

Famine: The British Genocidal Food Policy

by Marcia Merry Baker

It is now planting season in the Northern Hemisphere, for corn, soybeans, Spring-sown wheat, and other small grains, coming at a time of global food scarcity and hyperinflation. Yet, no concerted international food mobilization is under way. Instead, the U.S. Agriculture Department (USDA) is conducting studies of the size of the world “food gap” in the making, caused by the food “price shock scenario.” In the February issue of its *Amber Waves* monthly, the USDA foresees that 30 million tons of grain—enough to feed more than 50 million people for a year—soon will not be there, not at any price. In other words: famine.

This is not the consequence simply of bad weather, poor crops, or even the hyper-speculation in commodities and the insane biofoolery of Al Gore et al. Today’s famine crisis culminates decades of the neo-British East India Company policy for agriculture: Exert worldwide control over what gets produced, where, and how—and starve people.

This British imperial policy today is called *globalization*, and it proscribes the most basic rights of populations and their nation-states, specifically the right to exercise their sovereignty to provide secure supplies of food and other necessities to their populations, and their posterity. Instead, as in the British Empire’s exercise of power in the 18th and 19th centuries, nations are forced to submit to “free trade” demands, which eliminate protection and subject their fate to the “marketplace.” Tariffs are banned; food subsidies are banned; and economic aid is premised upon producing cash crops for the international financial markets. The result is that nations must submit to the will of the imperial financial powers-that-be. And today, that will is to let those people considered “excess” die.

Food Shortages

For seven of the last ten years, world annual production of basic grains has been below the level of consumption, drawing down any existing stocks to historically low levels. On top of this, in the mid-2000s, came the Al Gore “alternative fuels” insanity, of the large-scale diversion of corn, cane, and oil crops to biofuels.

The run-up in food prices occurred accordingly, with the additional factor of unprecedented gambling in futures contracts on the agro-commodities exchanges. Hedge funds and other players have swarmed to the Chicago Board of Trade, and to the Kansas, Minneapolis, London, and other trading

venues, as the overall financial crash has cut off their other speculative “opportunities.”

The effect has been that the price of rice has “gone vertical.” In only three months, the world market price (medium-grade, from Thailand) nearly doubled, going from \$360 up to \$760 a metric ton (as of March 27). The price has headed higher in April, in the face of severe shortages and lack of an international effort to deal with the crisis.

Now, for increasing millions of people, the *food isn't there* at any price. “The new hungry” is the parlor name for this phenomenon, in the words of Josette Sheeran, director of the World Food Program. Speaking at a conference in Addis Abeba in late March, she said: “We are seeing a new face of hunger. We are seeing more urban hunger than ever before. Often, we are seeing food on the shelves but people being unable to afford it.”

The more accurate terminology is, genocide. In February, the World Food Program announced that it has begun plans for rationing scarce food aid among 73 million people in 2008, mostly in Africa, because of the out-of-control food prices and scarcities. Some people will starve to death.

At present, nations are responding to the crisis by taking rearguard actions, to try to line up supplies, and protect domestic consumption in any way they can, in order to limit suffering and prevent food riots.

Rice. Three of the world’s leading rice exporters have placed bans on exports in order to protect domestic consumption—Vietnam, India, and China.

Wheat. Two of the top eight wheat exporting nations are resorting to limitations: Russia (its restrictions are due to expire April 30); and Kazakhstan (still considering banning exports.)

Many governments are trying to mandate food rationing and substitutions. In Bangladesh, the advice is to try to eat potatoes, given the rice shortage. In the Philippines, the government ordered restaurants to cut back the size of rice portions in meals.

Every day, food riots are taking place somewhere in the world against hyper-prices, shortages, or both. In Haiti on April 8, a mob tried to storm the Presidential palace in Port-au-Prince, crying, “We are hungry,” protesting the 50% increase in the price of staples over the past year. Five people died in protests the week before in provincial towns around the starving country. In Africa, major protests have occurred in Cameroon, Mauritania, Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Mozambique. In Tanzania, because of chronic malnourishment, 38% of children under five years old are stunted in height.

In North Africa, violent food protest riots and jailings have occurred in Egypt and Algeria.

Emergency Measures To Stop the Catastrophe

The question of the hour is, can this catastrophic course toward famine be stopped? The answer, in terms of bushels, liters, and metric tons is, “yes.” Even at this advanced stage of

collapse, national agro-industrial emergency measures and international collaboration for a kind of “victory garden” approach, could provide interim food supplies for millions, until economic activity is rebuilt to provide food security. During World War II, when the United States mobilized to increase food output, local and state groupings of agriculture and food-processing networks helped decide how to meet goals, and what manpower and resources were needed. We can do the same today.

Mustering the needed agriculture inputs on a crash basis, and for the longer term, would require the kind of nation-serving financial measures called for in the March 17 policy statement by Lyndon LaRouche, “Doom Has Struck! Three Steps to Survival,” now in mass circulation through the LaRouche PAC networks. The first points, focussed on the United States, embody the principle of averting collapse, and then reviving economic activity.

After identifying as Point 1, the need for U.S. action on the LPAC proposal for a Homeowners and Bank Protection Act of 2007, LaRouche lays out Points 2 and 3 about credits for revival—the kind needed for revving up farm output, and for a stable international financial system in which to build up national and regional productive systems of agro-industrial capacity:

“2. A two-tier credit system, in which a) U.S. government credit for physical-economic recovery programs is provided at between 1-2%, and b) other utterances of credit-injections float more or less freely.

“3. The U.S. government must now immediately approach the governments of Russia, China, India, and others for the prompt establishment of an international, emergency fixed-exchange-rate system, ending the presently hopelessly bankrupt floating-exchange-rate system.”

Among the many kinds of capital-intensive development cited to be carried out, is that of building up regions of industry and agriculture characterized by “closely held productive enterprises dispersed as essential elements of the economy of moderate-sized regions of combined private entrepreneurial industry and agriculture....”

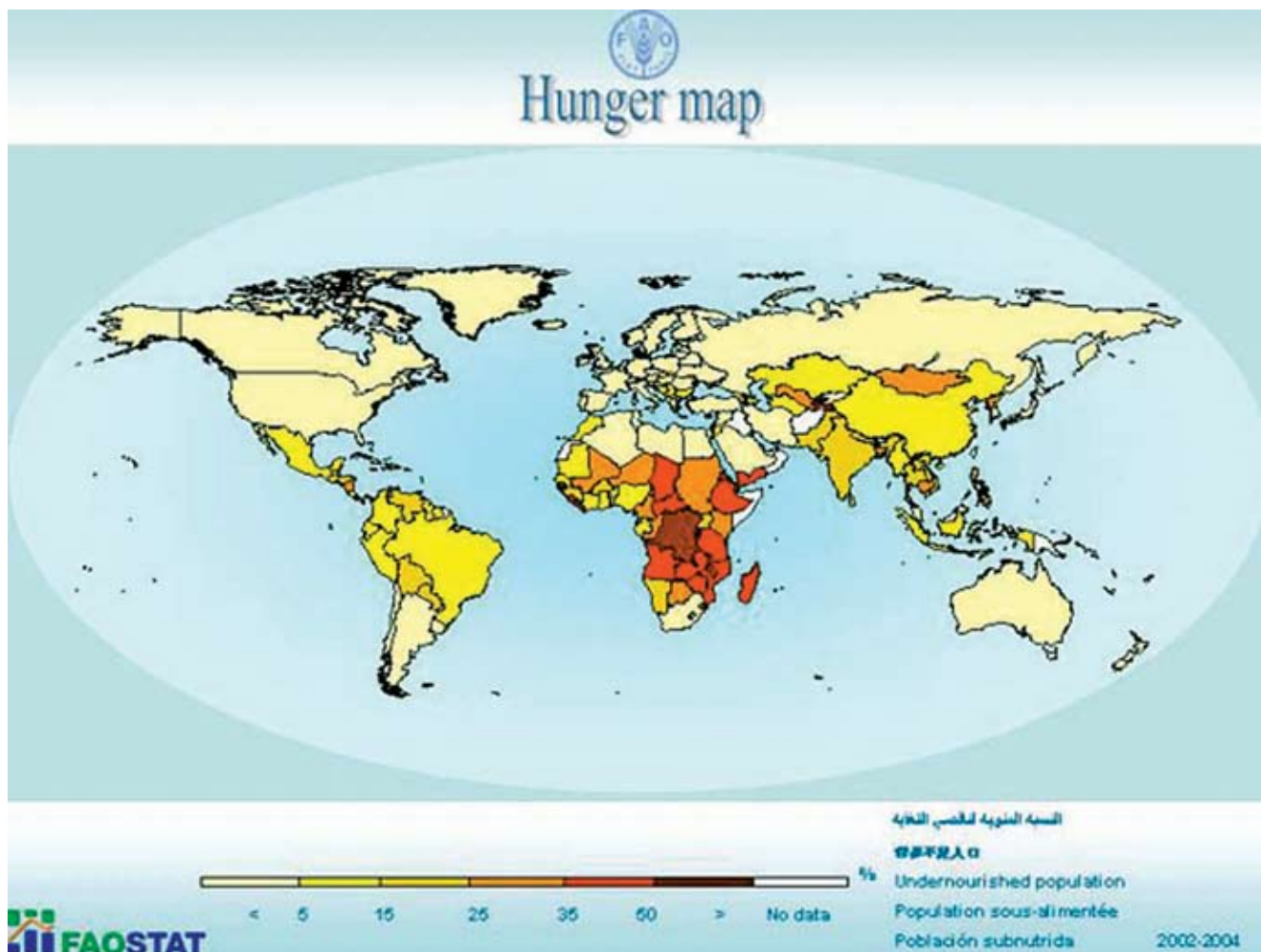
In the meantime, speculation could be stopped cold by government mandate. And in this spirit, food relief measures, despite the acute shortages, could be innovated in some fashion.

‘One World, One Market’

The major obstacle to averting famine lies in the myth of the “markets”: So far, there has been no subjective break with decades of brainwashed public and lawmaker opinion about the primacy of the “markets.” On one level, it ought to be easy. The world of “markets” has crashed.

But the grip of decades of globaloney about how the world’s “free” (rigged) trade will feed people, is still in force. The myths were codified in 1984, with the GATT—General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade—process, to “reform agri-

FIGURE 1



UN Food and Agriculture Organization

culture” to allow multinational private interests to globalize farming, processing, and distribution. This was further implemented in the 1995 World Trade Organization and the 1994 North America Free Trade Agreement. The central axiom was stated in the GATT poster slogan: “One World, One Market.”

Under this theme, nations were coerced to forgo grain reserves, forgo support for their agriculture sector, and forgo even the goal of domestic food self-sufficiency—all in the name of preventing “markets-distorting” impacts.

Now we have reached the stage of breakdown of the food chain, where to remain locked in these axioms means famine. Averting famine requires breaking with the markets’ con game. To prevent such a break, the voice of the City of London, *The Economist* magazine, is conducting a “Don’t You Dare” campaign. Its article in the March 29-April 4 issue is titled, “Cereal Offenders,” and it denounces any national-interest action by governments to protect their own food supplies, as “disincentivizing farmers” from producing for world markets.

The Economist is merely continuing the message from the

neo-British Empire perspective, for which the Margaret Thatcher years of the 1980s were the critical period of imposing extreme free-trade and globalization axioms throughout world agriculture.

We here summarize the scope of today’s immediate crisis, and review the leading aspects of the decades of Made-in-London globalization policies that got us to this point.

World Hunger Map

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization maintains an interactive map of “World Hunger” (www.fao.org/es/ess/faostat/foodsecurity/FSMap/map14.htm) in which it updates the statistics of the nations which are food short. **Figure 1** shows 70 nations. By region, the estimate for those now going hungry, even before the famine ahead:

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|---------------------|-------------|
| Sub-Saharan Africa: | 204 million |
| Asia/Pacific: | 156 million |
| India: | 221 million |

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| China: | 142 million |
| Latin America/Caribbean: | 53 million |
| North Africa/Southwest Asia: | 39 million |
| Countries formerly part of the U.S.S.R.: | 28 million |
| Other industrialized countries: | 9 million. |

This adds up to 852 million people, nearly one-seventh of the world's population, for whom sufficient food is not now being provided.

Take basic grains as a measure: The volume of production is below what is necessary for consumption and carry-over as reserve. The same point applies to tubers, legumes, and other staples. Now, as certain nations withhold grain from the export markets in order to meet home needs, *the volume of grain for commercial imports and aid is disappearing.*

For the current crop year, 2007-08, consumption of grains (all kinds), for all uses (food, animal feed, biofuels) is projected at 2,120.3 million metric tons, which is 17.7 mmt more than the projected production this year, according to the February estimates by the FAO. "World reserves are heading to yet another decline from their already low levels," stated the FAO. "World cereal stocks by the close of the [crop] seasons ending in 2008 are expected to fall to just 405 mmt, down 22 mmt, or 5%, from their already reduced level at the start of the [crop] season and the smallest since 1982."

All grains are in short supply. In the United States, wheat stocks are at their lowest level since 1946-47, in absolute tonnage.

Capping all these trends, is the "Gorey" catastrophe of the biofuels mania that is increasingly diverting grains and oil crops away from the food chain. At present rates, in 2008, 95 mmt of corn could be consumed for ethanol, which is 12% of the expected total world corn harvest. On top of that, 10 million tons of wheat and other grains are going into biofuels. This doesn't count the capacity going into cane ethanol in Brazil, or Asian and European oilseeds for biodiesel.

The following figures give a snapshot view, as of the March 2008 issue of the monthly *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates* by the USDA.

Rice. The tonnage of rice available for importing this year is falling drastically. The USDA estimated in March that rice for export was trending downward from 30.85 mmt in 2006-07, down to perhaps 29.39 mmt this year. But that does not reflect the announcements by major rice-exporting countries of limiting or banning exports. Of the 29 mmt of rice for trade or aid, only seven nations account for 27 mmt. Four of them have restricted exports: Vietnam (previously exporting 5 mmt in a recent normal year); India (3.5 mmt); China (1.3 mmt); Egypt (1.3 mmt). Pakistan, exporting some 3 mmt in recent years, is in a shortage crisis. (See article, in this section.)

Wheat. The tonnage of wheat traded each year is falling. In 2005-06, it was at the level of 116 million metric tons; then down to 111 mmt last year. This year, the USDA puts it at 105

mmt, but that is not accounting for the withholding that may occur. The top eight wheat-exporting nations would account for 96 mmt of wheat traded this year, but so far 21 mmt from Russia and Kazakstan may not all go on the market.

Genocide in Africa

Under these circumstances, the dependence of more and more nations on imports for their daily bread has been a guarantee for hunger and starvation. Yet, among the world's lowest-income nations are found the greatest number of people both dependent on grain to supply energy and nutrients in their diet, and upon imports to supply that grain.

A study of this dependency crisis by the Economic Research Service of the USDA was reported in its February *Amber Waves* e-journal, titled, "Rising Food Prices Intensify Food Insecurity in Developing Countries." It reports: "To identify countries that are highly sensitive to increases in grain prices, ERS ranked the 70 low-income countries by grain import dependence and daily calorie consumption. Six of the lowest-income countries (Eritrea, Liberia, Haiti, Georgia, Burundi, and Zimbabwe) depend on grain imports for more than 40 percent of their diets and consume an average of less than 2,200 calories per day. Eritrea, for example, is highly dependent on food imports: 87 percent of grains, 51 percent of vegetable oils, and 100 percent of sugar. Export earnings cover only 24 percent of Eritrea's import bill; the remainder is filled by external assistance. Eritrea's daily calorie availability of 1,465 in 2005 was among the lowest in the world...."

"Of the world's least developed countries (50 countries, as defined by the United Nations' FAO, 32 of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa), the import share of production [volume of imported foodstuffs taken as a percent of domestic production] for wheat jumped from 93 percent in 1980 to more than 130 percent in 2005. For sugar, the share soared from only 4 percent in 1980 to more than 65 percent in 2005. A similar pattern is seen for vegetable oils, with the share rising from about 6 percent to 80 percent."

One of the Sub-Saharan countries hard hit is Côte d'Ivoire. From 1990 to the early 2000s, grain production remained level. As the USDA reports, "To maintain grain supplies for a growing population, grain imports rose, and have been virtually equal to production for the past 5 years or so." In Zimbabwe, grain output has fallen by about half since 2000, with a rise in import-dependence and vulnerability.

This same food gap is to be seen around the globe. In Central and South America, the nations of Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru are extremely import reliant. Grain imports have been rising 10 percent a year since 1990 in Guatemala and Honduras. The USDA reports, "In fact, in 2006, grain imports exceeded domestic production in Honduras by 30 percent, and Guatemala by 55 percent."

Now, the food isn't to be had. This is the result of the deliberate "world markets-dependence policy," intended for genocide.



The British East India Company's economic model was to impose a global system of colonial looting, which caused repeated famines in India and elsewhere. Here, the Indian Ocean slave trade.

Famine: Made in London

At Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in 1944, a proposal was made in the discussions of setting up a post-war financial system, to create an International Trade Organization (ITO), to advance free marketeering among nations, in the style of the former British Empire's relations with colonies. It was easily defeated, under the opposition of the United States and its allies, who opposed setting up anything like the pre-war imperial looting of regions. Instead of an ITO, trade was to occur through mutually beneficial bilateral and multilateral trade arrangements among participating nations.

In line with this, the FDR-era economic development impulse prevailed over the 1950s and 1960s, in the furtherance of the agro-industrial build-up of nations and regions, including newly independent countries.

There were outstanding agriculture achievements. In the 1960s, Mexico was a grain exporter, benefitting spectacularly from the build-up of the agriculture base and crop yields under the Green Revolution, that originated at Mexico City's International Center for Wheat and Corn Research (CIMMYT). This world-class agriculture R&D center was founded at the instigation of President Franklin Roosevelt's Agriculture Secretary and Vice President, Henry Wallace, a plant geneticist from Iowa. In Africa, development projects included the major water management of the White Nile, with the initiation of the Jonglei Canal.

In 1974, India—thanks to collaboration with CIMMYT for seeds—became self-sufficient in grains of all types, for the first time in modern history. This went against all the doom-and-gloom forecasts from the propaganda machines of the now greenie neo-British Empire. In his 1968 book, *The Population Bomb*, genocidalist Paul Ehrlich had said specifically that it was a “fantasy” that India could “ever” feed itself.

Like CIMMYT, other research centers were established for oilseeds, potatoes, and other crops, especially rice, for which the IRRI, International Rice Research Institute, was set up in the Philippines. By the early 1980s, the Philippines became self-sufficient in rice; then-President Ferdinand Marcos had plans for developing Filipino and Asian agriculture productivity even more.

The association of IRRI, CIMMYT, and other such agencies was called CGIAR—Consultative Group for International Agriculture Research. The guiding principle was that scientific advances could continually be made in seed quality (disease resistance, yield, and other characteristics) so that, given requisite agriculture infrastructure and cultural practices, the world population would continue to grow by billions.

But by the 1970s, this trajectory was dashed. The onslaught against it included the 1971 floating-exchange-rate policy, the “Save the Earth” greenie brainwashing against technology, and especially, the imposition of privatization and free trade—the euphemisms for globalizing and controlling economic activity by a select financial elite.

The 1980s, the “Margaret Thatcher” years in Britain, were a watershed decade. Domestically, the Thatcher government deregulated and privatized infrastructure, industry, and agriculture. The outbreak and spread of Mad Cow Disease—bovine spongiform encephalopathy—was a spin-off of that takedown process. Internationally, a renewed demand for an imperial International Trade Organization was launched.

In 1984, in Punta del Este, the Uruguay Round of the GATT—General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade of the UN—was launched. Its focus was “to reform agriculture trade,” so that there would be borderless markets, in which cartels of multinationals would dominate. National populations were to

obtain food and maintain agro-capacity, based only on “market forces.” In negotiations culminating in the 1995 World Trade Organization (WTO), nations were coerced into agreeing to forgo their right to food reserves, because such reserves were categorized as “trade distorting.” Supports for the farm sector were similarly proscribed. Even setting a goal of food self-sufficiency was considered to be “trade distorting” and disallowed.

During the same period, sweeping patent rights to food seeds and seed-engineering methods were granted to a small cartel of multinational agro and pharmaceutical companies, including Monsanto, Cargill, DuPont, Novartis, and a few others. At the same time, funding was slashed for the public-good research at the CGIAR network, to the point now where its only apparent recourse is to seek funding from billionaires Bill Gates and Warren Buffett. While their handouts may be put to good use, it is no substitute for a public-good policy.

The WTO today is widely considered an institutional zombie, but it has accomplished the desired wreckage. Vast land-use shifts have occurred over the past 35 years, degrading world agriculture production and output potential way below the threshold of meeting needs. Huge amounts of land have been lost to farming, as urban areas have sprawled out over the landscape, instead of being concentrated as highly organized industrial, residential, and cultural centers. This is the case ranging from China, to India, from the Philippines to the United States, and throughout the Americas. China recently announced that it had lost 7 million hectares to this process, and it curbed further land conversion.

At the same time, once diversified and productive national regimes of agriculture, like that of mid-20th-Century Argentina, have been degraded into monoculture. Fifty or so years ago, the Pampas and other physiographic regions of that nation produced wheat, cattle, and a full range of fruits, vegetables, and oilseeds. Today, close to 50% of all the arable land in Argentina is in soybeans. Brazil, likewise, has been downgraded into vast soy plantations, and sugar cane operations to feed the cane ethanol craze. There are plans in the works for a dedicated ethanol pipeline from inland plantations to the port, for foreign consumption.

Dominating these shifts are the same few financial circles, involving Cargill, Bunge, ADM, George Soros, and the like.

This is exactly the British East India Company model of private control and dictation of basic economic life. From 1600 to 1873, this imperial gang imposed systems of producing what it wanted for trade and control—indigo, jute, rice, cotton, spices, and other goods around the globe. The British East India policy on the Indian Subcontinent is the textbook record of how to cause famines. In 1857, for example, the Company forced the conversion of local farm operations into foreign plantations. Famine ensued repeatedly. Presiding over the Great Famine in 1877-79, Lord Lytton, the British Viceroy of India, said, “Don’t interfere.”

It’s long overdue to break with this evil.