

NOTE

PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD: AN ETHICAL REFLECTION

Being human is both a right and an achievement. A human being, in virtue of his or her being human, is possessed of both rights and the potential to achieve. The rights are resident in the being human. Any human being has them. They are known as human rights. The potential to achieve points to the presence of responsibilities, also resident in the being human. Every human being has responsibilities for personal human development. Failure to realize one's human potential—a failure to achieve—does not constitute an abdication or loss of human rights. They remain resident in the human person in function of that person's being human. They reflect human dignity.

Human rights are quite basic. They are present whenever human beings are. They do not depend on what human beings do; they are there precisely because human beings are human. Human rights are therefore present to the material side of human existence. The human person, in function of being human, has a right to those material necessities without which human life and human dignity cannot be sustained.

There are rights, of course, in orders higher than that of material survival. But rights at higher levels are meaningless without the acknowledged presence and effective protection of rights at the basic material level of existence consistent with basic human dignity. One such right is the right to food.

Just as hunger can be viewed as an intensely personal or individual problem, so can it be seen as a wider, even world-wide, societal problem. Both perspectives are necessary if the rights and responsibilities associated with the problem are to be held in proper context. Analysis of an individual's hunger and an individual's right to food based on that individual's possession of human dignity can lead to an unbalanced *individualistic* approach to alleviation of the problem. Shifting the ground of ethical reflection from individual human rights to a broader concept of the common good may introduce a welcome communitarian dimension to the analysis but open the door to the conclusion that an ethic built on rights (not on the common good) is more cause than cure of a problem so complicated as that of hunger in the world. The unfettered, individualistic exercise of human rights and the unregulated play of free markets are in no small way responsible for the problem of world hunger, accord-

ing to what might be called the communitarian view.

I propose to offer in this paper a coherent but not comprehensive ethical reflection that goes well beyond classic liberalism's emphasis on individual rights and locates the human person, possessed of a right to food, in a broader communitarian context. I regard life in community as indispensable for the development of the human person. The communitarian context is essential for the realization of individual human potential and the protection of individual human rights.

THE PRINCIPLES

The basic principle underlying the right to food is the principle of human dignity. In saying this, I would want to identify the principle of human dignity as the bedrock of a body of doctrine that has come to be known as Catholic social teaching. It is not, however, specifically or properly Catholic in any exclusionary, confessional sense. It is a universal principle available to human reason, but illumined, in the Catholic view, by revelation.

The principle of human dignity is referenced, of course, in many secular sources. Take, for example, the Charter of the United Nations, which affirms a "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small."

Human dignity is the natural endowment of every human person. All human rights relate to and depend upon it. Hence human dignity is a principle from which all human rights, including the right to food, flow. But human dignity does not exist in some disembodied, abstract, splendid isolation. It requires association with other persons. Such association is essential for human development. Human persons are quite evidently social beings, made for the company of others, capable of communicating, co-operating, procreating with others, capable of love and care for others. The realization of these capabilities requires association with others. This principle of association flows from the principle of human dignity. So does the principle of participation in community, participation as an associate of equal dignity with other human beings. To deny participation within the community to individuals or groups who have a right to be there is to disrespect, disregard, or even attack directly their human dignity. Every person, in virtue of being a person, has a right not to be marginalized, shut out, put down, isolated. Without participation human development does not happen.

When the Catholic bishops of the United States rearticulated these principles of human dignity, association, and participation in their recent document *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social*

Teaching and the U.S. Economy,¹ they added two other principles which bear on the topic at hand. These are the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of preference for the poor.

Subsidiarity might best be explained by simply repeating the classic expression of this principle as stated in the 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*; the bishops quote the passage in their economics pastoral:

Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help (*subsidium*) to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them.²

This principle will protect freedom, initiative, and creativity in the community. It will also justify subsidies where they are really needed.

The principle of preference for the poor is a biblically-based, specifically Christian norm that measures the conformity of the values and choices of the Christian to the values and choices of Christ. Reasoned argument, apart from revelation, would produce the same conclusion. When it comes to protection of human dignity, preference should be directed to the point of greatest vulnerability, to situations of exclusion from association and denial of participation. In terms of economic survival, the poor are most vulnerable. Hence the poor need preferential protection. In terms of hunger—the most urgent form of poverty—the poor who are starving or chronically malnourished are deserving of preferential protection. Human dignity requires it. Starvation and chronic undernutrition are assaults on human dignity.

PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD

The meaning I attach to the phrase “right to food” is that used in the House-Senate concurrent “Resolution Declaring as National Policy the Right to Food.”³

Resolved that:

Every person in this country and throughout the world has the right to food—the right to a nutritionally adequate diet—and that this right is henceforth to be recognized as a cornerstone of U.S. policy. . . .

¹ Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1986.

² Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno* (On Reconstructing the Social Order), May 15, 1931, no. 79.

³ House: H. Con. Res. 393; Senate: S. Con. Res. 66, cf. *Congressional Record*, Sept. 25, 1975.

In Congressional hearings on the Right-to-Food Resolution, Dr. Robert M. Cavanaugh, president of International Food Technology, Inc., of Greenville, Delaware, stated:

My primary purpose in asking to be heard today is to make as emphatically as possible the point that passage of the first sentence of House Concurrent Resolution 393 would greatly facilitate essential discourse between nutritionists and economists, and later among various decisionmakers, because it contains language that marks a crucial paradigmatic shift.

The focus becomes abruptly sharpened to a "nutritionally adequate diet," which has useful meaning, whereas the word "food" has almost none for vitally important planning purposes. Providing x million tons of "food" to allay the "hunger" of 464 million people is like trying to provide y million pounds of "medicine" to solve the "illness" of that many people.⁴

The meaning I attach to the "right to food" is contained in that key phrase: "the right to a nutritionally adequate diet." That is the claim any human person, in virtue of being human, can make on the human community. That is not to say that this right imposes an obligation on someone else to produce the food, or to hand over food to anyone who might be inclined to assert the claim. Recall the opening sentence of this present paper: "Being human is both a right and an achievement." The right to achieve, I noted, "points to responsibilities" in the same human person possessed of human dignity and all derivative human rights. One of those responsibilities is to engage oneself with one's external material environment, as well as to develop oneself intellectually and spiritually, to cultivate both body and mind, and to interact with persons, ideas, and material creation external to oneself for the production of goods and services needed for the survival and development of self and the community. This is an elaborate description of employment, which is also a requirement of human dignity. The employment of some produces food for all. Those employed not in the production of food, but in producing other goods and services which the community needs or wants, derive income for their own use in the purchase of food and other necessities and wants.

The right to food does not, however, depend on employment performance. Failure to realize one's human potential for income and employment does not disqualify one from the human community. Failure to produce food or to earn sufficient income to buy food will lead to the

⁴ U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, *The Right-to-Food Resolution, Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Resources, Food, and Energy*, Ninety-Fourth Congress, Second Session on H. Con. Res 393 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976) 257.

form of deprivation known as hunger but not to the loss of title to human dignity, to association, and to participation in community. Individuals or groups may find themselves frustrated, for whatever reason, in their efforts to achieve a level of being consistent with human dignity. When such failure leaves them without a "nutritionally adequate diet," they can assert a right to food. The community has the obligation to respond with emergency aid and other appropriate subsidies. The community has the obligation to organize its systems and structures in ways which will enable persons to help themselves in the production of food or the generation of income sufficient to purchase food. Such arrangements will quite obviously protect the right to food by protecting the capacity to produce food or to earn income that can be applied to the purchase of food. Designing, constructing, and preserving these arrangements is a community responsibility.

Protection of the right to food extends quite logically to the protection of natural resources, of land, water, plant and animal species. Conservation of food-producing resources, and research directed to the enhancement of the food-producing potential of those resources, fall within the scope of the broad community responsibility to protect the right to food. Not to be ignored in all of this is the question of distribution—another area of community responsibility which, if left unattended, can frustrate success on the production side.

The importance of research related to world hunger cannot be overestimated. The important distinction between nutrition and food underlies the challenge to researchers to coax more nutrition out of less food, as well as multiplying crop yields through genetic manipulations which can also affect seeds and livestock embryos. The "field" for research that will be protective of the right to food extends well beyond agriculture to the unrealized potential of aquaculture. Society has the obligation to encourage the research talent needed for this task—develop it, reward it, and recognize its work as contributory to the satisfaction of the societal obligation to protect the right to food.

In addition to the care and development of its food-producing systems, and in addition to its efforts to advance and apply nutrition science, a society intent on protecting the right to food will also have to attend to questions of ecological balance and trade equity. These issues are scientifically challenging, economically intricate, and geopolitically complex. Ethically, they are rooted in the principle of human dignity, related to the principles of association, participation, and subsidiarity, and strategically linked to a preferential protection for the hungry poor of the world. In an ethically sensitive world community, the realization that every human person is possessed of a right to a nutritionally adequate

diet can first attract and then fasten the attention of scientists, economists, and politicians on the problem of hunger in the human community.

PROMOTION OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD

I once edited a book on *The Causes of World Hunger*.⁵ I undertook the project with an eye to the promotion of the right to food. In my view, we tend all too readily and regularly in our society to substitute blame for analysis. Extended causal analysis will move through considerations of geography and climate, resource abuse, population, poverty, politics, trade barriers, the colonial legacy, the unequal distribution of wealth and income in the world, the complexity and consequent neglect of agricultural development in many parts of the world, and the failure to establish a workable international system of grain reserves. The analysis will recognize the dead hand of tradition as contributing to poverty and hunger. It will inevitably note the absence of political will, in the developed and less developed nations, to deal effectively with the problem. Other causal considerations will surface as the analysis continues, but the single question of political will remains to be answered before an effective remedy to the scourge of hunger can be said to be in hand.

Political will is best organized around an issue. The issue must be articulated and communicated (the task of leadership) if a widely-grounded (and therefore sufficiently strong) political will is to be established.

Articulation of the hunger issue in terms of a human right—the right to food understood as a claim to a nutritionally adequate diet—is an indispensable first step. Agreement on the existence of such a right wherever human life exists cannot be assumed. Without widespread acknowledgment and acceptance of that right, a solution to the problem of hunger is unthinkable. Hence the importance of the communication of a clearly articulated understanding of the right. Such communication is part of the business of promotion of the right to food.

History is replete with instances of rights violated, indignities endured, and injustices overcome. In virtually every case, identification of the injustice had to be accompanied by a clear articulation of the right which was being violated and a persuasive communication of an understanding of that right as a basis of the exercise of remedial political will.

The hunger issue, understood as a violated right to a nutritionally adequate diet, is not a question of charity—an invitation to extend, for charitable and humanitarian motives, a helping hand. The hunger issue is a matter of justice. No one member of the community is exempt from the demands of justice (all members, in view of their shared human

⁵ New York: Paulist, 1982.

nature and common human dignity, are associated one with all others in justice relationships). But no one member can singly satisfy the requirements of justice relative to the question of world hunger. An individual respect for the right to food must enlarge itself to a communitarian concern for the protection of that right, as preamble to a community response to the problems produced by neglect or violations of that right.

Communities organize themselves into governments for the ordering and management of community affairs that cannot be handled effectively by individual persons, by lower levels of organization, or by voluntary charitable arrangements. Widespread hunger in the community is certainly a matter to be addressed by government, not by a total leave-it-to-government strategy, but by government participation in a co-operative response to violations of the right to food. But government will not respond absent the impetus of political will resident in the citizenry. Moreover, government's response will require various forms of expenditure of revenues received from citizens. Political will, in the matter of hunger, will therefore involve both political choice (spend for hunger reduction instead of something else) and citizen assent to the payment of taxes (possibly higher taxes if other public expenditures cannot be reduced) for the alleviation of hunger in the community.

Organized as we are into nation states, not a unified world government, we cannot solve the hunger problem without world-wide international co-operation. Theoretically this seems possible. Human nature transcends national boundaries. So does human dignity. Human rights may not be evenly recognized and protected in all nation states, but they are equally resident in all human beings no matter where they are. Was Teilhard de Chardin wise or wishful, or both, in saying "The Age of Nations is past. It remains for us now, if we do not wish to perish, to set aside the ancient prejudices and build the earth"? Our prejudices against the hungry must be broken. We—all of us in all nations—will have to pay for those prejudices one way or another. In fact, we will have to pay in a variety of ways, all peaceful, if we are to avoid paying in political unrest and violent uprisings in places where hunger is urgent and widespread. Those peaceful ways are a combination of taxes and transfers, voluntary contributions of time and money, citizen advocacy, career choice and vocational commitment aimed at the reduction of hunger in the world through research, increased food production, and improved food distribution. But it will not happen without general acknowledgment and widespread acceptance in the human community of the existence of the right to food.

The absence of a strong leadership voice and leadership insistence on the existence of a universal human right to food is regrettable. The

pastoral leadership of Pope John Paul II is notable in affirming the right to food, but his voice alone cannot build the necessary political will. I was moved personally by imagery used by this pope in affirming the right to food in an address made in Mexico, in the rural region of Oaxaca, on January 29, 1979. In the presence of peasants, he reminded the rich and powerful classes that bread needed for the nourishment of poor families "lay hidden" in fields kept unproductive by decisions of large landowners. This situation, he said, "is not just, it is not human. . . ."⁶ Other leadership voices in the religious, political, scientific, educational, and industrial spheres of influence must be heard if the right to food is to be recognized, protected, and promoted.

People who are troubled intellectually by any suggestion of a preference for the poor might reflect on evidence of human behavior in an altogether different area of life that transcends national and cultural differences and is virtually universal. Imagine a parent flanked by two children, a three-year-old and an adolescent, walking toward a busy intersection in New York, New Delhi, or any other place where vehicular traffic moves along in close proximity to pedestrians. The three-year-old breaks away from the parent's hand and darts into the cart path or street traffic. Without thought, for the moment, of the older child's safety, the parent will move quickly—and preferentially—to protect the toddler. So will total strangers who see the problem. Why? Because of the evident vulnerability of the helpless child. Such a response is appropriate, correct, charitable, and just human behavior.

When the vulnerability of the hungry poor becomes sufficiently evident, the appropriate preferential protection will be more readily forthcoming. Effective promotion (by means of articulation, communication, depiction, and representation) of the right to food will build political will and encourage the consequent protection of the right to food. There is a limited role for government in this response; political will should be strong enough to bring the response of government right up to its appropriate limit. But since political will resides in the same people who live in families, belong to churches and synagogues, and populate countless private-sector organizations and voluntary associations, it might be presumed that their concern to do something about hunger through political means will carry over to touch the agenda of their nongovernmental activities. The encouragement of such a widespread response is the function of leadership in the promotion of the right to food; the eventual outcome will be the protection of the right to food.

⁶ See John Paul II, *Puebla: A Pilgrimage of Faith* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1979) 148. This is a compilation of speeches taken from the English edition of *L'Osservatore romano*.

A POLITICAL WILL, THEREFORE A POLITICAL WAY?

Multiple means will have to be employed if the human community is to move toward the end or goal of eliminating hunger. Economic, scientific, and technological means are crucially important. But the best technical means will remain untested and unapplied to the goal of ending hunger unless effective political means are in place and at work.

The Senate-House Concurrent Resolution on the Right to Food made mention of U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's declaration of a "bold objective" at the 1974 World Food Conference in Rome: "that within a decade no child will go to bed hungry, that no family will fear for its next day's bread, and that no human being's future and capacities will be stunted by malnutrition." By way of preamble to the assertion of this objective, Secretary Kissinger noted: "The profound promise of our era is that for the first time we may have the technical capacity to free mankind from the scourge of hunger."⁷ With the technical capacity already in place, it remains for us to design and apply the necessary political devices. At the World Food Conference in 1974, Secretary Kissinger pledged his government's willingness to "work co-operatively" with other nations toward the achievement of what is certainly a "bold objective." The nations represented at the World Food Conference should resolve, Kissinger urged, to "confront the challenge, not each other . . . and let us make global co-operation in food a model for our response to other challenges of an interdependent world—energy, inflation, population, protection of the environment."⁸ No one will dispute the desirability of these goals. Nor should anyone dismiss as wishful thinking the possibility of learning, through co-operation in food, how to meet these other major challenges.

We have made little progress since 1974 in achieving global co-operation in food. The decade which ended in 1984 saw a sharp rise in worldwide awareness of hunger, chiefly as a result of televised news-reporting of famine in Africa. For the most part, however, the response to the problem took the form of emergency food aid. Political will was heightened; it was translated into action, in the United States, by several political means and by private voluntary activity. But the volume of politically-enacted relief assistance was not notable relative to the size of the American GNP and the enormity of the need overseas. And the private charitable response has been relatively short-lived, fading as graphic representations of the problem disappeared from the print and

⁷ For a full text of the Kissinger speech, see *War on Hunger, A Report from the Agency for International Development*, Vol. 8, no. 12 (December 1974); the portion cited appears on p. 24.

⁸ *Ibid.*

electronic news-media.

Political means to the political goal of ending hunger are in need of design, redesign, and persistent application. What forms might they take?

In the U.S., Public Law 480 (Food for Peace) was enacted in 1954 in a domestic political environment characterized by huge domestic farm surpluses that could not be sold in this country. There was both a political and a commercial need to move grain surpluses to overseas markets. P.L. 480 food aid has been used to support U.S. foreign-policy and national-security goals. There are two basic ways in which P.L. 480 assistance is provided: (1) long-term credit at attractive rates to needy nations to purchase U.S. farm products, and (2) direct food donations. In recent years the dollar value of the credit we extend to poor nations under P.L. 480 far exceeds the dollar value of food donations. P.L. 480 is the basic policy tool we have for moving U.S. food into empty stomachs of poor people overseas.

The challenge of hunger will not be met if political strategists focus on P.L. 480 assistance and ignore the need to increase food production in the food-deficit nations. The emphasis in our foreign-assistance policy has shifted since 1954 from food aid to combat hunger (while disposing of domestic surpluses and promoting foreign-policy objectives) to a more recent concern with agricultural, as opposed to industrial, development. In the early days of the U.S. Agency for International Development industrial development was stressed. The idea was to draw surplus rural labor in poor countries into industrial jobs (usually located in cities); industrial workers would presumably purchase the product of the agricultural sector. By the late 1960s it became clear that agricultural development was needed more urgently than industrial development. It also became clear in due time that small-scale agricultural development was wise in less-developed nations with large numbers of poor people in rural areas. To observe that land reform is indicated if the rural poor are to participate in agricultural development is simply to note the nature of one key dimension of the political challenge.

In their valuable book *To Feed This World*,⁹ Sterling Wortman and Ralph W. Cummings Jr. report Clifton Wharton's observation that politicians are professionals whose perspectives often differ from those of the agricultural-development professionals. Wharton sees "two political requirements (among others) for achieving significant sustained agricultural development: First, that the political leadership have a genuine *commitment* to the goal of agricultural development; and second,

⁹ Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1978.

that they have an understanding of the process."¹⁰ Both requisites for political leadership in this matter apply to politicians in rich nations and poor; they must co-operate in the design and application of antihunger strategies. This co-operation is more likely to occur if research results of scientific investigations are reduced to language the politicians can understand. Perhaps journalists have a role to play in interpreting the scientists to the policy-makers. Political leaders cannot be expected to support research if they do not understand it. Nor will they attach a high priority to agricultural development if they do not see that it makes sense politically as well as economically.

A study paper prepared for consideration by participants in seminars on World Food Day, 1985, noted:

This change in philosophy (from an emphasis on industrial to a stress on agricultural development) was reflected in the policies of such major aid agencies as the World Bank and the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID). Since the early 1970's, these agencies have focused on small-scale farmers seeking, through broad agricultural development programs, to provide resources such as better markets, price incentives, improvements in transportation, credit and land tenure arrangements, education, and agricultural research, needed for development.¹¹

No one of the "improvements" listed above can be achieved without appropriate and effective political action. Nor will improvement come without political co-operation between donor and recipient countries no matter what is transferred—food, credit, equipment, technological information, research results, or human resources.

A political device put in place by President John F. Kennedy for a variety of reasons—and hunger reduction was not chief among them—is the Peace Corps. This is a small-scale, modestly-funded, cost-efficient program which has come alive again in the middle 1980s. When the Peace Corps began in 1961, the average age of a volunteer was 24—enthusiastic, idealistic, inexperienced, unskilled. Today the average age is 30; 11 percent of the volunteers are over 50. They bring experience and skills (including language skills) to their overseas posts. Half of the Peace Corps volunteers now at work overseas are in Sub-Saharan Africa and most of them are working with the rural poor in food-producing activities. The food production will continue after the volunteer departs. Returned volunteers will carry with them a cultural sensitivity and awareness of the hunger problem that will influence their thinking and

¹⁰ Ibid. 311.

¹¹ See National Committee for World Food Day, *Food and Poverty: Perspectives, Policies, Prospects*. A Study/Action Packet (Washington, D.C., Oct. 16, 1985).

decision-making for the rest of their lives. What they do with their lives is interesting. "Former volunteers now make up 10 percent of every new Foreign Service class. Nearly 90 percent of new recruits for U.S. AID are former Peace Corps volunteers. There are 100 former volunteers working at the World Bank, 200 in staff jobs on Capitol Hill, 14 are vice presidents of Chase Manhattan Bank."¹² Expansion of this U.S. political mechanism would help us to address better the challenge of hunger. Extension of this idea to other "have" nations for the benefit of the "have-nots" would be a sure sign of progress in both the promotion and the protection of the right to food.

No discussion of political means can ignore the fact that politics is people—at home or overseas. An excellent way to prepare people for international co-operation on the food issue is to support massive programs of student exchange from the agricultural areas and schools of developing and developed countries. This strategy would target on the young, before they become policy-makers or researchers, and expose them to the places where the hunger problem is most acute and the places where the knowledge leading toward a solution is most advanced. Genuine international co-operation would bring together young people who are only notionally aware that they coexist in a hungry world. Some from the developing nations would not "fit" in the agricultural schools of developed countries, but appropriate apprenticeship programs could be designed to expose them to potentially helpful ideas. And while some students from the most advanced schools would find themselves overseas, removed from the best laboratories and libraries for a semester or more, they would gain a new appreciation of the limits to agricultural development in poor lands and the value of experimental stations in areas where the hunger problem is most pressing.

When the political will emerges, political ways will be discovered. The important thing, from the perspective of protecting the right to food, is to never stop trying to cultivate the political will.

The political ways, or means, must be directed, of course, to the appropriate strategic objectives. Under the title of *Feeding the World's Population: Development in the Decade Following the World Food Conference of 1974*, the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress produced a 779-page report which documented a decade of progress in world food production (except in Africa) and the presence of "intractable" problems of food distribution world-wide. "Clearly, problems of distribution—of family income, foreign exchange, nutritional knowledge, storage and transportation facilities, and relief programs—

¹² *Washington Post*, Aug. 2, 1987, A-20.

are more important to the solution of the world's hunger problem, and also more intractable, than the World Food Conference had foreseen."¹³

The interest of the small and relatively obscure Select Committee on Hunger of the U.S. House of Representatives, created in 1984, is "to determine in what ways the foreign assistance programs of this country can more effectively address the chronic hunger and malnutrition of the people who reside in the nations that are recipients of U.S. foreign assistance." In a 1986 study prepared by the Congressional Research Service for the Select Committee on Hunger,¹⁴ various foreign assistance programs are grouped into major types of activities. These groupings represent the contents of our national political "tool kit" for the task of hunger education overseas. The four major groupings (hence the four principal tools) are: Development Assistance, Food Aid, Economic Support Fund, Military Aid. In 1986 Development Assistance received 27.3 percent of our foreign-aid expenditure, Food Aid 8.5 percent, the Economic Support Fund 24.6 percent, and the lion's share—39.6 percent—went to Military Aid.

COMPOSITION OF U.S. FOREIGN AID APPROPRIATIONS, 1977-86

	[In millions of current dollars]									
	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Development Assistance	2,487	2,781	3,963	3,710	3,559	3,941	4,302	4,233	4,779	4,147
Food Aid	1,169	923	806	886	1,229	1,000	1,028	1,227	1,355	1,299
Economic Support Fund	1,735	2,202	1,922	2,007	2,025	3,065	2,993	3,302	3,902	3,741
Military Aid	2,022	2,509	2,981	2,058	3,185	4,104	5,536	6,480	5,910	6,027
Total	7,413	8,415	9,672	8,661	9,998	12,110	13,859	15,241	15,946	15,214

	[Percent of total appropriation]									
	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Development Assistance	33.5	33.0	41.0	42.8	35.6	32.5	31.0	27.8	30.0	27.3
Food Aid	15.8	11.0	8.3	10.2	12.3	8.3	7.4	8.1	8.5	8.5
Economic Support Fund	23.4	26.2	19.9	23.2	20.3	25.3	21.6	21.7	24.5	24.6
Military Aid	27.3	29.8	30.8	23.8	31.9	33.9	39.9	42.5	37.1	39.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

[Source: Select Committee on Hunger, U.S. House of Representatives (November 1986)]

The regional allocation of U.S. foreign aid is skewed in directions which reflect our relatively heavy interest in Military Aid and the Economic Support Fund (a program with foreign-policy objectives closely aligned with U.S. military interests) as compared to our investment in

¹³ U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Feeding the World's Population* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1984) 1-2.

¹⁴ *Trends in Foreign Aid, 1977-86* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, November 1986) 21 pp.

regions where hunger is most pressing and our military and security interests are more remote.

REGIONAL ALLOCATION OF U.S. AID, 1977-86

	[In million of constant dollars]									
	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Latin America	689	750	715	711	834	1,149	1,474	1,686	2,300	1,714
Asia	2,209	2,2235	1,878	1,656	1,564	1,528	1,864	1,995	2,100	1,840
Middle East	5,488	5,311	8,014	4,394	5,043	5,307	6,029	6,054	5,468	5,475
Europe	1,078	1,472	1,027	1,115	1,131	1,536	1,745	2,106	2,170	1,843
Africa	724	936	849	1,122	1,134	1,236	1,149	1,212	1,236	919
Total assistance	10,187	10,703	12,483	8,998	9,706	10,756	12,261	13,053	13,274	11,791

	[In percent]									
	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Latin America	6.8	7.0	5.7	7.9	8.6	10.7	12.0	12.9	17.3	14.5
Asia	21.7	20.9	15.0	18.4	16.1	14.2	15.2	15.3	15.8	15.6
Middle East	53.9	49.6	64.2	48.8	52.0	49.3	49.2	46.4	41.2	46.4
Europe	10.6	13.8	8.2	12.4	11.7	14.3	14.2	16.1	16.3	15.6
Africa	7.1	8.7	6.8	12.5	11.7	11.5	9.4	9.3	9.3	7.8
Total assistance	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

[Source: Select Committee on Hunger, U.S. House of Representatives (November 1986)]

The combined Development Assistance and Food Aid categories represent just about the sum total of the tools we have to deal with the distribution problems cited above in the status report on the world-wide situation ten years after the 1974 World Food Conference. Relief programs, storage facilities, transportation networks, nutritional education, improvements in family income, and foreign exchange—these goals are far more likely to be met through Development and Food Aid programs (e.g., AID bilateral functional development accounts; AID operating expenses; AID miscellaneous programs like disaster aid; the Peace Corps, Inter-American Foundation, African Development Foundation, Trade and Development; contributions to multilateral development banks and international organizations; and the P.L. 480 program) than through the Economic Support Fund and the four major forms of Military Aid—the military assistance program (MAP), foreign military sales (FMS) credits, military training (IMET), and peace-keeping operations. The redirection of allocations by region and the shifting of appropriations from one category to another are matters of political decision. In a representative democracy like ours, citizen education related to these complex issues is a prerequisite to citizen action targeted on the policy-formation and political decision-making process.

Consideration of political means suitable to the task of eliminating world hunger must transcend the politics of any single nation state and

take a global perspective. Proposals, policies, and projects relating to the vast complex of monetary and financial relationships between and among nation states are the raw materials of what some envision as a New International Economic Order (NIEO). The NIEO debate, even in summary form, would carry this essay far beyond its intended limits. Regardless of one's position on the adequacy of present economic arrangements world-wide (recall the principles of human dignity, association, participation, subsidiarity, and preference for the poor), the possibility of a new or renewed international economic order points to the world-wide dimensions of the political arena within which issues relating to the right to food must be resolved. In order to participate in the resolution of these issues, each nation state would do well to attend within its own borders to the cultivation of intercultural sensitivity, linguistic capability, scientific and technical competence, and sufficient political will to end hunger in the world. A universal human right in the economic order, i.e. the right to food, requires nothing less.

The right to food establishes a claim to a nutritionally adequate diet for any person anywhere. With that right implied, a May 1987 policy paper¹⁵ drafted to guide the lobbying efforts of Bread for the World stated that the primary objectives of U.S. agricultural policy should be to (1) assure national food security; (2) help achieve world food security; (3) help ensure fair returns to farm operators and workers; (4) ensure conservation and sustainable use of our resource base. The criteria by which the BFW statement would judge the acceptability of particular policies relative to these objectives are (1) assured access to nutritious foods by all persons (the right to food); (2) prudent use of resources; (3) fair distribution of economic rewards and power; (4) economically viable production and distribution systems; (5) consistency between agricultural and related public policies.

The statement elaborates the right-to-food criterion as follows:

Assured access to food, on the national level, requires a stable supply of nutritious food at equitable prices, an effective distribution system, maximum opportunity to earn a livelihood, and food subsidies for those unable to purchase food with their own resources. Internationally, it means trade policies which help assure fairness and price stability as well as food self-reliance, development programs designed to increase food production in food deficit areas, increased family incomes and improved food distribution, and food aid that responds to need efficiently and effectively without inhibiting agricultural and economic development.

¹⁵ "Policy Statement on U.S. Agriculture," Bread For the World, 802 Rhode Island Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20018 (May 1987) 8 pp.

That one paragraph contains a complete U.S. political agenda, domestic and foreign, for pursuit, protection, and promotion of the right to food. It also defines an area of serious ethical responsibility in the face of world hunger.

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