



Photo by LHS

"There were other pictures too: those of the penal colony of Poulo-Condore, created by the French, perfected by the Americans with their terrible 'tiger cages.' Tens of thousands of men and women rotted away there. Only one prisoner in four survived."

Congressman Koch is telling us that he sees no real difference between these penal colonies created and perfected by foreign force and what he has reported about the "education camps" of today. By similar logic, some German dissident in 1944 might have said that he sees no "real difference" between the punishment of collaborators in France and the Holocaust.

Koch adds finally that for him "there is only a single standard." That is true enough: it is the standard of subservience to the state and propaganda. Even the most extreme advocate of American "intervention" will delight in Koch's interesting rendition of history.

The editorial comment in the press is no less remarkable. Consider the *Christian Science Monitor*, which not long ago was featuring commentary by its leading pundit on the relative advantages of bombing trucks and bombing dams. The latter, he observed, is so much more satisfying to the pilots as "the water can be seen to pour through the breach and drown out huge areas of farm land, and villages, in its path." Bombing dams "will flood villages, drown people, destroy crops." But perhaps it is still not worthwhile because "there is no evidence that this causing of pain to civilians in North Vietnam (sic)" will bring Hanoi to the negotiating table (Joseph Harsch, Sept. 5, 1967). Today, with the hypocritical moralism that is its hallmark, the *Monitor* discusses the lessons that have "been all too belatedly learned by activists from the movement against American involvement." Hanoi's rejection of the protest "can only confirm the aggressive authoritarianism which America got into the war to resist." Typically, the *Monitor* makes its characteristic contribution to reinforcing the propaganda fabrications of the state it serves, with regard to the origins of the war and to the motives of those who opposed it.

The *Monitor* editorial then has the unmitigated gall to proclaim that now "the U.S. and other nations have to evaluate Vietnam's potentiality as a responsible world citizen." After the events of the past years, the United States must evaluate Vietnam as a "responsible world citizen," helped in this assessment by the *Monitor*, which has so clearly revealed its moral

stand and appreciation of historical events, as the quoted comments demonstrate. One can only watch open-mouthed in astonishment. I will refrain from pursuing the analogy to Nazi Germany, cited earlier.

These responses are not untypical. They reveal clearly the significance of the release of the protest to the American press, understood as a political act. The intention of the signers was, no doubt, to help victims of repression. The clearest and most significant consequence of the mode of protest they have chosen, which could easily have been foreseen and is now entirely obvious, is somewhat different. This political act contributes to the efforts on the part of the state propaganda apparatus—I include here the mass media—to reconstruct the history of the American involvement in Vietnam to fit the image of American benevolence, occasionally misguided; that is, to help lay the basis in public opinion for new episodes of this sort in the future.

There is absolutely no reason for anti-war activists to remain silent in the face of credible evidence regarding human rights violations in Vietnam, or more deeply, with regard to the society being constructed in Vietnam—though I stress again that this crucial question is not what is at issue here. But history suggests a certain degree of caution. Many of us, myself included, have criticized the North Vietnamese sharply in the past for alleged atrocities that were later revealed to be fabrications of American and Saigon intelligence. The land reform of the early 1950s is a striking example. It is equally striking that long after the propaganda fabrications had been exposed by Gareth Porter, and conceded by the former head of the Central Psychological War Service in Saigon, they are solemnly repeated as fact. This is not the only example.

By all means, we should continue to apply the single standard of judgment so grossly violated by the press, by academic scholarship, by Congressman Koch, and quite generally by those who are sometimes called "the American intellectual elite." But this commitment should not translate itself into service to the institutions of state propaganda. This is what has happened in the present case. Those who initiated the appeal now have an excellent opportunity to set the matter right. They have a public platform. I see no reason why they should not use it.

—Noam Chomsky  
Cambridge, Mass.

## Press profit-motive violates right to fair trial

Should the courts censor the press? It sounds like a heretical idea, one devised by a clique of rightists. Until recently, however, it was an infrequent, but effective technique applied by trial courts to insure a defendant charged with a crime a fairer trial, one not poisoned by pre-trial publicity. Moreover, it was the best remedy available to those who wish to insure due process to a defendant.

To understand why gag orders were and are so important one must know their background. In most criminal trials a defendant is arrested and tried without any media coverage or interest. But in a growing minority of cases, a citizen has the misfortune of being charged with an unpopular crime, or for allegedly victimizing a popular citizen. When that occurs, the media emblazons its front pages with massive pre-trial publicity.

What is most disturbing about such "reporting" is that the "information" comes directly from the offices of the prosecutor or the police. A confession is reported, or the suspect's prior criminal record is revealed, or unpopular or unusual political, sexual or social views of the accused are recounted. Even if such reports are true, which usually they are not, publication makes the selection of an impartial jury impossible. Thus a defendant is tried by the newspapers, on the basis of information, often false, not given under oath, and often not even admissible at trial.

Traditional techniques to insure an unbiased trial have usually failed. So in the 1960s the courts turned to two related techniques: first they gagged the parties to the case (the police, prosecutors and defense) by ordering them to not speak to the press regarding the case.

Such orders were somewhat successful, enough so to cause dozens of angry editorials condemning the actions. The newspapers and the prosecuting forces, however, were not deterred. Police or prosecutors would leak information in violation of the court order in consideration of a promise from the newspaper not to divulge the source. Prosecutorial leakage with impunity became a frequent problem.

Because of this, some courts chose to use a more radical—and direct—route to protect defendants. If they could not shut up the prosecutors, they could order the press not to print certain information prior to trial. Such press gag rulings never became common, but they were employed with great success, despite the hysterical claims of the media that such rulings thwarted crusading journalism.

Such claims were sheer nonsense. No gag order of the press ever prevented the

media from reporting on the occurrence of any crime or the arrest of any individual, either for a petty theft or Watergate. The press was simply restrained from relating damaging or incriminating allegations about a defendant before such allegations were made under oath at a public hearing. The press was thus told to delay its reporting of rumors until a defendant could be insured an unpoisoned trial.

Despite the logic and success of press gag orders the U.S. Supreme Court last year rejected such a Wisconsin order. In its decision it came so close to declaring press gag orders unconstitutional *per se* that most court observers believe, I think accurately, that the Supreme Court as currently constituted will never validate any order that censors the press.

Gag orders in the future, then, will have to revert to directing themselves against the parties. As in the past, they will be no more successful than the people allow them to be. The prosecutors and the press have an incentive to violate the orders. The public, however, has an interest in insuring fair trials.

The danger is that as long as the press continues to write inordinate numbers of columns opposing all gag orders, the public will not learn where its interests lie.

Moreover, unfortunately, most people on the socialist left have remained silent on the issue, either because they are confused or because they fear being "misunderstood" if they oppose the press.

The American Civil Liberties Union, however, has recently spoken out in favor of such orders. It has recommended the adoption of gag orders that fully restrict prosecutors and police from the dissemination of information, but that do not so limit the defense. (This would run contrary to present gag orders, which needlessly censor the defense. Such orders frustrate attempts to rebut rumors and to try to obtain legitimate community support for the defendant.)

Moreover, the ACLU favors the jailing of reporters who refuse to name their official sources who have violated the gag rulings. This position is both right and courageous.

It is about time that socialists come off the fence and take a firm principled stand in favor of the ACLU recommendation. The capitalist press is not interested in defending anyone's constitutional rights but its own. It is interested in profit, and as elsewhere, the profit motive is not generally conducive to the protection of the people's rights.

Joshua Dressler is a lawyer who teaches at the University of San Fernando Valley College of Law, Los Angeles. His column appears regularly.

THESE TIMES

Send me In These Times  
for the next 3 months  
for \$5

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street \_\_\_\_\_  
city/state/zip \_\_\_\_\_  
\$5 gift subscription for...  
name \_\_\_\_\_  
street \_\_\_\_\_  
city/state/zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Mail your check to...

New Majority Publishing Co.  
1509 N. Milwaukee Av.  
Chicago, IL 60622

Send me 50 weeks of  
In These Times  
for \$15

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street \_\_\_\_\_  
city/state/zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Gift subscriptions for...  
name \_\_\_\_\_  
street \_\_\_\_\_  
city/state/zip \_\_\_\_\_



## LIFE IN THE U.S.

## FOOD

## Americans need a new diet

By Judy MacLean  
Staff Writer

A man stands in a field of corn (or is it wheat?). A tractor has carved "100%" in letters the size of a football field on the field. He's telling America how many synthetic vitamins a cereal manufacturer has put into its breakfast cereal. He leaves out what the manufacturer left out—nutrients lost in the processing of grain to make the cereal. But, on the other hand, ten years ago he probably would only have told us that the cereal would make us happy, sexy, successful or champions. In its own way the food industry has responded to America's increased awareness about nutrition.

The federal government is responding too. The Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs recently issued a report that said health care costs could be cut by a third if the American diet were improved. According to the committee, six out of ten of the leading causes of death are tied to what we eat and drink.

The average American today takes in 60 percent of his or her calories through simple carbohydrates in the form of starch or sugar, which increases the likelihood of heart disease, diabetes and tooth decay, the committee found.

The committee recommends a diet with 60 percent of the calories from complex carbohydrates (fruits, vegetables and whole grains). Poultry and fish should replace red meat, and skim and low-fat milk products should replace those high in butterfat to cut down on saturated fat consumption.

The report recommends eating a lot less processed baked goods and soft drinks, the principle causes of high intake of sugar. To cut salt intake (which has been linked to hypertension) to the recommended three grams a day, the report says to be wary of cured meats, catsup, pickles, popcorn and potato chips.

#### ►Most findings already known.

There are millions of Americans to whom this advice comes as no surprise. They are the readers of Adele Davis' popular nutrition books that pulled together many scientific studies about human nutrition in a readable form. Or, they are the hundreds of thousands of people juggling a brown bag of bulgur wheat as they weigh up their lentils and avocados in crowded natural food stores. While some diets advocated as health foods are of questionable value, the information in the Senate study has been available for many years. If anything, the report can be criticized for leaving out many issues, such as the level of



Health care costs could be cut by a third if the American diet were improved, says the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition.

poisons such as DDT in animal products and the possible harmful effect of preservatives and artificial ingredients.

There are some, however, who found the report downright disturbing. *Food Chemical News*, an aptly titled magazine written for food industry executives, said the report "stepped on the toes of the dairy, egg and meat lobbies."

Or take John White, high in the upper reaches of public relations at Coca-Cola headquarters. What does he think of the committee's saying that, contrary to the new slogan "Coke Adds Life," "foods" like Coke were contributing to the leading causes of death?

"That's an extreme view," said Mr. White sourly. He was a lot less animated than the young fun-lovers in the Coke commercials. "Well, Mr. White," I said, "it's the Senate committee's view, not my own. But how would you react if the government started making you stamp, 'Warning, drinking this may be hazardous to your health' on every bottle?"

"They couldn't do that," he answered. "Soft drinks have been used since the dawn of time. There will always be a place for soft drinks in the human diet. It's a refreshment beverage, and people will always need refreshment."

"But Mr. White," I said, "this report says that too much sugar is making us all sick."

#### ►Moderate and conciliatory.

It's too bad he hung up on me so fast. I was going to tell him that I don't really think they will stamp that on the bottles. After all, George McGovern, head of the committee, said, "We don't want war with the food industry and the agricultural producers; we need their cooperation."

The report takes a moderate stance throughout, carefully avoiding recommendations that would threaten the profits of agribusiness. The report seems to be written in hopes that reason will persuade the food industry to cooperate, since it is backed by no political grouping that wields as much clout as agribusiness.

Even with that moderate attitude, the committee's days are numbered. In a recent reorganization vote, the Senate gave the committee only until the end of this year. Then it will become a subcommittee of Agriculture, with far less control of what it does. McGovern protested the vote, saying the hungry poor didn't have the resources to lobby for the committee to continue. The food industry, on the other hand, is represented by numerous powerful lobbies.

I asked Swift and Co., who make a lot of ham and bacon, which came under criticism in the report for having too much saturated fat and salt, what they think about the committee blaming the food industry for "a wave of malnutrition" even among affluent Americans?

"Swift and Co. has always been interested in nutrition education," said spokesperson Liz Sode. "We recently built a \$1.3 million exhibit on nutrition at the Museum of Science and Industry." I went right down to check that one out. The exhibit features plastic replicas of typical American meals: plastic meat, potatoes, and vegetable, with a plastic glass of plastic milk, all in a plastic case.

#### ►After all, you can pick and choose.

At Kraft Foods, Sara Vectors of public relations assured me they are "committed to producing only the finest food products for the American home."

When I asked about products like a box dinner (four largest ingredients: enriched spaghetti, sugar, salt, food starch) she said, "One thing that's made the American food industry great is that it manufactures a wide variety of products, some very nutritious, and some less so. That way Americans can pick and choose."

Between the agricultural producers and the food industry stands an institution known as the Commodity Board of Trade. Through its halls flow all the basic foodstuffs—corn, rice, wheat, soybeans, etc.—or at least pieces of paper representing these things flow. Great fortunes are made there. What role does this great middleman play in the deteriorating American diet?

I called them up and asked. The woman who answered the phone couldn't see any relationship. "I'm going to let someone talk to you who can give you some background, because from the sound of your question, you certainly need it," she said.

A nice young man patiently explained that it isn't so much the corn and rice that are sold there, as the risks that the crops

will be bigger or smaller. Speculation, he explained, means that financiers take the risk out of the business for farmers and food processors alike.

But, I pressed on, shouldn't there be some connection? Here's an institution dealing with a basic human need; shouldn't it have something to do with whether and how the need is being met?

No, he explained. "The board of trade just keeps cash and commodities flowing. It has nothing to do with what processors do once the food is sold."

#### ►Out for profit.

That, of course, is the heart of it. The entire food industry is there not to nourish us, but to keep cash and commodities flowing, to make a profit.

Giant food conglomerates are automating every step of food processing. Often the mechanical processes are more expensive than the workers they displace. But in the long run the food processors can pass on the costs to us, and the machines won't get sick, strike or become bored with the job. The corporation eventually has higher profits and more control.

The increased automation means centralizing in ever larger plants. Fewer workers are needed (and their work is more readily controlled) in a huge plant or plants where hamburgers are stamped out, rolls are baked, lettuce is shredded, tomatoes and onions are chopped and sliced than to set up a neighborhood kitchen and make hamburgers from scratch. Every bit of processing that can be centralized means higher profits; only the final "assembly" goes on in your neighborhood food outlet.

The principle is the same for a TV dinner; because the whole operation is centralized and automated they can sell it often for less than the cost of preparing the same meal at home—with far less than the nutritional value of the fresh-cooked meal, however. The same techniques are increasingly being used on stuffed flounder and *coq au vin* in "gourmet" restaurants.

All this creates the need for a long "shelf life" since the plants are increasingly distant from the place where we finally eat the food. And that means BHA, BHT and their like to preserve food, and products like "hydrogenated palm oil" (the principle ingredient of whipped toppings) that don't go bad on the shelf, but don't do us much good either.

#### ►Research and education.

The nutrition committee wants to fund a program to research "new techniques in food processing and meal preparation to reduce risk factors in the diet." Techniques of two generations ago would do that, but would also present a high risk factor for corporate profit.

The committee also wants a federal program of nutrition education to counteract the over \$1 billion the food industry spends each year on ads, mostly for junk food. They'd better come up with something more imaginative than what's in the typical public school today. There the teacher has charts with pictures of the five "basic food groups" and lessons telling the student to eat for breakfast: eggs, bacon, toast, cereal, milk and orange juice. Then the students go to the cafeteria where in an increasing number of schools the federally subsidized lunch program has been contracted out, for convenience and cheapness, to a manufacturer of school lunch TV dinners. Benton, Ark., public schools took the ultimate step: they invited McDonalds in to set up shop in the school lunchroom. And at the side of most cafeterias we find none other than well-stocked Coke and ice cream machines.

### Diet Recommendations

The report on "Dietary Goals for the United States" prepared by the staff of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs made the following suggestions on the foods Americans should eat:

**Complex Carbohydrates** — Fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains, including white and sweet potatoes, dark green and yellow vegetables, dry beans and peas. Fresh and frozen produce more nutritious than canned. Highly refined and processed food, such as instant mashed potatoes, not so nutritious. Brown rice better than converted and white enriched rice, but all three better than instant. Hot cooked whole grain breakfast cereals better than ready-to-eat cereals, but "instant" and quick-cooking cereals not so nutritious as long-cooking.

**Fats** — Concentrate on foods that have 30 percent or less of calories from fat, including beef pot roast, light meat

of chicken, liver, perch, halibut, sole, skim milk, uncreamed cottage cheese. Avoid high-fat items such as peanut butter, wieners, lunch meat, eggs, regular ground beef and whole milk. Butter is 50 percent saturated fat, while safflower oil is only 9 percent, and safflower margarine 13 percent.

**Cholesterol** — Skim milk, uncreamed cottage cheese are low in cholesterol (5-7 mg.); cheddar cheese, whole milk, butter and red meat higher (25-85 mg.); highest cholesterol are eggs (250 ms. each), liver and other interior organs (370-1,700 mg. for 3 oz.).

**Sodium (salt)** — All fruits and fruit juices are low salt, as are butter and cooking oils. Avoid salted meats such as bacon, ham, lunch meats; smoked and salted fish, such as anchovies; peanut butter, bouillon, catsup, chili sauce, prepared mustard, pickles, potato chips, popcorn, other salted snacks.