



SURVIVAL PAPER #SP92-14

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BARTER FOR SURVIVAL

by Michael Ironwolf

“The Soviet people, from Yerevan to Yakutsk, are suffering through a bitter winter with ration coupons for food that is not on the shelves. Energy is erratic and consumer goods both rotten and scarce. There is nothing on the market because what the farmer does not eat, he barter. People suffering in the cities see Perestroika as the cause for their miseries.”

--“Midnight Cry” March 1991
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Throughout man's recorded history, the first and primary means of commerce has been BARTER. A person would exchange goods or services for another good or service that they wanted. A free enterprise system depending upon barter, although at times cumbersome, cannot be controlled by any government so of course is “discouraged” by those in charge. In a survival situation, living apart from a government-controlled currency system, you will need to learn barter skills. In addition, your future survival will be made much easier if you start NOW to store items that will be useful in barter transactions.

The key to understanding what items to store for barter purposes is to ask yourself if the item is easily fabricated in an environment the equivalent of a refugee camp. When law and order disappears, water and electricity ceases and the lower forms of humanoid life rampage through the streets, living FAR AWAY in the country will be your only choice for survival. In this situation, what you have stored will have a direct effect on your future well-being.

When purchasing items for your own survival preparations, always buy a couple of “extras” at the same time, like extra bars of soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, tampons, candles, matches, etc. The list is endless. ALWAYS purchase items that you use yourself. Initially purchase items that have an extended life span so you are not replacing them every 2 or 3 years. Buy a few things each week. You will not miss the few dollars and will be amazed at how things add up.

After making the initial investment in your food storage program, you will eventually come to the conclusion that your residence or retreat just does not have the necessary room for the amount of “bulk” food that you would like to store. Purchasing items now with the intent of bartering them later for food and other necessities makes good sense. Depending upon what you store, a small closet of barter items could, over a period of time, be traded for several YEARS supply of food.

Be advised that if YOU listen to the above opinion by the “expert” Kurt Saxon, you will be VERY DEAD shortly after you are involved in any situation that requires firearms to be used in self-defense. Ammunition is the lifeblood of your weapon system. If you think nothing of spending \$500-\$1200 on a battle rifle, you might also consider a few hundred dollars for ammunition. Ammunition (especially military caliber) is next on the gun control agenda. So invest in LEAD while you still can. For more information, please see my previous article “Ammunition Stockpiling and Storage”, available from this publication.

LIVE FREE SURVIVAL PAPERS

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Some very overlooked items of barter are firearms, their necessary replacement parts and the skills to install those parts. A broken M-16/AR-15 is an expensive paperweight; however, a \$100-\$150 investment will get you a gunsmiths spare parts kit, the tools necessary to take down or rebuild the rifle as well as the necessary military manuals to teach you how to do it. So for a small investment you can be “in business” and with some practice can learn to perform quality maintenance on the M-16/AR-15. Even if you only know one rifle, you can be a specialist for that weapon and have a valuable skill to barter.

In addition, KNOWLEDGE is an excellent barter skill. Make it a priority to add at least one book to your survival library each and every week. The book publishers that advertise in Shotgun News and American Survival Guide have all the survival books you will ever need. Used bookstores carry everything else. You can barter the books themselves as well as the goods and services the books help you create.

Remember that any item that would be difficult or impossible to manufacture under primitive conditions is a candidate for your barter stockpile. Some specific suggestions are:

- Water: Water storage containers (5 gal – 55 gal)
Water purification filters and replacement cartridges
Water purification tablets, bulk iodine crystals
Water pump, hand operated
- Food: Canned foods of all types
Sealed lifeboat type rations
Salt in 50-pound bags
Bulk foods, sugar and honey stored in 40-lb. buckets
- Weapons: Ammunition in all calibers, especially military
.22 caliber Rimfire (At \$115 per case of 5000 rounds, this should be a priority.)
- Misc: Sealed metal containers of tobacco products.
Wax sealed bottles of whiskey, rum, etc.
Needles, thread, manual-operated sewing machine
Bicycle parts, tires, tubes, tire inflator
Motor oil and oil filters
Flashlight batteries – long-term storage type
12-volt automotive batteries: stored empty and dry
(keep the sulfuric acid in wax sealed glass bottles)
Grain Mill (manual & electric), parts & accessories

As you try to determine the relative “value” of different items, ask yourself if the product is a luxury or a necessity and how BAD will someone want to need the particular item. It’s easy to understand how a \$100 investment TODAY can be turned into a year’s supply of food tomorrow. Let’s use coffee as an example. An 11.5 oz. can of Maxwell House coffee recently sold for \$1.89 on sale at the food store. We can purchase 52 cans of coffee for \$98.28. In a survival situation, that translates to one can of coffee to be traded for a 1-week supply of food. At a time where locally grown food is more plentiful than imported coffee, it’s easy to see that this estimate is very conservative and in fact the actual trade might be for more than a week’s food supply.

Read the above sentence again. “.....over a period of time.....” The key concept to remember during any barter transaction is SUPPLY AND DEMAND. In a free market, supply and demand set the relative “value” of any piece of merchandise. Always remember that for EVERY transaction, you “only have a couple” of the item, it is “rare”, and you “might not ever get anymore of them”. It is essential that you regulate the supply of your stored items to bring the maximum “value” to you in EACH and EVERY transaction. In the ideal situation, each trader has acquired his or her merchandise at “wholesale” value and will trade at “retail” value. All parties involved understand this and the idea is to keep all traders happy

with their “deal”. Resist the urge to “price gouge” or take unfair advantage of people and always keep the customer happy. In a barter society “good will” can sometimes be more precious than gold.

Remember:

*Be not deceived. GOD is not mocked;
For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall
he also reap.*

Galatians 6:7

Ammunition is one of the best items to store for future barter. Ammunition is GOLD, period. Regardless of what ANY so-called “expert” tries to tell you, in a survival situation, NO AMOUNT of ammunition is too much. If you have any doubt about this statement, merely call the nearest army base and ask to talk to any combat veteran. When you have stored 10,000 to 15,000 rounds PER WEAPON (10 – 15 cases) you can start feeling a little more secure. However, after your first firefight, with a few of your friends dead and a few thousand rounds expended, I promise you will wish you had more. Listen to what a well-known survivalist has to say about weapon and ammunition storage:

Saxon: *“As I’ve said before, a pistol for the bedroom, a shotgun by the front door and a .30-’06 for reaching out should be all that any householder should really need.”* These can be gotten cheaply at any gun show. Along with two or three boxes of ammo for each and a few weekends should be all any rural should need. Urbanites should double or triple the ammo. (NOTE: Triple the ammo would be 6 boxes of 50 (pistol) = 300 rounds and 6 boxes of 20 (rifle) = 120 rounds).