

No 'daily bread' in 1989; Food for Peace responds

by Robert L. Baker

At the second international Food for Peace conference, held in Chicago on Dec. 10-11, 1988, Lyndon LaRouche made a very powerful statement. He said, "Around the world, as most of you know, the conditions of food crisis exist, and will worsen over the coming 12 months. It is almost as if we can hear a section of the Lord's Prayer coming from the developing nations, from the poor of Eastern Europe, from the poor, the tens of millions of poor in our own country: 'Give us this day our daily bread.' "

Beginning in January of 1989, LaRouche's statement became the Food for Peace battle cry. The organization launched a flurry of international activities designed to activate an alliance of individuals around the world who would work together to expand food production, ensure an adequate food supply and fair farm prices, and defend the moral right of all to eat.

In the U.S. in January, Food for Peace representatives addressed hundreds of church congregations, civic meetings, and farm and school groups—a process that culminated in consumers and farm producers from 25 states of the United States, as well as representatives of the people of South and Central America, Western Europe, and the captive nations of Eastern Europe, and China, joining together in a major rally on Jan. 16 in Washington, D.C. Thousands of people marched down Constitution Avenue, calling for parity prices for farmers, the right of all people to eat, and freedom from the criminal frameup of the Justice Department, for Lyndon LaRouche and his six associates (see story, p. 87).

Farmers organize internationally

Also in January, rounds of exchanges of farmers from different continents took place, to spread the word on the worsening food crisis, and how to fight it together. West German Schiller Institute farm spokesman Heinrich von Bochelberg went on a Food for Peace tour in the United States and spoke at meetings in six states—California, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, Oklahoma, and New York—reporting on the decline in European food and farming. He toured many U.S. farms and conferred on the need for bold action on both sides of the Atlantic to resume food output. In March, upon Bochelberg's return to West Germany, a four-week followup tour of the U.S. was set in motion by German farmer Wilhelm Winter, who spoke to farmers in New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, and Iowa.

Between Jan. 15 and March 1, in collaboration with the European Agricultural Commission of the Schiller Institute, Food for Peace scheduled meetings in Western Europe at which this author, an Iowa farmer, addressed over 1,800 farmers in 31 meetings in West Germany, France, and Denmark, briefing each group on the conditions of American farmers. A second European tour by California rancher Ed Anderson took place in March.

From Feb. 22 to March 12, Food for Peace conducted its first ever organizing tour of Australia, one of the world's largest grain exporters. Food for Peace organizers Al Douglas from the United States, and John Koehler from Australia spoke before 1,200 people in 15 cities, as well as in numerous newspaper, radio, and TV interviews. Australian rancher and political organizer Ian Murphy toured the United States in September and November, talking to farm groups, radio, and TV, and addressed the Nov. 10 Food for Peace conference in Chicago.

Two Food for Peace regional conferences were held in Mexico during March. Later, in November, Food for Peace organized a national tour in which *EIR* agricultural editor Marcia Merry made front-page headlines throughout Mexico by breaking the news that the U.S. was delaying the export to Mexico of badly needed milk powder because of U.S. shortages. The Food for Peace movement is rapidly expanding in Mexico and has established a Food for Peace Youth Brigade to involve young people in the effort.

The third International Food for Peace conference was held Nov. 10, 1989 in Chicago, and drew the largest turnout of the farmer-eater alliance to date, with over 700 farmers, civil rights leaders, clergymen, and other activists representing 35 U.S. states and five continents—reflecting the results of the international mobilization. Two weeks later, the fourth International Food for Peace conference was held in Voehl am Edersee, West Germany. The conference, sponsored by the European Agricultural Commission of the Schiller Institute, drew participants from five continents and 17 countries, including a delegation of 70 farmers, consumers, and clergy from the United States, and spokesmen from East German opposition groups, at the very moment the Berlin Wall was being opened.

The alliance between food-producing farmers and food-eating consumers that was successfully forged during 1989, has matured into a veteran force that has remoralized the

fighting spirit of those involved on an international scale. The Food for Peace activities in 1989 shattered the myth that farmers can't buck the system.

Inside the United States, black civil rights leaders, such as O.G. Christian from Philadelphia and Barbara Goudeaux from Chicago, led a new organizing effort to unite with rural farmers—mostly white—to demand parity prices for farmers, and a stop to the U.S. Agriculture Department dispossession of farmers who are in arrears on their loans.

World food stocks below crisis level

World food and grain supplies went down again in 1989. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), total year-end world grain stocks for 1989 will drop another 25% below 1988 levels, to 305 million metric tons, and are projected to fall to 293 million metric tons by the end of 1990, for a total drop of 35% over the last three years. By next summer, world stocks of wheat as a percentage of consumption will fall to the lowest level in more than 30 years.

The United States, the world's largest grain exporter, will see a drop in 1989 ending wheat stocks of 46%, and ending coarse grain stocks of 52%, compared to 1988. A further drop in ending stocks of 30% for wheat and 11% for coarse grains is projected for 1990. U.S. wheat supplies will be 75% lower than the 1985-86 level.

The United Nations' October Global Food Warning stated, "The safety net for global food security provided by substantial stocks in earlier years is now exhausted." World output of grain will be below annual world consumption for the third year in a row. In other words, there is very little grain for our "daily bread." Now U.S. and world grain stocks are at one of the lowest per capita levels in history, while starvation and hunger are at one of the highest.

The volume of grain donated by grain-exporting nations for annual international food relief has dropped from close to 13 million tons, down to only 8.5 million tons. World milk output is also far below minimal consumption and food relief needs. The famous multimillion-pound milk powder "mountains" of the United States and the European Community of the mid-1980s are gone.

The USDA intervened in November to postpone delivery until early 1990, of 20 million pounds of nonfat dry milk to Mexico, which was contracted to be shipped by December 1989, because there are absolutely no free stocks of nonfat dry milk powder in the United States at this time, and next to none in Canada, the European Community, and New Zealand. There are no stocks of federal government milk powder and cheese for schools, the poor, and disaster relief.

Despite this world nutrition catastrophe, there are still policies in place in Washington and EC headquarters in Brussels to demand the idling of cropland for reasons of "environmental conservation" or prevention of crop "surpluses." In Western Europe, 11 of 12 member nations of the European

Community were required for the first time to begin implementing farmland "set-aside" in 1989. Although exact figures are not known, the land taken out of food production so far may total 1 million acres.

U.S. grain production during the 1980s has been drastically reduced by annually implementing a cropland set-aside plan that has totaled, as of 1989, some 400 million crop acres not farmed over the decade. This is the equivalent of having the United States produce no food at all for one year!

In addition to the annual USDA-mandated cropland set-aside, by 1990 there will be an estimated 40 million acres in the new Conservation Reserve Program. This unprecedented project was authorized in 1985, and contracts to remove farmland from food production for at least 10 years.

Figuring at a rate of seven people supported by the grain from one hectare (or 2.4 acres), taking 41 million acres out of food production in the North Atlantic nations is depriving over 115 million people a year of their "daily bread." As *EIR* has repeatedly stressed, "Set-aside is genocide."

Farmers are in trouble around the world. What is called "the most extreme form of economic liberalization in the world" is being implemented for agriculture trade, just like the free trade promoted by the old British Empire against its enemies. In the Soviet Union it is called *perestroika*. For the U.S. and its allies, it is called "free trade." High national and farm-sector debt payments and interest rates are causing havoc in agriculture and national food supplies. Look first at the traditional food-exporting nations, and then at the East bloc and China.

Since 1980, according to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the U.S. has become the world's largest importer of food. While food prices have increased over 40% since 1980, the U.S. is now the world's largest net importer of oats, beef, and pork in order to meet domestic consumption needs, and imports 15% of the durum wheat consumed domestically.

U.S. cattle numbers and per capita beef production are at the lowest level in 25 years, yet producer prices are below what is necessary to stay in business. And even though U.S. agriculture in 1989 was projected to have one of the largest net farm incomes in history, still, almost 50% of U.S. farmers will have a negative cash income, even when non-farm earnings are added in.

The U.S. farm credit policies are ruining thousands of family farms. In 1989, the USDA continued its campaign to foreclose on farmers in arrears on their Farmers Home Administration loans. In June, 60,000 FmHA threat notices were sent out to farmers, following up a batch of 80,000 sent out in the fall of 1988.

Now, federal policy is being geared to "privatizing" farm debt, through programs such as "Farmer Mac," which will tap into equity markets. The new entity "Farmer Mac" came into existence, supposedly to pool farm mortgages and provide more credit in the agriculture sector, but in reality it is

a land control operation of Metropolitan Life Insurance and others in the banking and insurance cartels. While independent family farms are disappearing, Metropolitan Life and others are buying and operating huge "farm management" companies to manage millions of acres and control food production by neo-feudalist methods.

In Western Europe, the Economic Commission of the European Community states in a report on European agriculture and structural policy, that "facing the situation on the world markets and declining food stocks of the EC, the question is whether the EC can continue the policy of reducing production. The danger is that agriculture becomes unproductive through these measures." In an emergency meeting with the Agricultural Committee of the European Parliament, EC dairy companies pleaded, "The EC is facing a shortage of milk because of the immense cuts in milk production."

The New Zealand sheep meat industry is being crippled. Lambs are being sold for \$14 per head (when \$24 is needed), and full-grown sheep are going for \$2 per head. Interest rates are 20-30%. And 40-50% of the farmers are at risk of losing their farms. Some reports suggest that as much as 10% of New Zealand's farmland has been bought by Elders Pastoral, an Australian junior member of the world grain cartel.

In Australia, though they are not yet as devastated as their New Zealand neighbors, 170,000 farmers are being crushed in the same squeeze of high 25-30% interest rates, falling farm product prices, adverse government policy, and crooked maneuvering by the cartels. Australian farmer and Food for Peace activist Ian Murphy said, "If things don't change in another 12 to 18 months, most Australian farmers will not be able to hang on."

Food catastrophe in the socialist bloc

In the U.S.S.R. and the nations of the East bloc, "our daily bread" is no longer daily for millions of people. "We have destroyed our agriculture," admitted Viktor Lishchenko, a high-ranking Soviet agricultural economist. "Our farms are disaster areas." The average Soviet cow gives only 40% as much milk as an American cow. Using 33% more grain combines than in the United States, Soviet farms harvest half as much grain, and waste about as much grain from spoilage as they import. Harvesting damages about 80% of the potatoes, and 50% spoil in storage. Yet, on private plots that make up less than 3% of Soviet farmland, peasants raise about 30% of Soviet milk, meat, eggs, and vegetables and 60% of potatoes and fruit.

This past trade year, the U.S. provided a record 21.7 million tons out of the total of 41 million tons of grain imported into the U.S.S.R. During the 1990 trade year now under way, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that the Soviet Union's imports from the United States will jump to 36 million tons of wheat, corn, and soybean products, out of a total Soviet import tab of close to 50 million tons. Soviet officials estimate that drought hit about 50% of the cropland

in 1988 and about 30% this year. They are worried.

The Oct. 17 edition of the Soviet newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* reported from the south of the Russian Republic that the Tostove Oblast Grain Products Directorate is receiving telegrams from towns in the area describing the desperate situation. One such report read: "No flour of any kind in warehouses, railcars not dispatched to plants for many days." However, there is little extra food to send from other areas.

V. Voloshin, chief of the transport department of this directorate, said, "This situation is becoming increasingly desperate. Judge for yourself: In September, because of the lack of rail cars, we failed to supply 28 of the regions with 122,000 tons of grain and almost 7,000 tons of flour."

In Eastern Europe, there is almost no meat on the shelves. Meat prices jumped 500% in Poland, when food subsidies were removed Aug. 1. While East bloc pork production, half of which is produced in Poland and East Germany, has hardly increased in the last 10 years, pork exports have increased over 100% in order to pay debt. The largest importer of Eastern European pork is the United States.

In China, according to the official Chinese Communist news agency Xinhua, the agricultural "reform" of the last 10 years under Deng Xiaoping has been a disaster. Grain production has fallen each year since 1984. Under the watchful eye of the International Monetary Fund-dictated austerity plan called the "rectification," 100-300 million farm workers are wandering the nation in desperate search of work.

In Mexico, 180,000 children die each year from malnutrition, according to statistics released in September by the Mexican Center for Children's Rights. The Secretariat of Health reported on a study that showed that at least 35% of pre-school children in Mexico don't receive the most basic nutritional level, as defined by the World Health Organization. Malnutrition is the leading killer of children in this age group, accounting for 25% of deaths.

Official statistics published in the Mexican press in August show that, as a result of the economic policy applied to the farm sector, the per capita harvest of basic cereals for human consumption (corn, wheat, rice) was 34.9% lower in 1988 than in 1981. Per capita Gross Domestic Product in agriculture was 16.8% below that of 1981, and per capita production of beef, pork, and milk dropped by a staggering 37.5%, 45.6%, and 32.5%, respectively. Food imports are expected to be \$3.5 billion in 1989. Mexico must import 25% of its milk.

Cartels wield food as a weapon

Armand Hammer, one of the richest Soviet agents of influence in the world, stated that "food will be the oil of the '80s," but the issue is not merely greed, it is depopulation.

In the forum of the United Nations GATT talks, 1990 is to be the year of conclusion of radical agriculture trade "reform," called the Uruguay Round, from its initiating talks

four years ago at Punta del Este, Uruguay. The megafood companies are demanding that nations give up food policy sovereignty, and the right to attempt food self-sufficiency, and instead to rely on the "world market" for food "security." This would mean that in the midst of this food scarcity, the famous-name companies controlling food trade flows decide who gets food and who doesn't—as is happening now in the mass starvation in Africa, and the growing malnutrition elsewhere.

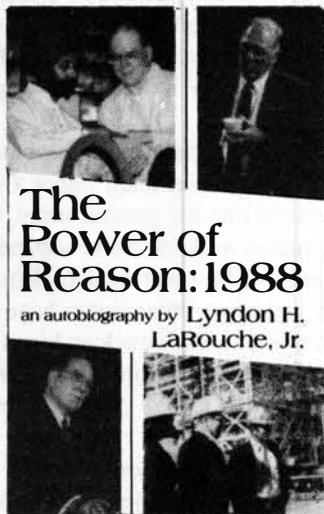
The international food trade corporations have lobbied hard in 1989 for new international rules for agricultural trade that will give all the advantages to multinational food corporations at the expense of the independent producer and processor. International food trade cartels—Cargill (Tradax), Continental Grain (Finagrain), Archer Daniels Midland-Toeffer, Ferruzzi-Central Soya, and Bunge, the "proper names" that comprise the so-called "market forces" which control 90% of all grain traded in the world—want to tear down all national protective agricultural trade barriers that have prevented them from freely looting farmers and consumers around the world.

On Oct. 25, the Bush administration presented its proposals for "fundamental reform of the global trading system" to the GATT. They include: 1) convert non-monetary import tariffs to a monetary value and then phase all tariffs out over

a 10-year period, 2) phase out export subsidies and import restrictions over a five-year period, 3) phase out most domestic support measures, and 4) develop international sanitary regulations for food.

The agricultural trade "reform" proposals the U.S. wants the GATT to implement are the same "free trade" controls called for by a special 1985 Trilateral Commission report on whose task force sat the grain cartels' man, Clayton Yeutter, who is the current secretary of agriculture, was the chairman of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and was a board member of the large grain and livestock company ConAgra.

Inside the United States, such companies are tightening their stranglehold. This past year marked the end of a decade-long scramble that has consolidated the U.S. meat-packing industry in the control of a few international grain cartels and multinational food conglomerates. The big three packer monopolies, IBP (owned by Armand Hammer's Occidental Petroleum), ConAgra, and Excel (owned by Cargill, Inc. the largest grain company in the world) control 70% of all beef processed in the U.S. and about 45% of all pork. These three also either own or have supply contracts with the four largest cattle-feeding companies in the U.S. The speed with which the livestock industry in the U.S. is being vertically integrated is unprecedented. Prior to 1980, none of the big three was even in the meat-packing industry.



LaRouche—at the center of current history

"I have been at the center of some among the leading crisis-developments affecting current history, including the Soviet and liberal establishment efforts to destroy the Strategic Defense Initiative."

—Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

"Lyndon LaRouche is striving to undermine the influence of Communists and other left forces among the workers and student youth."

—Izvestia, March 12, 1984

"It's LaRouche's people. He's persecuting me."

—Henry A. Kissinger, responding to a demonstration in April 1983

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