

Opinion

By GARY SYMONS

After seeing the reports flooding in about the catastrophic drought and famine in Ethiopia, I'm left with the impression of a group of men, hands in pockets, watching a man drown and idly debating whether or not to throw a life-preserver.

And the question that rises in my mind is, at what point does indifference become morally akin to murder?

While at least a million people have already died, and 6.5 million more are slowly starving, almost all of the nations contributing to the UN Relief Fund, with the exception of Canada, have reduced funding drastically.

The Americans are a notable example, having reduced their contribution by over \$25-million while US president Ronald Reagan is simultaneously crowing over the apparent resurgence of the American economy.

Canada, on the other hand, has increased its UN Relief Fund contribution by millions of dollars, and no one here is boasting about a strong economy.

But in the face of a disaster of such incredible proportions as the Ethiopian famine, even that is not enough.

Two months ago, when then Liberal cabinet minister Eugene Whelan pleaded before parliament for a substantial increase in the amount of aid sent to Ethiopia, he was refused. Now, with External Relations Minister Joe Clark working on behalf of Canada to improve aid to that

impoverished country, we are informed through the media that after an increase in aid funding to approximately \$26-million, "the well has run dry."

While I appreciate the efforts of Clark, Whelan, and the commitment of the Canadian government to keep our level of foreign aid the highest in the world, I still believe we can and must do more. Can't Canada, one of the world's wealthiest nations, afford more than a measly dollar a head for every Canadian citizen to avert the deaths of millions of people?

After all, the amount we spend on arms for our military is billions of dollars a year, and the immediate benefits are almost negligible. Surely if Canada can afford to spend millions on a single F 18-A fighter aircraft, we can also afford increased aid to save lives now.

What is needed now is massive aid from every industrialized nation in the world to enable the people of Ethiopia to at least survive through the present crisis. Then, when the country's populace is at least at the point of personal survival, more aid, financial and technical, will be needed to help the government re-establish subsistence level agriculture.

It will be expensive, there's no doubt about that, but how much more expensive for Canada and the US have been the various wars we've fought abroad in the name of 'freedom' or 'patriotism'? In this case we are fighting to save lives, and after

all, how important are abstract concepts such as freedom or patriotism to one who is slowly dying of starvation?

Simply put, the question is one of shifting our priorities. Is preparing for a future war over abstract economic or political concepts more important than saving lives now? I don't believe so.

I also believe that Canada, a country so rich in agricultural resources that we regularly destroy tons of excess produce to keep export prices stabilized (remember the Marketing Board scandals of the late '70s?), should be the nation that leads the way in increasing substantially the amount of foreign aid going to Ethiopia.

And we, the people who fill the public purse, should demand it.

YUFA cont'd from page 2

YUFA office, where "an appropriate response on behalf of all of us" will be prepared. "YUFA will vigorously defend anyone who has her or his pay docked as a result of failure to respond to such a letter," the bulletin says.

Temple Harris, Acting Director of Communications, said no letters have been released by the administration at this time. "I would say that there has been consideration" whether the administration will issue letters to YUFA, Harris said. The administration plans a series of internal meetings to discuss what actions to take, said Harris.

more

letters

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against nuclear war is a worthwhile effort, but we can't help wonder what kind of people these so-called peace-marchers are when they find it necessary to have small children carrying signs such as the one pictured. Let children be children while they can. We find such so called "Journalism" in very poor taste.

—Beverly A. Fellows
—Diane Supino
—Olga Cirak
—Val Toole

Truce truth

Editor:

I am writing to draw attention to the fact that any agreement between the CUEW and the Administration is for one year only.

The distinct possibility exists that the wretched circumstances of the last couple of weeks will be repeated 12 months hence. It seems therefore that something must be done now to prevent that. Certainly, we can fire all part-timers, a solution that is perhaps not without its appeal for the more exuberant members of the Board of Governors; but to replace them with permanent faculty would more than double the present cost. Or we can further raise the enrolment in classes which the rest of us teach, while publicly prattling about the educational excellence at York. Or we can limit enrolment throughout the university, thus extending the habit of the more noisily professional faculties. But all these unsatisfactory solutions would involve us in an honesty it would be as well for us to admit anyway: namely, that York

has increasingly existed on the sweated labor of its part-timers. That such labor has remained efficient is one of the wonders of the place, but that is no reason why we should continue on our unethical way. A university, above all places, should practise what it preaches, which may need to be patiently explained to those in the Administration and on the Board of Governors who perhaps feel otherwise.

Hypocrisy is as inefficient as ignorance, and we need to recognize this now, not next September. It may help prevent the appearance of bullying that has been so much a part of this year, whereby the most vulnerable are those most harshly treated. A university is in the business of opening minds, not breaking heads.

—Barry Argyle
Professor
Department of English

Little & late

Editor:

In last week's *Excalibur*, Valance Ellies, CYSF's Director of Finance, was reported as saying: "This (CUEW) strike is a total disgrace on the part of the union and administration. They... should have sat down a month ago and negotiated in earnest, not later when students are inconvenienced."

If this report is correct, Mr. Ellies has been hiding in the woodwork since taking office last spring. CUEW and the administration have been negotiating not since last month but since last June 2. Furthermore, CUEW has been negotiating in earnest ever since negotiations began.

As proof of this, our negotiating team proposed last Wednesday that the issue of wages, the major stumbling block in negotiations thus far, be submitted to the binding decision of an arbitration board. This would allow a third party to determine a wage for CUEW members between the administration's final offer of 6.4 percent for TAS and six percent part-timers and the union's proposal of 12.5 percent for both units based on the university's ability to pay in fairness.

The administration's response to this solution was swift and clear—they categorically refused. With a nine million dollar budgetary surplus, they knew they could not justify their refusal to give CUEW members a decent wage increase. As a result of this failure to negotiate in earnest, the strike continues at York and students continue to suffer.

As a member of the executive of CYSF, Mr. Ellies should be aware of these facts and support the side which is negotiating in good faith. By so doing, he will help the strike end and students return to classes that much sooner.

—Philip MacEwen
External Vice-President
CUEW Local 3

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