
Colombia

Grain growers hear of world food crisis

by Javier Almario

The world food crisis is caused by people who believe the Earth's "carrying capacity" is for only 2 billion people, and that "the world population must be reduced to that limit," charged Dr. Jonathan Tennenbaum, director of the West German Fusion Energy Forum, in his address to 200 delegates and invited guests of the XIII Congress of Colombia's National Grain Producers Federation, Fenalce, held in Bogota June 22.

The powerful food cartels, charged Tennenbaum, are behind the current collapse in food production. They have designed policies that are bankrupting the food producers of the advanced sector, while giving themselves enormous profits through the control they wield over the international food trade. "They see the market differently from ourselves; they don't see food as something primarily for people's nourishment, but as a very powerful weapon which they don't hesitate to use," said Tennenbaum. He added that as a result of cartel policies, world agriculture is scarcely able to feed 3 billion people, much less the nearly 6 billion inhabiting the planet today. Yet further cuts in food production are discussed at meetings of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Tennenbaum showed that the large cartels, including Cargill, Nestlé, and Phillip Morris, fund "ecologist" campaigns against modern farming, to promote backwardness. "They speak about returning to nature, but in truth they want to impose a supranational dictatorship under their racist view of the world." Tennenbaum said that Phillip Morris, identified by Italian authorities as a financier of the pro-drug legalization Radical Party, has "concrete plans to restructure its production of cigarettes to produce marijuana cigarettes." Many Colombians in the audience gasped.

He pointed out that these cartels, which in many cases share their boards of directors with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, plan to place world food stocks "under the strict control of the World Bank," which "creates tremendous blackmail opportunities in the financial world."

Tennenbaum recommended that in the face of such a serious world food crisis, the world's nations must guarantee food self-sufficiency "as a matter of life and death" for their national sovereignty. To achieve this objective, he said, nations must adopt a policy of maintaining support prices that

can guarantee that the producer "can cover his costs of production and still turn a reasonable profit for reinvestment in machinery, livestock, and buildings." The other measure for achieving food self-sufficiency must be "productive investment" on the part of the state through the cheapening of credit for agricultural activities.

He noted that U.S. economist Lyndon LaRouche has predicted an imminent world recession of unprecedented scale, which could upset the cartels' plans and force governments to take measures to protect their people. Under such circumstances, he said, "top priority is resolving the dramatic food crisis."

The next speaker was his wife, Rosa Tennenbaum, a spokesman of the West German Schiller Institute and a founding member of the Food for Peace movement. She argued for support prices, which can assure the constant growth of world food production. If farmers are rich, she said, the whole world is rich. "If the farmers are poor, everyone is poor."

Fenalce director Adriano Quintana told the delegates that Mrs. Tennenbaum's father was the first German farmer to sow corn in his country, for which reason "he will be accepted as a member of the National Grain Producers Federation." Fenalce President Hernán Osorio Arengas congratulated the Tennenbaums and declared that their arguments "give us further incentive for our fight." He regretted that Colombia's politicians are "not present at this conference to learn that national agriculture must be encouraged in the face of the world food crisis."

Agriculture minister backed

The Fenalce congress took place just one week after former Colombian President Alfonso López Michelsen, notorious for his secret meetings with the cocaine cartel, criticized Agriculture Minister Gabriel Rosas Vega for having raised farm support prices. López proposed that instead of financing national grain production, which would allegedly lead to "overproduction," the government should subsidize imports "of grains in which we have deficits, such as wheat."

In his speech to Fenalce, Minister Rosas said that "the raising of support prices, which for more than six semesters has been kept below the inflation rate and growth in costs, is to our way of thinking the only expeditious short-term means for recovering the profitability of the farm sector." Thanks to this policy, he said, "the crops have grown reasonably and previously scarce stocks have recovered. We have even returned to self-sufficiency in key crops, such as sorghum and corn, and we are producing surpluses in products that until last year we were importing, such as rice and milk."

Fenalce backed the minister against López Michelsen, asserting in a letter to the minister that the support prices "which are today the object of strong criticism, offer justice for the growers, by correcting the decline caused by suffocating costs of production."