

Agriculture Organization (FAO), in his opening remarks, when he called for "measures to solve the debt problems of developing countries."

Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere pointed out recently that Africa is paying \$10 billion annually in debt service alone, a sum vastly more than the amount of aid going into Africa; a sum mentioned by Whelan was \$3 billion last year. A WFC official at a press briefing mentioned that there is a \$1 billion a year fall in net investment in Africa, with \$8 billion going in during 1983 and only \$2.7 billion projected for 1986.

Some of the U.N. officials at the meeting were privately not at all happy about the fact that African representatives refused to accept the Malthusian argument that population growth was responsible for famine. One such official told *EIR*, "The population problem is a sensitive issue . . . for political reasons the Africans refuse to pay enough attention to it. The African population will double by the year 2000!"

In contrast to other U.N. bodies, the WFC places much less emphasis on the so-called "population problem." In a pamphlet published in May 1985, to the question, "What have been the causes of Africa's mounting food problems and recent famines?" the WFC answers:

"Africa's food problem is not solely the result of the recent drought. . . . There are other basic underlying factors at the heart of Africa's food crisis.

"External financial shocks and worsening trade prospects have brought many African economies to a virtual standstill. Some African export commodities have seen their international market value drop by 30-50% in recent years.

"In addition, many African countries are seriously underdeveloped, with serious shortages of skilled manpower and basic infrastructure. . . .

"Finally, observers point to the relatively low priority assigned by African governments in the 1960s and early 1970s to agricultural development and to national food policies as a basic, underlying cause of the present crisis."

Further on, the WF states, "The most practical and ultimately the most beneficial way of solving the world food problem is to support the development of low-income food-deficit countries, so they can either grow the food they need, or have the means for importing it."

The American position in the conference was: Free enterprise is the solution. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture John Block attacked "government interference that disrupts market forces." "Many developing countries would profit greatly from reforms that reduce the government's role and attract private sector participation into agricultural extension, research and the distribution of inputs to farmers." He described the American government's policy of selective help—only helping those countries which agree to undertake reforms; "Entitled 'Food for Progress,' this new initiative would provide 500,000 metric tons of commodities a year over the next five years to selected recipient countries."

Interview: Eugene Whelan



'They put a dollar sign on human lives'

The following interview with the Hon. Eugene F. Whelan, former head of the United Nations World Food Council (1983-85), former Minister of Agriculture of Canada was conducted by Mary Lalevée in Paris, June 14, 1985, following the four-day ministerial meeting of the World Food Council, June 10-13, 1985.

EIR: You said in your opening remarks, that unless something is done, Africa is facing the worst holocaust that man has ever seen. What does that mean for the World Food Council and its policies, because the WFC was set up to prevent this kind of disaster from ever happening again, and here it is unfolding in front of our eyes. What's gone wrong?

Whelan: Well, I think the World Food Council should admit that it's failed, the same as most U.N. agencies have failed. The ones that are the oldest are the biggest failures. The FAO, for instance, is a disaster, as far as I'm concerned. It must have been obvious to you what they were doing at the World Food Council. They were organizing a system that would not be the one that was intended, in the first instance: that is, one that looked after the criteria that it's set out for them to look after with these people in the U.N. In very rough farm terminology, you'd say that it's set out for them to ride herd on them, make sure they don't go astray, make sure they do the things that they're supposed to. And if they do ride herd, in the proper fashion, and if one of them goes astray, you're to bring them back, you're not to be all cuddly and nice with these organizations, just cooperate and work with them, you're to be at arm's length with those organizations, you watch them, you report what's going on directly to the United Nations.

I'm just saying that when we see this terrible tragedy, it is difficult for me to understand, in 1985, how that could even be allowed to happen. We call ourselves civilized! We're the most barbaric group of people in the world, especially those countries—and a lot of them have done that—which said "Look, our deficit is big, we can't afford this kind of thing. We have to lower our deficit, and until then you either live or die." In essence what we do is put a money sign—in my country, we would say a dollar sign—on the one who can

live and the one who can die. "I'm sorry, there's not enough for you. You'll die until we have a big enough surplus, or [until] our overall economic situation is in such a position. We're going to, then, start taking care of you." That's the meanest thing, the most barbaric thing.

We don't know for sure even now how many millions have died. In Ethiopia, for instance, there's no way to take a proper census. They say they have approximately 40 million people—nobody knows that. Nobody has been in all those villages, where the people have moved from. We said in 1983, they shouldn't be forced to move from that natural way of life, that habitat that they had. I

people into camps in areas [where] the environments are completely strange to them. It's doing to them. Then you're mixing them into a city of huts, which in time will probably be another disaster area, because the environment that some of them are moving in is very fragile. You [would] tell the ordinary person, "Watch out what you're doing, here." I

I some of the others when they were first set up. Canada is very proud of FAO, because we were leaders in setting it up.

[The FAO] said at that time that in two decades there should be no one suffering from malnutrition or starvation or hunger. But also, when you go to the foundation of the World Food Council, after that tragedy took place in the early '70s, especially again in Ethiopia—I

ger, from one of the most powerful nations of the world, saying "Let there be no man, woman or child ten years from now going to bed any place in the world suffering from malnutrition, hunger." We know, a rich country like that, that spends so much of its resources on military might, and all of these things, along with say the Soviet Union, just the two of them, together, could make sure [the famine stopped].

We could turn the desert around if we really wanted to! When we look at the deserts of the southwestern United States, New Mexico, Arizona particularly, California, look at the deserts in Mexico, look at the cold deserts in Canada, Australia, India,

it like the Garden of Eden. Or again I has one of the harshest deserts in the world! I about six weeks ago, and it's even more beautiful than the last time I was there; water and residences that you can't believe, food production that's making it one of the most important states in the United States every year as far as food production [is concerned]. We know that the deserts in parts of Africa are not nearly that harsh. You could make it [like Arizona] if you use the same things they did, and what was it? Money and technology, it's as simple as that.

People in Africa need vast amounts of all of these things. In

of their systems, but basically those people have to have the basic things of life, and that's basic education, enough knowledge to read and write. It's massive program, for at least ten years, or else you're going

to see—and you're seeing right now if you go there—genocide, or a holocaust that's as bad as anything you ever saw in the world.

We know, we're aware. We have satellites. You can read the newspaper in the back yard, we have the temperatures every day of every village all around the world. We can tell with satellites where the minerals are, with the equipment that we use. We can do the same thing for finding water. A massive effort. . .

I brought to our attention one or two years ago at the annual meeting of the WFC. I think it was 281 delegations went into Upper Volta, now called Bourkina Faso. But if you go to Bourkina Faso, you wonder what they did besides cost money to go there with those delegations . . . very little has been done in that country. And it's the poorest country, probably, in all of Africa. It's

you could have built a railroad from Ivory service them all year. You could build a road or a railroad from Algeria down into Niger, and that area, so you'd save these agencies other ways of bringing [food aid] in, or, as they develop, to export their products out for trade. All of these things compounded mean very little has been done to make a better way of life for these people.

In out the infrastructure of his systems, and the U.N. agencies that we met there said this man had a pretty good system of warehousing, and of making sure that in case of tragedy he'd be able to take care of his people. But one of the international agencies, I

grain on store. Get rid of some of it." And he did, and now he's begging! That wasn't his plan, you got to give him some credit, the infrastructure in this land-locked nation called Niger is one that has to impress you to some extent, when you see what they were trying to do. Outsiders came in, and told him, "You're wrong! We're not going to give you a loan if you don't change that."

When I going to visit the Nigerian President, hoping they could expedite the processing [of food supplies through Nigerian] ports. I've some of the most difficult in the world, the most congested, and never really developed into a port for international use. It's Ethiopia. I

I live in North America, and ships go by my farm from all over the world, because I seaway, the Detroit river, that carries more tonnage than any other waterway in the world. And I see what you can do with efficiency, in the ports in our own cities and on the Great Lakes, what we did with them, and how we've improved them, with massive amounts of money, but they have paid for themselves in trade. Thank God we have those ports, even for aid!

Last year, you may scoff, but the St. Lawrence seaway

stayed open the longest it ever has, because of the weather! A lift bridge was broken, and couldn't be raised, and it took them three weeks to get the mechanism to raise this huge lift bridge so the ships could go under. Every ship in the St. Lawrence seaway was able to get their cargo and return by Jan. 4, when most of the time that seaway was closed by Dec. 15. Every night the weatherman would say, "This is phenomenal, the warm winds are coming from the south, and they're covering the Great Lakes area, and going out over the St. Lawrence." It making sure that those grain boats got out of the St. Lawrence seaway. A power greater than ours.

EIR: What do you think should be done in Africa, both in terms of emergency aid, to save the millions of lives now at stake, and secondly in the more long term?

Whelan: It these world organizations have appointed Maurice Strong, to be the African coordinator. In another coordinator to make sure that the freight traffic moves right in that area, that distribution is taking place. He's from New Zealand, and he said, in a meeting I attended at the U.N. in December, we must coordinate all of our efforts for this tragedy, and coordinate them as quick as we could! [He said] "we're calling an emergency meeting for early in the year, in 1985."

Right at that meeting, the head of the FAO got up and said, "I didn't do, but if he'd said I'm the facilities, and work with you to cordinate all our efforts. But right at that meeting, he said, "I'm I'm obvious to me that the coordination that the secretary-general of the U.N. was asking for wasn't being adhered to. And it isn't yet either. There are some of these organizations that are making like they're coordinating, willing, but they're very prestigious with their own organization, don't like to lose their authority. . . . You know, "That's your job, and don't you interfere with my jurisdiction, your jurisdiction and mine are different."

EIR: What could be done in terms of an emergency effort?

Whelan: It shouldn't be a person in Niger or Bourkina Faso dying of starvation. Let's use an example: If you read the congressional reports of the United States, when the Catholic aid association in Ethiopia wanted to buy one \$47,000 truck, in July 1983, cause probably the Ethiopian government could use it for military purposes if they wanted to.

But when the madman from Libya was invading Chad, it took them seven days to send \$10 billion worth of military equipment, by big planes, for the people in Chad to counteract the invasion from the man from the north.

These are things that we know you can do, and you should

be doing that. There are airports in Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso that you could use, using military equipment if necessary to get the materials to them.

There has to be an overall change in the world organizations, as I nations over the U.N. bodies. I've positions ever since I was 21, never knew anything else than democracy. Maybe we have a different form in Canada, but any similarity between democracy and the administration of most U.N. bodies is purely coincidental. I don't see it there very much.

The head of FAO, for instance, is a dictator. I could not operate even as a minister for a day in my own country that way. The authority he wields over these people, I don't understand how they could do that. And the sponsoring nations, I don't see how they could stand for what's going on in some of those organizations.

I point a finger at them. He's even made a film that shows him walking amongst these poor starving people, saying, "I warned the donor nations." But when you check the documents of FAO, he didn't start warning the donor nations until 1984. He's trying to protect his own ass on this whole operation. This is part of the whole game with these people.

There should be a massive meeting of the sponsoring countries of the U.N., *not* those *bureaucrats* going there. At the meeting yesterday, when it adjourned, there were only one or two ministers there, and the ones that were the greatest spokesmen of all, the ones that are deliberately trying to stop'm calling the inquiry into the WFC's operations, were the ambassadors or their alternates from FAO. A blind man on a galloping horse could see what they were doing! They were gleeful over what they had accomplished. so important,

Any government that is part of that is, to me, not guilty of a misdemeanor, but guilty of a major tragedy to allow that kind of thing to continue to happen, and abuse the privileges that are granted to them. One of the greatest things that could happen at FAO is a benevolent dictator, under the present system, one that really cared, and went in there and cleaned house, and you could say that for some of the other U.N. bodies, too.

EIR: What about the question of the African economies? This was raised by some of the African ministers, that countries were being forced to pay back so much in debt service, and this was preventing their development.

Whelan: The African economies have to be protected. In my opening remarks, where I departed from my script, that I thought half the debt should be cancelled and a moratorium on the other half, because we're economically stabbing them to death. They can't possibly make those payments and do the things that are necessary for themselves.

All the people that I met in those countries, every one of the leaders recognizes that there have to be some drastic changes in their own countries, their farming practices, their education system, and all these things have to be changed for

the better. If it isn't, we'll continually have a basket case, and I don't think we want that, and I don't think they want that either.

We can use some of the African countries as an example. They're even told, "Look, you're spending too much money on education." The one I'm thinking of particularly now is Zimbabwe. I know Dennis Norman, the minister of agriculture there, and I've known him for several years, and he and the government have dwelt on a concentrated extension program for at least the last six years. Even in a terrible dry year, the year before last, they had not bad crops, in some instances they planted five times, in their country, because they have that kind of planning and those kind of resources that provided the seeds and the fertilizer for that. This year, this past harvest, they had a bumper crop. But if it hadn't been for what they had been doing, and especially with their small farmers, whose production went from 10% of the nation's production to 40% of the nation's production. You can't help but be impressed with it.

The World Food Council should admit that it's failed, the same as most U.N. agencies have failed. The ones that are the oldest are the biggest failures. The FAO, for instance, is a disaster, as far as I'm concerned.

But one of these organizations, the IMF I believe it was, or the World Bank, said "You're spending too much money on education." But that country had a basis for education; even under the controversial Smith regime, they never discontinued their education. They made it available to practically everyone. And that pays off in the long run, because to know how deep to plant a seed, to plant them in rows, to band the fertilizer, to know how far to band it from the seed, and how to use a pesticide, these simple things that we take for granted are so [important].

I saw in Somalia, when I was there, in cornfields, these poor women working with these little short-handled hoes, bent over, their whole system exposed to the sun, which we know is bad. It's against the law in Arizona to use short-handled hoes, but the extension people in Africa think those are the kind of hoes they should use, because they've used them for 2,000 years.

But that corn was a beautiful stand. They had had moisture. But the agriculture man, he was from Somalia, had been educated in Tucson, Arizona, and in Nebraska, he knew. I said to him, "The corn looks good, but your yields you told

me are very low." He said to me, "Yes. Mr. Whelan, what one good shot of nitrogen would do for it! It would mean for the work they would harvest probably triple what they're going to harvest." The extra work they would have is harvesting. But the land is so depleted of its natural nutrients. But they couldn't afford nitrogen. Just think if you could have used a bomber to fly over. We use planes in Canada to put fertilizer on fields. You could do it at night so that people didn't know what they were getting, maybe, and they could wake up in about six-eight weeks with one of the best crops they ever had, just with putting nitrogen on it!

With no post-harvest storage, no post-harvest processing, they waste a lot of food at the present time, no infrastructure for roads, no infrastructure with a marketing system, or any of these things that we take for granted. All that has to be built, that's why it has to be a massive [effort], not that piecemeal operation that we're involved in.

The green area of Africa, when you look at the satellite pictures, is being squeezed from both north and south. Those people are living in wonderland if they think it's going to stay that way, all the time. Some of those countries are becoming concerned, when they see the northern part or the southern part of their county starting to turn into a desertland. They're losing, according to some figures, as high as 15 million hectares a year to desertification. That is unnecessary. We could run water lines, if we had to. Look at what the madman of Libya is doing, with the money that he gets from the oil he sells to the developed world. You could say he's using money from the developed world, and his project is probably one of the largest mega-projects in the world.

EIR: What about institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank? You have mentioned several times that what they have proposed has been counter-productive in terms of development.

Whelan: Before that, I'd just like to touch on one thing that I omitted. I have been critical of the developed world for what they spend on military might, but the developing countries spend much too much on military and arms, they are getting credit for those from the developed part of the world. Europe is a big supplier of military might to the people in Africa. I think that is criminal. For instance, the two factions in northern Ethiopia, if they weren't being supplied with arms, there would be no war.

They're spending in Ethiopia, 52% of its budget on military. That's criminal, when they know what's going on within their country. [One of the ministers of Ethiopia] is a four-year graduate of the University of Michigan. A young minister in charge of development, I think, is a graduate of the University of British Columbia, and five or six of the other ministers are either graduates of some school in the United States

there who know what's going on, but they operate under not a democratic government, a system which I think was really

hoping that these terrible things that they could foresee would go away by natural things taking place like rain, but it didn't happen.

EIR: What about institutions like the IMF and the World Bank?

Whelan: I think there are many people in those organizations that are well meaning. I rode across the ocean from New York to Dakar with a man from the World Bank out of Washington. He was going into that area to make some decisions, and he openly admitted to me that he didn't know what he was [doing] . . . he was taking somebody else's place. They have a tremendous amount of influence and effect on what's taking place, but they don't have the expertise, they have thousands of people who learned in university and someplace else, but when it comes to the practicality of getting these things done and understanding what's going on in a country, they don't know.

On that same plane, in an African business magazine I read, it talked about the IMF and the World Bank disagreeing with what the leadership in Nigeria was doing, and ending up saying "Well maybe they are right," because he wouldn't devalue his currency, he wouldn't do any of those things they wanted him to do. He was telling them, "I'll run my own administration," and they were saying to him, "We'll give you no loans if you don't change this kind of thing." They have set up a huge bureaucracy, but whether they would have the intelligentsia that goes along with it, I don't think they do, not from my experience with them.

And when I heard them say at the world meeting that was called in New York by the secretary-general, and one of the heads of the World Bank said in a meeting in New York that there would be *less* money for '85-86, or maybe it was '86-87. I don't see how he could have done that, on the platform, while we were all sitting there, knowing full well that the [African nations] would have to have more money, not less.

EIR: Is there anything you would like to add yourself?

Whelan: I think that all of these organizations, even the World Bank, have to become more human in their deliberations. I was recently at a meeting in Geneva [on emergency food aid for Africa], and a story was told about a man who was getting a heart transplant, and he had a choice of three hearts from donors that they were going to give him. He had to make his mind up in a hurry. One was from an actor, one was from an athlete, and one was from a banker. He said, "I will take the one of the banker." They said to him afterwards, when he was recuperating, "You made a strange selection. Why did you choose the heart of the banker?" "Oh," he said, "It was easy for me. You see, I'm a farmer, and I knew that heart would have been used the least."

I've dealt with bankers all my life in Canada, and a lot of them are administering programs they know nothing about. A lot of our farmers in the developed part of the world are

having problems, economic problems, financial problems, because of bankers. We put great emphasis when we see the word "banker." We think, "This must be an important and intelligent person." That's a most overrated definition as far as I'm concerned. They're partly at fault for what's taking place in Africa, because they loaned money for industry, and they neglected agriculture, the same as the financial people did in Canada.

I ran in Canada the tenth largest bank in our country, the last year we loaned about \$800 million, supposedly to farmers, but I don't think 90% ever saw the farmer's hand. It was a transfer from the farm credit corporation to the banks, for bad loans that they had made. But that made us the 10th largest loaner in all of Canada, we took all the bad risks. We took these risks that these bankers had created, because they were living on the inflation spiral, and they never thought that anything might go wrong, they loaned money for everything. A lot of young farmers owed over a million dollars. I guess I was a little old fashioned, I couldn't believe that they could get that loan that easily.

You see them involved in the Third World, not understanding what's going on. I find a lot of the bankers actually originally come from the Third World, that I meet from the World Bank. I don't think they have a full understanding of the peasants either, they come from the Third World, they're highly educated, living in marble, air-conditioned buildings. There should be some way to make them go and live right in say, that little desert town, where they're going to be running the bank, for maybe, six months, and live in the conditions of those people. They would soon want electricity, they would soon want water, they would soon want roads, they would soon want greenery, that would get rid of the terrible dust and the taste of it in your throat.

When I was in a town called Zinde, in Niger, even at night I dreamt I was in a dust-storm. There probably was dust in the covers of the bed. You saw these people in a resettlement area there, they had got funds for that, but the land wasn't suitable, it was harder than the hubs of hell. They had dug these deep wells, by hand, some of them looked 10-20 meters deep, all by hand, but dry wells, when we were there, and the land, when they put water on it, became like concrete. I would have known that just by walking on the land, nobody should ever try and irrigate this land, because it's something like my farm, you don't irrigate it unless you're going to have really controlled irrigation, good under-drainage, and there's a humus content that's going to allow the soil to be subjected to this water being poured on it without it turning into clay tile.

I see so many people who are trying to really help, but don't know. . . . I'll give you an example I found at one of these resettlement areas in Ethiopia. There was a man from a West German association. He said what they needed was 16,000 oxen. In that area, they only farm three months a year, because that's all the weather allows. It's very fragile,

it's one of the areas where the environment is very fragile. So I said, "What would you do with the 16,000 oxen that you only use maybe about six weeks a year?" He said, "Turn them loose." I couldn't believe it! There are little tractors, that I was talking about, that cost in China about \$1,000, maybe by the time you got them there they would be \$2,000, each 15 horsepower, and one of those little tractors will do more in two days than a team of oxen in a week, and they'll do it well, because they have steel ploughs, and when that little tractor is not being used, it isn't eating every damn thing in sight.

But this was the philosophy they were teaching those people. They had to get 16,000 oxen. When I went there, I wrote a little poem. It went something like this:

If I was a new spear of grass,
or a shoot from a new tree
I'd be as scared to come above the ground,
for, you see, I know someone would eat me.
Either it'd be a goat, a camel or a cow,
just walking, walking, looking for something,
and whenever they saw one, they eat it up.

I said, if I'd had my old scatter-gun, I know what I'd have done there.

I saw deserts in Israel, where they just put a fence, and didn't do anything else, and it grew green as high as your head. That was over several years, but once the animals weren't allowed to just browse at their own free will, and eat every thing in sight, it turned green again. That has to be, or they never would have stopped the desert.

Following the interview, in an informal discussion, Mr. Whelan described his thoughts at the time of the 10th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam war.

"I was talking to one of my daughters, and I told her, "If you remember the evacuation, there were all these aircraft carriers off shore, and helicopters were making circles with people. But the last trip, they couldn't land all the helicopters on the aircraft carrier. It was so vivid, the picture of them pushing those big \$50 million helicopters in the ocean, after the crew got out of them, they pushed them in, because they had to have room for the next helicopter to land, because they didn't have room on deck for the people and the helicopters, they just pushed them in the sea."

Just imagine what we could do with about 25 of them! I know someone working for World Vision. They took a big helicopter from Canada, Lufthansa flew it to Nairobi for them free, they had to reassemble it there.

The Kenyans tried to charge them \$50,000 tax on this thing. In the end he had to pay \$10,000 tax. Anyway, what he's doing, there is a huge gorge, and normally to go around the gorge with a truck takes 18 hours, and you blow two tires because the roads are just atrocious. The helicopter goes from here to there every 30 minutes with 5,000 pounds, so in a day they move about 30 tons of food. It's just crossing this big

mile-wide gorge. They bring it here by truck, unload it, and immediately the helicopter is loaded, it hardly stops. Very successful.

That's what we said needed to be done in 1983. I wanted a massive invasion of helicopters, and all that type of thing, and I wanted the NATO forces to do it. That's in my report, whenever it becomes public. It makes you so sad, that we were so accurate, because we predicted that those people, they live in these high plateaus, in isolation; we predicted there would be mass evacuation of those people, which would be unnatural for them to do. We said you should bring food and medical supplies to them.

You know, we didn't do that.

I was at a meeting in Trinidad, we were talking about it. We were meeting with some of our agricultural people, a Canadian-Caribbean veterinary medicine meeting. We have an organization that works to eradicate animal disease in the Caribbean. They wanted me to speak on food aid in Africa. There was some publicity in Canada about this report that we made. This Trinidadian scientist called me a Messiah, a prophet. "No," I said, "I'm not, I'm a practical old farmer that knows, when you see things happening, what's going to take place."

EIR: You called for the use of NATO facilities in 1983?

Whelan: Yes, you see, you have a system there now that could be expanded upon [in Ethiopia]. You have the services, it made me feel good, Americans, French, British, West Germans, East Germans, Russians, all in uniform, all talking to one another, but no guns, but they're hauling food, doing good. That's what I wanted in '83.

EIR: But it wasn't done.

Whelan: It makes you sick, when you're driving along the road and you have to get off the road for a big tank carrier to go by. Wheels higher than your head. Each vehicle must have cost about \$500,000, those are made in Russia. You know, I had some pretty frank talks with Gorbachov when he was in Canada.

I've written letters to all the world leaders, including Mrs. Thatcher, Mitterrand, Weiszaecker, Gorbachov, Reagan, the head of Japan, the ones I thought had the resources. I haven't received a reply from any of them. It's about a month now. I wrote that letter when I came back from Africa. I put that in the letter, about the fact how you measure death by dollar bills. I think that's very unfair, I know none of us would like that.

In Europe, the European parliament passed a motion against killing baby seals. I haven't seen them pass one about killing babies in Africa, though in essence, that's what we're doing. When you've seen the mothers pleading, you know they thought I was a doctor, going through these camps, showing you their sick babies, blind babies, it made you feel so useless, the whole thing seemed so futile.