

OLGA BALEMA

One reenters the garden by becoming a vegetable

12. 09. 2015 – 08. 11. 2015

Opening: Friday, September 11, 2015, 7 pm

kunstverein
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“Most countries that had biowarfare programs have developed weapons to target crops and farm animals, with the aim of denying food to the enemy, causing economic damage, and sapping public morale. During World War I, German saboteurs in the United States used anthrax and glanders to sicken more than 3,500 horses before they were shipped from U.S. ports to the British and French armies. When the animals arrived in Europe, they were unfit for wartime service. Other German sabotage operations targeted French cavalry horses, Romanian sheep, and Argentinian livestock intended for the Allied forces.

During World War II, the United States and Canada secretly developed anti-livestock agents such as rinderpest, a highly lethal disease of cattle. Between 1951 and 1969, the United States also produced and stockpiled three anti-crop agents: stem rust of wheat, stem rust of rye, and rice blast. From the 1960s through the early 1990s, the Soviet Union’s anti-agricultural warfare program (which had the ironic cover-name “Ecology”) employed some 10,000 people and targeted poultry, livestock, and crops. During the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s, Saddam Hussein’s Iraq developed a variety of fungal agents to attack Iran’s staple food crops. In 1985 and 1988, Iraq conducted field tests of wheat cover smut to demonstrate its effectiveness as an anti-crop agent. Iraq also produced canisters designed to disperse the fungal agent over Iranian wheat fields.

Other incidents of anti-agricultural warfare have been reported. In 1952, Kenyan nationalists belonging to the Mau Mau movement poisoned 33 cattle at a British mission station using a local toxic plant known as African milk bush. In Sri Lanka in the early 1980s, a group of Tamil separatists threatened to spread non-endemic plant diseases among rubber and tea plantations in a scheme to undermine the government. Between 1964 and 1967, Cuba accused the United States of conducting 12 biological attacks against humans, animals, and crops. However investigations have proved these accusations were unfounded.”

– Dr. Jonathan B. Tucker, “Biowarfare Against Agriculture”,
in: “Case Studies in Agricultural Biosecurity”; Website of FAS, Federation of
American Scientists –

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