

# The case against feeding the world

In the wake of the *Survival Symposium* and in observance of *World Food Day* today, sentiments favoring an increased U.S. role in feeding the world are predominant in Chapel Hill. The pessimism of Garrett Hardin and others is easily pushed aside in the euphoria of concern we all share.

Yet it is the duty of the academic community to test ideas by considering the several sides of an issue or idea. Consider then the case against the United States feeding the world.

The role of the United States in feeding the world must be examined in both long-term and short-term dimensions. Short-term shipment of emergency relief aid is a desirable policy in times of famine. All should sacrifice to help others cope with unpredictable and unavoidable disaster.

The impending era of continual famine, however, presents other considerations. For the United States to become an international feedbag will mean needless short-term and long-term suffering in the third world.

Direct food assistance and funds for the acquisition of food face numerous obstacles to relieving the starvation of millions. Corrupt governments in the developing world have misdirected aid. The government of Chad, according to the *New York Times* (Oct. 11, 1974), flew half of its allotted U.S. food aid to a remote desert region in little need of relief. India refused U.S. aid for a long while to avoid any embarrassing reliance on the United States.

The priorities in these countries do not reflect the needs of the people. As the *Raleigh News and Observer* (Nov. 17, 1974) has pointed out, India has cut its family planning budget and has devoted resources to atomic bomb development while Ethiopia has squandered funds on tank and fighter plane purchases. Yet in both nations, "thousands of people literally are steadily dying of hunger."

When underdeveloped countries receive food aid, much goes to waste. Because of underdeveloped transportation systems, 23,000 tons of fertilizer sent to Ethiopia last spring sat idle in the port city Assab. Food storage involves great losses. The *Richmond Times Dispatch* reported Oct. 28, 1974, that losses of 70 per cent of food in storage in India are not uncommon.

Even if the malnourished and starving get food to eat, there is no guarantee that they will benefit from it. Kenneth Warren reports in *Natural History*, May 1974, that 200 million people in the third world are infected with the parasite *bilhoziasis*. *Bilhoziasis* is responsible for much mortality and morbidity in this area. Studies conducted in 1962 by the National Institute of Health revealed that as the host became better nourished, "a tenfold increase in parasite growth was noted."

Finally, free food aid creates disincentive effects within the recipient nations. According to Gale Johnson, professor of agricultural economics at the University of Chicago, farm prices are kept low in these countries such that farmers lack incentives to cultivate more land or invest in new machinery and techniques. Governments are relieved of the need to commit

resources to food production and population stabilization. As Don Paarlberg, professor of agricultural economics at Purdue, has written, "Dependence on donated food will grow . . . The recipient country may in time become so dependent on the donor nation that it loses its autonomy."

The alternative to direct food assistance is a more palatable approach. The use of technological and educational assistance helps recipient countries to develop their own resources. Dr. Philip Abelson of the American Association for the Advancement of Science reported earlier this year that "in Latin America only 23 per cent of suitable cropland is being used."

"The possibility for expanded production of food exists virtually everywhere through the use of improved seeds and fertilizers," Dr. Abelson has written. "This is especially true of the developing countries where yields today are only about half of the developed countries."

The introduction of new rice varieties produced record crops in India in 1970 and 1971 after famines in 1966 and 1967. The *New York Times* (Nov. 1, 1974) cites scientists who predict an upcoming time "when the rice yields can increase faster than they did in the first 10 years of the green revolution."

Bacteriologist Rene Dubos of Rockefeller University has indicated that "the application of present scientific knowledge to agriculture would permit the production of enough food to support 50 billion human beings on earth, almost 20 times the present level."

While care must be exercised to protect the environment from

agricultural expansion, no greater care need be taken in the developing countries than in the developed countries already suffering from agricultural side effects. Indeed less developed countries should have a greater capacity to assimilate spill-overs into the environment and to plan and control such spill-over.

Above all else, policy makers must avoid sustaining a spiraling world population which will strain natural and technological resources. Likewise, an overdependence on the U.S. or any sole source of food must not develop.

"Almost all recorded famines have resulted from widespread crop failures," writes Harvard nutritionist Jean Mayer in *Foreign Affairs* (Oct. 1974). Already, as *Science* (Aug. 17, 1973) points out, a poor harvest in the U.S. would mean disaster for some countries that depend on American food exports. To increase dependence upon the U.S. increases the risk of devastating crop failures with worldwide repercussions.

That risk is not insignificant. A National Academy of Sciences study released in January states that there exists a basic uncertainty as to whether U.S. farmers will produce enough food 25 years from now to support the American people. Oligopolistic tendencies limiting food output, loss of land to soil erosion and strip mining, and unpredictable natural disasters like floods, droughts and earthquakes may heighten this uncertainty. If goodly numbers of people in the third world are dependent on U.S. food, the impact of a decline or natural disaster might be cataclysmic.

If we intervene too much and too long with food aid, Garrett Hardin's gloomy prediction of exponential population growth resulting in worldwide disaster (affecting developed and underdeveloped societies may well become reality. Political leaders in the third world have often failed to tackle the population problem; cultural, religious, educational, and technological barriers further limit optimism about checking population growth.

Serious questions about U.S. agricultural capacity must be answered before we commit ourselves to becoming the feedbag of the world. The USDA Soil Conservation Service estimates that 60 million tons of topsoil were lost from newly developed agricultural lands in 1974. Nitrogen fertilizer run-off threatens water quality in some areas.

The ability to feed our own people is in doubt. G.W. Cook, retired chairperson of General Foods, has stated that from 20 per cent to 25 per cent of all Americans are already unable to get proper nutrition due to increases in food prices in the last two years. And the National Academy of Sciences wonders about our future ability to sustain U.S. needs.

Yet much of the third world lies uncultivated and underutilized. Leaders fail to deal with proper distribution of food and development of resources. Military aspirations outdistance humanitarian needs in budgetary considerations. Population control efforts lag. And so thousands are starving to death.

Whose house must be put into order first?

## The Daily Tar Heel

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The Daily Tar Heel, the UNC student newspaper since 1893, has its editorial, news and business offices in the Carolina Union on campus. All unsigned editorials represent the opinion of the Daily Tar Heel, while signed columns and letters represent the viewpoints of the individual contributors.

Thursday, April 17, 1975

### Letters to the editor

## A&T deserves vet school because it's black?

To the editor:

I was astounded to read in the editorial column of Wednesday's *Tar Heel* that the editor favors locating the proposed vet school at North Carolina A&T. By some twisted logic you seem to feel that A&T should receive the vet school solely because it is predominantly black, not because it possesses the necessary qualifications. It doesn't seem to matter to you that N.C. State is eminently more qualified.

In the recent race for editor of the *Tar Heel* you ran on your qualifications, and people voted for you because they thought you were better qualified than Sugar-Baer. But going by your reasoning, people would have been entirely justified in voting for Harriet Sugar because she is female and a helluva lot better looking than you are. Can I retract my vote?  
Russ Roberson  
306 Teague

by coming to Hanes Hall and starting registration early. Real early — like 10:00 p.m. Super job.

Another tip of the hat should go to officer Davis of the Campus Police and Raymond Strong (Records). Thanks, and we are glad we didn't have to stay all night. Sorry it didn't make everyone happy.

The Top Ten

### Platt's accusations said racist, bigoted

To the editor:

I sometimes wonder if Rorin Platt and others like him (Robert Putnam III, etc.) aren't merely fictitious characters created by each particular editor of the *Tar Heel* so that the replies will provide filler for the editorial page. However, since this "Rorin Platt" has appeared under a new editor, we must suspect that he does indeed exist.

In Tuesday's *DTH*, Mr. Platt (real or not) attempts to project what would have happened had white students silenced Stokely Carmichael. It is pointless to argue with this opinionated "what if" reasoning, but I do disagree with Platt's argument saying that by not protesting, whites have encouraged a monster intent on eating his beloved capitalism and racial supremacy.

It would have been wrong to silence Carmichael, just as it was wrong to silence David Duke. Extremists such as Duke (and Platt) should present their views to us, if only that we may see their absurdity. Stokely Carmichael's position on capitalism and racism is extreme but not absurd. He simply advocates the destruction of the institutions which have retarded the fulfillment of his people in this country.

Platt would have us believe that we whites owe the minorities nothing, but he can not possibly justify that even under his own Protestant-capitalistic ethic. We owe the minorities something for having denied them their rights; a capitalist would be the first to say a debt must be paid, and certainly no Christian will deny that we must pay for past

sins. Appealing to less complicated and hypocritical values than those of capitalism and Christianity, is it just for us to not help those we have hurt?

Platt, your emotional column exhibits your own bigotry — using words such as "moron mentality," "imbecilic" and "thugs" to describe blacks characterizes you as racist. Ending your argument with a statement about the great price paid by "our black citizenry" is a poor attempt to disguise your position. As long as the ideologies that produced such as you remain in power, the minorities can not win justice.

Ken Howell  
408 E. Rosemary, Apt. 3.

### Students thank Perry for early registration

To the editor:

We wish to express our gratitude to Ben Perry of Records and Registration and the other University administrators who enabled rising juniors to begin preregistering Monday evening. To the 150 or so of us who had elected to spend the night in the rain, a kinder deed could not have been done.

Let there be any dissatisfaction with the decision, let us explain one thing: Mr. Perry volunteered to preregister only those students in line by 9:30 p.m. However, when word got out that registration had "started," sophomores came from all over campus. The result was that uninformed rising juniors were forced to register relatively late in the class, since they arrived early the next morning.

Before you condemn the University for another blunder at the students' expense, consider who is really responsible. It was the students who abused the favor of a few University administrators and who also upset the plans of fellow students. Although we are sure many sophomores will complain about the decision, we believe that Mr. Perry's decision to volunteer his time so that 150 of us could go home to sleep was one of the kindest acts on the part of any

University official that we have experienced at UNC.

Bob Jones  
2530 Granville

Debbie Ogle  
2618 Granville

### Column on Wallace calls for an apology

To the editor:

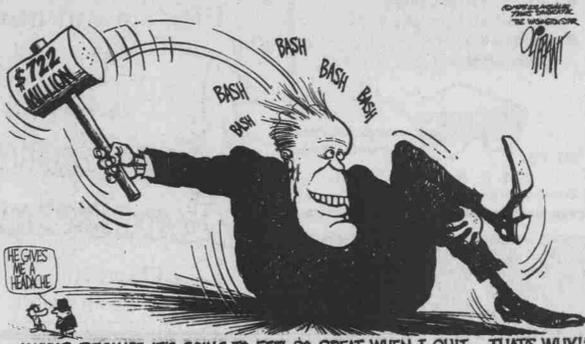
Re: the column (4/15/75) by Tim Pittman on Gov. George Wallace. Since Cole Campbell became editor, the *DTH* has steadily gone downhill, but now it has finally hit the bottom. Mr. Pittman's column does not only show poor taste, but reveals a lack of a sense of humor, and most of all a lack of intelligence of the writer.

For those of you who missed this lovely piece of art, the dialogue of the column is similar to a Mark Twain story. Gov. Wallace is the stupid Southern bigot with his bumbling sidekick, Jim Holsouser. Gov. Wallace has an outrageous accent, but surprisingly, Gov. Holsouser does not. (Have you heard him speak lately?) Mr. Pittman, this is not very accurate journalism: I am willing to bet that since you come from Smithfield you probably have a Southern accent also.

Next, Mr. Pittman reveals to us that Gov. Wallace isn't paralyzed at all. He's merely pretending in an effort to gain both sympathy and votes. Probably in Mr. Pittman's next column we'll find out that John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King are all pretending to be dead for the enrichment of their country.

I personally feel that Mr. Pittman, as well as Mr. Campbell, owes Gov. Wallace, Gov. Holsouser and the entire student body an apology for writing and publishing such slanderous trash.

K.E. Shiver  
331 W. Rosemary St.



### Thoughts on 2050 A.D.

## The gathering darkness: it's been there a long time

Dr. Louis D. Rubin Jr. is a University Distinguished Professor of English. He earned his doctorate in 1954 at Johns Hopkins University and received an honorary Doctorate of Literature in 1972 from Richmond.

Tomorrow Dr. Joseph W. Staley of the Physics department will discuss the world in 2050.

When one has lived through the middle five decades of this century, and is then asked

on then pretty much as now, though the particular gadgets and terms of reference may be different. Sophomores will continue to turn papers in late. Congress will continue to take recesses, printers will continue to make printer's errors, associate professors will continue to demand more faculty meetings, the ACC will continue to give basketball fans heart attacks, literary critics will continue to announce that the novel is dead, social scientists will continue to

### Dr. Louis D. Rubin, Jr.

to speculate on what will be going on 75 years from now, the first impulse is to cry havoc and predict disaster — seeming that what has been going on in the world during one's lifetime is not conducive to the comfortable reassurance that things will get much better in the future.

But that is the natural progression from innocence to awareness, and I'm quite sure that the future always looks less hopeful to the middle-aged than to the young, and even less so to the old. So I shan't assume that all the menaces to life as I know and love it are going to happen, and that all the potentialities for doom are bound to occur.

I'll assume, rather, that 75 years from now civilized life in something like the form we know it, and with the institutions we associate with its continuance, will still be rocking along.

If so, then several things must have happened during the interim. The problems of energy use will have been solved to the extent that we no longer continue to loot the earth of its combustible resources. The problems of nationalism will have also been solved, in that the various political and social units we call by the name of countries are no longer in a state of competitive anarchy. I rather imagine they, or some of them, will still continue to exist — I hope and trust that the United States of America will be among them — but I assume that they will have been forced into a condition of interdependence and permanence. By that I mean that there will be no more pioneering economies and no more open-ended expansion in population and consumption.

The only way this is going to be achieved, I am afraid, is through the several major powers of the world agreeing that this is the only alternative to mutual destruction, and proceeding to enforce self-containment. Naturally this will have to go along with the discovery of a way to feed and clothe everyone, keep them in beer and pretzels, etc. But this has never seemed a major problem to me. We could do it, if we really wanted to do it.

So if all this comes to pass, or something like it, I would assume that human life will go

announce that the South is about to become just like the rest of the country and middle-aged English professors will continue to agree to write statements on things they know next to nothing about.

If all this seems frivolous, and insufficiently aware of the gathering darkness, than I can only say that the darkness has been gathering for a long time now, and so far we can still see to read. Perhaps it is even conceivable that somebody up there likes us. I continue to hope so.

### Gerald Unks

## Answering the mail — education and nuns

Why weren't you asked to contribute to the "World of 2050" series running in the *Tar Heel*? E.S., Chapel Hill.

Because I can think of no way in which most schools would differ then from what they are now. If a person who had died in 1900 were to come back to life today, the place where he would be most comfortable would be in a school. Of all our institutions — family, church, government, etc. — it has changed the least. Don't be fooled by fancy buildings or textbooks; it's the same read-and-recite, sit down, shut up or get out routine that was standard at the turn of the century.

If schools have changed so little in the past 75 years, why should we anticipate that they will make any giant leap forward in the next?

If one wanted to change a school, how should he go about it? W.L.C. III, Chapel Hill. Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, authors of *The School Book*, say schools are changed in the same manner as plastic — by applying heat and pressure.

Raise as much hell as possible, be "uncooperative" and "unprofessional" and keep at it until the school bureaucracy finally responds. For years, school officials and

teachers have relied upon public apathy and ignorance of pedagogical principles to allow them to do as they damn please at the taxpayers' expense under the banner of "professionalism." Head them off at the pass, and demand decent schools for your children until they give them to you.

If one were to single out a particular person for heat and pressure, it would be the school principal. He usually has more latitude in determining what goes on in a school than do teachers or the central administration — though he won't admit it. To a great extent, he can create or destroy a good school. For example, I am told that the Oeracoke School, about which I wrote so glowingly last Fall, has a new principal who has set the school on a path of regression toward the conventional school norm. It is sad but typical of schools that they change for the good, and then some firebrand who treasures the old and untrue throws his archaic sand into the gears of progress.

If you want to change your kid's school, zero in on the principal. Beat the intellectual crap out of him. He usually possesses a dearth of intellect and a bottomless pit of crap.

Why are teachers such battleaxes in their classes, demanding rigid enforcement of idiotic rules of conduct, stifling creativity and accepting only one "right" answer — their own? N.W.T., Chatham County. Though there are studies indicating that teachers score higher than the majority of the population in fascist tendencies, closed-mindedness and adherence to tradition, most teachers are decent people who cherish their subject and have a democratic respect for student rights. Unfortunately, they are often trapped in a system which judges them on how quiet their classrooms are or how closely they stick to a regimented course outline rather than how much learning their students accomplish. Teachers are often unwilling subjects of a tyrannical regime. That is why so many quit so early.

On the other hand, there is a sizeable number — mostly women — whose behavior can only be explained with a different hypothesis. It goes like this: In every population there are a number of women who, through some mystical *a priori* experience, have come to believe they are possessed of the way, the truth and the light. They know — with the fanaticism of a

dervish — what is good for everyone, and — with zeal unbending — they seek to impose their notion of rightness on others.

Such zealous women can find a haven in the Catholic Church — as nuns. There they will be free and encouraged to inflict their rigid standards upon any who choose to enter their classrooms. Their fiery absolutism is fueled, not extinguished, and they lead a sublimated life of bliss, bringing "goodness" to the world. Our local Catholic school does not have such zealots in command, and has consequently developed one of the finest elementary schools in the city, but the typical parochial school is a haven for such absolutists.

The Protestant church — particularly the more fundamental ilk — is rife with such female aberrations, women consumed with the desire to drive out demons with their own dogmatic devices. Self-righteous and overpowered with zeal, they can conceive of only one answer and one code of conduct — theirs.

Unfortunately, the Protestant church offers its female fanatics no nunery and few havens other than to beat the drum against booze or to pass the tambourine, collecting

funds to put brassieres on Africans. So, these frustrated Protestant ladies, bent upon bringing their idea of goodness to the world, must find another retreat. They become school teachers! In the authoritarian tradition of the classroom, they can hold forth — missionaries in our own land — imposing their narrow notion of goodness and truth upon our children and punishing their peculiar conception of evil however they choose.

Teachers may be battleaxes because they are forced to be so by administrative decree. They may also behave that way because they are, in reality, Protestant nuns.

Do you make up these questions yourself? D.D.D., Chapel Hill.

Yes. When will you get around to talking about sex? D.K.E., Chapel Hill. Next week.

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