level.	Localized drought affecting 270,000 people.
17 Somalia	Above-average 1982 crop production; late 1983 planting and rainfall; influx of 700,000 refugees.	1983 crop season delayed; crop outlook uncertain.
18 Swaziland	Continued drought; 1983 rainfall less than 50 percent of normal; severe water shortage.	Projected 1983 maize production at 40 percent of normal; cotton shortage.
19 Tanzania	1983 crop prospects average or better than 1982.	Persistence of rural food shortage.
20 Togo	Drought in 1982, delayed rains in 1983; prolonged winds causing brush fires.	1982 secondary maize crop failed; other crops damaged; 1983 outlook uncertain.
21 Zambia	Continued drought, especially in south; spread of infectious diseases.	Maize production above 1982 level but still below average; livestock losses.
22 Zimbabwe	Drought limited in 1982, country-wide in 1983; lack of irrigation water.	1983 maize crop cut; other crop failures; 50 percent drop expected in wheat crop.

the food crisis? The crisis was caused by incompetent and falsely conceived international economic policies in general, and in world agriculture in particular. The question, however, is not so much, what is responsible, but rather, *who* is to blame. U.S. Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker's high-interest rate and tight-credit measures, begun in 1979, have done most to bring about the crisis. Unless the world economic depression is stopped generally, the process of destruction of agriculture in the Third World is irreversible, since Third World agriculture depends on the maintenance of infrastructure, on the necessary increase of productivity, and on the rise and fall of world market prices. Productivity increases in agriculture are a function of the input of capital goods such as fertilizer, pesticides, tractors, and other equipment, as well as biological advances in the breeding of plant

and animal varieties. For virtually all Third World nations, those goods must be imported.

As a result of currency manipulations by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), and the central banks connected with them, import prices of such means of production have increased tremendously in recent years. Simultaneously, the world-market price for important agricultural products, the principal source of export income for the Third World, has collapsed, thus precluding the possibility of financing the import of necessary agricultural supplies. During 1981-82, according to FAO figures, the world market price for agricultural products fell by 22 percent, the price for the agricultural products of the Third World by as much as 30 percent. Sugar presents the most dramatic example—the price fell to 6 cents

per pound, which is under the price of production. That is only one-fifth of the average price in 1980. The price for rice and corn are at the lowest level in 20 years.

As a result of reduced export income, the resulting austerity conditions and usurious debt payments, fewer and fewer means of payment for imports vital to sustain life are available. Brazil has, for example, drastically limited the import of fertilizer. Other countries such as India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan have reduced their subsidies for fertilizer. The IMF policy of forced depression and what the Council on Foreign Relations calls "controlled disintegration of the world economy" is causing the physical destruction of agricultural production in the Third World. The greatest damage is through the limitation of work or even through the closing of important agricultural research and development centers. An example is Mexico's Centro Investigaciones Agrícolas del Noroeste (CIANO) in Obregon, Sonora.

CIANO devoted itself to increasing productivity in wheat production. Improved wheat varieties were exported into all parts of the world and were responsible, for example, for doubled wheat production in Bangladesh. In 1982-83, CIANO had to accept serious budget reductions as a result of IMF austerity demands made on Mexico. CIANO laid off 54 of its workers, and experiments were reduced from 500 to 300 per year.

The destruction of Western agriculture

In the United States, an agricultural crisis is beginning which threatens to be worse than that of the 1930s. Europe will shortly face a similar crisis. Until 1973, the American government maintained a 90 percent parity-price system. Under the presidency of Jimmy Carter, the destruction of this system began. Today, the average price is around 50 percent of parity. Farmers and ranchers can no longer expect a profit from expanded production, but are rather encouraged and even induced to decrease production.

The so-called Payment-In-Kind Program (PIK) is concerned with grain and milk production. The government pays \$10 for every 100 lbs. of milk which is *not* produced. That would allow American milk-producing herds to be reduced by 30 percent. For the first time in American history, production fell by approximately 20 percent within one year (1982-83); corn by around 50 percent, wheat by 14 percent, and soybeans by 40 percent. In addition, a large portion of the American farm sector is bankrupt. In this year alone, \$23 billion must be paid in interest, and bankruptcy of 20 percent of existing farms can be expected. Because of the special importance of American agriculture on the world market, this American collapse will prove disastrous for the food supply of the rest of the world.

In Western Europe, the widely successful common agricultural policy (CAP) of guaranteed prices is threatened by the financial bankruptcy of the EC. Exactly as in the United

States, wrong-headed conceptions of "over-production" are used to justify proposals for choking production by means of price reductions or quota systems. With the given level of indebtedness of European agricultural producers, measures to reduce production mean the destruction of numerous agricultural firms.

The world is in despair and starving while in the two regions where the necessary surpluses could be produced,

Figure 2
Basic indicators of African economies
(south of Sahara only)

	Population mid-1981	GNP per capita in dollars (1981)	Life expectancy at birth (years) 1981
Low income economies			
Ethiopia	32.0	140	46
Mali	6.9	190	45
Malawi	6.2	200	44
Zaire	29.8	210	50
Uganda	13.0	220	48
Burundi	4.2	230	45
Upper Volta	6.3	240	44
Rwanda	5.3	250	46
Somalia	4.4	280	39
Tanzania	19.1	280	52
Benin	3.6	320	50
Central African Republic	2.4	320	43
Sierra Leone	3.6	320	47
Madagascar	9.0	330	48
Niger	5.7	330	45
Mozambique	12.5
Sudan	19.2	380	47
Togo	2.7	380	48
Ghana	11.8	400	54
Middle-income economies			
Kenya	17.4	420	56
Senegal	5.9	430	44
Mauritania	1.6	460	44
Liberia	1.9	520	54
Lesotho	1.4	540	52
Zambia	5.8	600	51
Angola	7.8	...	42
Nigeria	87.6	870	49
Zimbabwe	7.2	870	55
Cameroon	8.7	880	50
Congo	1.7	1,110	60
Ivory Coast	8.5	1,200	47
For comparison purposes:			
United States	229.8	12,820	75

Source: World Bank, *World Development Report 1983*.

Table does not include countries with less than one million inhabitants.

production capacities in agriculture are being destroyed. That is the result of the stupidity and immorality of those responsible. To people such as the authors of the *Global 2000* blueprint for genocide in the American government, especially in the Department of Agriculture, and to the green friends of Sicco Mansholt in the European agricultural ministries, it is apparently not important that millions of human beings are dying miserably of starvation in the Third World.

The root of the evil lies in the increasing influence of the ideology of the zero-growth Club of Rome which proclaims the end of the possibility of progress, in those national and international institutions which are responsible for the planning and organization of agricultural policies and programs. If technological progress in agriculture is rejected, then the principles and methods which have yielded agriculture the most fruitful results in the last 150 years will be nullified and the result will be the collapse of agricultural production. The Club of Rome's warnings of the threatening world catastrophe are lies, because it is precisely the proposals of the Club of Rome which have brought about the crisis. Thus the Club of Rome warned, at its agriculture conference last September in Budapest entitled "The Means of Nourishment for Six Billion Human Beings," of a disaster by the year 2000, since even the United States cannot produce sufficient foodstuffs for its own population. As a solution, the Club of Rome proposed worldwide small-farm production and a strict cut-off of all infrastructure projects. But it is precisely this which will lead to disaster.

Food emergency in 22 African countries

Proof of the coming Apocalypse is found by the Club of Rome today in Africa. There the lack of great infrastructure projects as well as the lack of technology and capital investment, combined with international austerity policies, has caused an apparently hopeless state of emergency in 22 countries. In that connection, the FAO presented a report in Rome on Oct. 19, 1983 entitled "International Alarm on the Emergency Food Situation in Selected Countries in Africa." The report is intended only for "official use" and is so horrifying that it was hardly referred to in the international press.

It concerns the following countries: 10 in West Africa (Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, the Cape Verde Islands, Mali, Mauretania, Senegal, Togo, and Chad); 2 in central Africa (Sao Tome e Principe and the Central African Republic); 3 in east Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia, and Tanzania); and 7 in south Africa (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zambia, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe).

As in 1982-83, grain production in these countries decreased in 1983-84; 2 million tons, or 9 percent less, is expected. Additionally, these countries are less and less in the position to import needed grain; hence their food deficit is growing larger and larger. Along with the decreasing production of grain, there is the widespread death of agricultural

animals through diseases such as cattle plague or through lack of water and food. In Mozambique alone, for example, during the first months of 1983 over 100,000 cattle died, and 15,000 are now dying per month.

These 22 countries have a population of 137.4 million. Grain production for 1983-84 will be at 2.67 bushels or 101 kilograms per capita. The world average for 1983 was 9.4 bushels or 150 kilograms per capita. For West Africa, per capita production was 1.9 bushels or 70 kilograms; for Central Africa, only 1 bushel or 38 kilograms. A land such as Ghana with 11.8 million inhabitants had available from its own production during one year only 40.7 kilograms of grain per capita. This situation must be imagined in detail in order to get a real appreciation of the catastrophic situation in these African countries, a situation about which the international media are silent.

The FAO demanded in its report additional imports of 4.96 billion tons as food relief. This would increase the per capita amount to 3.6 bushels or 137 kilograms, still under the African average.

From this it is clear how cynically the international organizations of the United Nations operate. In their proposals, they do not even consider any fundamental changes in the horrible African food crisis. And the same is true of numerous humanitarian relief organizations. For them, the world food crisis cannot be overcome. The aid provided by these organizations can be wiped out with the stroke of a pen by the international financial and economic policies of the IMF and the central banks since, if the currency of one African country is decreased by 1 percent, more human beings die as the result of such a decision than Bread for the World and other such organizations can ever save.

Egypt's strategy for development

At the beginning of October 1983, the Club of Life and the Fusion Energy Foundation had the opportunity, on invitation of the Egyptian government, to visit Cairo for discussions of the political and economic situation of that region. Along with conversations with government representatives, including cabinet members, the program included detailed information on Egyptian agriculture.

What was most impressive was the resolution of the government representatives to deal with the problems of their country with the most modern technological methods and with the introduction of every possibility for economic growth. Our report on the spread of the insane ideas of the Greens, for example, in Germany, was received with expressions of disbelief. The state secretary of the Egyptian ministry of agriculture expressed himself most clearly—he said that he could honestly not see, after the Egyptians had doubled their rice productivity, any limits to growth whatsoever. The Club of Life proposals for a New World Economic Order and for the development of infrastructure projects were positively

received. It was emphasized again and again these projects are the only feasible way out of the economic depression, both for the industrial nations and for the developing sector.

Egypt is the best example for the correctness of the Great Projects approach, since it has rejected any program of "appropriate" soft technologies and small-scale projects. On the one hand, Egypt has proved its capability for improving agricultural production; on the other hand, Egypt will slip into a social and agricultural crisis if great projects are not introduced. With a population of 45 million, the country imports 48 percent of all agricultural products; 75 percent of all wheat must be imported. Each year, Egypt spends \$4 billion for these imports. The population is growing by approximately 1 million per year, and will reach approximately 65 million by the year 2000. This will naturally increase the demand for foodstuffs considerably and increase the so-called gaps in food production. Average consumption of food in Egypt is at approximately 2,800 calories per capita per day. That is considerably more than in other countries in Africa, and is the result of a government policy which subsidizes the price for food and for the means of production. Their success is expressed most graphically in a rising birthrate and a declining deathrate.

The food subsidy system costs Egypt 1.1 billion Egyptian pounds per year. The IMF has demanded substantial cuts in this amount, a demand the government has thus far not given in to. Previously, the income from the Suez Canal, oil production, and tourism, and money sent back home by Egyptian workers abroad was sufficient to support these subsidies.

As a glance at a map shows, the limiting condition for Egypt is arable land. Only 3 percent of the total land in Egypt is available for cultivation—the Nile valley, the Delta, and some scattered oases. There are approximately 2.32 million hectares of arable land. Land development programs have been successful, but gains in agricultural land have been offset by losses to urbanization.

Conditions for agriculture in Egypt are ideal. All agriculturally used land is artificially irrigated, provided with water from the Nile. Climatic conditions are extremely favorable:

- There is no sudden rainfall or destructive storms;
- Temperatures are such that more than one crop can be produced per year;
- Solar radiation provides optimal conditions for photosynthesis; there are no clouds;
- Under these conditions, the potential for vertical expansion, the increase in productivity of land currently under cultivation, is estimated at approximately 200 percent.

The decisive question is, of course, horizontal expansion, since land presently under cultivation will sooner or later be maximally exploited and will not be able to support a growing population. Therefore, new land must be developed on a large scale, which cannot be done in the long run by means of small- or middle-scale projects such as, for example, the very successful project in El Sahilia, where we were person-

ally shown that corn, tomatoes, and many other products can be successfully grown in the middle of a desert.

Egypt needs the Great Project of a second Nile. What has been produced by the old Nile for thousands of years—a sector of productive land in the middle of a desert—must be replicated by means of the water reserves from the region of the Nile's origin in East Africa, by means of which Egypt's arable land can be increased in the long term by a factor of three or four. Only in that way can the individual land development programs be unified for a long-term solution.

Within the framework of the second Nile project, it is important that the infrastructure of the Sudan, which contains over a million hectares of arable land, be developed. With the proper capital-goods input, the Sudan can be made into the bread basket of Africa and Arabia.

The goal of world economic development

A program for world agriculture which is to be taken seriously cannot merely consist of cynical calculations of what will reduce the number of victims of starvation in the world to a half million rather than a million or similar determinations. The only rational goal is to seek, as soon as possible, to produce and distribute enough food on a worldwide scale so that not a single human being goes hungry; that is, 4.7 billion human beings will have between 2,400 and 3,500 calories per capita per day, the equivalent in grain of approximately 16 bushels per capita per year. The goal must thus be to be able to immediately double grain production from approximately 1.6 billion tons immediately to 3 billion tons, in order to be able to keep in step with the growing population. Development and aid programs must either present means by which this can be reached or not be taken seriously.

Technically, this goal can be reached. Even the FAO concedes that far less than half of the potentially arable land is presently in use. In 90 of the countries of the Third World, only 750 million of approximately 1,850 hectares which could be considered for agricultural production are used—approximately 40 percent.

Cultivation of these gigantic new land areas can only be done through infrastructural projects which use the huge, unused amounts of water which pour into the oceans as water supplies. On every continent, there are possibilities for such projects, all of which have been extensively worked out. Today such projects are prevented by financial obstacles arising out of an unjust world economic system. Therefore, the primary goal must be to reform the world financial and economic systems along the lines of Lyndon H. LaRouche's 1982 *Operation Juárez* proposal, through which the conditions will be created for reviving the world economy, which will then provide the conditions for the realization of a realistic agricultural development program.

Either we will achieve such a wide-ranging solution, or the consequences of the worldwide crisis will endanger the foundations of world civilization.