

The self-described "Worldist" has his gospel of people since his first hunger in 1929. Speaking at "The World" conference in summer of 1984, he believes hunger is politically motivated by developed

to give political force to organize them ... peasants are harrowed by their own food they will

sists not only on the right of themselves. "We have the right to produce, to harvest, to eat food ... What the rich want is to steal from the

is an example of intervention. Nicaragua was a grassroots movement largely by an agrarian reform and revolution. The success of the Sandinista programme of land to the peasants to the food has outraged the government. American corporations have been reduced to huge land holdings to lose not only a food exports but, a cheap garden for a huge colony war. Thus the American government is backing the rich peasants for land and food they need for.

the governments, in the 1980s, are the monetarist they back to propound economic beliefs in the 1980s, in particular The World Bank and International Monetary Fund, virtual Greek controlled by the United States policy, stated by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz is "Food is a weapon. It is the principal weapon in negotiating kit." The World Bank and IMF are the going markets for products and insisting on a strict set of economic beliefs. Dumont labels the world's collective debt, in the neighborhood of \$1 trillion, "a detailed account by the rich of the world."

nothing altruistic in it. It serves political objectives and, like business gestures, must return on investment. The World Bank leaves no room for friends like that the Soviets for that the policies are similar) and countries can ill-afford.

ant Dumont goes so far as to oppose all aid to the world except in the most direst situations occasioned by disasters such as floods

or earthquakes. Any project with foreign assistance, he insists, must employ locals, but supplies locally and be controlled locally by the people affected (not necessarily their government). If money is needed it should be given with no strings attached, and toward fulfilling their rights of people.

"Countries should feed themselves, not depend on so-called aid. Ninety per cent of aid goes to the ruling elite and bourgeoisie, further entrenching inequalities ... Aid blocks the production of food for the starving."

He says the best approach to combatting hunger is to be militant, launching an all-out attack on the current world economic system, a system that insists on a 'free' market for primary agricultural and mineral products from the Third World countries, but highly regulates and artificially inflated (through quotas and oligopolies) the price of finished goods, services and food-stuffs.

The island nation of Malta demonstrates how poor nations are at the mercy of outside economic forces. The economy of the country has been devastated by the introduction of a new Coke. The new drink contains no vanilla, the island's principal export, whose sole client is Coke. Vanilla prices are set by the "free" market — in this case what Coke offers — but imports of finished goods rise steadily in price and don't stop once the vanilla market caves in. The situation is similar across the Third World. More than 60 nations depend essentially on a single product for their export income, and in most cases this product is purchased by one or two corporations: coffee in Ethiopia, nuts in Gambia, cocoa in Ghana, bauxite in Jamaica, sugar in Cuba, wood in Laos, livestock in Chad and cotton in Sudan. While the rest of the world focus on the drought in Ethiopia and Sudan, we somehow manage to ignore the fact that corporations continue to harvest hundreds of millions of dollars in non-edible products such as cotton and coffee while the locals starve to death.

"The cause of hunger is political and ending hunger necessitates massive political concessions," says Dumont. In effect, what Dumont calls for is revolution. Not a revolution in the sense of taking up arms (through he warns that this is inevitable if current inequities persist) but a revolution in our approach to famine and justice.

For a world so proud of its science, technology and its management skills, eliminating hunger should be child's play. The problem is a lack of political will. "... Marxism, capitalisms, etc. are all outdated," says University of Mexico professor Modesto Seara-Vasquez, another participant in "The Right to Food" conference. "Nineteenth century theories cannot solve twentieth century problems."

"The real solution lies in a deep reform — dare I say revolution? — of the world social, economical and political system."

Noting that people go hungry in a world where abundance reigns, with farmers being paid not to produce and food being destroyed by the ton, Seara-Vasquez calls hunger a "crime by humanity against humanity."

"Everybody is guilty — the rich countries, egotistic and short-sighted, and the ruling classes of the developing countries, inefficient, corrupt and as egotistic as those from developed countries."

Countries have a moral obligation to produce food and people have an inextricable right to their just share of production. Of course there are sound economic reasons from keeping food from reaching the hungry, he says, but this only further proves the inadequacies of the system, it in no way justifies what is happening.

"... We aren't speaking of simple economic operations, but of practices that mean literally condemning to death millions of people."

One can always find perfectly good economic reasons for other people's deaths but we are ignoring the true value of the malnourished. The ultimate irony, says Seara-Vasquez, is that the billion starving people could be viewed as a natural resource looking for power, lacking rights. He says the rich, ruling classes are so short-sighted in their exploitation that they don't even realize that by giving up little they could wipe out starvation and create new markets which conform to their ideas of rational self-interest. People who are fed, not surprisingly, are far more productive. The option to granting all people the right to food is grim says the professor. He hesitates to use the word "revolution" (it sounds so pat), but warns that "much worse is yet to come" for both rich and poor if changes are not made.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Malnutrition states: "No right has meaning or value once starvation strikes. It is the ultimate deprivation of rights, for without food, life ends, and rights are of value only to the living."

Think of that as you sing along to the We Are the World video, or watch Bob Geldof receive a Nobel Prize or as you stick a cheque to your favourite charity in an envelope.

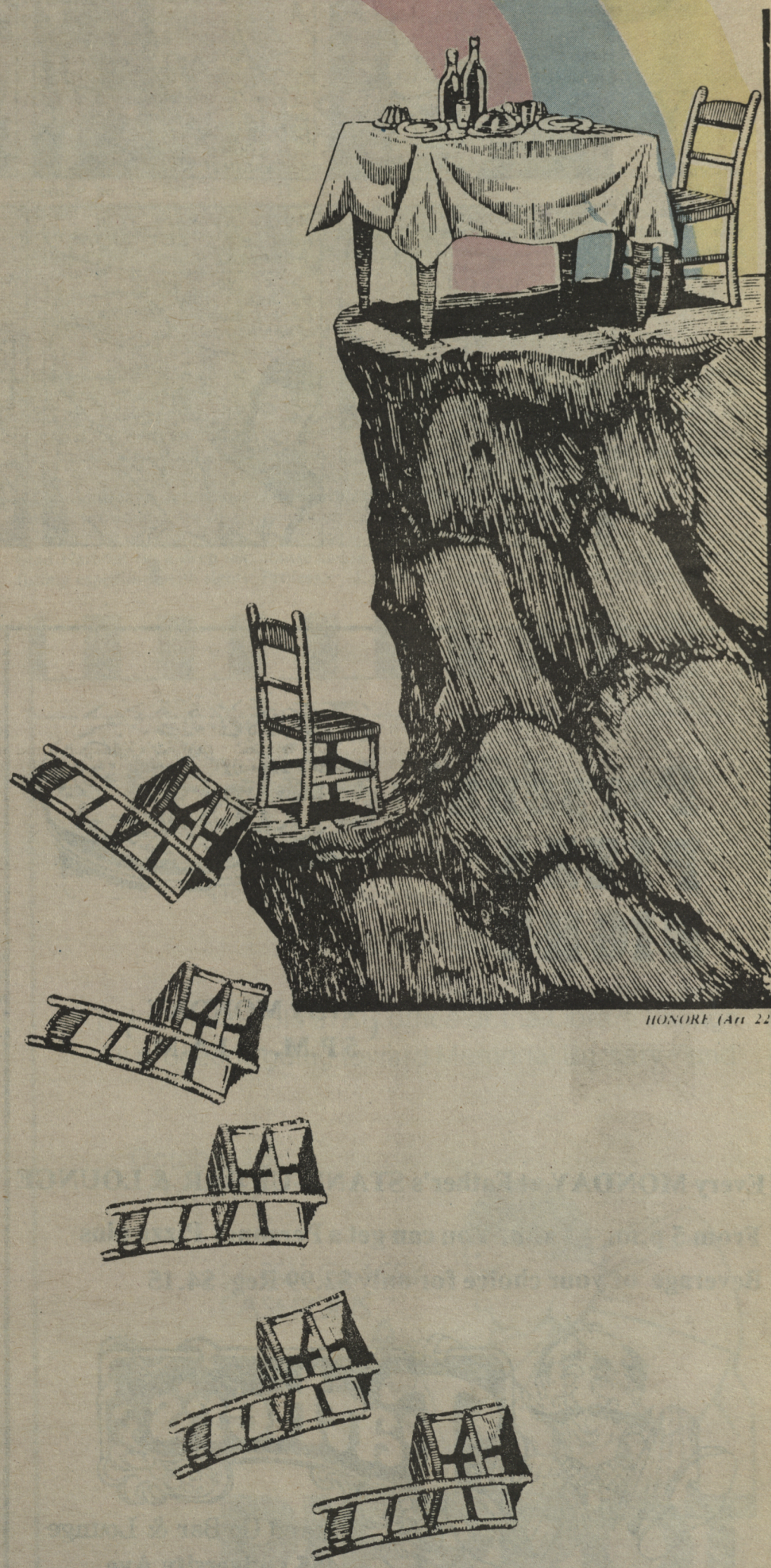
Think of the political and moral statements you are making through your action or inaction.

"The problem of hunger is not one of technology or organization, but one of politics; morally, the issue is not charity, but justice," says Susan George.

"Even one death is a scandal in a world where more than enough food exists for everyone," she adds.

Think of that when you mourn the 1,000 people who died while you read this article.

Mourn them with action.



HONORE (Art 22)