

Worldwide Hunger Catastrophe! Produce Food, Not Biofuels!

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

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What's happening now was totally foreseeable: There is an explosion of disastrous hunger and food riots in 33 (!) nations in Africa, Asia, and Ibero-America. Without doubt, the world is standing at the brink of a hunger-tsunami, which is the direct result of the attempt by the central banks to postpone the collapse of the hopelessly bankrupt world financial system, with injections of more and more liquidity, as well as that of speculators who have thrown themselves into the food sector, for the inhuman destruction of food in order to produce biofuels.

The World Bank has now published numbers which say that the price of wheat, as of February, has gone up over the last 36 months by 181% (!), and that food prices overall have gone up 83% (!) over the same period. If worldwide riots, a hunger catastrophe threatening a billion people's lives, and a collapse into a New Dark Age are to be stopped, then the criminal destruction of foodstuffs for biofuels must be immediately ended, and a worldwide crash program for doubling the production of food be put in place.

To make the point clear: Hunger riots and protests have occurred in Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Egypt, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Kenya, Mozambique, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Jordan, Bolivia, Indonesia, Haiti, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and are looming in other nations. For many countries, and the approximately 2 billion people who have been suffering from malnutrition for decades, the current hyperinflationary explosion of prices is an existential question.

Although it must have been clear to anyone, at least by the breakout of the end-phase of the systemic collapse of the global financial system in July 2007, that very soon, this catastrophic hunger crisis would hit the world's poor, and especially, of course, the developing countries, all of a sudden, the food riots

and food price inflation have become the subject of countless conferences, declarations, and media reports. But instead of identifying the real problem, especially the financial press—from London's *Economist* and *Financial Times*, to the *Wall Street Journal*—have brought out their old Malthusian arguments, that too many people want to eat ever-better food. At the same time, they attack countries such as India or China, that are trying to protect food supplies for their own populations through restricting exports, and insist on free trade.

In reality, the crisis is a declaration of the bankruptcy of globalization, which for decades, under the slogan “buy cheap, sell dear,” has insisted that the low-wage countries export their foodstuffs, although their own populations were not supplied sufficiently with food. But it's primarily the utilization of corn, grain, soy, and other agricultural products for the manufacture of biofuels—i.e., the transformation of a high-value product, into a low-grade one—which has played a major role in the price explosion. You don't have to agree with Fidel Castro on all issues, to agree with his forecast that the attempt to cover a large portion of the energy gap with biofuels, would potentially cost the lives of 3 billion people.

All the more scandalous, is the fact that, despite the manifest ethanol debacle, which has made it clear that most cars, the environment, and agriculture cannot cope with biofuels (tropical forests would be felled, swamps would dry up, and the price of animal feed is being driven up), German Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel is, out of ideological stubbornness, insisting that in 2009, as planned, the share of biodiesel fuel is to rise from 5% to 7%. And if Czech President Vaclav Klaus considers “ecologism” to be the greatest threat to mankind, then, if one considers the consequences of it regarding the world hunger catastrophe, he has surely recognized it as one of the greatest dangers.

Completely opposite was the tenor of the discussion at the



Saab

"You don't have to say Fidel Castro is always right, to agree with his forecast that the attempt to cover a large portion of the energy gap with biofuels, would potentially cost the lives of 3 billion people." Here, a Saab 9-5 BioPower vehicle at an ethanol plant in Germany.

summit between India and the African Union (AU), which just took place in New Delhi. A whole series of speakers blamed the shift from food to biofuels for a very large part of the explosion in food prices. It was pointed out that in the U.S.A. alone, since 2006, 8 million hectares that previously had been planted with corn, cereals, and soy, for food and fodder, was turned over to biofuel production. In 2008, 18% of American cereals production is supposed to be wasted for biofuels, and similar proportions in Brazil, Argentina, Canada, and Eastern Europe—while hundreds of millions of people are threatened with death from famine!

This India-AU summit also showed what a different approach is needed today. The general director of the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Kandeh K. Yumkella, stressed that solid cooperation between India and Africa in agriculture could feed the world. India would possess the technological capacities, and Africa would have the land and the labor-power.

Yumkella referred to the Green Revolution in India of the 1970s and '80s, which proved that technology can raise productivity and increase the cereals crop dramatically, in the quickest way possible. But similar improvements must also be made in manufactures and transportation of the foodstuffs. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh promised help to Africa in solving the food-supply catastrophe. The AU undoubtedly compared this summit with the EU-AU summit in

Lisbon at the end of last year, at which Chancellor Angela Merkel not only made herself the mouthpiece for British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and his policy of recolonizing Africa, but at which there was no real help provided to Africa.

Although the EU promised to raise its aid to Africa to Eu2 billion, this is only peanuts, when you consider the scope of the disaster, and that hundreds of billions are squandered in the supposed saving of the banks. And instead of sounding alarms about the engagement of China, Russia, and India in Africa for the construction of infrastructure, the European nations should follow the example of these countries, and contribute to help, so that the causes for the vulnerabilities of the African continent are eliminated—namely, the widespread lack of infrastructure.

The currently exploding world hunger catastrophe is the declaration of bankruptcy of globalization, which simply underscores that the free-market system is now some orders of magnitude more bankrupt than the communist system was between 1989 and 1991. And one should remember the words of Pope John Paul II, who commented upon the collapse of the Comecon, that one should not draw the conclusion from the collapse of the communist system, that the system of the free-market economy is a more moral one. This would become obvious, if one considered the situation of the developing countries.

What Is To Be Done

There is no rational reason not to immediately implement a package of measures to overcome the world hunger catastrophe as quickly as possible. The goal must be to overcome world hunger and the undernourishment of approximately one-third of mankind, which was already in effect before this current crisis.

Therefore we need:

- the doubling of food production worldwide as soon as possible;
- the immediate cessation of the misuse of food for bio-fuels;
- the immediate construction of infrastructure in Africa, Asia, and Ibero-America;
- comprehensive help in the processing of foodstuffs, including food irradiation;
- the immediate utilization of unutilized acreage;
- the immediate construction of the inherently safe high-temperature reactors for the desalination of large amounts of sea water for irrigation;
- the deployment of corps of engineers, farmers, and mid-sized entrepreneurs, under the provision of the agreement of sovereign and equal governments.

Because the global hunger catastrophe is only the consequence of the collapse of the world financial system, the question of a new financial architecture, a new Bretton Woods, must immediately be put on the agenda.

Because any reasonable person knows that it would be easy to solve the problem, provided that the political will can be mobilized, those in responsible positions will be measured by this yardstick. The world possesses all the technological and industrial capabilities to put into effect in a very short time, a global Marshall Plan, a global New Deal.

What Stands in the Way?

The international financial oligarchy, which is presently about to enlarge the British Empire into a world empire, with a weakened America as a satrapy on the other side of the Atlantic, and an EU dictatorship, which threatens to rob the nations of continental Europe of any sovereignty, is absolutely determined to throw the world into a New Dark Age rather than agree to a rational reorganization of the world financial system, and a worldwide financial order.

Not a few of them see, to the contrary, in the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, an effective means of eliminating what they consider the current overpopulation. There are innumerable statements by Prince Philip, in which he has expressed his wish to solve the problem of this alleged overpopulation, including that he, for example, would like to be reincarnated as an “especially deadly virus.”

Thus Philip wrote in 1988, in the chapter entitled “The population factor” in the book *Down to Earth*: “What has been described as the ‘balance of nature’ is simply nature’s system of self-limitation. Fertility and breeding success create the surpluses after the replacement of losses. Predation, climatic variation, disease, starvation—and in the case of the inappropriately named *Homo sapiens*, wars and terrorism—are the principal means by which the population numbers are kept under some sort of control.”

And in an interview published in the Dec. 21, 1981 *People* magazine, he said: “Human population growth is probably the single most serious threat to survival. We are in for a major disaster if it isn’t curbed—not just for the natural world, but for the human world. The more people there are, the more resources they consume, the more pollution they create, the more fighting they will do. We have no option. If it isn’t controlled voluntarily, it will be controlled involuntarily by an increase of disease, starvation and war.”

The rapidly worsening world hunger catastrophe is the test for all the world’s governments. It is high time to throw overboard the political axioms which are responsible for the looming existential crisis for mankind. And these are, above all, neoliberalism, Malthusiansim, and ecologism, imperialism, and colonialism.

What we need instead, is a world of sovereign nation-states, which work together for the common goals of mankind on the basis of the principle of the Peace of Westphalia, that is, for the interest of the other. The absolute precondition for this is the New Bretton Woods system proposed a long time ago by Lyndon LaRouche. Do we in Europe have the moral strength, to make a decision in favor of this perspective?