

The global water crisis can be easily solved

by Nicholas F. Benton

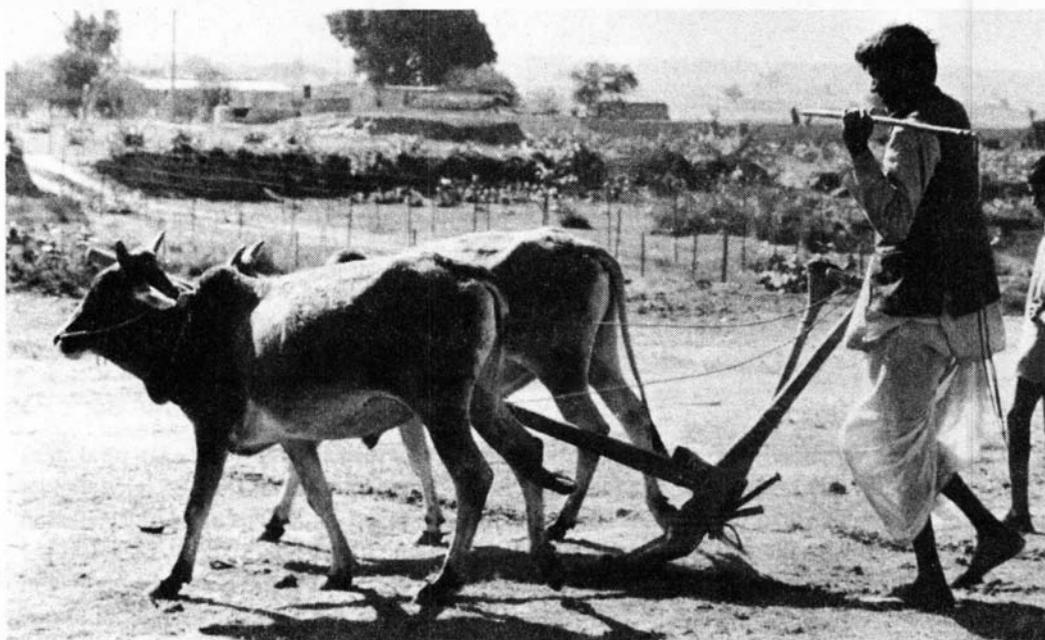
It is a cruel irony that the U.S. Congress and administration proclaimed May 2-8 as "National Drinking Water Week, 1988," when neither has added a single drop of new fresh water to the world's rapidly diminishing supply.

All across the globe, in developed and undeveloped sectors alike, insufficient supply and management of fresh water resources threaten billions of human lives with a shocking immediacy. Famine and disease are by-products of man's failure to harness enough of the most essential resource on earth required for human life—fresh water. Whole continents, most particularly Africa and the Asian subcontinent, face near-term catastrophes of epic proportions due to this failure.

No one is immune. In the United States today, severe water rationing is being introduced into some of the most agriculturally rich and populous regions of the country. Writing in 1982, Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche said, "Next to a general thermonuclear war, the greatest single environmental danger to the American people over the coming two decades is the danger that whole regions of our nation will simply run out of usable fresh-water supplies" ("Won't You Please Let Your Grandchildren Have a Drink of Fresh Water?" by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., published by the National Democratic Policy Committee).

LaRouche's prediction is coming true with a vengeance, not only in the United States, but worldwide. In the United States, where monuments to man's engineering creativity turned muddy streams into the water lifeline for millions (with projects like the great Hoover Dam on the Colorado River), urban populations now face not only shortages, but potentially deadly contamination of fresh water, as unimproved 200-year-old wooden sewer pipelines in older cities finally give way to erosion. Lack of continued progress in water development, the devastation of uncontrolled flooding, including the inability to control the rising levels of the Great Lakes in recent years, poses an equally great danger, as the flooding which shut down West Germany's principal artery of commerce, the Rhine, exemplified earlier this spring.

In the Asian subcontinent, monsoon flooding, which countless generations



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Crippled by poverty and lack of basic necessities, a majority of India's rural and urban population remains unhealthy, unskilled, and consequently, only marginally productive. Water, power, education, and transportation are thus key to India's very survival.

have learned to live with there, is so violent and uncontrolled that it has left the region with the most minimal possible benefit, and therefore as susceptible to the ravages of drought as any of the most parched regions of desert Africa.

Man's inability to use even 100-year-old technology for continued basic water infrastructure development is one of the uglier components of policy decisions made to perpetuate the institution of usury. Whether in the name of balancing the budget in the United States, or of collecting the debt in the Third World, this policy has cultivated a crop of home-grown theories of "zero growth," "environmentalism," and "cultural relativism" to consciously deprive the world of fresh water in order to better drain its population of its political and economic autonomy and wealth.

This is the fact that explains the unnatural constraints placed on water resource development around the globe. It includes the cynical effort by the United Nations to declare the 1980s the "International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade," only to conclude, in its 1986 report, entitled *Strategy for Survival*, that "desertification" of the Sudano-Sahel region south of the Sahara Desert in Africa, and its inevitable consequence of mass famine and death, are "irreversible." It explains why Lester Brown's Worldwatch Institute published a pamphlet, entitled, *Water: Rethinking Management in an Age of Scarcity*, which conjures fraudulent arguments to debunk the most routine form of fresh water diversion project anywhere on the globe.

It explains why President Reagan, in his proclamation declaring "National Drinking Water Week" May 3, cited the construction of single-village "one-pipe water stands" as exemplary of the kind of "technical assistance to water systems" that the United States supports in the Third World.

Such genocidal constraint on fresh-water development seeks to silence men of vision who have charted plans to divert mighty rivers onto our deserts, or to capture monsoon rainfall in order to reap the full measure of its potential benefits.

For example, there exists a workable plan to flood the North American continent with fresh water from a portion of the waters that today rampage, untouched by man, northward through Canada into the Arctic Ocean. Utilizing that water, a comprehensive fresh-water, navigation, and flood control system could be integrated that would range from the Pacific Coast and northern Mexico to the Great Lakes and Hudson River.

In Africa, one mountain range stands between the raging waters of the Zaire River and the Sudano-Sahel region that the United Nations has condemned to death. Breaching that small geographical distance could eventually turn all of northern Africa into a garden. In Asia, as in all other parts of the world, many plans for capturing and controlling fresh water for man's use exist.

In the future, these plans will be augmented by a new form of energy, thermonuclear fusion power, sufficiently cheap and dense to make water desalination economically feasible on a large scale. Directed-energy technologies may eventually be able to affect the earth's magnetic field lines in ways that control weather, as well. But bringing ample fresh water to man's use need not await any of these to begin. The political will to overcome the obstructionist apologists of usury is the single most essential ingredient in a glass of fresh water.

To that end, *EIR* presents on the following pages the case study of India—and, in brief, the Middle East.