

Editorial

Food aid needed for starving Ethiopians

“Eat your vegetables! There are people starving in Ethiopia.” That platitude has been uttered in this overfed country again and again. For some reason, though, concern about people starving in faraway places is an occasional, short-lived phenomenon in the minds and media of the United States.

For four years, drought has drained the food supply in areas of Africa. Only now has the crisis in Africa hit the newsstands and broadcasts. And now money and food is pouring into Ethiopia faster than it can be delivered.

The food and money are needed, and will save some lives. But the aid pouring into Ethiopia's desolate stomachs and coffers is insufficient, temporary and a little to late.

In Ethiopia's last famine, about a decade ago, about 100,000 died. According to last week's Newsweek, relief officials estimate one million people might die this time.

The hunger extends far past Ethiopia's borders. Eighteen countries in Africa face hunger problems, and those in danger of starvation are numbered anywhere from 11 to 35 million, according to Louis Picard, a UNL associate professor of political science, whose special area of study is Africa.

“There's not much interest in this country with the Third World,” Picard said. Cold statistics don't get the sympathy



graphic pictures do, he said. A British Broadcasting Corporation film on Ethiopia set off the recent interest in that country, he said.

The aid now arriving in Ethiopia is “a band aid” approach, Picard said. Although

the drought is a natural phenomena, long-term aid to Ethiopia would help prevent starvation on such a massive scale.

Technical assistance in the form of education, hybrid seeds and equipment

appropriate to labor-intensive, small farms, would be a sound way to help prevent another crisis, Picard said.

In addition to the aid the United States is providing, monies should be appropriated to fund programs that would help prevent another mass famine. The United States often provides countries with arms to gain their affections. The United States now has a chance to provide something that would save lives instead of destroying them.

The crisis in Ethiopia has created another constructive possibility. Ethiopia is a communist country. It's not a full member of the communist bloc but it gets support from East Germany and Bulgaria.

The Western bloc countries have a chance to work with Eastern countries in alleviating the famine. Many Ethiopians will never reach the camps where food is available — they might have to walk for days. Transportation as well as food is needed.

It may be uncharacteristic of many Americans, especially in light of the mandate for President Reagan's individualist “meritocratic” philosophy, to help those who can't help themselves, but it would be humanitarian.

Temporary food aid is needed. You can donate money to CROP, a food aid program, in care of Church World Services, 1020 Terminal Building, Lincoln, NE 68508.

Home computer fails to liberate workaholic from the office

Back in college, science courses were divided into lectures and labs. That was instructive in more ways than one. You learned, if you did not already know it, that what looked good in theory often failed dismally in the lab. This, by another name, is called life.



Richard Cohen

Now, I have learned that lesson, once again. Several years ago, I thought it fit to offer some wisdom on computers. There was a story in TimeWeek, probably a

cover, saying that more and more people were working at home on computers. I decried this, ruling the end of the office community, the shmooze by the water cooler, the interchange with colleagues that produces, if not inspiration, then so much good gossip. Crowded cities, after all, produce civilization. Lonely farms produce hogs.

Now, though, I have gone from the lecture to the lab, I have bought a computer — an IBM-PC. It does things beyond imagination (at least what I'm told), although all I want to do is write. I already use a computer at the office and carry a portable with me when I travel. I wanted one at home to write a book — and an occasional column.

For about two weeks, the computer was beyond me. The salesman said installation was “idiot-proof.” I proved him wrong. I hooked up the printer the wrong way, did not understand how to “boot” the system and, in short, could not make the thing work. Now I can. I can even make my computer “talk” to the one in the office. The result is not quite what I expected. I work at home, all right. I also work in the office. In fact, I work all the time.

A home computer is to “workaholics” what a bottle of booze is to an alcoholic. I cannot stay away from it. A thought strikes me, I bound to my study to start banging away on the old PC. Then, I have my computer send what

I've written to the computer in the office. Just to show you how hooked I am, I do it the other way, too. Before leaving the office, I arrange things so that when I get home, I can call up on my home computer what I've written that day. There is no end to perfecting a column.

I should have known, Grandson, that I am, of Louis the Socialist, I should have wondered why so many companies offer rebates to employees who buy home computers. They say they do this so their workers will become computer literate — surely a contradiction in terms. I accepted that. (Grandfather, forgive me.) I should have known that no company does anything out of the

goodness its heart. They all know that we workaholics will toil for them on our own time. They are the contemporary versions of Tom Sawyer. We workaholics will white-wash every fence in sight.

Now I work almost 16 hours a day. I hate to think of what I learn on an hourly basis. I send columns back and forth to the office. I have the computer, at home, call the one in the office for messages. Before I go to sleep, I check to see if there are any messages on the computer in the office. Sometimes there are — usually one saying someone in the office has lost a ring in the bathroom. There are things you have to know before you can go to sleep.

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Journalistic conversatism bows to more fashionable trend

Last week the Daily Nebraskan reported that in spite of overwhelming student body support for President Reagan, none of the Big Eight schools' student newspapers had endorsed him for president. More than one person subsequently commented to me about the article, typically complaining about the apparent disproportion of the phenomenon. Evidently in the nation as a whole this disproportion was maintained at the newspapers of the larger universities.



Jim Rogers

I agree that the truly underwhelming number of budding young conservative journalists is disturbing. However, on a slightly broader scale, I am concerned with more than simply the fact that student-run newspapers are not giving vent to the new conservative majoritarian sentiments of student bodies.

My concerns with the press were similarly noted by exiled Soviet dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn in his now-famous Harvard commencement address. Among other concerns with Western culture in general, Solzhenitsyn complained that superficiality and an unbecoming faddishness were and are strong characteristics of the American press.

Lack of rigor is too often characteristic of the journalistic mind. Solzhenitsyn correctly noted that “hastiness and superficiality — these are the psychic diseases of the 20th century and more than anywhere else this is manifested in the press. In-depth analysis of a problem is anathema to the press, it is contrary to its nature.”

Perhaps as a result of the shallowness of thought manifest in the media is a concomitant faddishness of thought which fills the empty void. Solzhenitsyn said, “Unrestrained freedom exists for the press, but not for the readership because newspapers mostly transmit in

a forceful and emphatic way those opinions which do not too openly contradict their own and that general trend.

“Without any censorship in the West, fashionable trends of thought and ideas are fastidiously separated from those which are not fashionable, and the latter, without ever being forbidden, have little chance of finding their way into periodicals or books or be heard in colleges.”

Now I don't want to be unfair. Indeed I am painfully aware that there is a shameful lack of clear and articulate conservative journalism on issues of broad concern. But then conservative journalists are a relative minority among professionals in the medium and consequently are not prone to the charge of adhering to a mindless journalistic liberalism.

Our nation's journalism departments and student newspapers need to be wary of instilling a shallow left-of-center mind-set in their students. The seeds of the

low esteem from which the press now suffers in the eyes of the public were sown in the schools where too often it seems that liberal journalistic “sensitivity” was and is simply a smokescreen for political and social beliefs comprised mainly of unquestioned slogans and silly platitudes.

Journalists, perhaps more so than any other sector of our society because of their quasi-public calling, need to develop broad and rigorous methods of thinking. Now may be the opportune time for journalism schools to begin thinking of requiring strong core requirements in the fundamentals of serious thinking. Among others, these requirements should include philosophy, history and literature. This would train the journalists in an ability to be aware of the broad contexts of the reported beliefs and events. At worst, the students produced with such backgrounds will have some understanding of the primary metaphors which guide Western thinking and, at best, a better and more challenging journalism will result.

BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed

