

Four Continents Hit Criminality of Biofuels

by Franklin Bell

Al Gore's biofuels are a crime against humanity. That blunt truth is even coming out of the mouths of public officials—usually a more diplomatic set.

"We have gone from three meals a day to two. Then it will be one meal. Then we will die. Why is the world taking corn for fuel? It will mean the death of many people." This was the statement made by Yoseph Yilak, the head of the Ethiopian grain traders association, to the visiting head of the UN's World Food Program (WFP) recently. Questioned as to what should be done about the problem, Yilak shot back: "The best solution long-term is massive production of food."

As emergency meetings to deal with the worldwide food crisis proliferate, an increasing focus is being put on the diversion of desperately needed food, into the unscientific scam called biofuels. Although the drive for biofuel production, most prominently associated with hedge fund operator Al Gore, is not the *cause* of the crisis, which has developed due to the genocidal policies of British free trade over the past 30 years and more, it is a significant contributing factor, which must be immediately eliminated.

Jean Ziegler, the UN's Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, used his April 28 press conference in Geneva to denounce the World Trade Organization, biofuels, and the "aberrant" policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), for starving poor people around the world.

Ziegler was attending the meeting of several UN agencies, called to come up with emergency solutions to the world food crisis. In his final press conference as Special Rapporteur—his job ended on April 30—he minced no words. The work of WTO director Pascal Lamy, said Ziegler, "is totally contrary to the interests of people who are victims of starvation." Yet the WTO is rushing to conclude the Doha Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) for even greater trade liberalization, which will kill more people, he said. It is protectionist payments that allow peasants and small farmers to produce food, not trade liberalization, he continued.

The Swiss official charged that the IMF's "aberrant" policies are tantamount to colonialism—encouraging poor nations to produce non-food products for export, so they could pay off their foreign debt, while leaving subsistence farmers



to try to eke out an existence on their own. Enough of such "colonial crops," he said. Ziegler made an impassioned call for increased donations to the UN's WFP, which is the only source of food for 75 million people. Over the past three months, he reported, the purchasing power of the world's poor has dropped by 40%, because of food price inflation.

Biofuels: An 'Intolerable Crime'

Ziegler slammed the biofuels mania, which he charged is one of the main causes for rising food prices. If people want to fight global warming, fine, Ziegler said, but they should do it without killing people. Today, biofuels "are a crime against a large portion of humanity, which is intolerable," he stated. There must be "total moratoria" on biofuels production, lasting a minimum of five years, he said.

A similar charge was made just three days earlier by the incoming Finance and Economics Minister of the Italian government, Giulio Tremonti. Tremonti denounced biofuels as "a crime against humanity," and named Gore as the main political figure responsible for that crime. Tremonti made these remarks during an April 25 televised debate with current Trade Minister Emma Bonino and *Corriere della Sera* editor Paolo Mieli. The topic: the need to implement a New Bretton Woods international financial agreement and to end globalization.

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter said on National Public Radio's Diane Rehm Show on April 29, that the world food shortage, especially in very poor countries, is caused by "taking food grains, and making ethanol out of them." He said, "The American people are seeing an inflation in food prices," while in "the 35 very poor countries in which the Carter Center works in



Africa, there are shortages of food. . . . Food prices have skyrocketed in the last 6-8 months; the price of rice has doubled. We see limiting of the sale of rice in the U.S. in Costco. This is uncomfortable for Americans; it is devastating for a family that lives on less than \$1/day. This is caused by U.S. economic policies, and it is also caused by an unnecessary emphasis on taking food grains and making ethanol out of them." Carter noted, "18% of U.S. corn is exported, and 18% is used for ethanol. This is not going to work in the long term, and people have been misled about it. The proper source for this is cellulose—fiber—from trees, not food that comes out of people's stomachs." [An unworkable technology, as nuclear power is available—ed.]

In Germany, Development Minister Heidemarie Wiecek-Zeul and Agriculture Minister Horst Seehofer have called for a freeze on biofuels, and a boost of food production. Wiecek-Zeul urged a total ban on biofuel production for as long as there is a global food crisis. With present budgets, the United Nations Millennium Goal of an adequate food supply

for the world by 2015 will be missed by a large margin, she said. She insisted that more money is needed, especially for food production in the developing nations.

Seehofer reiterated his proposal for expanded food production in Europe, attacking any idea of scrapping subsidies to European Union farmers. Seehofer called for lands that are now set aside, to be reassigned to produce high-quality food in Germany and in the rest of Europe. Biofuels, he said, must become secondary, at a time of food scarcity.

Venezuelan Oil Minister Rafael Ramírez told a late-April gathering of energy ministers in Rome, “All countries, and particularly in Latin America, have problems with food stuffs. It is such a bad idea to use foodstuffs for fuel, it is criminal.” Qatari Energy Minister Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah, at the same Rome conference, agreed, saying biofuels have “created a food shortage.”

Bolivian President Evo Morales also denounced the use of food for fuel, saying that for the first time, he found himself in agreement with the IMF and World Bank, both of which have recently acknowledged that biofuels were driving up the price of food and causing a global food crisis.

Peruvian President Alan García said the search for fuel alternatives is driving up the price of grains, and that he would issue a “vigorous call” to the wealthiest nations, at the Latin-America-European Union summit in May, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum in November, to limit their conversion of food crops to biofuels.

Senator Inhofe: Congress Must Find Courage

Even the U.S. Congress is hearing more than tepid calls against biofuels. On April 29, Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), the ranking member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, urged his fellow Senators to find “the courage” to reduce biofuel mandates in the United States. He pointed out two pathways to quickly accomplish that.

Inhofe began, “We are in the midst of global food difficulties brought on by decades of misguided environment and energy policies.... I come to the floor today to demand two dramatic and necessary actions to help mitigate our current biofuel blunder....

“First, Congress must revisit the recently enacted biofuel mandate, which can only be described as the most expansive biofuel mandate in our nation’s history. The mandates were part of the last year’s Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. Congress must have the courage to address this issue, and address it now.

“Second, the Environmental Protection Agency has the Congressionally given authority to waive all, or portions, of these food-to-fuel mandates as part of its rule-making process. The EPA must thoroughly review all options to alleviate the food and fuel disruption of the 2007 Energy Bill biofuel mandates....”

Inhofe then listed attacks on the use of food for fuels by India’s Finance Minister; former Italian Prime Minister Prodi;

the head of the UN WPF, and many others.

The 2007 Energy Independence Bill doubled ethanol requirements, and was presented as the Democrats’ major achievement by Speaker Nancy Pelosi. It does, however, allow the ethanol requirements to be waived under certain conditions.

A 35-Year Fight To Expand Food Production

For nearly 35 years, the LaRouche movement has waged a fight to expand food production, against the maneuverings of the Malthusian financial oligarchy. In December of 1973, the LaRouche movement newspaper, *New Solidarity*, published its first program for high-technology economic reconstruction in the Third World, including plans for making Ibero-American food self-sufficient, increasing food production by 40% in two years, and ending hunger throughout the Western Hemisphere. In late November that year, UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim had issued an appeal for 500,000 tons of food and an additional \$30 million in aid funds, to relieve the famine in Sub-Saharan West Africa.

What was the Malthusian response? Among other ploys, the U.S. Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act was passed, which covered the crop years 1974-77. Despite its name, it was essentially a food cartel bailout bill, shortchanging family farmers, while providing subsidies to Cargill, Continental, ADM, and others. Subsequent five-year farm bills expanded the cartel-serving innovations in 1976, 1980, 1985, and 1990.

As an “American Almanac” centerfold in the LaRouche newspaper *The New Federalist* (the successor to *New Solidarity*) documented in November 1993, the LaRouche movement year-in and year-out has drafted policies and rallied forces to counter the Malthusian drive for genocide.

In 1988, in advance of the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, Presidential candidate LaRouche issued a draft proposal for a “Food for Peace”-type foreign policy to relieve world food shortages, and particularly to liberate people from the conditions under the yoke of Soviet rule.

The Malthusian countermeasures? The United States submitted a proposal to the Uruguay Round of GATT calling for “elimination of all [national] market access barriers and subsidies which affect trade.... [F]ood security need not imply food self-sufficiency pursued behind restrictive trade barriers.... Self-sufficiency, as distinct from food security, is no longer justified by the possibility of massive global food shortages....”

As long ago as 1979, the LaRouche movement exposed the Malthusian hoax of the biofuels gambit. In September of that year the LaRouche-founded Fusion Energy Foundation’s *Fusion* magazine published “The Gasohol Fraud.” Author Mark Sonnenblick, now deceased, showed how Brazil was destroying its agriculture and its economy with gasohol, then the name for ethanol, which yields only a third to a half the energy it takes to make it—by slave labor, at that.