

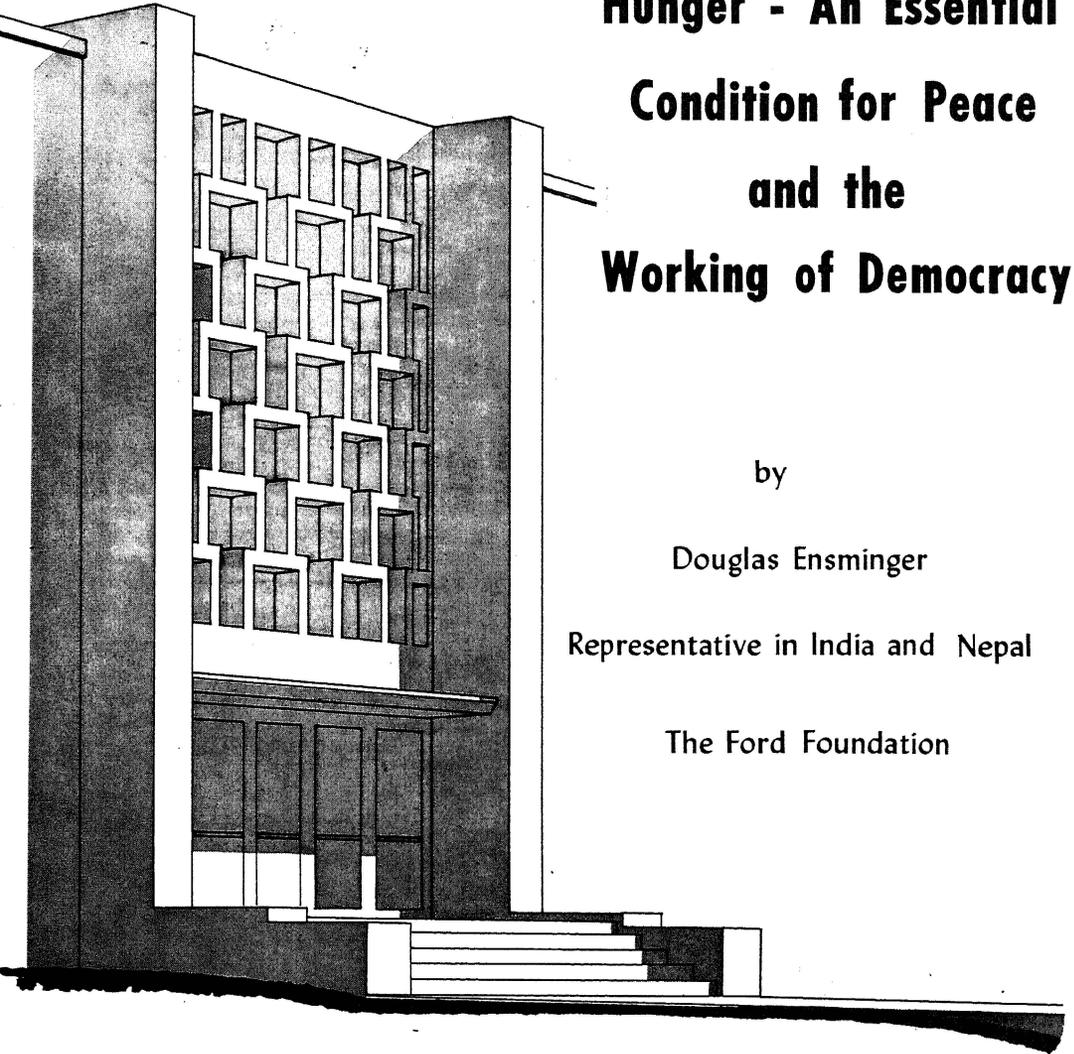
**Freedom from
Hunger - An Essential
Condition for Peace
and the
Working of Democracy**

by

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In our free society, our great educational institutions encourage the individual to continuously challenge himself about what he wants to do with his life, as well as help him to prepare for his chosen path of service. I am fortunate in having attended the University of Missouri where I was benefitted in both of these ways. As an alumnus who is now applying his training in India, working to help create the conditions required for peace and the effective working of democracy, I want to express deep gratitude to the University, and especially to the faculty members of the College of Agriculture who guided me in self-discovery and education.

Our topic this afternoon is "Freedom from Hunger: An Essential Condition for Peace and the Working of Democracy." I am convinced that hunger-and-conflict and hunger-and-tyranny have a natural affinity; that peace and order, individual freedom, and the effective working of free institutions are inconsistent with mass hunger; and that freedom from both hunger and the fear of hunger is essential to the maintenance and growth of democracy. I believe this is true for the world as a whole, including India, where I have been privileged to work for the past 11 years.

Since the term "freedom from hunger" is susceptible to various interpretations, I shall define its meaning as used here. Economically, psychologically, and politically, such freedom includes more than the absence of hunger for today: importantly, it also consists of a people's confident ability to produce enough food for themselves or to obtain it in exchange for their other products. For any Nation, then, "freedom from hunger" means the assurance of enough food, based on the Nation's own resources and productive strength. It includes freedom from the fear of hunger as well as from the actuality of it.

This is the kind of freedom I am talking about. It is a durable and self-reliant situation that does not need to depend upon gift shipments out of foreign food abundance. Such food largesse, however, valuable, is not a long-time solution. Even if the United States was willing and able to donate adequate additional food indefinitely to a hunger-threatened Nation, the basic fear and insecurity would still remain. That country's food anxiety would persist as long as its own total productive powers were below the levels of safety. Also, the fact of food donations being needed at all is evidence of current food distress at some levels of society.

Think of what it means for a people to go short on food or to have to live in anxiety about the supply of their daily bread (or rice, more likely). Try to imagine what life would be like if your family had to subsist on an "enough to survive" basis, instead of having abundance of food for health and well being. What would be your reaction? Would peace and order, protection of individual liberties, and maintenance of institutional freedom be your uppermost concern? Or would promises of more food, however specious, be able to goad you toward desperation? I do not know what your response might be. I am sure, however, that the cause of civilization and of democracy would not be advanced by such conditions. Freedom and food enough go together, not separately.

Food Trends in India

Now think of India - a Nation of 440 million people, with population rising more rapidly than food productivity per acre. If these trends continue, India within the next

decade or so will face an annual deficit of some 28 million tons of foodgrains - the staple food source in India. This supply gap is predictable unless the increase in population slackens and unless food production increases greatly, or both. Under the circumstances, India cannot be said to be free from hunger. Millions of its people, in fact, are today suffering from poor diets arising out of inadequacies in food supply.

You may say that, since production of food abundance in the United States is so easy, surely India can produce enough food for itself if it decides to do so. Given enough time and enough concentration on the task, India can indeed do this. It has a large land base for production, has a great potential for increased food output, and is already actively engaged in production improvement work.

There is no doubt that India and the free world, working together earnestly and steadily, can build up India's food production to the levels needed. However, reaching these levels of production will take much time and effort. There is no substitute for either of these vital elements. In the meanwhile, the situation is one that calls for the understanding of the free Nations and for their steady, dependable cooperation.

To appreciate the magnitude of India's task, let us look at some of the conditions which prevailed in India when it became independent a decade and a half ago. These included:

1. Widespread poverty, with one of the lowest levels of per capita income in the world (\$64.00 per year), resulting in near-starvation diets for many millions of people.
2. A largely self-sufficient agriculture with crop yields per acre among the lowest in the world.
3. An overwhelmingly rural population (83 percent) living in 558,000 villages under conditions of physical and social isolation.
4. A decadent village industry and meager urban industries.
5. A rigidly stratified social structure with hundreds of castes and with some 55 million persons in the so-called "scheduled castes" (Untouchables).
6. A people divided into 15 different major language groups, with some 800 languages and dialects in total; also divided by diverse ethnic origins and cultures.
7. An overall illiteracy rate of 84 percent - probably of over 90 percent in most villages.
8. A limited transportation system and greatly inadequate communications.
9. The majority of village people mentally oriented toward survival rather than toward hope and expectation.
10. A political leadership which had helped throw off British rule but which was then unaccustomed to the burdens of self-government.
11. An administrative structure and staff geared to police duties, tax collection, and regulatory functions.

Commitment to Democracy

As freedom-loving people ourselves, we wish to help India in her efforts to grow into a land of freedom and democracy. India's leaders and people are fully committed to this goal.

India's commitment to democracy was set forth in its first "Draft Outline," entitled "The First Five Year Plan." Under the sub-heading "Democratic Planning", it said:

"Now what kind of an economic system do we need to achieve our aims? The prevailing inequality, economic stagnation, and poverty indicate the necessity for change. What are the alternatives?"

"At one extreme is some kind of totalitarianism. To many, its appeal lies in its promise to satisfy quickly the basic human needs. It achieves its results because under a totalitarian system the mobilization and direction of resources are in the hands of an all-powerful central authority. We know, however, that totalitarianism brings in its train violence, conflict, regimentation, and the suppression of the individual. Now these things are repugnant to our national instincts and tradition. We cannot, therefore, give up the democratic ideal even if it were less profitable from the practical point of view. But is it really so?"

"Economic progress under democratic planning is perhaps less spectacular, but surely more enduring. It is achieved through the willing sacrifice and cooperation of the people. To carry out a plan in a democratic state means hard work and participation by every individual. It is a process of education which, while it secures the progress of the country, also raises the quality of the individual. Moreover, the incidence of sacrifice which democratic planning demands is equitably distributed in the society. On the whole, therefore, the democratic way is more advantageous even from a narrow point of view."

"We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic, and to secure to all its citizens: Justice, social, economic, and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship; Equality of status and opportunity; and to promote among them all Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation, in our constituent assembly this 26th November, 1949, do hereby adopt, enact, and give to ourselves this Constitution."

Agricultural Progress Under Way

Under this Constitution, India's Government is moving to solve its food problems, is developing its democratic institutions, and is gaining competence and confidence in the use of democratic methods. Prime Minister Nehru and other earnest leaders serve as a powerful force encouraging the Nation to exert itself to solve its basic problems of hunger, disease, and ignorance. These leaders are fully committed to broad governmental efforts to improve living conditions for all the people. Although the difficulties are evident on all sides, India is marching ahead.

In agriculture, many steps have been taken to increase food production. Production methods are still largely traditional and productivity is not yet rising fast enough to forestall future crisis. However, total agricultural production has increased more than 40 percent since the granting of independence. A vast Community Development program has been launched, providing for Extension guidance to cultivators, home-makers, and village youth. From the very beginnings of the new Government, major attention has been given to the need for increased food production.

As a new step forward, India has now launched under the Third Five Year Plan (beginning in 1961), an Intensive Agricultural District Program or "Package Program." This program, operating in one district of each State, is intended to develop and demon-

strate the means of achieving a continuing "break-through" in agricultural productivity, for later application in other productive districts. The program is based on provision of the full resources needed for this "break-through." The resources involved include technical guidance for cultivators in use of new farming practices; adequate supplies of fertilizer, improved seeds, insecticides, and simple improved implements; production credit to cultivators for purchase of these supplies; and improvement of storage and marketing facilities. Facilities for seed testing and soil testing are also made available.

This program, part of India's reaching toward "freedom from hunger," is the outgrowth of a report, "India's Food Crisis and Steps to Meet It," made in 1959 by a team of specialists The Ford Foundation and the Government of India. At the request of the Government, a follow-up report, "Suggestions for a 10 Point Pilot Program to Increase Food Production," was made by a similar team in 1960. Launched in 1961 in seven districts in as many states, the Package Program is being given substantial financial and technical support by The Ford Foundation. The Government of India has subsequently expanded coverage of the program to 16 districts, on a general basis of one district per State.

Overall Gains in Development

In thinking about the future, we must keep in mind the difference between India as an ancient civilization and India as a new Republic only 15 years old. We should remember, too, that India's first four years of independence had to be devoted to creating the conditions for national development and to absorbing some 4 million refugees. Actually, India has had only 11 years of experience in development. Its gains in this short period are most impressive -- even though still more progress is vitally necessary.

Some of the highlights of India's development in its first decade are:

1. National income up 42 percent.
2. Per capita in up from \$64 per year to \$69, in rupee equivalent.
3. Agricultural production up 41 percent.
4. Industrial production up 94 percent.
5. Production of machine tools up by 16 times.
6. Mileage of surfaced roads up nearly 50 percent, along with an increase of 68 percent in rail freight traffic.
7. Production of consumer goods up substantially; of sewing machines, up 800 percent; bicycles, 940 percent; auto-mobiles, 224 percent.
8. Total school attendance up 85 percent to a total of 44 millions; 15 million more children in primary schools and 159 percent more young men and women in colleges, to a total of 1,052,000.
9. Through a nationwide malaria control program, reduction in incidence of malaria from 75 million to 10 million cases per year; also addition of 4,000 hospitals and dispensaries, 14,000 doctors, and 12,000 nurses.
10. Over 18 million additional acres brought under irrigation.
11. Land reforms benefitting 20 million farmers, abolishing antiquated land holding system.

12. Creation of national farm extension and community development services which by 1963 - next year - will include all of India's 558,000 villages. Many thousands of new staff workers had to be trained for this work.
13. In eight States, passage of basic legislation creating democratic self-government in rural areas to carry out local development (All States scheduled to have such legislation).

Conclusion

These advances reflect India's beginnings in modern development. India is trying hard and her efforts are bearing fruit. Her problems are difficult, but she is moving ahead toward a stronger and growing democracy. Her most urgent problem is that of food production and "freedom from hunger." The solution to this problem is the key to India's development as a land of freedom.

My feeling is that a Nation which has made such notable gains in a 10-year period, without previous developmental experience, can look forward to the future with confidence. With adequate assistance and reasonable time for growth, India will "make the grade." It is true that the time available is limited and could well be uncomfortably so. Therefore, the growth that is essential, especially in food production, must proceed on a schedule of highest urgency.