

FAMIN, FOOD & POWER

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Introduction

California, one of the world richest food producing areas has lost over 30 percent of its cropland due to the ongoing drought. The major aquifers that supply the water for crops in Africa, India and the American Midwest are drying up. Food shortages brought riots to Africa in 2010-2011 and food shortages had a part in the disastrous "Arab Spring" movement that eventually generated ISIS

At this point the earth hosts over 7.3 billion people and this number will reach 9.7 billion by 2050 with the global demand for food rising by 50 percent above current levels. America loses one-percent or more of farmland to development annually. By the end of the twenty-first century (if we get there) the population will top 15 billion. To imagine that food production will ever be able to keep up with this demand is preposterous. We cannot even feed the current population in many countries. China's experiment with food production in Africa has been a total failure. Back in the 1990s when the Soviet Union collapses and stopped subsidizing North Korean agriculture over one-million Koreans died within a few years and they continue to die now. The whole world agricultural capacity is fragile and dependent on cheap water, cheap fertilizers (mostly based on petroleum) and cheap fuel to run massive machinery. All of these elements are at or near the breaking point. The issue of food supplies will become the major political, economic, military, and survival issue in the coming decades.

I don't write much about food for survival. That's because it is so well covered by thousands of articles and books. Next to air and water, food is the most important survival necessity. In theory most healthy people can get by without much food for several weeks or longer, but serious physiological and psychological effects take place within a few days that can ultimately lead to other survival hazards. Most homes have a few weeks worth of food around and most areas have additional food available on store shelves, or in the lakes and forests. Of course the wise prepper or survivalist should have both stored food and the capacity to grow and gather further food for longer emergencies. In this article I will explore the effects of hunger and the power of food on the society. All of the great wars, migrations and revolutions of history come down to a quest for food. We need oil (energy) so that we can grow, transport and earn money to get food. Our ancestors migrated, colonized. Pioneered, settled and displaced others for land to produce food. The temporary supply of cheap oil energy and industrialization of farming distracted the masses from the land, but land is the new oil and control of the food supply is (as it always was) the foundation of power.

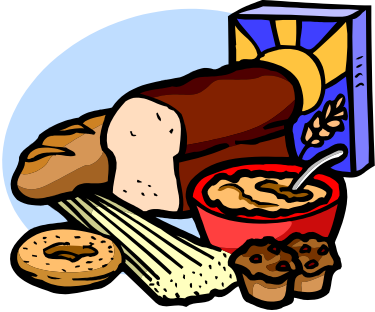
Americans have no concept of hardships whatsoever. Our interpretation of being hungry would have been a feast to those who suffered through true famines in Europe and Asia. As a child I did experience hunger, but I still had some food and enough energy to get to school and play. During the Civil War

and the Great Depression there was hunger and malnutrition, but not massive starvation. By contrast Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia have experienced massive crop failures, wars and sieges within the past 50-100 years that resulted in significant population reductions and population displacements that affect their societies today. Studying books like Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) Russia) by Anna Reid who interviewed the survivors of 872 day siege of the Russian City by German forces from 1941 till 1943 that starved approximately 800,000. People to death gives some indication of what a true famine can do.

As would be expected the very young and the very old were the first to die off. On a diet that provide from 300 to 800 calories per day people started dying off at from 5 to 10 thousand per month from July till November of 1941. As the cold weather started death rates rocketed to from 55 to 110 thousand per month until dropping in June. By then most of the infants, ill and elderly were gone along with many others. Of course government workers and those with connections did better. Food crime was rampant. Youths often lurked near the few food distribution centers and would kill mothers for a few slices of bread or a turnip. Of coarse no one had any weapons to defend themselves. Early in the siege people would go into the surrounding countryside to trade “valuables” for food from farmers, but soon no amount of gold or jewelry was worth even a bag of potatoes. If one had food everyone else hated you, even if you were a friend or family member. Anyone who looked well fed was under suspicion of hoarding or stealing. People ate boiled leather goods, wallpaper paste, rats, cats, dogs, tree bark and occasional resorted to cannibalism. All edible game and plant life was gone within the first few months.

Education, wealth, relationship, age, religion all meant nothing. You had food or you did not. Food was the common cause. The younger people and those truly committed to the communist state did little to prepare the public as the German Army approached. They had confidence in the states ability to protect them and to provide for them. This was amplified by the state propaganda that constantly understated the threat. The older people and those less trusting prepared as best they could. Older residents had experienced several famines in the past. At the beginning of the war they bought all the bread they could get and dried it in the sun and stored it in pillow cases for later. . They even went into the countryside and traded for “cattle cakes” intended to feed cows. Of course they were labeled “alarmist” and “defeatists” so they had to keep a low profile. Does any of this sound familiar?

As the people became weaker and weaker industry and civil services began to fail. Workers were unable to get to their jobs, much less function. Police, fire, sanitation and other services were just unavailable. Even after minimal food supplies were restored people kept dying. Apparently starvation reaches an irreversible point after which the restoration of food cannot save the life. It appears that after the body consumes its fat, it starts to consume muscle and then even organ tissue. At this point the body no longer has the capacity to resume digestion and processing of nutrition.



The communist system had completely failed to anticipate or cope with the siege. The population had psychologically abandon the communist system, but had no choice since the enemy at the gate was an even more oppressive force committed to their extermination. Had the enemy been less appalling they probably would have revolted. When the siege was lifted the communist quickly suppressed any reports of the famine and sent many of the most creative survivor to the gulags. Many diaries and photos remained hidden until recently.



Actual World War Two ration book and stamps that my parents had to use to get food and fuel. The black market was alive and well throughout the war. Particularly when it came to fuel, sugar, tobacco and tires. This could come back in the mid-21st Century or sooner if war or nature effects the food supply.

Conclusion

Hungry people will do anything to get food. Hungry people will obey any ruler who can provide food. Hungry people will attack anyone in order to obtainer food. Once food becomes scarce social relationships, political ideals, religious

convictions and governmental systems distort, weaken and fail. Mao Tse-tung said that “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun” but that is true only of the person holding it is well fed. Even in “normal” times those who control the production and distribution of food have the true economic and political power. As fuel supplies decline there will be a return to smaller farms and localized supplies. Poor and overpopulated countries will experience significant chaos and accelerated death rates. More affluent countries will experience deurbanization, civil unrest, political instability and shifting values. Major political and economic interests will attempt to retain control of the food supply through regulation, intimidation and perhaps even rationing. Those who are food self-sufficient will have a great advantage, but will be assaulted both by those who are hungry and those who seek to use food as a source of power and control. Therefore it is critical that food self-reliance be accompanied by defensives capability. Here are the steps that one must take to food freedom:

1. Store enough food for short-term (6-month to a year) emergencies and to buy time to convert to food self-reliance for longer or indefinite situations.
2. Start now to develop food producing and food preserving skills and equipment. Hunting, fishing, trapping and foraging are important, but remember that these resources will quickly be wiped out when everyone is doing them without regulation.
3. If you can get a few acres of farmable land, do it now. It will be a good investment (far better than gold) and maybe save your family.
4. Start a freedom garden in your yard. Even a small raised bed, intensive vegetable garden can provide a significant supply of food, but get the experience now. Also start saving vacuum packed seeds and learning to create mulch. Consider looking into hydroponics and aquaponics as indoor food production methods
5. Network with others to build a food trade system within your immediate area. This will necessarily include mutual security for crops, stores and transport.
6. Most importantly; spread the word and teach the skills of self-reliance. The more people that can take care of their own families the fewer you have to worry about and the more you can trade with. The more folks who are on your side the less likely it will be that demigods, gangsters and dictators will rule the future with food.