

Medicine by John Grauerholz, M.D.

Food nuts: a perennial weed flowers

Whenever economic conditions deteriorate, "austerity dieting" fads spread.

The recent suicide of low protein fanatic Nathan Pritikin and the release of a report by a group called the Physician Task Force on Hunger in America, which indicates that at least 20 million Americans go hungry two or more days a month, provided the stimulus to look into the impact of food fads, past and present. This is especially pertinent to the emphasis on "preventive medicine" occurring in the context of an impending collapse of the U.S. agriculture sector. A review of the history of "austerity dieting" and some of its present manifestations seemed in order.

The following quote will illustrate the problem at hand. "There is probably no science which had made greater progress in the last decade than nutrition; but at the same time no science has suffered as has nutrition in the hands of the faddists and those who mark commercial food and vitamin preparations, the labels of which savor a reputation of the patent medicine propaganda.

"There are many fads and fallacies in nutrition, most prominent of which are: 1) The reducing fad. 2) The bread fad (white bread versus whole wheat). 3) The sour milk fad (yogurt). 4) The vegetarian fad. 5) The no-meat fad (pure vegetarians versus those who will eat cheese, milk, eggs, etc.). 6) The vitamin fad. 7) The bran or roughage fad."

This quote, which is an accurate characterization of the current fads,

including those of Pritikin, is from a 1927 *Bulletin of the California Bureau of Food and Drugs*, which was reprinted in a 1961 book, *The Nuts Among the Berries*.

The anti-meat, pro-roughage faction in this country goes back at least as far as Dr. Andrew Graham, inventor of the graham cracker, in the early 19th century, and continued through such people as Kellogg and Post, founders of the respective cereal companies.

The Pritikin centers, where patients spend up to \$6,000 for several weeks of exercise, "education," and a strict low-fat, low-protein diet, are simply a recrudescence of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, run by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg and Sister Ellen H. White, where meat-eating sinners were purged of their toxins and their cash by copious enemas and a diet remarkably similar to Pritikin's. This diet—no meat, two meals a day, elimination of alcohol, tobacco, coffee, salt, sugar and lard, and consumption of graham (high-bran) bread and vegetables—was revealed to Sister White in a one-hour trance back in the 1860s.

The simultaneous manifestation of back-to-the-earth environmentalism and this sort of "natural food" faddism has been a recurrent phenomenon at times of economic and social collapse throughout history. An illustrative example today is Dr. Cliff Robertson, who writes for the "eco-agriculture" magazine *ACRES, U.S.A.*, which

pushes growing of herbs as a cash crop in the face of worldwide starvation.

Robertson, whose contribution to the compost heap of nutball health books is called *The Health Explosion*, runs a clinic whose treatment procedure is as follows:

"Step One. The first step is to cleanse and detoxify the patient and—teach—keeping the system clean.

"Step Two. To feed the patient proper foods to rejuvenate, rehabilitate, and reform the body—only fresh, poison-free, whole, natural foods—raw as much as possible. The following items should be eliminated: 1) chemically contaminated or polluted water; 2) devitalized, degerminated, chemically treated, and synthetically enriched grain products; 3) unnecessary cooking of food; 4) devitalized, sterilized, pasteurized, and ultrapasteurized milk or milk products; 5) all refined sugars and hydrogenated fats and oils."

The development of pasteurization was a major step in making milk, an excellent protein source, safe and widely available. Prior to pasteurization, milk was a source of a number of infectious diseases, including dysentery and tuberculosis. This does not bother "Dr." Robertson, who believes: "Tuberculosis can be caused from degeneration resulting from overcooking of foods and too many mucous-forming foods. This condition can begin to heal as soon as the patient follows a raw diet, minus all refined grains and milk products. We also flood the patient with plenty of fluids—and clean out the elimination system." It is precisely this sort of thinking which could well bring TB back.

One of the major benefits of a mobilization to develop the scientific and technological potential of the Strategic Defense Initiative would be to purge the health-care systems of this sort of idiotic, and dangerous, quackery.