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Series D. International Relations Activities. 1961-1992.

Box 58, Folder 7, Food and poverty, 1975-1976.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

STATEMENT ON THE POOREST AMONG US

The American Jewish Committee has long been concerned with the plight of 25 million poor Americans, those who subsist on incomes below federal minimum living standards. They include the 9 million people on public assistance (of whom only a small percentage are employable), the under-employed, and the fully employed who earn less than these federal standards. A majority of this group is white, but it includes a disproportionate number of Blacks and persons from other minority groups. Included also are poor Jews, particularly many elderly living on inadequate social security.

We believe that the existence of poverty in an affluent society is morally indefensible, breeds hostility and community tension, and alienates one group from another. The best bulwark against poverty, we contend, is a prosperous nation that provides work opportunity for all, and adequate financial aid to those who cannot work. Therefore, we call for a program of social insurance that will incorporate financial safeguards, health insurance for all, and a social security program that will ultimately make the existence of a public welfare system unnecessary. Until such time, the present welfare system must be revised and improved.

But our efforts to eliminate the blight of poverty and malnutrition in America must not lead us to neglect our obligations abroad. The spectre of starvation is haunting large parts of the world today. Hundreds of millions of the world's peoples are undernourished. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and scores of other nations in South Asia, Africa and Latin America face widespread famine. Thousands have already died in drought-ridden sub-Saharan Africa. U.N. Secretary-General Waldheim has warned that "peoples and countries could disappear from the face of the map" in West Africa if the world does not help with immediate relief and long-range efforts to make the region self-supporting.

The high cost of oil, created by the oil-producing countries, is wrecking the economies of the poorest countries. And because petroleum or natural gas is needed for fertilizer production, oil and gas shortages in poor countries are spelling starvation. It has been estimated that if just one quarter of the natural gas that is now wasted in the Persian Gulf fields was diverted into a fertilizer industry on the spot, the world's entire current demand, for nitrogen fertilizer could be met.

We must also recognize that, in our finite world where resources are limited, the family of man must bring birth rates into reasonable balance with the lowered death rates that have been achieved. Many governments see the need to guide national policy toward this objective. We urge that the United States, working in consort with other governments and international organizations, give family planning at home and abroad the highest priority and adequate funding.

The American Jewish Committee is strongly committed to the search for economic and social justice everywhere. It sees the need to reduce the widening gaps

between rich and poor states. This must be a concern of Jews, Christians, Moslems and Hindus; of blacks, browns and whites. As the world becomes smaller, and nations closer, we become increasingly aware of the interdependence of one with the other. The affluent and developed nations cannot remain untouched by the poverty and famine in the less advantaged nations. This means not only immediate famine aid, but development of productive economies in the poor states. The highest degree of charity, said Maimonides, is not only to give food but also to assist a poor person to find a job or business opportunity, in short, to put him "where he can dispense with other people's aid." That must be our goal.

Therefore, we urge our own members and Americans everywhere -- in unions, business, civic and religious groups -- to contribute to the famine relief efforts of the member agencies of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service.

And, despite the unfortunate vote of the House of Representatives in January, we hope that Congress will ultimately support the Administration's recommendation for a \$1.5 billion U.S. contribution spread over four years to the International Development Association. We urge all affluent nations -- developed and developing alike -- to join in the United Nations for similar efforts to aid the poor. This is the least we can do to help meet the needs of 800 million people in the developing countries who are living on only 30 cents a day.

Adopted at the  
68th Annual Meeting  
May 18, 1974  
74-900-50

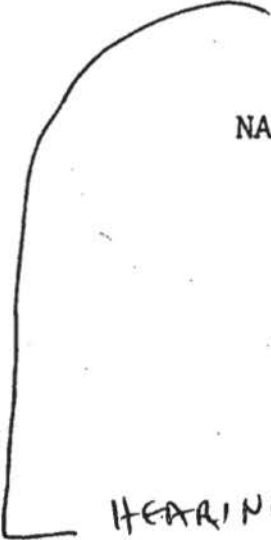




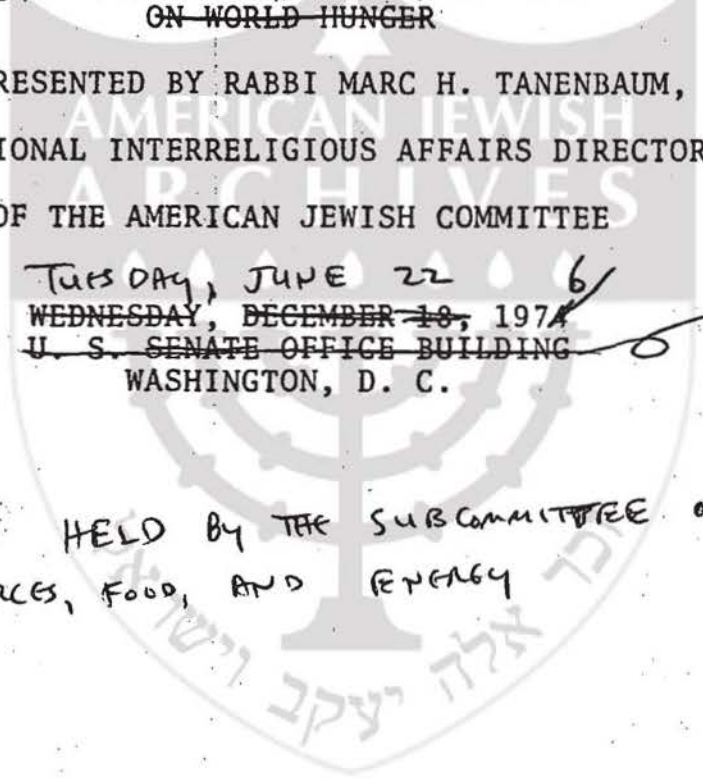
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ~~AD HOC SENATE COMMITTEE HEARINGS~~  
ON THE RIGHT-TO-FOOD RESOLUTION  
ON ~~WORLD HUNGER~~

PRESENTED BY RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM,  
NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS DIRECTOR  
OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Tuesday, JUNE 22 6/  
~~WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1974~~  
~~U. S. SENATE OFFICE BUILDING~~  
WASHINGTON, D. C.



HEARINGS HELD BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL  
RESOURCES, FOOD, AND ENERGY



Mr. Chairman,

My name is Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum of New York City. I serve as National Interreligious Affairs Director of the American Jewish Committee, a major human rights, ~~and~~ intergroup relations, ~~and~~ agency of the organized Jewish community in the United States.

*Social Justice*  
↓

I appreciate your extending to me the invitation, together with my Catholic and Protestant associates, to present these views on the compelling problems of world hunger.

On May 18, 1974 the Board of Governors of the American Jewish Committee adopted a policy statement in which we called upon our entire membership and the Jewish community at large to take an active part in helping to mobilize maximum American relief support to meet the needs of the millions of impoverished, <sup>malnourished</sup> hungry, and starving peoples throughout the world, including those within our country. A copy of that statement, entitled "The Poorest Among Us," is attached to this testimony.

*See copy →*

My purpose today is to elaborate on the rationale for a Jewish involvement in this urgent effort to save human lives, as well as to <sup>assure minimum nourishment for millions of human beings in this country and abroad</sup> ~~address several current problems.~~

As is well known, the Jewish community in the United States and throughout the world is anxiously beset, as seldom before, by massive problems of Jewish survival and security - the defense of the fundamental right of 3,000,000 of our brothers and sisters to national self-determination in their Biblical homeland, now the sovereign state of Israel; the safeguarding of the human rights of

free emigration and religious-cultural freedom of our 3,000,000 oppressed kinsmen in the Soviet Union, and the surviving pitiful remnants in Arab countries; the combatting of a renascent anti-Semitism now being systematically refuelled by demonic forces in this country and in many other parts of the world; not to speak of the vital needs of responding more adequately to the Jewish religious, educational, cultural, and family needs of our people.

In the face of these challenges and burdens, which except for the inspired support of the United States Government the Jewish community has responded to virtually alone out of its own limited resources, the American Jewish Committee and I personally have been asked with increasing frequency by members of the Jewish community, "How can you get involved in such massive problems of world hunger when our own needs are so great and pressing?"

A ~~The question is a legitimate one. The answer that I have tried to formulate in response to that question is in fact the basis of~~ *my* reason for being here today. ~~That reason~~ is grounded in the very essence of the morality of Judaism; in the traumatic lessons of Jewish history; and in the duties of being a responsible citizen in a democratic American society and in a growing inter-dependent world community.

If one takes seriously the moral, spiritual, and humanitarian values of Biblical, Prophetic, and Rabbinic Judaism, *as well as those of the American democratic ethos,* the inescapable issue of conscience that must be faced is : How can anyone justify not becoming involved in trying to help save the lives of starving millions of human beings throughout the world - whose plight constitutes the most agonizing moral and humanitarian

In Hebrew. Practicing Tzedakah is an obligation; those who are more fortunate are morally obligated to provide help to those that are less well off.

- 3 -

problem in the latter half of the 20th century?

Nothing is more fundamental in Biblical and Rabbinic ethics than the moral obligation of Tzedakah, a Hebrew term which means "righteousness." Significantly, there is no word-equivalent for "charity" both "charity" and "to do justice." The Rabbinic sages of the Talmud declared that "Almsgiving - i.e., aiding the poor and feeding the hungry - weighs as heavily as all the other commandments of the Torah" (Talmud Baba Batra 9a).

In proclaiming the Jubilee year, which like the Ten Commandments was ascribed to divinely-inspired legislation revealed on Mount Sinai, the Bible ordained, "And if your brother waxes poor, and his means fail with you, then you shall uphold him; as a stranger and a settler shall he live with you." (Leviticus 25:35). The Rabbis observe that the expression that "your brother may live with you" means that it is our personal and communal duty to see to it that our fellow human beings do not die of starvation. Though the person be a "stranger" or "an alien settler," he (or she) is to be included in the term "your brother" and is to be treated in a brotherly and compassionate manner.

To underscore the supreme virtue of humanitarian aid to the needy in the hierarchy of Jewish moral and spiritual values, the Rabbinic sages regarded such compassionate care of man as a Divine act:

"God says to Israel, 'My sons whenever you give sustenance to the poor, I impute it to you as though you gave sustenance to me, for it says, 'Command the children of Israel...my bread for my sacrifices...shall ye observe unto me. Does, then, God eat and

④ The great Rabbi Hillel who lived in Palestine in the first century of this era observed that the deed of God who daily "gives bread to all flesh" is as ~~great~~ wonderful a marvel as the splitting of the Red Sea. - 4 -

drink? No, but whenever you give food to the poor, God accounts it to you as if you gave food to Him." (Numbers Rabbah XXVIII;2).

The virtue of such care for the poor and hungry is depicted in Jewish tradition as the salient attribute of the "founding father" of Judaism, the Patriarch Abraham, who is called the archetype of the "Pharisee of love." In a midrashic commentary that begins with the phrases, "Let your house be open; let the poor be members of your household. Let a man's house be open to the north and to the south, and to the east and to the west," the Rabbis describe the humanitarianism of Abraham:

"He went out and wandered about, and when he found wayfarers, he brought them to his house, and he gave wheaten bread to him whose wont it was not to eat wheaten bread, and so with meat and wine. And not only this, but he built large inns on the roads, and put food and drink within them, and all came and ate and drank and blessed God. Therefore, quiet of spirit was granted to him, and all that the mouth of man can ask for was found in his house." (Abot de Rabbi Nathan, VII:17 a,b).

In Jewish communities from Biblical times through the present, there was much free and generous giving of alms to all who asked - even to deceivers! - and there was also much systematic and careful relief through established institutions. Each Jewish community boasted of a Tamhui (public kitchen) from which the poor received two meals daily. There was also the Kupah (alms box) for the disbursement of benevolent funds on Sabbath eve to provide three meals for the Sabbath. (Mishnah Peah VIII,7). Additional

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care was exercised in respect of the itinerant poor, who were provided with a loaf of bread which sufficed for two meals, and who were also entitled to the cost of lodging.

System of Social legislation.

To meet the needs of the poor, the Bible initiated a far-reaching system of charity relating to "gleaning," the "forgotten sheaf," and "the corner of the field," implied the underlying idea that national territory belongs to the public as a whole. In accordance with Jewish law, ~~landowners~~ <sup>farmers</sup> used to lay open fences surrounding their fields and vineyards, and during

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certain hours of the day, the needy were allowed to eat from the produce of the harvest. If any grain was left behind inadvertently, or fell to the ground at harvest time, it was no longer the property of the owner of the fields - it belonged to the needy.

There was also a ~~three-yearly~~ allocation of Maaser Ani (poor man's tithe) ~~from the threshing floor~~ <sup>that taxed one-tenth of the crops to go to the poor, at least every three years.</sup> (Deut. 24:28, 29.)

Thus, there arose the charitable traditions and institutions of the Jewish people which have remained a religious-communal characteristic ever since. These customs of Tzedakah ~~charity~~, which were foreign to the pagan frame of mind of the Greeks and Romans, also had an abiding impact on the nature of the Christian "caritas".

THE LESSONS OF JEWISH HISTORY

D Isarah

In addition to the impact of this long and engrained tradition of tzedakah on the moral sensibilities of Jews, the historic experience of the Jewish people, both past and recent, have predisposed the Jewish community to a particular empathetic understanding of the plight of the starving and suffering poor. During the late 1930s and early 1940s, the world community - certainly leaders of major segments of the international community - had knowledge of the fact that Hitler's Nazi Germany had embarked on a program of systematic extermination of the Jewish people through

starvation, forced labor, and finally through the efficiencies of the crematoria and gas chambers. With rare exception, leaders of governments, churches, labor unions, and universities stood by indifferently or cynically turned their backs on the genocide of six million Jewish men, women, and children and millions of other human beings.

The failures of the world community to confront that evil incarnate and to seek to contain its murderous programs resulted, I believe, in a supreme crisis of conscience which has not yet been fully comprehended. Certainly one consequence of that indifference was that it led to a depreciation of the worth of the human personality as a creature fashioned in the image of God, and thereby added to an ecology of callousness, dehumanization, and barbarism in the family of mankind. The Jewish people were literally traumatized by that experience of abandonment by the human family. In our struggle to find some meaning out of that ultimately absurd chapter, the Jewish people relearned as a governing lesson of its existence the command of the Book of Leviticus as a permanent and universal claim on our conscience, "You shall not stand idly by while the blood of your brothers and sisters cry out to you from the earth."

In the strict sense of the term, the deaths of hundreds of thousands resulting from the world famine is not genocide. But the fact that ~~some 800~~ million <sup>s/ of human beings</sup> ~~people~~ are at this moment suffering from debilitating malnutrition and starvation, that ~~at least~~ <sup>thousands die regularly</sup> ~~10,000~~ people are dying each week from famine does mean in fact

that there are human holocausts taking place before our very eyes. The facts of this vast human tragedy are inescapable - we see the corpses piled up in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Sahel, Ethiopia, on the evening television; we read in minute detail about the magnitude of food and medicines that are desperately required in feature stories, editorials, columns in daily newspapers and news-magazines; our rabbis, ministers, and priests preach sermons about our moral obligations as Christians and Jews.

*underscores by our Brethrenwood Observances)*

For a nation with our liberal, humanitarian ideals and for a people with our unambiguous Jewish and Christian ethical heritages to temporize in the face of the greatest moral challenge in the last decades of the 20th century is to risk the betrayal of everything morally meaningful that we profess to stand for. What is at stake in the way we respond during the coming months to this unparalleled world famine is our capacity to arrest the cycle of dehumanization and callousness to suffering that is abroad in the world, ultimately affecting all peoples, and to set into motion forces of caring and compassion that are the singular qualities by which an emergent interdependent world can be sustained.

#### SOME PRACTICAL RESPONSES TO WORLD FAMINE

While I have sought to keep myself informed about the complex nature of the world famine problems and the political and economic issues that necessarily affect our responses, I hardly qualify as a technical expert. For that reason, I have relied on such research studies as those of the Overseas Development Council,

and have identified myself with the central features of the positions taken by my cherished, long-time friend, the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame, who also serves as chairman of the board of ODC.

As a personal stand, I associate myself with the views expressed by Father Hesburgh in a letter to President Ford dated November 22, 1974, which I joined in signing together with a group of other religious leaders. The key features of that position, which I reaffirm as my own at this testimony, are as follows:

1) I join in urging President Ford to lead the United States in initiating immediately the shipment of two million tons of U.S. food aid additional to the amount now programmed to alleviate present conditions of critical starvation. I also urge that another two million tons of increased food supplies be planned for next spring and summer shipment, contingent on matching commitments by other donor countries. Canada and the European community have already acted and we should likewise move now.

At the same time we should seek to persuade other industrial and OPEC countries which are wallowing in tens of billions of dollars to share a substantial part of their incredible wealth to help feed the starving millions in the third world nations. Failure on the part of the Arab nations to demonstrate a significant measure of compassion for the hungry, while they continue to be recipients of hundreds of thousands of tons of food supplies through our American Food for Peace program, cannot but lead to an erosion of the consensus and will of the American people who are determined to help, but who will not be taken as naive suckers.

We understand that the President can make these shipments of four million tons under his existing authority without need of further prior legislative action by Congress. We further understand that the Senate, in Resolution 329, sponsored by a bipartisan group of 38 Senators and passed in August, has also urged that the President increase food aid this year by this amount that we are recommending.

We recognize that it will not be easy to provide an additional 4 million tons of food relief in the current crop year, which represents a doubling of the present announced level of the Food for Peace Program. But the alternative is not morally acceptable. The starvation of millions, while an even greater number are eating more than is healthy, will be worse than a moral travesty; the spread of famine and misery guarantee a degree of economic and political instability potentially disastrous for all in an interdependent world.

Moreover, the failure to muster up the political will to prevent a massive human catastrophe will further undermine the faith of citizens everywhere in the capacity of the world to cope with the problems it now faces. Such an indication that the world's problems had indeed become unmanageable would have dangerous psychological consequences everywhere.

Adding \$800 million to the federal budget also will obviously be difficult at a time when large budget cuts have already been initiated. There is no escaping the question of priorities. We must ask whether the threat to human security and well-being posed by the food crisis does not outweigh some of the more traditionally

recognized security threats-- and whether a budgetary adjustment is not appropriate. Humans who die prematurely cannot be resurrected; military hardware which has been delayed in procurement can be acquired in a later year.

2) Negotiated delays in commercial export deliveries to Europe, Japan, Iran, and the U.S.S.R. are another possible source of additional grain. These countries are not facing starvation; indeed, the Soviet Union bought almost 30 million tons of United States grain, in secrecy and at an unreasonably low price level supported by unwarranted Government subsidies, mainly to increase substantially its feeding of livestock.

3) A major, systematic national program is required to reduce food waste and reduce American consumer demands for grain. The average American consumes 1,850 pounds of grain per year, much of it in the form of meat. The average person in India consumes 400 pounds, most of it directly as grain. Our government, and especially our religious leadership, must help our people to reduce their enormous appetite for animal products which has forced the conversion of more and more grain, soybean and fish meal into feed for cattle, hogs, and poultry, thus decreasing the amounts of food directly available for direct consumption by the poor.

It may be worthwhile to recall that in ancient Palestine, the staple food of the Jewish community consisted mainly of cereals, fruits, and other produce of the land. Meat was consumed solely in connection with the sacrificial obligations of every Jewish man and woman, of which the paschal lamb was an outstanding example. In more recent history, President Truman in 1947 called on Americans to

conserve 2½ million tons of grain to stave off famine in Europe during the winter of 1947. President Truman then called on Americans to take many specific actions to save food, including meatless days, saving a slice of bread a day, and closing distilleries for 60 days. Today our total food supply is far greater and Americans consume far more than they did in 1947. The emergency relief now required could be made available without an inflationary impact through far less drastic measures today, if we have the necessary national political will and government leadership.

4) There are numerous other suggestions which experts propose which call for serious consideration and implementation as part of a national and global strategy to cope effectively with this vast human problem - including those outlined in Lester Brown's perceptive studies "In the Human Interest," and "By Bread Alone." There is an area in which I believe the religious community, in concert with other cultural forces in our society, can make a distinctive contribution, namely, the definition and articulation of a new "Ethic of Scarcity" for the American people. Our society has been blessed since its founding with what appeared to be almost limitless natural resources and raw materials. We seem to have been living on a set of unexamined assumptions that constitute an "ethic of abundance" which has rationalized and justified endless consumption, self-indulgence, and permissive hedonism. The waste at our social functions - conferences, conventions, weddings, confirmations, bar mitzvahs, even funeral wakes - have verged on the scandalous, especially when seen against the background of the world's starving masses. We are

entering a new experience of growing scarcity of resources and energy supplies, and the nation requires a definition of values and human priorities that will result in greater self-discipline, restraint, and a genuine motivation to share out of a more limited supply of goods.

The American people are a generous people, and I feel confident that with vigorous governmental, religious, and other voluntary leadership they will respond as constructively and positively to this great human crisis as they have to other challenges in our past.

74-700-115





TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS'

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES, FOOD AND ENERGY

ON "THE RIGHT-TO-FOOD" RESOLUTION

PRESENTED BY RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM,

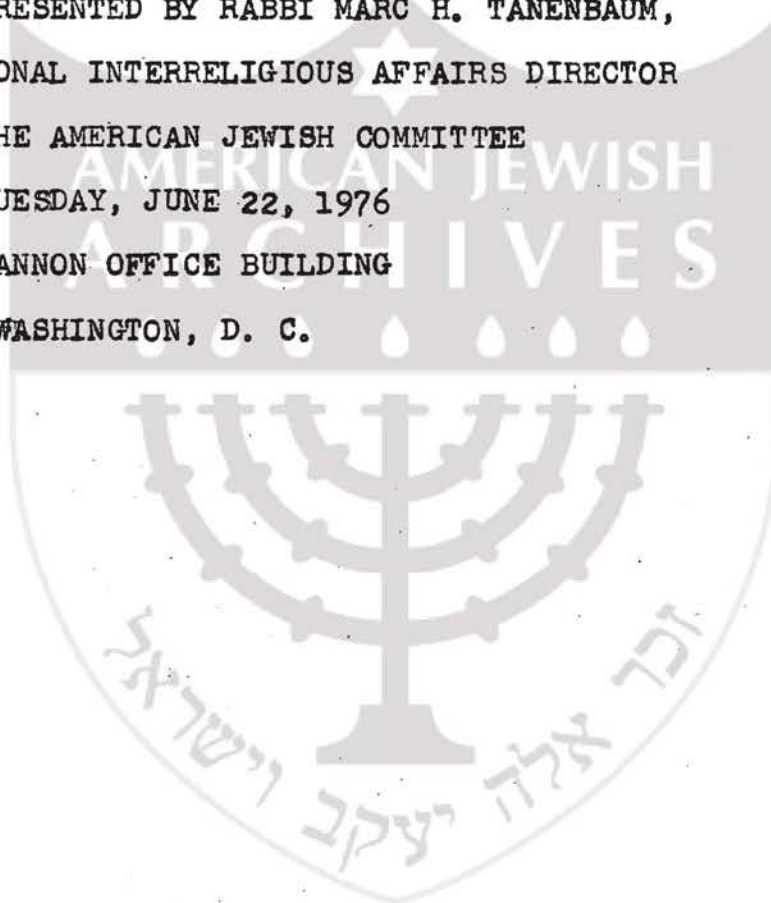
NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 1976

CANNON OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, D. C.



Mr. Chairman,

My name is Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum of New York City. I serve as National Interreligious Affairs Director of the American Jewish Committee, a major human rights, intergroup relations, and social justice agency of the organized Jewish community in the United States. I appreciate your extending to me this personal invitation, together with my Catholic and Protestant associates, to present these views regarding H. Con. Res. 490 that advocates the right of every person throughout the world to a nutritionally adequate diet and the assistance for self-help development among the world's poorest people.

On May 18, 1974, the Board of Governors of the American Jewish Committee adopted a policy statement in which we called upon our entire membership and the Jewish community at large to take an active part in helping to mobilize maximum American relief support to meet the needs of the millions of impoverished, malnourished, and starving peoples throughout the world, including those within our country. A copy of that statement, entitled "The Poorest Among Us," is attached to this testimony.

My purpose today is to elaborate on the rationale for an American and a Jewish involvement in this urgent effort to save human lives, as well as to assure minimum adequate nourishment for millions of human beings in this country and abroad. That rationale is grounded in the very essence of Jewish morality; in the traumatic lessons of Jewish history; in the duties of being a responsible citizen in our American democratic society as well as in a growing interdependent world community.

In this discussion of our moral responsibility to aid suffering men and women, I believe that it is important to recognize that there are two major social visions contending for domination in large parts of the world today. The stand we take in relation to these moral-philosophic world-views affects decisively our approach and commitments to the less fortunate people of the world.

To summarize a complex reality briefly, I refer to the respective influences of Social Darwinism versus Biblical Morality. In the 1830s, the school of thought of Charles Darwin had a spectacular impact on the study of man and society. Based on Newtonian mechanistic science, Darwin threw the weight of his enormous prestige behind the idea that social progress has resulted chiefly, though not solely, from individual, ~~xxxxx~~ tribal, and racial competition.

Together with Herbert Spencer, Darwin asserted that the progress of humanity had resulted from race conflict, from "a continuous over-running of the less powerful or less adapted by the more powerful or more adapted, a driving of inferior varieties into undesirable habitats, and occasionally, an extermination of inferior varieties." Since the progress of civilization had been generated, in his view, from competition and the capacity to survive in the past, it would presumably continue to result from the same causes in the future.

Darwin was critical of the tendency in modern society to inhibit natural selection from exerting its full power. He wrote:

"With savages, the weak in body or mind are soon eliminated; and those that survive commonly exhibit a vigorous state of health. We civilised men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process

of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed and the sick; we institute poor-laws; and our medical~~men~~ <sup>their</sup> men exert with/utmost skill to save the life of every one to the last moment. There is reason to believe that vaccination has preserved thousands, who from a weak constitution would formerly have succumbed to small-pox. Thus the weak members of civilized societies propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man. It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race, but excepting in the case of man himself, hardly any one is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed."

Darwin's views that early man was simply an anthropoid animal equipped with a better brain than his cousin anthropoids became a revolutionizing force in social thought and made these a basic postulate of modern social science. If human history were but an extension of natural history, the prospects of individual liberty were dim and uncertain. Nazi race theory, not free enterprise, was the logical outcome of the biologizing of social theory. On another plane, Adam Smith earlier took Newton's conception of nature as a law-bound system of matter-in-motion as his model when he represented society as a collection of individuals pursuing their self-interest in our economic order governed by the natural laws of supply and demand.

Contrast these views with the moral, spiritual, and humanitarian values of Biblical, Prophetic, and Rabbinic Judaism, as well as those of the American democratic ~~ethos~~ ethos. Biblical religion, Prof. David Flusser of Hebrew University in Jerusalem asserts, was a breakthrough in human consciousness. The God of Israel initiated a new

era in the history of mankind, introducing a new concept of justice - which is the central message of His revelation - an uncompromising moral law, an original social order to be established paradigmatically in the Holy Land of Palestine, conceived in this justice. This postulate of individual and social justice was not to be limited to Israel only. The Creator of the Universe postulates this justice for all His human creatures; it was incumbent on all the peoples of the world.

The concept of justice which emerges from the Hebrew Bible is not ~~xxx~~ just the regimen of mighty men - the fittest who have survived. The Bible does not identify God on the side of Pharaoh and his imperium. It stresses that God cares for the poor and unprotected, for the orphan, the widow and the stranger. The basis of social justice was not to be external power and might, but the reverence of God and obedience to His moral will.

To understand the idea of justice in Israel, we must bear in mind the Biblical teaching that the human being is created in the image of God, that each human life is sacred and of infinite worth. In consequence a human being cannot be treated as a chattel or an object to be disposed of for someone's program or project or ideology, but must be treated as a personality. Every human being is the possessor of the right-to-life, dignity and honor, and the fruits of his or her labor. The supreme importance of the human being in the economy of the Universe is expressed in this Rabbinic teaching:

"Man (the human personality) was first created as a single individual to teach the lesson that whoever destroys one life, Scripture ascribes it to him as though he had destroyed a whole world; and whoever saves one life, Scripture ascribes it to him as though he had saved

a whole world." (Sanhedrin 4:5).

Based on these values, nothing is more fundamental in Biblical and Rabbinic ethics than the moral obligation of Tzedakah, a Hebrew term which means "righteousness." Significantly, there is no word-equivalent for "charity" in Hebrew. Practicing Tzedakah is an obligation; those who are more fortunate are morally obligated to provide help to those who are less well off. Thus, the Rabbinic sages of the Talmud declared that "aiding the poor and feeding the hungry weigh as heavily as all the other commandments of the Torah." (Talmud Baba Batra 9a).





**bread for the world**  
a christian citizens' movement in the usa

Statement of

Eugene Carson Blake

President of Bread for the World

Before the Subcommittee on International Resources,  
Food & Energy of the House International Relations Committee

June 22, 1976

Subject: Right to Food Resolution, H.Con.Res.393

My name is Eugene Carson Blake and I am testifying as President of Bread for the World, an interdenominational Christian citizens' movement concerned with public policy and hunger. We have members in every congressional district of the United States, and in addition we have a fine working relationship with the churches, which are becoming increasingly concerned about finding long-range solutions to the hunger problem in this country and throughout the world.

I have asked our Executive Director, Arthur Simon, to present the latter part of our testimony. We speak in favor of House Concurrent Resolution 393.

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**Mary Jane Patterson**  
Director, United Presbyterian  
Washington Office

**Paul S. Rees**  
Vice President at Large  
World Vision International

**Larold K. Schulz**  
Director, Center for Social Action  
United Church of Christ

**Tom Skinner**  
President, Tom Skinner Associates

**Doreen F. Tilghman**  
Associate Secretary for  
Administration, United Methodist  
Committee on Relief

**Mary Luke Tobin, S.L.**  
Director of Citizen Action  
Church Women United

**Kristen Wenzel, O.S.U.**  
Chairperson, Dept. of Sociology  
College of New Rochelle, N.Y.

**Charles G. Williams**  
Vice President of Religion  
Lilly Endowment, Inc.

Hunger has receded from the headlines, thanks to favorable weather last year in most developing countries. Famines that are dramatic enough to make news come and go. But they are merely the tip of the iceberg. Underneath the situation has not changed for at least 400 million victims of malnutrition, most of them children. They don't make the evening news. They simply suffer in quiet obscurity, get sick too often and die too soon.

The outlook for them is not getting better. A report from last week's meeting of the World Food Council in Rome said that unless nations make greater common efforts, the world is headed for a global food disaster by 1985. The World Food Council has called attention to the fact that food and fertilizer aid to the poorest countries has lagged behind goals, that the world has yet to agree on a global system of food reserves, and that food production in the developing countries is increasing more slowly than it did during the 1960's.

In the light of this assessment Bread for the World is dismayed that spokesmen for the Department of Agriculture have argued against the right-to-food resolution on the grounds that "current efforts directed at fighting hunger and malnutrition are sufficient at this time."

This assessment not only ignores reality, but it contradicts the Administration's own position presented at the 1974 World Food Conference by Secretary of State Kissinger, when he said, "We regard our good fortune and strength in the field of food as a global trust....The United States will make every effort to match its capacity to the magnitude of the challenge."

We are doing no such thing.

We also find it disheartening, therefore, that the State Department, through Assistant Secretary McClosky, has filed a statement that says, "the Executive Branch questions both the desirability and the feasibility of establishing a world-wide right to food as a cornerstone of U.S. policy."



In contrast to this head-in-the sand position, the right-to-food resolution represents a practical initiative. It lays the foundation for an approach to hunger far more comprehensive and realistic than anything we have done to date. If taken seriously, it would help us get at some of the underlying causes of hunger both in this country and abroad.

We believe that the resolution should be approved by this subcommittee for the following reasons:

1. The right to food is consistent with the Judeo-Christian tradition.

It is rooted in the extraordinary value that God places on human life, and in the belief that the earth is the Lord's, and that we are stewards, not owners, of his earth, accountable for the way in which we use its resources, whether to enhance or to diminish the lives of others.

2. The right to food flows from the right to life and is grounded in the deepest and finest tradition of our nation. The Declaration of Independence

says: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Without the food to sustain life, those rights are made meaningless.

3. This resolution moves in the direction of development for self-reliance.

It does not suggest that the United States has to feed the world, nor is it a massive food aid proposal. On the contrary it says that a network of policies is required, only one of which is assistance. And assistance is described in the final paragraph of the resolution as "assistance for self-help development among the world's poorest people...with particular emphasis on increasing food production among the rural poor." This emphasis has prompted The Wall Street Journal, among others, to speak favorably of the resolution in a lead editorial that is attached. If this resolution pushed ever-increasing food assistance and

ever-increasing dependency upon such assistance by the developing countries, we in Bread for the World would oppose it. That's exactly what we do not want. Food assistance for emergencies and on a scale that reflects our share of the world's grain exports, yes. Participation in an internationally coordinated system of food reserves, yes. But the resolution before you emphasizes that a range of policies, including economic assistance and food aid, needs to encourage development for self-reliance with, as it says, "particular emphasis on increasing food production among the rural poor." In terms of domestic hunger, too, we see the long-range emphasis not on food assistance programs, but on the kind of development that pushes for "full employment and a floor of economic decency for everyone."

4. Implementation of this resolution would be the most effective possible contribution toward reducing population growth rates in the developing countries. We are well aware of the seriousness of the population growth rate as it relates to world hunger. For this reason we want to avoid the self-defeating but popular notion that you must first get impoverished people to have smaller families, and then deal with nutrition and other basic needs later. It doesn't work that way.

A peasant couple in India, for example, has no social security except for sons who survive to adulthood. Because adequate nourishment and basic health care are often beyond reach, the chance of the couple's losing several children through death is high. Under these conditions a couple typically makes an intelligent economic decision by choosing to have many children. Only when the insecurities of hunger and poverty are substantially reduced do parents voluntarily decide to have small families. Consequently the general rule is that hunger spurs population growth.

China, Taiwan, South Korea, Sri Lanka, and even Kerala; a poor state in India, have sharply lowered their population growth rates. Why? Because minimal but adequate nutrition, health care, basic education, and in most cases jobs are available to all or virtually all of their people. In this context parents tend to have fewer children. Without these gains parents will continue to have many children, no matter how vigorously birth control measures are pushed, precisely because it is not in their best interest to do otherwise. What developing country has dramatically lowered its population growth rate apart from social and economic gains that reach the poorest half of its population? None.

5. This resolution has the overwhelming support of the religious community. That support is evident in the congregations and among the leadership, as well. I refer you in this connection to a paper, attached to this testimony, entitled An Appeal to Congress, issued some weeks ago by various religious leaders, including the heads of virtually every major denomination. Let me single out two especially important points made in that appeal:

First, it underscores the resolution's wording that every man, woman and child has the right to a nutritionally adequate diet. The Congress is not being asked to carve out a new right, but merely to acknowledge one that already exists. The resolution does not say that people should have the right to an adequate diet. That right is inherent because it derives from the right to life. It is not ours to give or to take away--only ours to acknowledge or deny. And we deny it at the risk of undermining the Judeo-Christian concept of humanity upon which freedom in this nation was established.

Second, it observes that hunger is no longer unavoidable, because we have the means to overcome hunger. "Substantial gains against hunger will not be quick or easy or cheap," the appeal says. "But they are not beyond reach. They will require exceptional efforts on the part of rich and poor nations alike. And they will exact some sacrifices from all of us. The alternative, however, is a broken world that we do not want our children to inherit."

We do not come to you posing as experts in legislation. You are the experts. But House Concurrent Resolution 393 is not specific legislation. It is rather a statement of moral and political assumptions upon which specific authorizations and appropriations should be based by the Congress. There is, however, in the resolution the specific goal of one percentage of the GNP for aid to the poorest nations of the world. I would like, therefore, to ask Mr. Arthur Simon, executive director of Bread for the World, to speak to this aspect of the resolution to complete our testimony.

## II

Is a target of one percent of GNP--a target that would mean in terms of this year's GNP an assistance figure of roughly \$15 billion--feasible? We think that it is, for the following reasons:

1. The resolution clearly indicates that we are to reach the target gradually. This allows for relatively easy adjustment as the nation moves toward that goal, and for the freedom to take many factors into account as Congress decides how long it should take us to get there. The argument that our economy at the present time would be strained to assume such a responsibility is correct but misplaced.

2. The 1 percent target should be compared to both present and past performance. According to 1975 preliminary estimates, the United States ranked 13th among 18 Development Assistance Committee nations, when assistance is measured as a percentage of GNP. Sweden topped the list with 0.8 percent, compared to the U.S. percentage of 0.24 for development aid. This is less than one-tenth of the proportion of our assistance to Western Europe during the peak of the Marshall Plan in 1949, when assistance reached almost 3 percent of the nation's GNP.

3. Several polls have shown that a large majority of the U.S. public supports development assistance. That support increases and becomes more firm when combined with the condition that assistance effectively reach those who are truly impoverished, or the condition that it be detached from military aid and political considerations. Public support also increases when citizens become aware of the present low level of our assistance, because most of them have a greatly exaggerated idea of how much development assistance we give.

4. Private contributions for assistance abroad has increased sharply. The United States ranks 2nd among the 18 DAC nations in private assistance, compared to 13th in official development assistance. While the latter has declined, private contributions have increased. This speaks of the public's inclination to support a 1 percent target. (The resolution, I should note, includes private as well as government assistance in the 1 percent target.)

5. Aid should not be seen as lost resources. The Marshall Plan demonstrated and, despite some misdirected efforts, our economic aid to developing countries has shown that we can build better trading partners and a healthier world economy through assistance. As you

know, most aid dollars never leave the United States. And almost all of the goods and services imported by recipient countries through U.S. aid programs are purchased in this country. As the U.S. Agency for International Development has pointed out, "The relatively small proportion of AID funds spent overseas each year is more than offset by receipts of interest and repayments on past AID loans, resulting in a new inflow to the United States from these operations." In fact, this reflects a dollar flow that should be reversed. But even if most assistance took the form of grants, as it did under the Marshall Plan, much of it would be spent in the United States, and the long-range benefit to us would be considerable. Further, many economists agree with a report of the Overseas Development Council\*, that when our productive capacity is underutilized, the economic cost of assistance to us is negligible. Put another way, such assistance creates jobs and is one of the more economically and socially useful types of countercyclical spending.

6. Assistance, properly applied, can have a catalytic effect in spurring development. The "new directions" of recent development assistance legislation indicates the importance of delivering assistance to the rural poor, who need appropriate technical and material help to improve their food productivity. Aid can be based on specific criteria and tied to the accomplishment of specific goals in order to spur needed reforms in recipient countries and to insure gains for the target population.

7. A U.S. commitment to the 1 percent goal would have the effect of helping to mobilize other prosperous nations in a serious global

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\*James W. Howe, The "Killing" of U.S. Aid to the Poor Countries, 1972

effort against hunger. The point is important because we do not think for a minute that the United States can or should shoulder such a responsibility alone.

8. Assistance aimed at increasing food production abroad would not diminish markets needed for U.S. farm products. A continuing and growing market among the more prosperous northern countries seems well assured, and projections show that by 1985 many of the least developed countries will need food imports beyond their purchasing capacity. The aim of the resolution before you is to change that situation and to avert catastrophe; but even with considerable improvement for those countries, there are no signs of a shrinking market abroad for U.S. farm exports.

9. The underlying question is: What kind of world do we want? An improved and expanded assistance program could have a number of benefits, not the least of which would be increased respect for the United States abroad, and better links with countries on whom we rely for essential imports. In summoning arguments for a 1 percent target one could also make various comparisons--spending on the arms race, or on liquor or cosmetics, to cite but a few possibilities. The 20 cents of 20 dollars per U.S. citizen per day that the 1 percent target would imply, if it were in full effect today, is not inconsiderable; but neither is it beyond our capacity. However, the question that lies beneath these and other arguments ultimately is: What kind of world do we want? As the religious leaders said in their appeal, efforts to enable hungry people to produce more food and to work their way out of hunger "require some commitment of our resources, to be sure. But the costs are far cheaper than war, and much less than the cost of continued human misery."

Fourteen days before he died, President Kennedy addressed the Protestant Council of the City of New York and urged church leaders to support foreign aid. He deplored the fact that it had dropped to a mere 4 percent of the national budget (it is less than 1 percent now) and added, "I do not want it said of us what T.S. Eliot said of others some years ago:

'Here were decent godless people:  
Their only monument the asphalt road  
And a thousand lost golf balls.'"

We can reach for a better world than that.





## REVIEW & OUTLOOK

### The Right to Food

Twenty-seven national religious leaders recently drafted a thoughtful appeal to Congress that is bound to stimulate widespread public discussion. The interfaith religious leaders said that until recently hunger was unavoidable for much of the human family, but now that we have the means to overcome hunger it is no longer acceptable. Every man, woman and child on earth has the right to a nutritionally adequate diet, they said, since the food to sustain life is a fundamental right that derives from the right to life itself.

The authors of this declaration do not seek villains or pretend that there are easy answers, which distinguishes their effort from some other notable statements issued in the name of religion. They explicitly point out that two resolutions currently before Congress, declaring that everyone has a right to food and that such a right is to be recognized as a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy, "does not commit our nation to massive food handouts." Rather, they say, the resolutions "recognize the responsibility we have, in cooperation with other nations, of enabling hungry people to produce more food and to work their way out of hunger."

The religious leaders' concern is readily understandable: Famine and food shortages have plagued mankind since the beginning of time, yet finally mankind has the means to overcome hunger—provided that governments do not interfere. (Russian expert Adam B. Ulam notes in a recent issue of the *New Republic* that four to five million Soviet citizens starved in 1932-33 while the Stalinist government exported 1½ million tons of grain to obtain foreign currency for industrialization.) That's why we share the underlying suggestion in the clergymen's declaration that food and nutrition cannot be divorced from such considerations as population, economics and politics.

The religious leaders caution that "substantial gains against hunger will not be quick or easy or

cheap," and that they "will require exceptional efforts on the part of rich and poor nations alike." But it seems to us that foremost among those "exceptional efforts" is recognition that the problem of food shortages is rooted to a large extent in government policies, particularly in efforts to impose rigid controls on agriculture.

This is true in many nations but it is particularly true of Communist and socialist states, which continue to blame harvest failures on the weather and on everything other than the effects of state planning. It is no accident, and only partly the fault of bad weather, that Russia was the world's leading agriculture exporter before World War I, yet twice in recent years was required to purchase vast amounts of grain from the U.S.—whose agricultural methods it routinely criticizes as unscientific and wasteful.

Some influential Americans also describe U.S. agricultural methods as unscientific and wasteful, and their solution for modernizing it is to impose ever wider controls. Regrettably, they have yet to make the connection between America's bountiful harvests and the fact that U.S. farmers enjoy considerable freedom. The proper solution is not to wrap them in a straitjacket of regulations and controls, but to encourage other nations to follow the U.S. example.

This means that Washington should redouble its efforts to share U.S. technical and scientific know-how with interested nations. It means we should do everything we reasonably can to ameliorate hunger and prevent starvation anywhere in the world. But it also means that we owe it to the underdeveloped world, as well as to home grown critics, to reiterate again and again that most countries have it within their power to stave off famine by merely liberating farms and farmers from the shackles of government master plans.

Joint Statement by

DR. EUGENE CARSON BLAKE

President of Bread for the World

and

Former General Secretary of the World Council of Churches

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES

BISHOP JAMES S. RAUSCH

General Secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops

and the

U.S. Catholic Conference

(represented by FR. J. BRYAN HEHIR, Associate Secretary,  
Office of International Justice and Peace, U.S. Catholic Conference)

RABBI MARC TANNENBAUM

National Director of Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee

We are here for two purposes: (1) to express alarm at official foot-dragging by the Administration on the crucial issue of world hunger; and (2) to appeal to the Congress for passage of a resolution, now being considered in public hearings, that would acknowledge the right of every person to a nutritionally adequate diet.

We do not for a moment overlook the responsibility that other nations have regarding world hunger. At the same time we recognize that the United States is in a uniquely favorable position to help mobilize a truly global effort against hunger.

Last week in Rome, at a meeting of the World Food Council, it was reported that unless nations make much more comprehensive common efforts, the world is headed for a global food disaster by 1985. The World Food Council has called attention to the fact that food and fertilizer aid to the poorest countries has lagged behind goals, that the world has yet to agree on a global system of food reserves, and that food production in the developing countries is increasing more slowly than it did during the 1960's.

In the light of this and similar assessments we are dismayed that spokesmen for the Department of Agriculture have argued against the right-to-food resolution on the grounds that "current efforts directed at fighting hunger and malnutrition are sufficient at this time." The Administration's position not only ignores reality, but it contradicts its own position presented at the 1974 World Food Conference by Secretary of State Kissinger, when he said, "We regard our good fortune and strength in the field of food as a global trust. . . . The United States will make every effort to match its capacity to the magnitude of the challenge."

We are doing no such thing.

It is disheartening, therefore, that even the State Department, through Assistant Secretary McClosky, has filed with Congress a statement that says, "the Executive Branch questions both the desirability and the feasibility of establishing a world-wide right-to-food as a cornerstone of U.S. policy."

The right-to-food resolution is not asking for a chicken in every pot or a dessert on every table. It asks only for enough to live on--a nutri-

tionally adequate diet--for everyone. And it asks that this right become a fundamental point of reference in the formation of U.S. policy. Nothing less will do.

The resolution is not a proposal for massive food handouts. Rather it recognizes the responsibility we have, in cooperation with other nations, of enabling hungry people to produce more food and to work their way out of hunger.

We stand with our colleagues, including the leaders of virtually every major religious denomination, who recently appealed to Congress to support the right-to-food resolution. They said, "Substantial gains against hunger will not be quick or easy or cheap. But they are not beyond reach. They will require exceptional efforts on the part of rich and poor nations alike. And they will exact some sacrifice from all of us. The alternative, however, is a broken world that we do not want our children to inherit."

The right of people to a nutritionally adequate diet is not ours to give or take away. It derives from the right to life itself. The Declaration of Independence identifies the right to life as an unalienable human right coming from God, who has created all persons as equals. Without the food to sustain life, that right is made meaningless.

In the Bible we read the admonition: You shalt not stand idly by while the blood of your brothers cries out to you from the earth. The fact that literally millions of our brothers and sisters are suffering from hunger in quiet obscurity and dying too soon cries out to us. To turn a deaf ear is not only to abandon them. It is also to let our moral sensibilities become callous and to encourage a process of dehumanization that destroys the bedrock of civilization.

We intend to ask the House Subcommittee on International Resources, Food and Energy to recommend this resolution for quick and favorable action.

STATEMENT BY CONG. DONALD M. FRASER FOR PRESS CONFERENCE ON  
RIGHT TO FOOD RESOLUTION HEARINGS, TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 1976

I regret that I am unable to join with Dr. Blake, Father Hehir, and Rabbi Tannenbaum, but I am bound to a previously arranged speaking engagement. I commend these distinguished leaders on their excellent statement.

The United States stands at a crucial threshold in its relationship to the developing nations of the world. Our reaction to the intertwined problems of food production, food security, and food trade will be pivotal in developing nations' efforts to free their populations from the spectre of hunger and malnutrition.

The record of the current Administration is ambiguous. On one hand, it has taken positive steps. In various international forums, it has firmly committed itself in word to meeting the challenges of global hunger and poverty. It has also contributed to the development of an institutional framework designed to foster expanded dialogue and cooperation between the developed and developing worlds -- the tone of United States participation in the World Food Conference, the Seventh Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, HABITAT and the International Wheat Council has been encouraging.

2-2-2 -- Right to Food Resolution hearings press conference

On the other hand, however, it is an Administration that has too often failed to implement its rhetoric with program initiatives and to fully utilize the potential of international organizations and institutions. It was only after considerable public and Congressional pressure, for example, that the Administration agreed to increase its P.L. 480 grain shipments to a level more in line with the targets accepted at the World Food Conference.

Moreover, the Administration has written Congress that "Current efforts directed at hunger and malnutrition are sufficient at this time" and that "the Executive Branch questions the desirability and feasibility of establishing a world-wide right-to-food as a cornerstone of U.S. policy." This position threatens to make a mockery of our rhetorical commitments. It lessens prospects for a meaningful international dialogue on development problems. The Administration reveals a painful insensitivity to the tragic conditions of existence which govern the lives of countless millions of persons.

We cannot, either morally or in terms of self-interest, allow such an attitude to prevail; we cannot afford to lose grasp of the opportunity at hand.

3-3-3 -- Right-to-Food Resolution hearings press conference

The hearings beginning today will be a useful forum in which to assess our government's willingness to move away from the status quo toward an international order predicated upon new imperatives and sensibilities. The right-to-food resolution represents a strong affirmation of Congress' desire to ensure that our government does not back away from this responsibility. I look forward to a fruitful series of hearings.



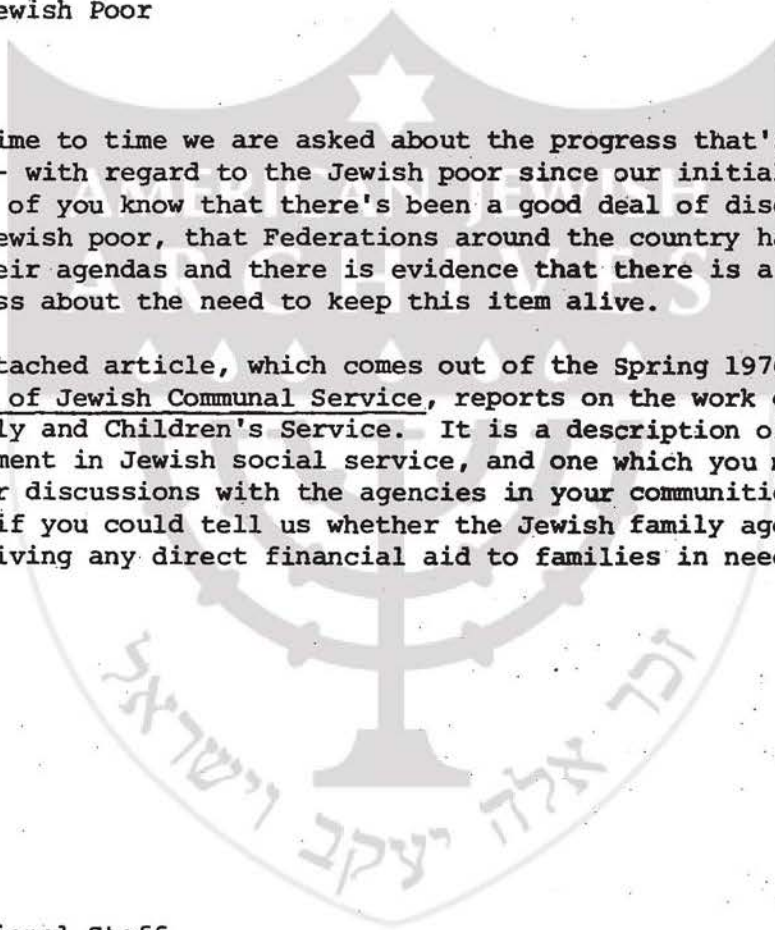
**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

**date** June 17, 1976  
**to** Area Directors  
**from** Ann G. Wolfe  
**subject** Jewish Poor

From time to time we are asked about the progress that's been made -- or not -- with regard to the Jewish poor since our initial work in 1971. Most of you know that there's been a good deal of discussion about the Jewish poor, that Federations around the country have put the issue on their agendas and there is evidence that there is a greater consciousness about the need to keep this item alive.

The attached article, which comes out of the Spring 1976 issue of the Journal of Jewish Communal Service, reports on the work of the Detroit Jewish Family and Children's Service. It is a description of an encouraging development in Jewish social service, and one which you might find of help in your discussions with the agencies in your communities. It would be helpful if you could tell us whether the Jewish family agencies in your towns are giving any direct financial aid to families in need.

AW:PL  
Att.  
CC: AJC National Staff  
76-640-24





# The Jewish Family Agency and the Problem of Poverty Among Jews\*

SAMUEL LERNER

Executive Director, Jewish Family and Children's Service, Detroit, Michigan

*"Once an agency—and a Federation—makes a decision to embark on a financial assistance program that doesn't only handle emergency needs but will provide regular monthly or periodic grants to financially strapped families, then they can expect that the costs will rise steadily over the years."*

FOR TOO long we have lived with the myths that (a) there are no Jewish poor; (b) if they do exist their numbers are so small as to be insignificant and not important enough to be considered as a serious problem; (c) the poor or near-poor are concentrated almost exclusively among the aged; (d) the Jews "take care of their own" and therefore have solved this problem to the satisfaction of the givers and receivers of assistance.

Unfortunately none of these guilt-relieving myths are true. There are Jews who are poor; in significant numbers; not only among the aged but in younger and middle-aged families with children and we have not as Jewish communities "taken care of our own," to any marked degree. However, we are beginning to wake up to the problem and in certain cities community action has begun and some help is being given. But there is still general acceptance of the above "myths," and too little direct financial support to the poor and near-poor.

Part of the problem is the confusion around the definition of poverty. For too long we have been lulled into accepting the definitions of poverty put out by the state and local public assistance agencies or the low standards set by the Department of Health, Education & Welfare for SSI or Social Security grants or for food stamp eligibility

\* Presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Conference of Jewish Communal Service, Grossinger, New York, June 10, 1975.

as measures of what people really need to live on. By these standards a typical family of four is expected to live on \$3,500-6,000 (depending on which agency sets the standard) whereas a recent study by the U.S. Labor Department, Bureau of Labor Statistics, calculated the cost for a family of four living on the low cost "austerity" budget as \$9,200 a year. Note that these lower budget families are assumed to live in inexpensive rental housing, use public transportation or drive a used car and do most of their own cooking and washing. (Families of four living on a "moderate" cost budget require \$14,300 to maintain this "moderate" standard of living.)

The B.L.S. statistics on minimum budget costs averaged \$323.33 a month for a couple and around \$200 for a single person living in the New York City area in September, 1973. Since then the cost-of-living has gone up at least 20%, with even larger increases for the poor and moderate income families in food, rent and service items. Yet we know that SSI grants a maximum of around \$170 for a single person and \$235 for a couple (though permitting maximum incomes of \$235 for single working aged, blind or disabled, or up to \$300 a month when either of the couple is working). Only those fortunate few who are living in housing under H.U.D. subsidies, are participants in hot lunch programs, get food stamps, or otherwise get their budgets subsidized, can manage to survive

without suffering malnutrition or deprivation of other basic necessities. Although Social Security Administration has recently raised the allowance 8%, effective July, 1975, we know that the actual costs rise faster than adjustments are made in Social Security grants. We know that the national average for inflation for the year 1974 was 12.2%, the steepest rise since 1946, and consumer prices have risen 3-4% since January, 1975.

Without dwelling on statistics, it is important to accept the reality that there are many more people struggling to make ends meet than we are willing to admit or that most communities are prepared to subsidize from their limited funds.

The Jewish family agency, and Federations, must frankly face several difficult issues before embarking on a program of financial assistance, such as:

- a. How does one define the "poor or near-poor?"

To use public assistance standards of poverty, or to use only the concept of helping "starving" individuals does not tackle the question. There are many "non-starving" individuals who are living day-to-day on a subsistence budget, depriving themselves of various items, whether it be food, clothing, personal incidentals, the kind of drugs, or medical care they may need, or funds to take buses to recreation centers—or even to the movies.

- b. To what extent should one try to change the life-style of individuals entrenched in their food eating and living patterns? To what extent should they be expected to conform to a low-cost or "moderate" food cost budget, if in their life experiences such budgetary

standards do not cover their expenses without depriving themselves of other essentials?

- c. What is to be included in a definition of the "basic necessities" of life? What is to be done when the client's perception of his needs is significantly different (either higher or lower) from the agency's perception?

These questions are related to the broader issue of the need to help those people who are not generally considered among the poverty group. Benjamin Sprafkin referred to them as a new underprivileged class, the families who fled from the inner city to the suburbs, and who over-extended themselves financially. As he stated, "unlike the real poor who in a crisis are eligible for such benefits as medical care, food stamps, and free use of community services, these people who are above the poverty level, yet not affluent, are not eligible for such benefits and services. Thus, many times they have no other way than ever-increasing indebtedness."<sup>1</sup> Equally fundamental must be an honest facing up to the potential costs for a program of financial assistance that is not oriented primarily to the emergency, one-time grant. As we will see from the Detroit experience, plus that of other large cities which have Jewish populations of over 40,000, a change in program to regular sustained supplementation of budgets of those in need, will not only double or triple the dollar outlay but will raise it ten-fold and, in time, it may be 20 or 30 times the original outlays for emergency assistance alone. This can become a severe strain on a community's budget

<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Sprafkin, "The Jewish Poor—Who Are They? Are We Helping Them Enough?" *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. XLIX, No. 3 (1973).

—and will begin to pose serious problems to the agency board and staff when, and if, the question is posed, as to whether to increase staff and salaries, or to increase financial assistance grants to the needy. Too often there is little realization that as a community's program of financial assistance increases it requires additional staff, to process and handle the increased caseload. Equally *important* from our experience, is the realization that the job of helping these clients needs skilled, trained staff. With few exceptions it requires workers who are not just oriented to calculating budgets but who understand the complexity of problems that often are masked under the request for financial assistance. The caseworkers should know and be able to utilize agency and other community resources for the benefit of the client. The private family agencies should be wary of developing the image of the welfare worker. This does *not* mean that all clients who apply for help need to be treated for emotional problems. I would agree with the statement of philosophy of the Jewish Family and Children's Service of Metropolitan Toronto to the effect that "the money is given within the larger framework of the core counseling services and rehabilitation program of the agency. We allow for different approaches to a wide variety of client needs and we recognize that *all clients do not immediately want or need personal or family counseling when they come to us for help.* This idea represents a change in philosophy in the past years, a change which has improved the honesty between worker and client. However, we do believe that we have the right and responsibility to understand fully the client's social and familial situation before granting assistance, and that the client work together with us to develop a financial plan with feasible

goals for which both parties carry responsibilities."<sup>2</sup>

It seems clear that there are situations when we are not likely to make effective changes in the basic condition of individual cases. The casework process is neither surefire nor guaranteed, regardless of the economic status of the individual client or family unit. We also know that often the reality problems related to poverty; the troubled families whose financial problems are compounded by emotional difficulties; the gradual deterioration and reduction in functioning of some of the aged;—these cannot necessarily be resolved by casework, although in some cases it may be helpful. Nor is it advisable to contribute to the creation of long-term dependency on the part of these individuals and families by keeping the cases open "ad infinitum." The client's right to independence, once financial supplementation is no longer needed, should be encouraged. Similarly, the client should be encouraged to recontact the agency periodically, after the case is closed, to give progress reports or to apprise the caseworker of changes in the client's financial situation, health and social adjustment. The agency should stand ready to get reinvolved in these situations. Primarily we would assume that the former clients, their friends or relatives, or other involved social agencies and organizations will recontact the agency and notify it of the desirability of intervention. It would be philosophically undesirable for the agency to attempt the role of "Big Brother" or "community parent" to keep a continuous check on the poor, except in known situations where "protective service" is indicated. In those situa-

<sup>2</sup>Karen Wynnychuk, "Review of the Financial Assistance Program of JFCS—Metropolitan Toronto." Internal Document dated January 26, 1973.

tions it is likely the cases would continue to remain open for long periods of time.

Some Jewish communities, like Toronto and Baltimore, have for many years spent large sums of money yearly to help the poor through direct financial grants. Others, like Detroit, have instituted such programs within the past two years. Most communities have always provided token assistance to the poor, handling the short-term emergencies, but they do not have programs that provide regular subsidies to the majority of low income families who might reside in their communities and need financial subsidization.

In Detroit, when we decided, early in 1974, to get involved on a more intensive scale to provide direct financial assistance to families, we asked for and received an increased grant from Jewish Welfare Federation from \$7,000 to \$50,000 for 1974; for 1975 Federation granted us \$75,000. Our request for 1976 is \$90,000. This is in addition to the various ways we currently subsidize clients through other agency programs, e.g.:

- a. Homemaker Service (Cost for 1974 was \$90,125 for which income averaged 15% in re-payments.)
- b. Housing Relocation for the Elderly—a program of direct subsidy of rents. (Cost \$34,000 for 1974; estimated \$36,000 to \$38,000 for 1975.)
- c. Kosher Meals-On-Wheels
- d. Child Placement Services—where children are subsidized in placement in residential treatment and special school facilities. (1974 costs—over \$65,000. Anticipated costs for 1975—over \$75,000.)
- e. Counseling services. This is largely subsidized, since most of the

clients either pay no fee, or pay a modest fee, much less than the cost per interview.

We felt that once we were going to get involved in a financial assistance program involving large numbers of clients and outlay of substantial funds yearly, that we should formulate a policy and guidelines for a poverty program, setting forth the philosophy of private agency assistance. We then detailed the procedures that we would follow in making grants. We focused on the role of children and relatives as possible resources, the supplemental support (scholarships, camperships) by other Jewish agencies, and the essential role of the casework services in helping the client to cope and to improve the quality of life. This statement of "Policy and Guidelines for Poverty Program" was accepted by the JFCS Board and subsequently submitted to the JWF Board of Governors. The statement is as follows:

1. JFCS is the Federation agency which has primary responsibility for evaluating and handling individuals and families who present a need for financial assistance.
2. The primary responsibility for providing financial assistance to the needy rests with government through such programs as general assistance under county auspices; federal and state programs, such as Supplementary Security Income programs, Aid to Dependent Children, Disability allowances and Medicaid.
3. Public assistance programs attempt to meet basic food, shelter, clothing and medical needs. However, they have not kept pace with the inflation in food, clothing and shelter costs. They do not allow for certain special needs nor for the greater cost of observing Kashruth and other aspects of the life style of the Jewish family.
4. Many individuals may receive Social Security income or employment income which maintains them on a marginal level. This income may make them ineligible for public assistance, yet provides them with less than bare essentials to maintain an adequate living standard.

5. Drawing on data from the Family Budget Council (cost-of-living standard setting service sponsored by UCS agencies) JFCS has developed a standard which it considers basic to the maintenance of an adequate living standard.
6. JFCS is prepared to the extent that funding is available, to supplement:
  - a. Individuals and families who receive less than this amount if the supplementation is necessary and essential to provide for their basic necessities. The agency will take into account the client's life-style, and his expectations, and will not automatically include in the person's budget those items which he can forego without any significant hardship
  - b. Individuals and families who by reason of unusual high rent or mortgage payments which cannot be reduced; unusual medical expenses; and/or other fixed expenditures who have an income that exceeds the low cost budget.
  - c. Individuals and families, who may resist making application for public funds. Assistance will generally be on a temporary basis, until a referral is effected.
7. In situations where the life-style does not support the facts as presented (or the caseworker senses some withholding of facts in regard to resources) verification of financial information should be requested. However, verification of resources will be utilized on a selective basis and not as a regular routine.
8. Supplementation may be on a regular, weekly or monthly basis, a one time grant, or periodic grant.
9. Children and interested relatives will be considered as possible resources. Similarly, lay organizations and other sources of special funds will be utilized wherever possible to meet the special needs of clients. Referrals will be made to appropriate UCS-supported agencies in the general community.
10. Clients will be encouraged to use the facilities that the Jewish community offers, such as Shiffman Clinic, Jewish Vocational Service, Jewish Community Center, United Hebrew Schools; and these agencies are asked to provide free service or scholarships to these needy clients so that they can make use of the facilities provided by the total Jewish community.
11. JFCS' focus will be on providing for the financial needs of the poor and near-poor,

combined with a casework assessment of what else is needed to help the client cope with the realities of his/her existence, and to attempt to improve the "quality of life" of the poor. In addition to food, clothing and shelter, JFCS is oriented to the client's health needs, his loneliness and isolation, his desire for recreation and companionship. The various supportive services of the family agency, plus the resources of other Federation agencies are essential to help this group of clients rise above the level of poverty and deprivation.

Before this policy statement was formulated both staff and board were engaged in a process of self-education as to the dimensions of the problem and the special techniques that would need to be employed to reach out to these families, how budgets should be calculated, what the existing public welfare standards are and what supplementation they permit. A board-staff case committee was formed to review some typical case situations; in-service training of supervisors and staff resulted in greater awareness of local resources as well as focussing attention on techniques of decision-making and case analysis oriented to understanding the client, as well as his budgetary needs. Brief surveys were undertaken of a select group of aged clients (e.g. those living in Federation Apartments, a JWF facility) to analyze their needs for supplementation of food or rent and to draw conclusions that might be applicable for others living in the general community. The administrative staff prepared new face sheets and questionnaires, formulated guides for recording on "poverty" cases, and analyzed the budget standards used in the local community, using these as guides for formulating standards of assistance and supplementation for our clients. The board-staff case committee, after studying the material, approved of a set of standards for assistance to individuals, couples, and families with children. The standards,

as formulated in April, 1974, proposed the following ranges of income that we would attempt to achieve in supplementation, *recognizing that there would be adjustments upward and downward for special circumstances*, as defined in our guidelines.

Single persons	\$3,000-3,600
Couples	\$3,800-4,500
Each additional child	+\$750-1,000
Thus, for family of 3	\$4,550-5,500
Thus, for family of 4	\$6,050-7,500

The staff was instructed to make adjustments in the grants in March, 1975, due to change in the cost-of-living. Periodic adjustments in grants will be made in the future, to the extent that funds are available, and within the limitations in the amount of supplementation permitted by SSI or the local Department of Social Services.

The guidelines are oriented to the caseworker and spell out in more detail the policy statement approved by the board-staff committee and subsequently by the board. For example, it describes the kind of supplementation possible for eligible clients, for (a) those on SSI totally (\$20 a month without jeopardy to their grant); (b) those who receive a combination of SSI and Social Security or other income or those who receive public assistance (no regular weekly or monthly supplements permitted but "periodic" grants are possible); (c) those whose income derives from employment, pension, compensation, unemployment compensation and social security. (They may be supplemented on a *weekly or monthly* basis.)

The guidelines specify the criteria for making a decision for supplementation, how to be "realistic" yet not depriving by taking into account the client's life-style and expectations. They set parameters for granting funds to cover unusually high medical

expenses, high rent or mortgage payments, fixed expenses for their children, etc, where these expenses would exceed the low-cost budget.

In other words, our agency accepted a policy position that it would not only help those below the low-cost budget standards but would help other families in the community in financial straits, those in the "new underprivileged class" who had over-extended themselves financially and were faced with financial crises. We agreed that for such families supplementation may be indicated on a one-grant basis or for regular supplementation while the caseworker and the family try to work out these problems and to consider whether some change in life-style might be indicated.

What has been the result of our "poverty program" so far?

- a. During the period January 1, 1974, through April 30, 1975, we granted approximately \$75,000 in direct financial assistance to 195 families.
- b. We made a startling discovery—that the majority of the families assisted in these programs were not aged, but were younger families with children.
  1. Of the 195 families, 92 heads of household were over 60; whereas
  2. 103 of the 195 heads of household were under 60 years of age. In over 30% of the families the heads of households were under 50 years of age.

This means that we must make a major shift in our thinking and assumptions of where poverty exists in the Jewish community. Most previous studies have ascribed 75-90% of the poverty that exists is among the aged Jews. Now we have direct evidence from our caseload that the majority of

indigent or low-income families coming to our attention for *direct financial subsidy* (and *not* involved in other agency subsidy programs like housing relocation program) are not aged but are younger families who cannot survive on their modest incomes. They are not all on ADC. Many are families not on public assistance but who are in debt or have special financial needs that cannot be met from their meager incomes.

Equally significant is the shift in the ages of heads of households of families served during the first six months of the program and in the subsequent nine month period. When we first started the program and did an outreach to all families known to have received cans of food by local women's organizations, we granted assistance to 105 of the 204 cases studied. Significantly, 58 of the 105 cases granted assistance in the first six month period were ages 60 and over (over 55%).

However, in the subsequent nine month period, when the program was more stabilized and new referrals came from normal referral sources (self-referrals and women's groups who have knowledge of specific "poverty" families) the percentage of younger families served increased. Of the 90 families helped, 56 (or over 62% of the heads of household were *under* 60 years of age; 34 families (or less than 38%) were among the aged.

No firm conclusions can be drawn from these statistics. But it might suggest that:

- a. As an agency becomes known in the community as ready and willing to help low-income families, more of the marginal families with children are willing to apply for assistance. They come forward more freely and apply for help. Often it is for a one-time grant, to

avert dispossession or loss of a house; or to meet a medical emergency cost; or to cover special clothing or household repair needs.

- b. The aged tend to be taken care of first when an agency is establishing a financial assistance program. Many of these clients are already known to the agency through other programs (e.g. homemaker service, housing relocation projects) where subsidies are granted; thus, there will be less new cases applying for assistance once the initial outreach has occurred to reach the "aged poor."
- c. A regular, well-publicized program of financial assistance will continue to draw referrals from the general community.

This means that:

- d. Once an agency—and a Federation—makes a decision to embark on a financial assistance program that doesn't only handle emergency needs but will provide regular monthly or periodic grants to "financially strapped" families, then they can expect that the costs will rise steadily over the years. The costs will rise because of various factors:
  1. A certain number or percentage of the families will always need subsidy periodically. This group will be the "core group" and it will continue to increase as referrals increase.
  2. For those already receiving aid, the rises in cost-of-living necessitating subsidies will usually be greater than increases in their incomes, especially for those existing on public assistance or social security grants. Thus the amount of

subsidy needed per case will continue to rise.

3. New referrals, stimulated by community awareness, will mean more cases added to the current caseload, whether for long-term assistance or short-term emergency help. The addition of new cases will tend to exceed the loss of cases—those taken off subsidy because of death or acquisition of other resources making them financially independent.

The major conclusions to be drawn are:

- a. Programs of financial subsidy by the Jewish community for the poor and marginal income families are desirable and needed.
- b. Once such programs are instituted, larger numbers of "younger" families get referred for assistance than originally anticipated, indicating that poverty among Jews is not confined primarily to the aged.
- c. Such programs involve marked increase in expenditure of staff time (professional, clerical, bookkeeping) to study the cases, to determine eligibility, to make home visits, prepare budgets, provide mechanisms for continued grants and continued casework follow-up with clients, whether or not they received a grant.
- d. Budgeting for such programs must therefore include funding

for additional staff as well as for steadily rising costs for direct financial assistance.

- e. There must be a clear understanding on the part of staff, board and the Federation that once a regular financial assistance program is instituted in the community there is no way of retreating and withdrawing the grants without causing serious hardship to those who need this assistance, and have come to expect such supplementation. It becomes part of the "rising expectations" not only on the part of clients but also the community, the volunteer workers who come in contact with these families, the board members who set agency policies and who have helped raise money in campaign drives, and the leadership of Federation who have developed a sense of commitment to the concept that the Jewish community "takes care of its own."

This convergence of forces and pressures will tend to insure continued commitment to financial assistance programs once the process has begun and there is continued interpretation of the need. It emphasizes the importance of knowing from the beginning what one is getting into when making a commitment to help the Jewish poor and marginal-income families, and the long-term consequences of such a commitment.

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THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE  
INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RELATIONS  
165 East 56 Street  
New York, N.Y. 10022



JACK KEMP  
38TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE:  
APPROPRIATIONS

RANDAL TEAGUE  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

LOU ROTTERMAN  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
132 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
AREA CODE 202: 225-5255

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
1101 FEDERAL BUILDING  
111 WEST HURON STREET  
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14202  
AREA CODE 716: 842-6876

ED RUTKOWSKI  
DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

June 10, 1976

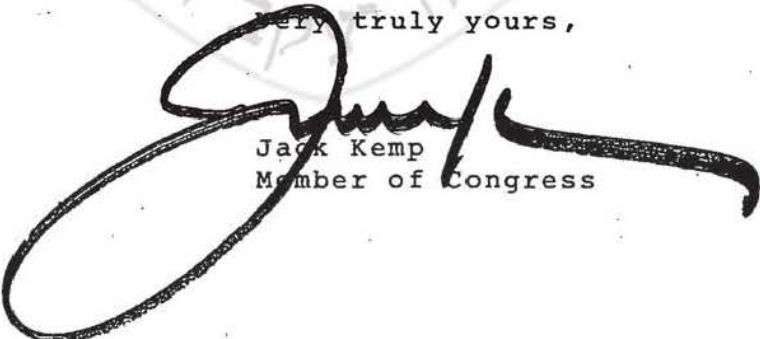
Dear Friend:

On April 14, 1976, I addressed my colleagues in the House of Representatives on the role that must be assumed by public policy makers in order to assure freedom and prosperity for all Americans. In doing so, I outlined a legislative program for our bicentennial year which can best bring about these bipartisan goals.

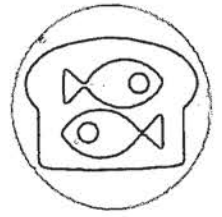
I know that there are many others who believe, as I do, that our community and our country would benefit from the adoption of this program, and that the premises on which it is based should serve as guideposts for action. I'm pleased to report that the Jobs Creation Act, the free enterprise alternative to both inflation and recession outlined in the enclosed speech, now has over 125 cosponsors and is still gaining momentum. This is in no small part due to the large number of citizens who have taken the time to urge its support to their elected officials through letters and telegrams.

If you would like additional pamphlets to pass on to your friends or associates, I will be glad to send you more. Please excuse the informality of this "Dear Friend" letter, but it is the only way to maximize the number of people who need to know that there are alternatives to bigger and bigger government, higher taxes and, consequently, diminished freedom and prosperity for all.

Very truly yours,

  
Jack Kemp  
Member of Congress

JK/rg  
enclosure



## RESOLUTION DECLARING AS NATIONAL POLICY THE RIGHT TO FOOD

House: H. Con. Res. 393  
Senate: S. Con. Res. 66

**Whereas** an estimated 460 million persons, almost half of them young children, suffer from acute malnutrition because they lack even the calories to sustain normal human life; and

**Whereas** those who get enough calories but are seriously deficient of proteins or other essential nutrients may include half of the human race; and

**Whereas** the President, through his Secretary of State, proclaimed at the World Food Conference a bold objective for this nation in collaboration with other nations: "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"; and

**Whereas** all the governments at the World Food Conference adopted this objective; and

**Whereas** in our interdependent world, hunger anywhere represents a threat to peace everywhere; and

**Whereas** the coming bicentennial provides a timely occasion to honor this nation's founding ideals of "liberty and justice for all," as well as our tradition of assisting those in need, by taking a clear stand on the critical issue of hunger: Now, therefore, be it

**Resolved** That it is the sense of the (Senate/House of Representatives) that

1. 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; and
2. This right become a fundamental point of reference in the formation of legislation and administrative decisions in areas such as trade, assistance, monetary reform, military spending and all other matters that bear on hunger; and
3. Concerning hunger in the United States we seek to enroll on food assistance programs all who are in need, to improve those programs to insure that recipients receive an adequate diet, and to attain full employment and a floor of economic decency for everyone; and
4. Concerning global hunger this country increase its assistance for self-help development among the world's poorest people, especially in countries most seriously affected by hunger, with particular emphasis on increasing food production among the rural poor; and that development assistance and food assistance, including assistance given through private, voluntary agencies, increase over a period of years until such assistance has reached the target of one percent of our total national production (GNP).

### questions people ask

(1) Why should the United States be expected to feed the world? The Right to Food resolution does not commit this country to feed the world, nor is it a food aid proposal. On the contrary, it stresses the importance of enabling the hunger of the world to feed themselves through self-help development. Increased food production among the rural poor, not food handouts, points the way.

(2) Wouldn't the resolution, if implemented, cost too much? The resolution suggests a target of 1% of our national income for development aid, to be reached gradually over a period of years. That 1% figure also includes the work of voluntary agencies, so that government spending could be reduced as private aid increases. Although it represents a substantial transfer of resources, the 1% commitment is

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not unprecedented. Immediately after World War II, U.S. aid to Europe reached almost 3% of our GNP. The 1% target is less than we now spend on tobacco or alcoholic beverages, and it would greatly improve our present international standing, which places us 14th among the 17 most developed Western nations, when aid is measured as a percentage of GNP.

(3) A resolution won't feed anyone, will it? As we all know, resolutions can be meaningless. This one lays the groundwork for a more serious and comprehensive approach than we have now. Obviously, if it is to work it must be backed by other legislation. Meanwhile it has already proven to be an exceptionally effective educational tool that has attracted wide support. With that support growing, the resolution provides leverage to implement its aims.

(4) Why should people have a "right" to food? Food is a unique commodity, one that sustains life. If life is an "inalienable right" (as the Declaration of Independence says), then life must be sustained, and food is essential for that. In this country we have considered education a right. Is adequate nutrition less basic than a good education?

(5) But isn't the question of a "right" to food irrelevant if there is not enough to go around? The United States clearly has enough to feed itself. For that matter, half of the world's grain exports come from this country. Worldwide, there is a growing awareness that the earth does have the capacity to feed all of its people. The problem is more one of distribution than of production, though it is still both.

(6) Are we not offering people an empty promise? The Declaration of Independence declares "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" to be inalienable rights. The gap between that declaration and its deliverability was and still is considerable. Yet the declaration of those rights gave us a vision to pursue and made an enormous difference. There is a solid point somewhere between a hollow resolution and the capacity for immediate delivery of an entitlement.

(7) If food is declared a right, won't that encourage sloth? Or prompt people to

obtain food by force? As with every right, the right to food relates to other rights and responsibilities--the right and the responsibility to work for those who can and should work, to cite an example. And the responsibility of obedience to the law, for another.

(8) What useful purpose is served by declaring food to be a right? The idea of adequate nutrition as a right is useful because it moves us from charity to justice; from placing the hungry at the mercy of private generosity, and toward a sense of corporate responsibility. It stresses that all of us, well-fed and hungry alike, must use resources at our disposal to enable hungry people to work their way out of hunger. Accepting the principle of good nutrition as a right could help us set priorities that would enable us to deal more effectively with production and distribution needs.

(9) If a right to food encourages more production and better distribution, won't that increase the population growth rate and result in even more hunger and starvation in the long run? No. Victims of hunger tend to have large families. Where hunger and related factors push the death rate up, couples who depend upon surviving sons for social security must have many children to insure surviving sons. Evidence shows, and experts widely agree, that good nutrition is an essential part of lowering the population growth rate.

(10) But is "the right to food" a biblical, Christian idea? We need to understand the truly overwhelming case that the Bible makes against any toleration of hunger. Old Testament law gave poor people the right to glean; a tithe of the harvest (required every third year from each landowner); and other rights. The Hebrews sang of such justice for the poor and hungry in their psalms. The prophets proclaimed it. So did Jesus and the apostles. The right to food is rooted in the value that God places on human life, and in the belief that "the earth is the Lord's" and that we are stewards, not owners of his earth, either to enhance or to diminish life.

### **bread for the world**

235 east 49th street  
new york 10017

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# —an appeal to Congress—

As religious leaders who care deeply about this nation, we call upon the Congress of the United States to pass without delay a resolution, now before both the House and the Senate, which affirms "the right to food" as a basic element of U.S. policy and action.

We believe that every man, woman and child has the right to a nutritionally adequate diet. This right is not ours to give or take away. It is fundamental and derives from the right to life itself. The Declaration of Independence identifies the right to life as an unalienable human right coming from God who has created all persons equal. Without the food to sustain life, that right is made meaningless.

The resolution before Congress does not commit our nation to massive food handouts. Rather it recognizes the responsibility we have, in cooperation with other nations, of enabling hungry people to produce more food and to work their way out of hunger. Such efforts require some commitment of our resources, to be sure. But the costs are far cheaper than war, and much less than the cost of continued human misery.

Until recently hunger was unavoidable for much of the human family. That is no longer the case. We have the means to overcome hunger, and therefore hunger is no longer acceptable.

Substantial gains against hunger will not be quick or easy or cheap. But they are not beyond reach. They will require exceptional efforts on the part of rich and poor nations alike. And they will exact some sacrifice from all of us. The alternative, however, is a broken world that we do not want our children to inherit.

Within a few months the Right-to-Food resolution has won extraordinary support within the churches and synagogues of the nation. This support is deep and growing. Our people have expressed this in tens of thousands of letters to Capitol Hill. We now invite Congress to respond.

Passage of this resolution could indicate a turning point for the nation, and perhaps for the world. In the words of our colleague, Fredrik A. Schiotz, former president of The American Lutheran Church, "it might very well be recognized by future historians as a landmark in American history, the one single act that could cast a glow of new light over the bicentennial year and on into the future."

Favorable action on House Concurrent Resolution 393 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 66 would be a worthy way for the nation to mark its bicentennial. Such a commitment could again enable us as a people to assume a role of distinguished leadership in the world.

JOHN M. ALLIN, Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church  
JOSEPH L. BERNARDIN, President, National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Archbishop of Cincinnati  
EUGENE CARSON BLAKE, President, Bread for the World  
ROBERT C. CAMPBELL, General Secretary, American Baptist Churches  
TERENCE CARDINAL COOKE, Archbishop of New York  
ROBERT P. DUGAN, JR., President, Conservative Baptist Association of America  
PAUL M. EDRIS, Moderator of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church, U.S.  
WILLIAM F. (BILLY) GRAHAM, Evangelist  
THEODORE M. HESBURGH, President, University of Notre Dame  
ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Americas  
KATHLEEN KEATING, President, National Assembly of Women Religious  
ARTHUR J. LELYVELD, President, Central Conference of American Rabbis  
ARTHUR MARSHALL, President, Board of Bishops, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church  
ROBERT J. MARSHALL, President, Lutheran Church in America  
ROBERT V. MOSS, President, United Church of Christ  
D. WARD NICHOLS, Senior Bishop, African Methodist Episcopal Church, and Presiding Bishop of South Carolina

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DAVID W. PREUS, President, The American Lutheran Church  
JACOB A.O. PREUS, President, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod  
CLAIRE RANDALL, General Secretary, National Council of Churches  
JAMES S. RAUSCH, General Secretary, U.S. Catholic Conference  
MARC TANNENBAUM, National Director, Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee  
KENNETH L. TEEGARDEN, President, Christian Church  
BARBARA THOMAS, President, Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
WILLIAM P. THOMPSON, Stated Clerk, United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and President,  
National Council of Churches  
BERT E. VAN SOEST, President, Reformed Church in America  
W. RALPH WARD, JR., President of the Council of Bishops, United Methodist Church, and  
Bishop, New York area  
MORDECAI WAXMAN, President, Rabbinical Assembly  
JAROY WEBER, President, Southern Baptist Convention

## behind the resolution

The Right-to-Food resolution was introduced in the Senate by Mark O. Hatfield, Republican of Oregon, and in the House by Donald M. Fraser, Democrat of Minnesota. That was in September, 1975.

Beginning in mid-November an "offering of letters" in churches across the country attracted wide support for the resolution, and within a few months approximately 200,000 letters had reached members of Congress--probably the strongest voter response since immediately after World War II in favor of measures to help impoverished people abroad.

On the Senate side the resolution was referred to the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, of which the Subcommittee on Foreign Agricultural Policy indicated that it might hold hearings on the resolution in the spring of 1976. (Herman E. Talmadge is chairman of the full committee and Hubert H. Humphrey of the subcommittee.)

In the House of Representatives the resolution went to two committees: (1) Agriculture; and (2) International Relations. The chairman of the Agriculture Committee, Thomas S. Foley, says that his committee will deal with the resolution after action by International Relations, whose subcommittee (International Resources, Food and Energy--Charles C. Diggs, Jr., chairman) also indicated hearings for Spring 1976.

Effect on Congress? "Having served in the United States Senate for nearly 18 years, I cannot recall when an organization such as yours has had such an impact on public opinion and in mobilizing support for action to remedy a major global problem."

--SENATOR GALE MCGEE OF WYOMING

### WHAT IS BREAD FOR THE WORLD?

Bread for the World, which assisted in the drafting of the Right-to-Food resolution and organized nationwide support for it, is a new and rapidly growing Christian citizens' movement. It aims to influence public policy through a grass-roots network of persons who agree to use their citizenship for the Lord by becoming advocates for the hungry. Your participation is needed. Membership: \$10 a year. For more information write: Bread for the World, 235 E. 49th Street, New York, New York, 10017.