

Monologue

Famine coverage far too late

By Shelley Ball
Editor In Chief

The popular adage about bad news traveling fast was disproved by Western news media recently with its coverage of the massive famine spreading across Africa.

According to a recent report by *Newsweek* magazine, the earliest warnings of this disaster were made known two years ago, yet little attention was paid to the inevitable doom by Western news media until a month ago, when a British Broadcasting Corp. film enlightened people around the world by depicting the blight of Africa's nations.

The tragedy has since been receiving top coverage by the American media and no doubt other countries as well. This coverage has in turn helped to spur a surge of contributions for the starving in Africa.

I wonder, however, whether the African famine situation would be as dire as it is now had the media picked up on and reported the tragedy much sooner. ABC News recently reported that despite the great influx of contributions (the United States alone is spending \$100 million in support), the aid is not even beginning to make a dent in the hunger problem.

As it stands now, *Newsweek* reports this famine, considered the worst in African history, is responsible for killing as many as 200,000 people in the country of Mozambique and at least 300,000 in Ethiopia.

Other countries, such as Mali, Niger, Sudan and Mauritania are on the verge of a famine similar to the epidemic levels reached in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Chad. A total of about 30 African countries are officially listed as hungry.

It's difficult to say whether people would have sent in contributions similar to what is being sent in now had they been informed of the threat of famine earlier. Many people no doubt needed the shock of seeing Africans die before

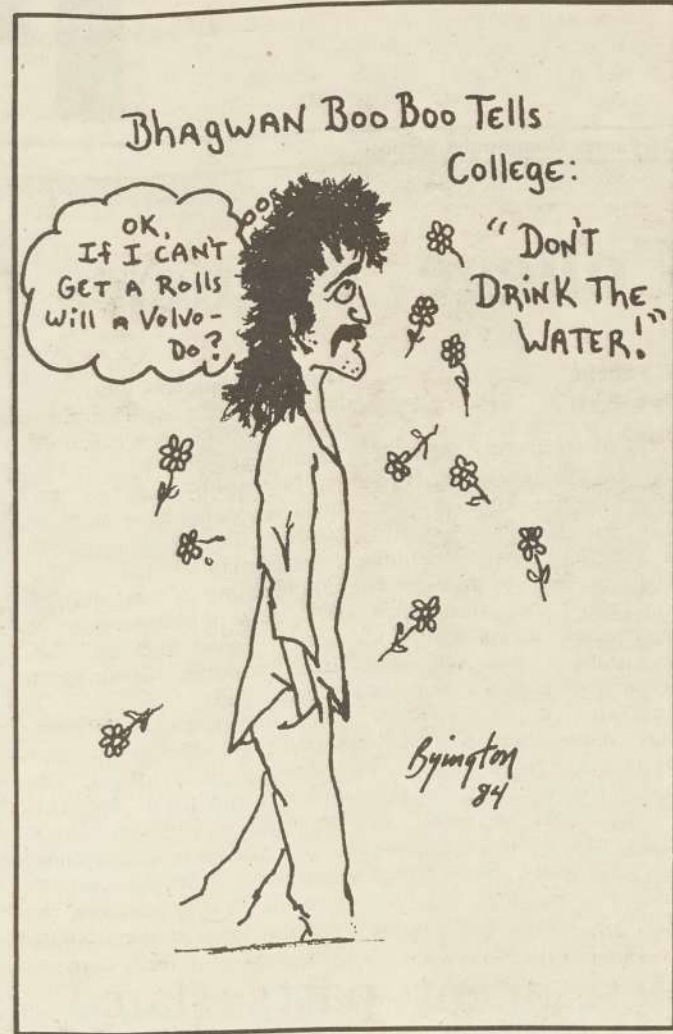
their eyes on television before acting on their behalf. But the media didn't think the situation in Africa was important enough to cover until the conditions there became deplorable. *Newsweek* reports Western relief organizations kept alerting the news media of the disaster with press releases, phone calls, photos, even filmed footage of it in progress for months, all to no avail.

The media didn't completely ignore the famine situation, though. The *New York Times* and some other major newspapers were reported to have run stories on the famine last summer and the disaster did receive more coverage in Europe. America's news media has its hands full covering what is going on in its own backyard, so it could be understandable that it can't spare enough time to cover problems as remote as an African famine until the event itself demands attention.

It should also be noted that the Ethiopian government was reported to have refused foreign journalists into its borders prior to its anniversary celebration of the ouster of Haile Selassie.

But Ethiopia was not the only country suffering from a famine, and even when American free-lance journalist Gayle Small was able to enter Ethiopia and report what was going on, she said news agencies wouldn't buy her stories. *Newsweek* quotes her as saying, "What people are dying of now is as much international silence as a food shortage."

Every good journalist knows it's just as important to report events while they are in progress as well as when they have taken place. And no matter how insignificant Ethiopia and other Africa countries may appear to us Westerners, it seems to me the onset of the worst famine in African history, a famine that has already claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, is surely important enough for the media to inform the public of as soon as the threat was made known. Who can predict how many people may be alive today had action been taken earlier?



Letters to the Editor

The *Print* gladly accepts any letters to the editor. All letters are subject to editing and should not be libelous, obscene or false.

Letters must be typed and double spaced. It must be signed by the author and accompanied by an address and phone number where he/she can be reached.

White Supremist's beliefs nothing more than trash

By Jane Wilcox
News Editor

The idea of a white supremacist nation irks me. No, more than that, it incites in me a fury that defies description. The nerve of a handful of white trash deciding that they are better because they lack a little more pigment than some. The particular group I'm talking about is the neo-Nazis in Hayden, Idaho that call themselves the Church of Jesus Christ Christian Aryan Nations, headed by Rev. Richard G. Butler.

The Nov. 18 issue of the

Oregonion's Northwest magazine ran an article on this group, from which I've gathered the following information.

For the past 11 years Butler and his followers have lived on their 20 acres putting out the word against Jews, Catholics, blacks, Mexican-Americans and homo-sexuals, as well as communism and the American economic system through their own printing press.

Butler has been quoted by *Northwest* as saying, "The white race has been the culture bearers; they have been the civilizing influence of the

world."

Unfortunately, Butler is not the only neo-Nazi leader. Keith Gilbert, a 45-year-old convict is the founder of the Post Falls, Idaho Social Nationalist Aryan People's Party and pastor of the Restored Church of Jesus Christ.

Gilbert is more vocal about his hates than Butler. Butler never includes racial epithets in his church sermons and speeches but Gilbert litters his conversations with "nigger," "kike" and "greaser."

Gilbert has threatened mere children because through no fault of their own, they were

born racially mixed. It's been reported he stopped one child on the street and allegedly asked, "How are you today? Thou shall not live long."

Gilbert was sued by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith for using their name on letters he had sent to

the Idaho Legislature. He showed up in court in full Nazi dress, alone, to defend himself. He said, "I have God and Jesus Christ at my back." Do I really need a lying, filthy Jewish lawyer?"

Funny. Wasn't Jesus Jewish?

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