

'Easier to ship tanks than turnips'

Food crisis is new bomb, warns Gregory

By AGNES KRUCHIO

This is the second in a series of articles dealing with social critic Dick Gregory's recent speech in Toronto.

Gregory reiterated his warning to Canadians time and again: "you better watch what is going on over there; we're doing some mighty funny things over there. And whatever goes down over there is going to affect you."

He also expressed his faith in the young generation. He said, "Never before in the history of this earth has the burden of responsibility been dropped on the young people the way we have dropped it on them. The very fate and destiny of America today depends on the young folks." Elsewhere he warned, that the young generation will "have to raise their moral force in the next few months" to save America from the chaos and degeneration he foresees.

CANADIAN ACTION

He praised Canada for its actions at the World Food Conference in Rome, where it has pledged \$50 million per year for the next three years and a million bushels of grain. That action, he said, then legitimized the action he took in going to Rome and telling America and the world: "There's a whole lot of decent people in America that those representing us at the food conference don't speak for. There is a whole lot of decent people in America who think along the lines of humanitarianism when it comes to feeding people. When it comes to people starving, we don't deal in politics."

On November 21 over half a million young people in America went on a fast and donated the money to feed the world's hungry. "That was so beautiful, said Gregory "Never before in the history of America has anything like this happened. Now, I knew I was going to the White House to protest on Thanksgiving day. We got to the White House at 10:30 on Thanksgiving morning; at 10:45 they back up the trucks and wagons, to put us in jail — there ain't nothing but two of us at this time — five police cars, and three buses. Then the cop told us, 'You know you can't walk across the

White House without a parade permit, and you can't carry no signs, and if you continue, you'll be under arrest.'

CHECK WITH BOSS

"Let me tell you something, Gregory answered, "I've been here in front of the White House only twice in my life protesting, and gone to jail both times; but half a million people fasted a few days ago, and said we're not gonna tolerate people starving, so before you bust me, you better go in and check with your boss, and find out if he wants to get involved with this one." The result was a permission to demonstrate.

"It really proves the power behind the moral force. Can you imagine going standing under the number one most powerful human being that ever existed on this planet, can you imagine standing there, in front of his career, messing up his dinner?"

Two days later the White House announced that they were releasing 300,000 tons of grain to India, 250,000 tons to Bangladesh, with a price tag on it of a \$100 million.

"But we did not do that just by marching in front of the White House," Gregory declared "It was those young kids, over half a million, who gave up eating that day, who raised the consciousness level of the White House and all we had to do was follow it up.

"There's some groovy things beginning to happen now, and I just wonder if we can raise that consciousness level soon enough before it's too late."

Explaining the state of the world, he said the Arab-Israeli conflict is nothing but a Russian-American conflict.

"Russia and America made

whores out of everybody else; they are the two superpimps of the world — everybody else has to turn tricks when they get ready.

"That's why we're mad at Canadians — who the hell do you think you are, goin' to tell us you're not importing our cancer beef? Dammit, if cancer beef is good enough for Americans, it's good enough for you Canadians."

FOOD BOMB

Turning to the World Food Conference, he said it was the "biggest trick in the world". We had no intentions of feeding people," he continued. "Food is the new Bomb now, that's the new army, that's the new weapon," he declared. "Now we can rape countries of their natural resources by deciding who we're going to feed and who we're not going to feed.

"And if you're stupid enough to believe that you're gonna sit back and eat your three meals a day while the rest of the world is starving to death you're out of your mind.

"There has never been a conference in the history of the world that will have as much effect on your life as that World Food Conference.

"Haile Selassie is the number one strongman that's walked this planet earth for the last 1,500 years; he never knew that that food problem was going to become so political that it would knock him out of office.

"Right now he is somewhere with a pistol on his head — they don't know when they're gonna pull it. And yet had Haile Selassie understood the

magnitude of that food problem, it would have been very simple to start a border war to get everybody's attention off.

"How many governments are going to sit back and tumble like Haile Selassie? Do you think the Indian government is going to let the food problem bust them out of office? It's only too easy to march across the border into Red China; if that happens it's World War III, so don't think you're eating three meals a day while the rest of the world is starving and it's not going to affect you.

"Any old military junta that would overthrow their government tonight, that would call on the U.S. to send them war equipment and armaments, we'd do it in the morning. I just can't believe that it is easier to manufacture and ship a tank around the world than it is to ship turnips. I just cannot believe we can supply the world with napalm but we can't supply it with fertilizer."

He claimed, "All this nonsense they're telling about population being the cause of it, that's a damn lie.

"How can the world population be causing the food crisis? Half a million persons are on the brink of starvation between now and the next eight months, yet 2000 farmers in America are going out of business every week?

"Do you realize half the arable land on this world is not being used — and I'm talking about land that would not need a speck of fertilizer, it's so fertile, and if we pressed that half into business within the next 48 hours, within the next 18 months we

could create enough food to feed 40 billion people.

"They can get away with it because most folks is so dumb and so ignorant and got to depend on a bunch of shady, degenerate governments to get their information.

"If we in America are going to stand by and let that government stand by and let half a billion people starve, we in America better get ready 'cause they're going to let the same thing happen to us.

"In America, we've got a critical thing going on; instead of rationing food 18 months ago, the Pentagon alerted the military in America to start training for the food riots.

"If this government knew what the weather patterns were to be like, and knew we were going to have this critical weather, why in the hell did they dump all of our grain?"

MISUSE OF GRAIN

"A third of all the grain produced in America is used to manufacture alcohol, and 80 per cent that's left is used to feed the cattle."

Gregory said that while he is not opposed to people drinking alcohol and eating meat, "if the government would get behind it and expose the facts to the masses," he believes there are enough "decent people who would give up drinking and eating meat if they knew it would release grain to feed hungry people."

Gregory said that in order to produce one pound of animal protein it takes 100 pounds of grain. "It's insane," he concluded.

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