

Correspondence

Liberty & Postal Rates

To the Editors: Andrew Heiskell's remarks ("Liberty, Ignorance, and Postal Rates," Excursus, *Worldview*, July-August) were read with relief, whatever the motivations of the chairman of Time Inc. might be.

The cost of the mass distribution of ideas is increasingly treated as "no object" in this mass media society. It's the survival of the fittest, or blandest, or largest in the public information market. As if the embrace of advertising revenue didn't adulterate the press enough, now free market postal rates are interjected to separate the men from the boys, and the deviates, and weirdos, and lunatic fringe.

I have much less concern for the hardships *Time* must endure than for the stringy publications whose birth in the future will be welcomed by Madison Avenue road tests. Without sufficient capitalization, these misfits will be orphaned by postal rates and finished off by an inherently conformist advertising market.

The postal "service," by the way, has a most bewildering catch in their Second Class rate classification. That is that a news publication must have a paid subscribers list (not token) to qualify for this comparatively lower rate.

I have not discovered the theory behind this yet—perhaps unsolicited ideas are considered as potentially harassing as discount store circulars. Whatever, the effect is clear. The nonincumbency of young, perhaps different, publications is a great handicap to their prime intent, the dissemination of their particular information or opinion.

A true postal service would make it possible for even the most offensive of ideologues to get it out of his system—and why not? Surely the taxpayers may not wish to pay for such an extended conception of liberty. Let the postal service tax the profits (and only the profits) of the publishers who benefit by such nonexclusive rates (this taxation through the government, of

course). I suspect the chairman of a well-entrenched publication might take issue with me here. Nevertheless, such action would boost the real value of publication while not eliminating the capitalist incentive.

Right now it seems that TV and the local newspaper are commonly viewed as adequate mediums of man's day-to-day discourse. You may even throw in *Time* and *Playboy*. Even *Cosmopolitan*, or any of the specialized publications that depend on dedicated subscription. To add to the mailbox clutter unsolicited, no less uncondoned, ideas is to add to the drag on the great production/consumption machine that the postal service is rapidly becoming a part of.

Maybe our society is doing more thinking. Perhaps our people are becoming more reflective than before. So why is it getting harder and harder to hear the other guy think?

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The World's Food Needs

To the Editors: I wish to commend you for your inclusion in the May, 1975, issue of *Worldview* of the "Message From Consultation on World Hunger" at Wartburg College in February, 1975, and also "The Right to Food: A Statement of Policy" of Bread for the World. Both of these articles lack the unfortunate sensationalism that frequently is seen in statements by the concerned but inadequately informed. Both of these articles address themselves to specific problem areas and seek specific solutions.

The message from the farmers points out the crucial importance of a strong agriculture in meeting the world's food needs. In the past much of our U.S. international development aid has been directed toward industrialization of developing nations. Our efforts were based on the premise that industrialization would raise the economic status of the masses, thereby allowing them to better feed themselves. The industrial technology and food would be provided by the U.S. The fallacy in this concept is the underlying presupposition that the U.S.

is rich because we are industrialized. We have become industrially great because our nation first developed a strong, independent agriculture. In the developing nations 75 per cent of the populace are directly dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood. U.S. agriculture has become so efficient that only 5 per cent of our population are farmers. Only by increasing the agricultural efficiency of the developing nations can they free the labor necessary for industrial development. In an effort to abet this situation the World Bank recently committed \$7 billion toward agricultural development over the next five years, and \$1 billion annually thereafter. However, the World Bank readily admits that this amount constitutes only 20 per cent of the capital necessary for adequate agricultural development.

There are obviously no simple solutions to the world food problem. It is indeed a delicate if not impossible task to implement programs to alleviate hunger without intruding on the cultural and religious mores of other peoples. Developing nations seem to be particularly suspicious of programs emanating from the U.S. as being self-serving.

Solutions to the problem, if they do indeed exist, will require the coordination of efforts in several primary fields: (1) food production, (2) storage, distribution, and utilization of food and feed, (3) population control, (4) resource management and reallocation, (5) education of development agents in areas such as agriculture, sanitation, medicine, water management, nutrition, and food technology and processing. Fragmentation of efforts in the past has led to failure.

The crucial issue seems to be who or what shall be the coordinating agency. Allusion has already been made to the fact that the U.S., although perhaps best equipped to provide the coordination, probably no longer evokes the necessary confidence of the rest of the world.

Our resource-limited, shrinking world can no longer afford the luxury of isolationistic nationalism. Solution of the world hunger crisis seems contingent upon the finding of a suitable

(Continued on p. 4)