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'The Claims of Asia and the Far East': India and the FAO in the Age of Ambivalent Internationalism

Introduction

Born in the wake of devastating famine and the pledge of sustenance that nationalists advanced in the dying decades of British rule, the Republic of India had everything to gain from the new Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and its internationalist vision of shared uplift. The new nation's arrival on the world stage came sutured to promises of plenty that would set independent India's government apart from its colonial predecessor, whose rule had been pockmarked by hunger and characterized by a distorted agricultural economy oriented towards world markets rather than basic subsistence. Even before the Bengal Famine of 1943, which claimed 3.5 million lives and accelerated the push for self-rule, India's nationalist leadership had tied their legitimacy to the provision of food and the stewardship of agricultural advance: one well-respected Indian planner, Narendranath Gangulee, dedicated his 1939 primer on *Health and Nutrition in India* to 'Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders of the Indian National Congress, who have undertaken the responsibility of shaping a national policy [for] my Country, where 'for every three mouths, there are only two rice bowls.'¹

These visions of agricultural progress would have girded neatly onto the hopes of progress that the FAO embodied in its earliest years, exemplified in its unprecedented promise of 'ensuring that all the world's people had enough to eat.'² Indeed, the preface to Gangulee's text had been written by John Boyd-Orr, the pioneering nutritionist and internationalist who would serve as the FAO's first Director-General.³ And India's earliest years were inexorably tied to the new international institutions: the United Nations arbitrated the nation's first disputes with the state of Pakistan.⁴ It was also to India that the World Bank offered its first, hesitant loans.⁵ And as actors within the World Health Organization pushed it towards the conflicting goals of social medicine

1. Narendranath Gangulee, *Health and Nutrition in India* (London: Faber and Faber, 1939).

2. Amy L.S. Staples, *The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945-1965* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State Univ. Press, 2007), 82; on hunger and Indian nationalism see Sunil S. Amrith, "Food and Welfare in India, C. 1900–1950," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50 (2008): 1010–1035; and Benjamin Siegel, *Hungry Nation: Food, Famine, and the Making of Modern India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

3. James Vernon, *Hunger: A Modern History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 147.

4. Daniel Haines, *Rivers Divided: Indus Basin Waters in the Making of India and Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2016).

5. Jason A. Kirk, *India and the World Bank: The Politics of Aid and Influence* (London: Anthem Press, 2011).

and the ‘magic bullet’ approach represented by DDT and antibiotics, India was a critical and influential international laboratory.⁶

Yet in the nation’s two hungriest decades, from independence to the Green Revolution, the FAO proved a greater boon to Indian careerism and the authority of Indian experts themselves than to the amelioration of Indian hunger. Talented Indian scientists and administrators found ready work with the new organization, culminating in the unexpected election of the Indian national B.R. Sen as Director-General in 1956. But the most substantive Indian efforts to ameliorate hunger transpired beyond the aegis of the Organization. Ultimately, it would be a different set of international networks – the Ford and Rockefeller Foundation, abetted by pressure from the United States – that helped midwife quantitative abundance.⁷

Rather, Indian experience with the FAO reflected both the winnowing scale of the Organization’s ambition, and divergent international and nationalist notions of what the Organization was meant to accomplish. From the early and lofty goal of a World Food Board, the Organization pivoted to a program of technical assistance to farmers and the production and compilation of agricultural statistics, kept in check by the budgetary restraint of key donor nations. B.R. Sen’s Freedom From Hunger Campaign sought to overcome this stagnation by drawing in non-government assistance, and attempting to reanimate the moral mission of the Organization through the Freedom From Hunger Campaign.

Ultimately, however, the tensions within the Food and Agriculture Organization kept it from actualizing its loftiest ends. Even the most capable administrators were unable to reconcile the conflicting goals of increased agricultural productivity and market availability, on the one hand, and the assumption of food as a shared global moral responsibility, on the other.⁸ Donor states, in turn, drew upon the international moral authority embedded in international institutions in the middle of the century, and used the Organization as an instrument to cajole, punish, and persuade, lessening its attractiveness to the world’s hungriest nations, and its viability as an instrument of shared uplift.⁹

6. Sunil Amrith, *Decolonizing International Health: India and Southeast Asia, 1930-65* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

7. Leonard A. Gordon, “Wealth Equals Wisdom? The Rockefeller and Ford Foundations in India,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 554 (November 1, 1997): 104–116; Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

8. Lucy Jarosz, “The Political Economy of Global Governance and the World Food Crisis: The Case of the FAO,” *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 32, no. 1 (January 1, 2009): 37–60.

9. Staples, *The Birth of Development*. On moral authority and technical expertise, and friction between international organizations and member states, see Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

These foundering hopes owed much to the larger disconnect between bureaucrats staffing international organizations and Indian representatives on the world stage. If the former saw in India the possibility of dollar funds to underwrite costly developmental schemes, the latter proffered technical expertise and assistance to a country that already had its own rich network of agricultural research institutions. Indian officials hoped in large measure that the Organization would be to Indian agriculture as the World Bank was to international finance – “our international banker,” in the words of B.K. Nehru, charged for funding but not shaping Indian policy.¹⁰

The Indian experience and its failures offer unique insight into the interplay of international expertise and the imperatives of postcolonial development planning. If wedded to the promise of plenty, so too were Indian nationalists married to notions of autarkic self-sufficiency on the food front.¹¹ Programs of agricultural uplift in postcolonial India did draw liberally upon international idioms and networks of colonial and Cold War origin.¹² Yet for many years after independence, expertise in Indian agriculture and food planning – as research other domains – was of an increasingly protectionist character.¹³ And India’s large landowners – obligate participants in any major scheme of agricultural development – made use of the Republic of India’s federalist system to stymie the project of land reform the FAO experts’ vision of agricultural advancement would require.¹⁴

10. B.K. Nehru, "The Way We Looked for Money Abroad," in *Two Decades of Indo-U.S. Relations*, ed. Vadilal Dagli (Bombay: Vora and Company, 1969), 20-21. I am grateful to an anonymous reader for this astute comparison.

11. Taylor C. Sherman, “From ‘Grow More Food’ to ‘Miss a Meal’: Hunger, Development and the Limits of Post-Colonial Nationalism in India, 1947–1957,” *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 36, no. 4 (December 2013): 571–588; Benjamin Siegel, “‘Self-Help Which Ennobles a Nation’: Development, Citizenship, and the Obligations of Eating in India’s Austerity Years,” *Modern Asian Studies* 50, no. 3 (2015): 1–44.

12. Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015); Subir Sinha, “Lineages of the Developmentalist State: Transnationality and Village India, 1900–1965,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50, no. 1 (2008): 57–90.

13. John H. Perkins, “Wheat Breeding and the Consolidation of Indian Autonomy, 1940-1970,” in *Geopolitics and the Green Revolution: Wheat, Genes, and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 157–186. On Indian agricultural research networks, see M.S. Randhawa, *Agricultural Research in India: Institutes and Organisations* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Agricultural Research, 1958); M.S. Randhawa, *A History of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, 1929-1979* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Agricultural Research, 1979). For a parallel in atomic energy, see Robert S. Anderson, *Nucleus and Nation: Scientists, International Networks, and Power in India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

14. See Francine R. Frankel, *India’s Political Economy, 1947-2004: The Gradual Revolution* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), *passim*, and a parallel argument in Benjamin Siegel, “‘The World Has Changed’: Development, Land Reform, and the Ethical Work of India’s Independence,” in *The Postcolonial Moment in South and Southeast Asia* eds. Gyan Prakash, Nikhil Menon, and Michael Laffan

Accordingly, Indian politicians, scientists, and planners looked to the Food and Agriculture as a repository of international authority – a resource for making policy arguments or an institution for advancing their own careers – yet its enduring impact upon India’s nutritional well-being remained insubstantial.

Wallace Aykroyd and the Transfer of Indian Expertise

The internationalist aspiration reflected in the formation of the FAO, and the tension between national planning and international expertise, was evident in the career of the celebrated colonial nutritionist Wallace Aykroyd in the final year of imperial rule. Aykroyd’s professional life had been international in character from the start.¹⁵ He had begun his career as a hospitalist in Dublin before a chance posting in Newfoundland, where poor fishermen’s pervasive beriberi had initiated the young doctor into the burgeoning field of nutrition. After four years in Canada, Aykroyd returned to Europe in 1931, appointed the first nutritionist for the League of Nations’ Health Secretariat in Geneva. But after four years of committee work and report drafting, the sociable Aykroyd had been recruited to India by the new viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, asked to take over the Nutrition Research Laboratories from its founder, Robert McCarrison.

High in the cool Nilgiri Hills, surrounded by verdant tea fields, McCarrison had built the Laboratories into an institute of international renown. The Irish doctor had served across the subcontinent as a member of the Indian Medical Service, and with the prejudices of the time, had been taken by ‘the fine physique, powers of endurance and relative freedom from disease of the peoples’ of northwest India.¹⁶ In the Himalayan town of Kasauli, McCarrison began research on diet and goiter, before transition to a project on beriberi with a Sikh colleague in 1918. In 1925, McCarrison was given a former jam processing facility in the Pasteur Institute in Coonoor for his continuing work on ‘deficiency diseases,’ which he stocked with rats and monkeys fed on diets designed to mimic those of India’s different populations.

McCarrison had worked diligently, and his primer on diet became the standard text in public institutions across India.¹⁷ Yet he had the reputation of a bench scientist uneasy in the world of public outreach, and it was with the idea of nutritional consciousness in

(London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

15. Kenneth J. Carpenter, “The Work of Wallace Aykroyd: International Nutritionist and Author,” *The Journal of Nutrition* 137, no. 4 (April 1, 2007): 873–878; R. Passmore, “Wallace Ruddle Aykroyd, CBE, MD, ScD,” *British Journal of Nutrition* 43, no. 2 (March 1980): 245. Aykroyd’s own recollections are in W.R. Aykroyd, *The Conquest of Famine* (New York: Reader’s Digest Press, 1975).

16. “Note on the Work of the Nutrition Research Laboratories, Coonoor,” 1940, Mysore Residency - Mysore Residency Bangalore - 598-D, 1940, National Archives of India.

17. Robert McCarrison, *Food: A Primer for Use in Schools, Colleges, Welfare Centres, Boy Scout and Girl Guide Organizations, Etc., in India* (Madras: Macmillan, 1928).

mind that Aykroyd had been appointed his successor. Aykroyd had worked assiduously, recruiting Indian staff, collecting equipment, and devising new means of assessing the state of India's nutritional well-being and communicating that information to a public outside of the laboratory. By 1939, Aykroyd had begun publishing the results of a massively ambitious survey of India's rural and urban diets, chronicling their generally lamentable state with tabular precision.¹⁸ Beyond his general conclusions — that Indian agriculture would need to be re-arranged to provide for greater pulses, vegetables, and other nutritive foods — Aykroyd worked to communicate the Laboratories' findings to policymakers and the public. His brochures on nutrition were translated into multiple Indian languages, and sixty nutrition officers had been hired to survey and consult in Bengal, Bihar, Punjab, Baroda and Hyderabad. Meanwhile, his Nutrition Advisory Committee began regular consultative meetings in Delhi, and building upon his connections in Geneva, Aykroyd forged links and collaborations with the League of Nations' Technical Commission on Nutrition. By 1940, Aykroyd had established a sterling reputation among Indians and Britons alike, but still lamented that, 'as yet, the mass of [India's] population has scarcely been reached.'¹⁹

By the dying days of empire, however, Aykroyd seemed to be wondering if nutrition were a domain best-suited to nations, or whether it was the promise of international cooperation and collective advance that held the solution. In 1943, Aykroyd was deputed to Hot Springs, Virginia, as one of India's delegates to the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture, where he took the lead in drafting the report that would lead to the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization. And a year later, as a member of the Commission of Inquiry into the Bengal Famine, Aykroyd cast doubt, contra Indian nationalists, that freedom alone would herald improved nutritional outcomes. No matter its composition, Aykroyd felt, a government would need to move past laissez-faire notions of the food economy and assume new responsibility for changes in diet and agriculture alike.²⁰ And so at the beginning of 1946, with India's independence all but certain, Aykroyd turned over the cache of equipment and samples that he had amassed at the Laboratories to the Indian biochemist V.N. Patwardhan, having been recruited by Lord John Boyd-Orr as head of the Nutrition Division at the new Food and Agriculture Organization. The move had not been an unexpected one, given Aykroyd's increasing presence at international gatherings throughout the wartime years, yet its impact was no less monumental on the staff he had left behind.

Throughout the summer, Aykroyd kept close tabs on his colleagues at the Laboratories, and in India's Department of Food, corresponding frequently with W.H. Kirby, the Department of Food Official who had overseen India's wartime rationing schemes.

18. W.R. Aykroyd, *Note on the Results of Diet Surveys in India* (New Delhi, 1939).

19. "Note on the Work of the Nutrition Research Laboratories, Coonoor."

20. David Arnold, *Science, Technology and Medicine in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 202.

Kirby lamented India's worsening food troubles — 'you'll hear too much about them soon!' he promised in a February letter — but continued to plan for a film project on India's nutritional needs.²¹ Yet the letters from his Indian colleagues were of a different nature: Aykroyd found himself deluged with requests for recommendation letters, inundated by old assistants and subordinates' appeals for work with the new international organization. The medical researcher O.P. Verma lamented the sudden shift away from field project, and asked, if barring a new assignment to India's public health commission, Aykroyd would recommend him for 'one of the FAO jobs.'²² The physician M.M. Shafi wrote to Aykroyd to lament the lack of 'practical work' available in the Food Department. 'I find that in U.N.O.,' Shaffi wrote from the Department of Food, 'they are in need of officers. If you think my experience of the West and the East can help in the nutrition work, I shall appreciate if you could let me have a letter of recommendation.'²³ So, too, did the researcher Kanwar Lal Shourie write asking for help in securing an assignment with the FAO's Nutrition Division.²⁴ And P.M. Kaul, a high-ranking officer in the Indian Medical Service soon to be deputed to the World Health Organization, asked if Aykroyd could use his bully pulpit with the FAO to find overseas training in the United States for a number of budding nutrition experts — most notably, M.S. Swaminathan, whose work would help usher in the Green Revolution several decades later.²⁵

Aykroyd fielded these requests gracefully, obliging some and gently declining others. But the clear takeaway was that India's nutritional network, built assiduously over the course of several decades, was buckling under the weight of decolonization, and the emergence of a new, international organization with global authority behind it. Kirby noticed the same in a November 1946 visit to Coonoor. 'I think your old love has been slowly going downhill since you left it,' he reported.²⁶ Yet several paragraphs later, Kirby followed up with a plaintive request. 'Do you think I could be of any use in the [FAO's] proposed World Food Board,' he asked, 'and if so, 'could you kindly let me

21. W.H. Kirby, "Letter to W.R. Aykroyd," February 12, 1946, RG 57.1 Series B3 - W.R. Aykroyd Incoming Letters from Governments, FAO Archives, Rome; W.R. Aykroyd, "Letter to G.V. Allen," March 8, 1946, RG 57.1 Series A3 - W.R. Aykroyd Outgoing Letters to Governments 1946-1949, FAO Archives, Rome; W.R. Aykroyd, "Letter to W.H. Kirby," April 3, 1946, RG 57.1 Series A3 - W.R. Aykroyd Outgoing Letters to Governments 1946-1949, FAO Archives, Rome.

22. O.P. Verma, "Letter to W.R. Aykroyd," June 14, 1946, RG 57.1 Series B3 - W.R. Aykroyd Incoming Letters from Governments, FAO Archives, Rome.

23. M.M. Shaffi, "Letter to W.R. Aykroyd," April 18, 1946, RG 57.1 Series B3 - W.R. Aykroyd Incoming Letters from Governments, FAO Archives, Rome.

24. W.R. Aykroyd, "Letter of Recommendation for K.L. Shourie," November 12, 1946, RG 57.1 Series A3 - W.R. Aykroyd Outgoing Letters to Governments 1946-1949, FAO Archives, Rome.

25. P.M. Kaul, "Letter to W.R. Aykroyd," August 13, 1946, RG 57.1 Series B3 - W.R. Aykroyd Incoming Letters from Governments, FAO Archives, Rome.

26. W.H. Kirby, "Letter to W.R. Aykroyd," November 4, 1946, RG 57.1 Series B3 - W.R. Aykroyd Incoming Letters from Governments, FAO Archives, Rome.

know the correct channels through which I should apply?’²⁷

The scramble that followed in the wake of Aykroyd’s departure for the FAO spoke to both the charisma of a pioneering scientist and the exigencies wrought by the end of British rule in India, as colonial experts sought to deploy their knowledge in the service of more politically viable projects. Yet the crush of Indian scientists who sought employment under the celebrated nutritionist testifies to the promise that the new organization represented to Indians and others in an era of turmoil and uncertainty. With the imperial project reaching an ignoble and protracted end in the wake of the Second World War, the world’s new, postcolonial nations were now faced with addressing the deficiencies of land, health, and food that had so often animated nationalist struggles. New institutions like the FAO and the World Health Organization carried the promise of shared advance predicated upon the collective marshaling of scientific, economic, and technological expertise. If there was something vaguely desperate in the letters that flooded W.H. Aykroyd’s mailbox in the last year of imperial rule – the resumé-polishing that invariably occurs in the wake of new management – so, too, was there a note of optimism. The FAO would be, in these petitioners’ imagination, the site for exciting new ‘practical work’ in nutrition, the font of funds for new training and technologies, and in time, a shared repository of expertise that would help new nations shed vestigial illness and want. The scientists and bureaucrats who sought to follow Aykroyd to Rome, or Washington indeed brought their talents to new shores – but the promise of plenty that the FAO represented would be soon diluted by the quixotic failures of internationalism and the defensive idioms of postcolonial nationalism.

Late Colonial Internationalism: Indian Bureaucrats and Founding of the FAO

Aykroyd and the other colonial administrators who arrived in Hot Springs, Virginia, in 1943 for the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture were undertaking a perilous balancing act. From offices in Delhi and Calcutta, bureaucrats at every level were denying the famine mounting in Bengal, while India’s colonial emissaries were admitting, in the United States, that India’s nutritional prospects were dire.²⁸ The conference had been convened, John Boyd-Orr would later recall, to ‘consider ways and means of international co-operation to raise standards of nutrition throughout the world, and at the same time to raise the standard of living of the two-thirds of the population of the world depending for their living on agriculture, the majority of whom were in abysmal poverty.’²⁹ Yet the Indians closest to this abysmal poverty bristled at

27. Ibid.

28. On the famine, see Janam Mukherjee, *Hungry Bengal: War, Famine and the End of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); for contemporary accounts in Bengali and English see Samīra Ghosha, *Pañcāśera Manvantara, Śilpe, Sāhitye [The Bengal Famine in Art and Literature]* (Calcutta: Pratikshaṇa Pābalikeśanas, 1994).

29. John Boyd-Orr, *The White Man’s Dilemma* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1965), 86–87.

the foreign emissaries who had been chosen to represent them.

In the days and weeks following the conference, as famine spread throughout India, the Indian nationalist press initially buzzed with rumors that there were to be new international agreements over prices and provisioning. Anxious bureaucrats in India's External Affairs department cabled their counterparts in Washington to ensure that this was not, in fact, an agreement stemming from the conference.³⁰ In publicity brochures circulated by the Food Department in New Delhi, colonial emissaries trumpeted the commitment to freedom from hunger that they had vowed to the world in Virginia.³¹ Yet Indian nationalists were incredulous. The *Modern Review* lambasted the paltry number of Indians who had been sent to Hot Springs alongside the airy and noncommittal nature of the conference's conclusions. 'The starving masses of India,' one editorial seethed, 'should be grateful to learn that her rice needs were recognized at the Conference, although nothing could be done.' India, it continued, 'is probably the only country in the world which can silently tolerate scheming for the alleviation of famine in war-torn countries – more accurately, those in Europe – by persons claiming to represent her, while her own people, men, women and children are starving.'³²

Nationalist critique spilled off the pages of the *Modern Review*. Bombay's socialist mayor, M.R. Masani, would lambast the British administrators who denied famine for so long at home, but readily admitted at the conference that 'one-third of the Indian people are habitually under-fed in normal times.'³³ And the nationalist writer J.M. Deb remarked that one 'need only quote what was said by the representatives of the British Government in India at the Hot Springs Conference in the United States of America about the food situation in India to expose the hollowness' of the imperial administration's commitment to feeding the Indian masses, having admitted abroad that 'a third of the Indian people were habitually underfed even in normal times.'³⁴ This percentage, proffered without supporting evidence, was adopted as gospel by Indian planners, even as better data became available. The Gujarati nationalist and future Food Minister K.M. Munshi would use the Hot Springs number in his manifesto, *The Ruin that Britain Wrought*, published three years later, and the economist and planner Radhakamal Mukerjee would use it to bolster his own contemporary plans for national reconstruction.³⁵

30. "Reports Regarding Food Conference Held in Hot Springs in U.S.A.," 1943, External Affairs - External - 380-X, 1943 (Secret), National Archives of India.

31. "Food Situation in India: General Circulars Issued by the Food Department," 1944, External Affairs - War Progs., Nos. 59(49)-W, 1944 Secret, National Archives of India.

32. "India at the United Nations' Food Conference," *Modern Review*, July 1943, 4.

33. M.R. Masani, *Your Food, a Study of the Problem of Food and Nutrition in India* (Bombay: Padma Publications for Tata Sons Ltd., 1944), 3.

34. J.M. Deb, *Blood and Tears* (Bombay: Hind Kitabs, 1945), 189–90.

35. Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi, *The Ruin That Britain Wrought* (Bombay: Padma Publications for

When India's Central Legislative Assembly was asked to consider a motion supporting the constitution of the newly-proposed Food and Agriculture Organization, the debate turned rancorous.³⁶ A bloc of parliamentarians suggested that India's colonial representatives offered scant legitimacy: one MLA, Abdul Qaiyum, suggested that the FAO 'should consider the [moral] credentials of a Government like that of India, which had allowed chronic malnutrition, famine, and destitution, illiteracy, and absence of medical relief to prevail in the country, while the officers of the Government were busy issuing ordinances laying down how much the tailoring charge of coats and trousers should be.' A larger faction – which successfully introduced an amendment to the motion – worried that an international body could pave the way for quicker exploitation of India's agricultural resources. The legislator and peasant leader N.G. Ranga urged that the FAO consider not only the interest of consumers, but India's agricultural producers, as well, as they worked for remunerative prices on the market.

Yet even at this early date, as nationalists debated the meanings of international cooperation in a colonial context, Indian delegates began angling for places for themselves in an emerging institutional framework. Nationalist ferment, and the deepening postwar expectation of British departure, led to the increased participation of Indian bureaucrats and scientists in the incipient organization. Two years after Hot Springs, it was a chiefly Indian delegation which arrived for a preparatory meeting in Kansas City. W.R. Aykroyd was the chief delegate, but he was accompanied by India's Agricultural Commissioner, D.R. Sethi, and Dr. Beni Prasad, an Indian fisheries expert. The delegation lobbied for funding for training for Indian students to study advanced farming techniques abroad, and for new opportunities for Indians to study holistic land use programs like the Tennessee Valley Authority.³⁷ Gove Hambidge, executive secretary of the United Nations Commission on Food and Agriculture, seemed eager to secure Indian buy-in, outlining in a radio broadcast the possibility of the new organization encouraging the manufacture and distribution of modern farm instruments in India as a key battleground in the global fight against hunger.³⁸

A year later, representatives were convening in Quebec for the founding conferences of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The Indian delegation, headed by Agent-General G.S. Bajpai, was a mix of veteran civil servants and rising bureaucrats. Aykroyd was once again among their ranks, but with independence on the horizon, the delegation was primarily Indian: a Punjab parliamentarian was in attendance, as well as a senior Forestry Department member, alongside the

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1946); Radhakamal Mukerjee, *Race, Lands, and Food: A Program for World Subsistence* (New York: Dryden Press, 1946), 61, 65.

36. "Likely Advantages to India from FAO," *Times of India*, November 22, 1944.

37. Daniel Klingensmith, *One Valley and a Thousand: Dams, Nationalism, and Development* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007).

38. "United Nations to Help India: Farm Implements," *Times of India*, October 16, 1945.

distinguished Delhi University economist V.K.R.V. Rao and the agricultural expert M.S. Randhawa.³⁹ Bajpai's address before the conference demonstrated a delicate ambivalence that foreshadowed a complex relationship of hope and nationalist pride. The challenges to India's nutritional well-being, he averred, could not be overstated, particularly in light of the petitioning that other representatives were making for food imports. A third of India's four million citizens, he suggested, repeating that familiar statistics, did not get enough to eat, and that with an average per capita income of about \$22 dollars, Indians' purchasing power remained too low to acquire food on the international market. The new FAO, Bajpai continued, would not 'accomplish miracles,' and would have to recognize national self-help as the prerequisite for adequate foodstuffs. India's government, he contended, was newly 'resolved to assume responsibility for the adequate nourishment of the people and to take the measures necessary to achieve the end.' It was the new nation itself, he proclaimed, that would diligently tackle the food problem, and succeed.

Yet Bajpai and his peers saw a role for the FAO in ensuring that India had the right tools — physical and economic — for the job. The new organization could be useful in 'the procurement of agricultural machinery and of facilities for specialized training for her nationals in various branches of agriculture.' It would prove its worth through the collection of good statistical data. And with an attention to the imperatives of price incentives that would characterize the Organization's first, failed efforts, he noted that the FAO might best be useful in ensuring to farmers 'fair and equitable prices for the harvest of their toil.' Indian experts, he contended, must be central in the Organization's operations. While India possessed, 'east of Suez, perhaps the best agricultural institute of research in the world,' its technical workers needed the opportunity to train and serve abroad, and should be represented fairly among the FAO's higher ranks.

The Indian team which returned from Denmark a year later would make similar claims for India's importance in this global forum. The veteran civil servant P. Srivastava returned to India from Denmark touting India's gains there.⁴⁰ 'The size of India,' he declared, 'its importance both as a producer and a consumer country, its bitter and continuing experience of food shortage and famine and its success in food administration on a scale unattempted by any other country entitled her delegates to be heard with attention and respect, and in the conference her due place among the great nations has been given full recognition.' Srivastava lauded India's success in making a case for fertilizers and agricultural machinery to be imported to India under favorable terms, in ensuring that any international nutritional standards placed India on 'the highest standards,' and in lobbying for expert training in fisheries and other domains

39. Department of Agriculture, Government of India, *Report of the Indian Delegation to the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture at Quebec City, P.Q., Canada* (New Delhi: Manager of Publications, Government of India Press, 1946); V.K.R.V. Rao, *The Partial Memoirs of V.K.R.V. Rao*, ed. S.L. Rao (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 131.

40. "India's Case Before FAO: Food Delegation Has Done Well," *Times of India*, September 16, 1946.

that would help unearth India's 'untapped food wealth.' From its inception, India's representatives at the FAO were negotiating the new nation's distinct place within it, with an admixture of caution and opportunism.

'A Progressive and Revolutionary Ideal': Dashed Aspirations in the Boyd-Orr Years

Indian bureaucrats looked expectantly at independence to the lofty inaugural proposal advanced by Lord John Boyd-Orr for the Organization and its member states, flush with cash and internationalist ambition alike. Beginning in 1945, Boyd-Orr had proposed the creation of a World Food Board, an instrument which many Indian representatives saw as well-suited to the nation's hunger.⁴¹ Indeed, many Indian politicians were hatching plans for national price stabilizing bodies at the same time, suggesting that only price interventions could bridge the disparity between India's low purchasing power and the high price of food. These gloomy economic predictions had been worsened by the agricultural costs of partition: at independence, India's most arable provinces, Bengal and Pakistan, had been violently divided, and the new Republic was home to all of India's traditional famine regions, with only 69% of its former arable land.⁴²

The board that Boyd-Orr proposed would promote agricultural production across the world by stabilizing prices at a global level. The proposed Board would purchase and hold buffer stocks equal to about six to twelve months of global trade. When global prices of foodstuffs were high, the Board would release stocks onto the market; when prices were low, they would, conversely, purchase them. This purchasing scheme would protect farmers and consumers, and the Board would simultaneously extend long-term credit for agricultural development, with repayment tied to developing nations' economic growth. Such a proposal, Boyd-Orr envisioned, would increase farmers' purchasing power, which in turn would stimulate the production of capital goods. At a moment when India's first nationalist leaders were eager to actualize agricultural development with a minimum of capital input, Boyd-Orr's proposal was a deeply attractive one to Indian planners. Ultimately, in 1966, India would create its only body, the Food Corporation of India, which would attempt to manage prices and stocks in a similar manner.

The plan offered much to Indian administrators, offering a wide degree of national autonomy which advancing the promise of stabilized markets for Indian agriculturalists. V.K.R.V. Rao of Delhi University had trumpeted his support for the

41. *Proposals for a World Food Board* (Copenhagen, Denmark: Second Session of the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization, July 5, 1946); see Staples, *The Birth of Development*, 85–87. Boyd-Orr's own reflections are in Boyd-Orr, *The White Man's Dilemma*; see also the discussion in Bashford, *Global Population*.

42. Chopra, *Evolution of Food Policy in India*, 52. One of India's most talented food administrators, Ijaz Ahmad, had also left for Pakistan, where he would serve as the new nation's FAO representative.

Board soon after it was outlined at the 1946 FAO Conference in Copenhagen.⁴³ B.R. Sen added his support, announcing that India would be working on their own domestic buffer stores of grain, and that Boyd-Orr's plans meshed well with the 'accepted policy of Government that steps should be taken to stabilize agricultural prices in the future.'⁴⁴ Bihar's finance Minister, A.N. Sinha, deputed to the FAO's meeting in Geneva in September 1947, suggested that international commodity agreements under the aegis of the World Food Board would work well alongside India's own planning schemes.⁴⁵

Representatives of India's peasantry lauded the proposal, eager to secure more consistently remunerative prices for Indian crops. N.G. Ranga, who had expressed cautious optimism for the FAO as a parliamentarian, touted the 'revolutionary' character of the Board, though his version was far more radical than that which was actually being proposed.⁴⁶ The idea that 'the richer countries [would] take delivery of all the food surpluses in their own countries and in others and to make them available to all poorer countries at specially low prices,' he contended, 'is indeed a progressive and revolutionary ideal when contrasted with the usual capitalist device of dumping surplus production of one set of countries in another set of countries merely for the sake of markets but to the destruction of the merchants and producers of importing countries.' The FAO, Ranga felt, would 'cure the world of this capitalist disease,' and 'once this solution is adopted, 'peasants need not be afraid of their bumper harvest ever resulting in a slump for their produce. [...] It is thus a democratic and socialistic ideal for the achievement of which world peasants are now being prepared by the FAO.'

Boyd-Orr's proposal was ambitious indeed, though nowhere nearly as radical as Ranga wished to believe. Yet the proposal did court the fervent disapproval of India's merchants. The Secretary of the conservative Indian Merchants' Chamber appealed in a January 1947 memorandum to the Department of Food to include private industry in any agreement made under the proposed World Food Board.⁴⁷ 'Every opportunity,' the Secretary wrote, should 'be taken by Government for emphasizing and preserving the principle of utilizing the normal channels of trade in all the stages of the work connected with the enforcement and administration of the said decisions.' Indian rice merchants in particular, he contended, should be able to 'place their machinery and personnel at the service of government for performing the functions resulting from the

43. "Need for Creation of World Food Body Recognised: Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao on Work Done at Copenhagen Conference," *Times of India*, September 23, 1946.

44. "Agricultural Prices Stabilisation: Accepted Policy of India Government," *Times of India*, October 9, 1946.

45. "World Food Body Can Prevent Malnutrition: India's Plea at FAO Conference," *Times of India*, September 9, 1947.

46. N.G. Ranga, *Revolutionary Peasants* (New Delhi: Amrit Book Co., 1949), 230.

47. A.C. Ramalingam, "Letter to Secretary of the Government of India, Department of Food, New Delhi Re: Setting up of a Rice Food Board at Delhi," January 16, 1947, Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay / 830 / Rice Food Board, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

obligations undertaken by the Government of India in consequence of the setting up of the World Food Board.' A Food Board which deprived trade of its rightful place in the sale of foodgrains was one that no merchant in India could stomach.

And if India's merchants shuddered at the thought of Boyd-Orr's board, they were joined by administrators and politicians in the United States and the United Kingdom, who found the proposal alternately laughable and odious. As British Foreign Office staff mocked Boyd-Orr's seeming irreverence for financial details in his 'plan for an agricultural Paradise,' American administrators worried about the plan to create three new international organizations to manage credit, buffer stocks, and famine distribution, loathe to cede authority to international bodies and the opportunity to use food aid to persuade and cajole.⁴⁸ The FAO, as Frank Trentmann has noted, 'turned out to be a more conservative body than many internationalists had hoped, focusing on improved living conditions rather than on eliminating world hunger.'⁴⁹ The *Eastern Economist* was lamenting the failure of Boyd-Orr's plan as early as 1946, declaring that 'proposals for a World Food Board and a world food plan have been totally abandoned,' and laying the blame squarely on the United States, which was 'sabotaging the international character of the FAO.' Without the support of the United States, the FAO's mission would be 'left at the mercy of the naive American belief in the magic of the expanding world economy.'⁵⁰

Within a year of its formal founding, it was growing clear to Indian observers that the FAO was not the egalitarian body that its nationalists would have hoped for, and the sense of thwarted possibility grew with each dashed plan. India's representatives appealed to the FAO for food gifts in the desperately lean months of late 1947, finding themselves frustrated that such moves were beyond the Organization's mandate.⁵¹ It refused to participate in the World Agricultural Census planned by the FAO in the closing years of the decade, citing manpower constraints.⁵² V.R.K.V. Rao, an early proponent of the promise that the Organization held out to India's hungry, admitted in a series of articles in the *Eastern Economist* that 'not much by way of concrete action has been undertaken so far.'⁵³ Other Indian voices lamented the FAO's disproportionate

48. Staples, *The Birth of Development*, 88–89.

49. Frank Trentmann, "Coping with Shortage: The Problem of Food Security and Global Visions of Coordination, C. 1890s–1950," in *Food and Conflict in Europe in the Age of the Two World Wars*, ed. Flemming Just and Frank Trentmann (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 32.

50. "The F.A.O.," *Eastern Economist*, February 7, 1947.

51. "India's Food Delegate," *Times of India*, October 25, 1947.

52. "World Farm Census," *Eastern Economist*, February 14, 1947; *Report on the World Census of Agriculture* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1950).

53. See V.K.R.V. Rao, "International Co-Operation in Food and Agriculture I," *Eastern Economist*, April 18, 1947; V.K.R.V. Rao, "International Co-Operation in Food and Agriculture II," *Eastern Economist*, April 25, 1947; V.K.R.V. Rao, "International Co-Operation in Food and Agriculture III," *Eastern*

focus on hunger in the West. In 1949, the Indian government statistician W.R. Natu urged the FAO to place 'a high priority to the claims of Asia and the Far East,' home to the 'real have-nots in the world.'⁵⁴

If many Indians had responded warmly to the World Food Board proposal, their ardor was cooled in 1949 when the FAO fielded a plan for an International Clearing House, a new body tasked with buying agricultural surpluses and selling them to food-short countries.⁵⁵ The proposal's focus on currency buy-ins would, many Indian observers suggested, unfairly hamper India and other countries with low purchasing power. 'It is not necessary,' the *Eastern Economist* opined 'to pick holes in the FAO proposal for an International Commodity Clearing House, simply because it is as full of holes as any ordinary household sieve.'⁵⁶ In a later, damning assessment, the journal lamented the diminishing vision of the FAO. That vision 'began with Lord Boyd Orr's grand vision of a World Food Board, which would feed the earth's hungry millions by making two blades grow in the deserts and swamps, where none grows now. It was so impressive as a vision that the member nations of the FAO simply could not take it as anything else; and as a vision it still remains, with the visionary being appropriately rewarded with a Nobel Peace Prize — appropriately because, peace, like freedom from hunger, appears to be just another vision, or perhaps, illusion!' The ICCH scheme had fallen through, the journal noted, 'and with it all attempts at global food planning appear to have been abandoned — at least for the time being.'⁵⁷ Indian opprobrium reached its peak in July 1949, when its representative joined the USSR in lambasting the FAO's inability to increase food production globally, suggesting conspiratorially that it had concerned itself chiefly with the maintenance of high market prices.⁵⁸

In the absence of more favorable and viable plans in Rome and Washington, Indian representatives began to lobby for greater Indian representation and influence within the organization. In 1947, government representatives urged that the FAO quicken its hiring of Indian experts in agriculture and animal husbandry. Two years later, W.R. Natu was urging that Indians needed to be more included more prominently in the organization's administration, since only they and other Asians could 'interpret the

Economist, May 2, 1947; and V.K.R.V. Rao, "International Co-Operation in Food and Agriculture IV," *Eastern Economist*, May 9, 1947.

54. "Asia and the F.A.O.," *Eastern Economist*, December 3, 1948, 969.

55. "Clearing House for Food Surpluses: Proposal for FAO," *Times of India*, November 21, 1949.

56. "Clearing House for Food," *Eastern Economist*, December 2, 1949.

57. "F.A.O. Conducts a Dutch Auction," *Eastern Economist*, December 16, 1949, 930–931. "The Indian delegate," the journal added, "who does not appear to have been unduly distressed by the untimely end to which world food planning has been brought, feels that the Committee has great possibilities, but the Director-General of the FAO, less easy to console, is acutely disappointed at the failure of the Conference to evoke adequate means of easing the lot of the ill-fed peoples of the world."

58. "FAO Work Criticised," *Times of India*, July 8, 1949.

desires and aspirations of Asian Peasants.⁵⁹ The *Economic Weekly*, writing about the failure of the commodity clearing house in 1949, noted the silver lining that was five Indian experts who had been deputed to the United States as expert consultants.⁶⁰ These schemes were abetted by W.R. Aykroyd who, from his offices in Rome and Washington, continued to look after colleagues and friends in India, helping to secure positions for Indians overseas. Aykroyd worked to secure the participation of old colleagues from Coonoor in the Congress of Tropical Medicine, and brought international nutrition experts traveling under the FAO's auspices to the Indian institutions he had helped midwife.⁶¹

This lobbying for Indian influence became clear in the interlinked conferences and meetings that took place in the closing years of decade. In May and June 1947, an International Rice Study Group comprising delegates from Australia, Burma, China, France, India, Netherlands, the Philippines, Siam, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the United Nations was held in Travancore state.⁶² Chaired by agricultural economist S.Y. Krishnaswami, the Group studied the production, storage, distribution and international trade of rice, recommending the formation of a Central Rice Board for South and Southeast Asia for the appropriate distribution of surpluses. Food Minister Rajendra Prasad, inaugurating the meeting, hoped that the group's efforts would 'help in the improvement of India's food position and enable the country to secure whatever it could from other countries, especially those having large surpluses at their disposal.'⁶³ The real success of the Group, however, was that it had been held in Travancore concurrently with another conference in Washington on global plant and animal stocks – a coup for India's participation on the world stage. Shortly thereafter, a similar meeting on agricultural cooperatives in Asia was held in Lucknow.⁶⁴ Uttar Pradesh's governor, H.P. Mody, emphasized in opening the conference that the co-operative idea is of particular importance to Asian countries, with their predominantly agricultural economy.'⁶⁵ India's delegation, headed by Bombay Finance Minister V.L. Mehta,

59. "Asia and the F.A.O."

60. "Food Surplus and FAO," *Economic Weekly*, August 13, 1949, 18.

61. W.R. Aykroyd, "Letter to Park F. Boyd," February 2, 1948, RG 57.1 Series A3 - W.R. Aykroyd Outgoing Letters to Governments 1946-1949, FAO Archives, Rome; W.R. Aykroyd, "Letter to V.N. Patwardhan," August 5, 1948, RG 57.1 Series A3 - W.R. Aykroyd Outgoing Letters to Governments 1946-1949, FAO Archives, Rome; W.R. Aykroyd, "Letter to K. Mitra," November 2, 1948, RG 57.1 Series A3 - W.R. Aykroyd Outgoing Letters to Governments 1946-1949, FAO Archives, Rome.

62. *Report of the Rice Study Group, Trivandrum, Travancore State, India, 16 May - 6 June 1947* (Washington, D.C.: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1947).

63. "Rice Study Group," *Science and Culture*, July 1947.

64. *Report of Technical Meeting on Cooperatives in Asia and the Far East - Lucknow, India, 24 Oct - 2 Nov 1949*. (Washington, D.C.: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1949).

65. "F.A.O. Talks on Co-Operatives in Asia And Far East: U.P. Governor on 'Enormous Scope' of Movement," *Times of India*, October 25, 1949.

emphasized that India could serve as a model, among the international community, of high-functioning cooperative work in agriculture, noting that Indochina and Thailand already seemed to be patterning their cooperatives on Indian models.⁶⁶

Once again, India had found that if the FAO were not the effective and egalitarian body it had been made out to be, Indians could at least use it to secure seats at the international table — or as an international authority to win policy debates at home.⁶⁷ This dynamic became blisteringly clear in 1949, when a major disagreement between two camps in the combined Food and Agriculture Ministry broke out over the target goals for agricultural production, and the possibility of self-sufficiency in food by 1951. ‘Though they share one Minister,’ a British observer noted, ‘the ministries are situated two miles apart, and their approach to the common problem about as wide apart, too.’⁶⁸ Agriculture Ministry officials had pressed for the two-year time frame, reaching out to former FAO chief Boyd-Orr to come to India to give his blessing. Food Ministry representatives, by contrast, had rallied behind the estimates of the current FAO Director, Norris Dodd, that India would more realistically be able to reduce food imports to 1.5 million tons annually, reaching self-sufficiency at a later date.

Research and Expertise under the Expanded Program for Technical Assistance

In 1952, British science journalist Ritchie Calder found himself dispatched to the unlikely destination of Cuttack, Orissa. Unexpectedly, the editor of London’s *News Chronicle* had found himself something of a spokesman for the United Nations’ new developmental organizations. Three years prior, he had traveled across North Africa and the Middle East at the behest of UNESCO, surveying the organization’s efforts to promote reclamation and find new productive uses for desert lands. The trip resulted in a popular book, *Men Against the Desert*.⁶⁹ Soon thereafter, Calder was asked to traverse South and Southeast Asia on behalf of the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization, charged with a similar mission. His report from Cuttack was breathless, as he chronicled the efforts being undertaken to feed India’s four hundred million new citizens, dependent on ‘bread-grain from North America and even having to turn to Egypt and Brazil for rice.’⁷⁰ There, in bungalows repurposed as laboratories,

66. “Co-Operatives in South-East Asia Shaped on Indian Pattern: Mr. V.L. Mehta Praises Efforts for Agricultural Reforms,” *Times of India*, November 5, 1949.

67. On this dynamic, see David C. Engerman, *Planning for Plenty: The Economic Cold War in India* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, forthcoming).

68. Office of the Adviser in India to the Central Commercial Committee, “Adviser in India’s Report No. 18,” April 1949, DO/133/108, National Archives (United Kingdom).

69. Ritchie Calder and Raymond S Kleboe, *Men against the Desert*. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1951).

70. Peter Ritchie Calder, *Men against the Jungle: An Account of a Journey Made to Report on the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme in Indonesia, Thailand, Burma, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1954), 133.

the Asian scientists staffing the Rice Research Station were deploying scientific grit and know-how in the service of Asia's shared prosperity.

The Rice Research Station was an exemplar of what the Food and Agriculture Organization could do in the absence of the lofty goals that had characterized its earlier incarnations. India's eating habits were so fixed, Calder declared, and its agricultural methods so set, that it was perhaps best to avoid any effort to remake agricultural techniques or Indian diets. 'Even if the machines and the means were available,' he declared, 'it would be difficult to wean the rice peasants from the habits of centuries. Even though they might recognize the value of new ideas in cultivation, it would take time for them to learn new skills and modify tradition.' Yet the benefits of new strains of crops, and of rice in particular, were evident in a single season, and it was with that very practical goal of creating new hybrids that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations had lent its support to the Station, bringing in scientists from ten Asian nations to work under an Indian director, and securing funding for the Station from the UN Technical Assistance Board.

In a period of reduced ambition for the FAO, Indian administrators were able to eke out their strongest gains from the fledgling organization as it focused, under the directorship of Norris Dodd, on programs of technical assistance. Stymied by American recalcitrance, the FAO turned, beginning in 1951, to the provision of technical assistance, relying upon funds from the United Nations' Expanded Program for Technical Assistance – funds which quintupled the FAO's budget in a single year from a paltry \$750,000 to nearly \$5.25 million. Nearly a third of EPTA's funding, pooled from member nations' voluntary donations, went to the FAO, which sent training missions to countries which requested assistance to particular projects.⁷¹ India and Indians stood to gain much from these projects – though FAO funding was rarely, if ever requested or given for projects to increase India's staple grain production.

From the very beginning, it was clear that the key impediment to India's nutritional well-being – quantitative caloric abundance – would not be undertaken through FAO networks. India lobbied for the FAO's assistance in their fight against the destructive and invasive *Kans* grass, which had vexed peasants for years and represented a formidable obstacle to land reclamation.⁷² In 1950, at India's request, the FAO deputed two expert mechanics to the newly-formed Central Tractor Organization in Uttar Pradesh, supervising the maintenance of new machinery and the construction of a training and repair workshop in Bareilly with the aim of facilitating land reclamation.⁷³

71. Staples, *The Birth of Development*, 99.

72. S.T. Raja, *Reclamation of "Kans" Lands* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1949); *More from Mother Earth* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1951), 98.

73. *Report on the Activities of FAO under the Expanded Technical Assistance Program for the First Financial Period, 1950-1951 and Outline of Activities for 1952* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1952).

The Organization soon delegated another three experts to the Terai region of the same province to oversee land reclamation projects directly, and to assist in the promulgation of better hand-made tools. Before long, other experts were 'imported' under FAO auspices to oversee veterinary training aimed at eradicating rinderpest, to supervise irrigation schemes, to work on the production of sawmills and pulpwood production, to combat soil erosion via afforestation, and to develop fisheries in West Bengal.⁷⁴ The next year, the FAO deputed nine new experts to the Central Tractor Organization and eight experts to a livestock production and animal disease prevention team.⁷⁵ A dairy technician was sent to the a clean milk production scheme in Bombay, and a sheep expert to a production facility in the Himalayas. Further veterinarians were sent to work on vaccines for rinderpest and other local endemic diseases, while another group was sent to oversee a particularly sensitive project: the production of profitable hides and skins from milch cows which had passed their usable age. Meanwhile, the FAO sponsored a number of investigations into a number of interlinked projects, from a survey of Zebu cattle in India to a large-scale investigation into the process of land reform.⁷⁶

By 1954, a Dutch expert from the FAO was working overtime on a Sundarbans fisheries project.⁷⁷ The Bombay dairy scheme had expanded into a new course of study being run under FAO auspices.⁷⁸ And two Iowa State professors had been sent to Delhi to lecture at a new FAO training center on applied agricultural experimentation.⁷⁹ New experts had been sent to the machinery workshops in Uttar Pradesh, and more veterinarians to the vaccine project being undertaken at Izatnagar.⁸⁰ Two hundred sheep had been imported to a breeding station, and a sheep advisory service was instructing Indians on the production of wool. An FAO naval architect had been sent to supervise the

74. On this latter project, see F. Botke, *Report to the Government of India on the Development of Inland Fisheries in West Bengal* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1954).

75. *Report on the Activities of FAO under the Expanded Technical Assistance Program for the First Financial Period, 1952-1953* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1953).

76. See M.R. Bhide, *Improved Land Tenure, Success and Failure in the Development and Settlement of Government Owned Lands* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1954); N.R. Joshi and Ralph W. Phillips, *Zebu Cattle of India and Pakistan* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1953); H.D. Malaviya, *Role of Community Spirit and Mutual Aid in Rural Development* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1954); Otto Schiller, *The Reorganization of Individual Farming on Co-Operative Lines* (Lahore, Pakistan: Punjab Co-operative Union, 1955); and Pandurang Vasudeo Sukhatme, *Survey Method of Experimentation* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1955).

77. W.F.L. Van der Heyden, *Report to the Government of India on the Development of the Sundarbans Fisheries in West Bengal* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1954).

78. "Dairy Course at Aarey: Bombay Govt.'s Plan," *Times of India*, August 3, 1954.

79. "Two U.S. Experts Leave for India." *FAO Memo*, September 1954.

80. *Report on the Activities of FAO under the Expanded Technical Assistance Program for the First Financial Period, 1953-1954* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1954).

motorization of fishing boats, and experts had been sent to supervise timber engineering and the steadying of sand dunes in Rajasthan. Prime Minister Nehru had taken note of the steady stream of FAO experts, meeting with a food technologist in Uttar Pradesh and conveying dismay when an FAO expert mission to investigate *jhum* (swidden) practices in Assam was blocked by the state government.⁸¹ By the middle of the decade, there were around fifty full-time FAO experts supervising projects across the length and breath of the country.⁸²

The FAO contributed greatly, in the EPTA years, to the advancement of individual projects. Yet with a focus on export crops and products like sheep, wool, and fisheries, as well as the preservation and conservation of ‘supplementary foods’ like fish, eggs, and meat, the FAO was cordoned off from the more politically important projects of ensuring adequate caloric sustenance. Thorny questions of staple crop production and distribution, of land management and the question of public provisioning, were kept hermetically sealed from the domain of international expertise, and would remain cloistered until at least the Ford Foundation’s pilot program in India, beginning in 1959.⁸³ In the absence of a more dramatic contribution to India’s continuing agricultural maladies, Indian parliamentarians continued to question the need for participation at all. In the Rajya Sabha in September 1956, Food Minister A.P. Jain defended India’s annual subscription of \$200,000 to skeptical parliamentarians, noting that the FAO did not give financial assistance as presumed, but ‘technical assistance in the shape of foreign experts, fellowships for trainings of Indians abroad, and research purposes,’ whose value far exceeded the annual cost of membership.⁸⁴ It was clear that Indian administrators valued the opportunities that the FAO provided to gain plum postings abroad; likewise, visiting dignitaries from the Organization were feted with great fanfare, particularly when they acknowledged that India’s hunger made it all the most central in the organization’s strategic planning.⁸⁵

But the internationalists who had been so optimistic about the FAO’s aims at the Organization’s inception recalled the 1950s as a decade of stagnation. In large measure, the stagnating project of land reform – implemented in a formal sense and subverted frequently in practice – ensured that landowners had little incentive to participate in the larger designs of state planners. India’s ministerial class proved equally stubborn: N.G.

81. SWJN vol 23, p 239; SWJN v. 22, p. 237.

82. *Assessment of Experts by Food and Agriculture Organisation*, 1956; see also *Experts from Food and Agriculture Organisation*, 1957.

83. Agricultural Production Team, Ford Foundation, *Report on India’s Food Crisis & Steps to Meet It* (New Delhi: Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation, Government of India, 1959).

84. *Subscription to and Assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organisation*, 1956.

85. See “FAO’s Aid to Jobless: India Gets First Attention,” *Times of India*, March 2, 1955; “FAO Chief Visits ‘Annapoorna,’” *Times of India*, January 26, 1953; and “FAO Commends India’s Food Policy,” *Times of India*, November 27, 1955.

Ranga was elected to India's National FAO Liaison Committee in 1950 after what he described as 'three years of our [peasant] agitation.' He served in this capacity until 1957 under the chairmanship of India's Minister of Agriculture. Yet 'despite all my efforts,' Ranga recalled, 'our Commission could not take much initiative, due to the conservative attitude of the Ministry.'⁸⁶ Contributions to the development of fisheries and livestock schemes may have held appeal to their direct stakeholders, but for votaries of the peasantry, the FAO's pivot away from questions of prices and productivity towards the import of expertise and the export of Indian talent represented an unmitigated abandonment of earlier promises.

6. B.R. Sen, Direct Assistance, and the Freedom From Hunger Campaign

The widening cleavage between Indian developmental aims and the winnowing potential of the Food and Agriculture Organization was to grow starker during the directorship of B.R. Sen. These were the high-water days of agricultural planning and the transfer of expertise, and grains, in India. In the absence of hybrid seeds and the social and political conditions needed to grow them effectively, India's administrators eagerly welcomed the agricultural expertise being made available – nearly \$71 million dollars' worth by the end of the decade – from the United States' Technical Cooperation Mission.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, short-sleeved Americans flocked to Indian villages in shirt-sleeves under the auspices of the Community Development Program, and officials of the Rockefeller and Ford Foundation scoured the length and breadth of the country looking for funding opportunities.⁸⁸ All the while, American grains flooded Indian stores under the aegis of the United States' PL480 'Food for Peace' legislation.

An anemic budget did little to assist the comparative prestige of the FAO, in spite of the unexpected election of an Indian national as the FAO's chief. B.R. Sen, a former Department of Food official serving as Ambassador to Japan, narrowly edged out a Harvard Business School professor and former Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, the Philippines' Ambassador to the United Nations, a fisheries expert from the Netherlands, and Spain's Director of Commercial Policy. The election of an Asian to the directorship ended a long period of American administration of the FAO, though did

86. N.G. Ranga, *Fight for Freedom: Autobiography of N.G. Ranga* (S. Chand, 1968), 188–189. Elsewhere, it is suggested that the National FAO Liaison Committee was headed, from 1953, by N.G. Ranga in consort with Syed Mazhar Imam. *Election to the National Food and Agriculture Organization Liaison Committee*, 1953.

87. Agriculture Division, U.S. Technical Cooperation Mission to India, "Summary of TCM Assistance to Indian Agriculture FY1951 - FY1961," February 10, 1960, RG 286 / P446 / Box 1 / Administration - Divisional Affairs - Agriculture 1960, United States National Archives; a more general review is "The Indo-American Program - A Brief Resume (1952 - 1958)," 1959, RG 286 / P446 / Box 3 / Contracts - Indo-American Team 1955-58, United States National Archives. See also David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

88. Gordon, "Wealth Equals Wisdom?"; Immerwahr, *Thinking Small*, 69–71.

little to curb its influence: The United States was contributing, at Sen's election, nearly a third of its overall finances and half of the funding designated for technical assistance field programs.⁸⁹ Sen's first months and years in office saw the Indian national attempting to reprioritize an organizational focus on Asia and, to a lesser extent, Latin America. His first official trip was to Dhaka, then in East Pakistan, for talks on the food situation there.⁹⁰ Shortly thereafter, Sen declared that, as an Asian, he was uniquely positioned to 'speak for millions who are striving out of poverty today in the world's vast under-developed regions.'⁹¹ The deputation, shortly thereafter, of an Agricultural Extension Study Tour which brought together senior officers from a dozen countries to study the agriculture of India, Japan, and the Philippines, further underscored a shifting geographic commitment.⁹²

By the end of the decade, however, it was clear that effective management of the fledgling organization required a new start — particularly in light of the Organization's own findings, via the *World Food Survey*, that per capita food consumption in Asia and Latin America had sunk to pre-World War II levels.⁹³ Sen, endowed with a sense of moral determination that no doubt stemmed in part from his capable work during the Bengal Famine, set about seeking a different approach. The new paradigm took shape in a brainstorming session with the FAO's policy planning board in the wake of a meeting with Dwight D. Eisenhower; in January 1959, Sen announced the inauguration of the Freedom From Hunger Campaign, which he hoped would 'impel' the world to take major efforts in the fight against hunger. Doubling down on the efforts to cast hunger as a global ethical concern, the FFHC would work 'to attract worldwide attention to the problem [of hunger]; to secure the participation and cooperation of all concerned; to achieve a degree of enthusiasm and anticipation which would result in more effective national and international action; and in the process, establish a higher level of mutually profitable world trade to help the prosperity of both developed and developing countries.'⁹⁴

89. "F.A.O. Director Mr. B.R. Sen, One of 5 Nominees," *Times of India*, September 14, 1956. N.G. Ranga recalls his satisfaction at seeing his "old friend" being elected to the post. "I was glad," he would recall, "that the FAO did the right thing in selecting its chief from the under-developed part of the world, because he would know how to interpret the needs of the underdeveloped countries to the rest of the world and persuade them to spare their surplus wealth for the backward areas." Ranga, *Fight for Freedom*, 455.

90. "F.A.O. Director-General in Dacca: Talks on Food Problems," *Times of India*, November 14, 1956.

91. "Utmost Urgency of Raising Food Output: Mr. B.R. Sen on Immensity of Problem," *Times of India*, January 26, 1957.

92. *Tour of Agriculturalists from Asian and Far Eastern Countries Organised by the Food and Agriculture Organisation*, 1957. The group studied extension work, program planning and training, the preparation of teaching materials, the operation of community development schemes and cooperatives, and the transfer of research to farmers.

93. Staples, *The Birth of Development*, 105.

94. B.R. Sen, *Towards a Newer World* (Dublin: Tycooly International Pub., 1982), 138.

The FFHC faced American resistance from the very start. Committed to the premise of ‘trade not aid,’ and the dumping of surpluses to curry political favor, the United States government sought to defang and defund the Campaign. Hunger was not a moral problem, its representatives to the FAO suggested, but an economic one, and posed no obligation *per se* on countries with surpluses.⁹⁵ As a result, Sen suggested that the FAO call upon non-governmental organizations to partner with agencies in developing countries under its aegis; companies, too, were soon welcomed into the fold.

Indian reception was enthusiastic. The FFHC, Food Minister S.K. Patil gushed at the 1959 Rome Conference, was a reminder that it was ‘equally the responsibility of the surplus countries to take preventative action to avoid conditions of scarcity,’ even if the United States, the FAO’s biggest donor, had not signed on to this claim.⁹⁶ Perhaps most importantly from the subcontinental perspective, the FFHC posed no threat to the consolidation of Indian research autonomy, since it focused on person-to-person knowledge transfers – and left development in staple grains to national agencies and the foundations which were increasingly expressing interest in Indian agricultural development.

The campaign was kicked off in India amid much fanfare at the beginning of 1961. Two bodies, the National Campaign Committee, and the Governing Board, were established, the former comprising eighty-one members presided over by the Minister for Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Cooperation, and the latter comprising fifty members headed by the Minister of State for Food and Agriculture.⁹⁷ The Union Minister of Food and Agriculture, S.K. Patil, delivered a broadcast on All-India Radio to introduce the campaign. ‘The quick solution of hunger and malnutrition,’ he contended, ‘is the key to [India’s] orderly and stable development.’ Despite the ceremonial leadership of Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Sarvapelli Radhakrishnan, Patil contended that the Center’s engagement with it would be limited, and that it was state governments and nongovernmental organizations ‘who have got to import real life to the campaign,’ singling out Chambers of Commerce and Trade Unions as particularly important actors.⁹⁸

The development of staple crops continued to occur under the auspices of national institutions, but the FFHC would now serve as the principle coordinator in India for non-governmental organizations working broadly in the field of food production.⁹⁹ The

95. Staples, *The Birth of Development*, 109–112.

96. “World Food Bank: Mr. Patil’s Plea at FAO Conference,” *Times of India*, November 5, 1959, 3.

97. O.B. Kaushal, *Ten Years of Freedom from Hunger Campaign in India (1960-69)* (New Delhi: Indian Freedom from Hunger Campaign Society, Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Co-operation, 1970), 1–2.

98. “Patil Sees FFHC Key to Development,” *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News*, April 1961, 9.

99. Kaushal, *Ten Years of Freedom from Hunger Campaign in India (1960-69)*, 1–4.

FFHC in India would receive proposals from organizations on the ground, and those deemed technically feasible would be sent to the FAO for review. A screening committee at the FAO would then circulate proposals to prospective donors, before brokering bilateral assistance agreements and arranging for donations in cash and kind. By the late summer, with a grant from the Union Government of 20,000 rupees, the Campaign's Delhi headquarters was printing pamphlets in multiple languages and posters to hang in railway stations, district councils, and schools. A mobile unit was deputed from the Central Information and Broadcasting Ministry to circulate campaign information. The first two projects that the Campaign would sponsor was the popularization of Japanese implements and techniques for rice growing; the second was to be a scheme for the manufacture and distribution of better poultry feed.¹⁰⁰

Yet as India struggled under the weight of continued staple grain shortages, the most significant projects undertaken with the FFHC concerned the development of high-protein supplemental food – a sign of the FAO's limited ingress into core developmental projects. A project was inaugurated in Orissa under the auspices of an American poultry production to encourage home poultry rearing in the name of more meat, fertilizer, and eggs.¹⁰¹ A million-dollar grant from the United States FFHC provided for the import of crossbreed chickens, the development of better feed, and the training of extension workers. The Australian FFHC partnered with the Union government to expand this project, providing \$130,000 to airlift 10,000 day-old chicks from Australia, while the Indian government provided another \$870,000 for buildings, staff, land and facilities. The program was soon expanded into Uttar Pradesh, where a new center would train 50 to 100 farmers and provide them with equipment, feed, vaccine and medicine on credit.¹⁰² By 1967, Indians were still far short of the 80 billion eggs needed to supply half its population with a daily egg. Yet the FFHC program had been credited with Indians eating double the eggs they had consumed at the time of the project's inception.¹⁰³

Where poultry came first, milk soon followed. Oxfam, in 1962, donated \$300,000 to the Campaign to purchase a feed mixing plant for the pioneering Kaira Milk Producers' Union in Anand.¹⁰⁴ The plant – with funding from the Campaign Committees in Glasgow and Clydeside, Scotland as well as the New Zealand Committee and UNICEF

100. "India Moves Ahead," *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News*, August 1961, 8–9.

101. "Nutrition Program in India Opens Practical Way to Better Diet," *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News*, November 1961, 8–9.

102. "Million-Dollar Poultry Project for India," *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News* 5, no. 32 (October 1964): 28.

103. "Millions More Eggs for the Tables of India," *Freedom From Hunger* 8, no. 49 (August 1967): 31. The FAO estimated that a farmer near a city with a hundred birds stood to earn about 1000 extra rupees a year, representing a fifth of his average income.

104. "Oxfam to Give 300,000 Dollars for Indian Milk Scheme," *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News* 3, no. 15 (June 1962): 11.

– was inaugurated by Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in early 1965. The local Freedom From Hunger Coordinator characterized the plant as a further step in ‘the story of a milk revolution: the story of a small group of progressive farmers blazing a new trail in the dairy industry.’¹⁰⁵ (A lesser contribution to Indian dairying came in the milk buffalos donated to blind graduates of the Tata Agricultural and Rural Training Center for the Blind by students of the Convent of the Holy Ghost School in Bedford, England.)¹⁰⁶

Smaller projects came alongside these major investments. In the first years of the campaign, an anonymous French donor provided \$1020 dollars to the World Seed Campaign, with the stipulation that it be used in the Campaign in India.¹⁰⁷ India requested, under the FFHC, the import of improved ‘Great Scot’ potato seeds for planting in the Nilgiris.¹⁰⁸ A joint FAO and UNICEF ‘Expanded Nutrition Program’ was piloted in 240 villages in Orissa, developing nutrition schemes, poultry projects, school gardens and fisheries with the assistance of Mahili Samitis (Women’s Clubs) and youth groups.¹⁰⁹ A farm broadcasting course was held with funding from the Austrian Committee and the Oxford Committee for famine relief; an FAO farm radio specialist was deputed to train extension officers from the Indian Department of Agriculture in agricultural programming, and to assist female extension officers in programming on gardening, poultry-rearing, and hygiene.¹¹⁰ The UK Save the Children Fund sponsored nutrition vans to travel throughout Indian cities and villages and the Heifer Project flew 180 Yorkshire, Landrace, and Tamworth pigs to India for local breeding schemes.¹¹¹ The Finnish FFHC Committee donated \$82,000 to construct water supply points across cyclone-damaged areas in Maharashtra’s Ratnagiri district.¹¹²

In September 1964, Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson announced the creation of

105. “A Milk Revolution,” *Freedom From Hunger* 6, no. 35 (April 1965): 32. A major summary of the Anand project is David Mason, “Milk for Children and Place in the Sun for Kaira’s Farmers,” *Freedom From Hunger* 7, no. 44 (October 1966): 14–19.

106. “A Gift from Abroad Helps Rehabilitate Blind Indians,” *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News* 3, no. 16 (July 1962): 10.

107. “Seed Program Gets Boost,” *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News*, December 1961, 3.

108. “Import of Better Potato Seeds: FAO Aid Sought,” *Times of India*, January 19, 1962, 8.

109. “Orissa Undertakes Fourfold Nutrition Program,” *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News* 3, no. 14 (May 1962): 4–7.

110. “Course for Farm Broadcasters,” *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News* 4, no. 28 (December 1963): 14; “Special Broadcasts Now Advising Indian Farmers,” *Freedom From Hunger* 7, no. 43 (August 1966): 31.

111. “Nutrition Vans to Circulate Through India,” *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News* 5, no. 33 (December 1964): 31; “Pigs for India,” *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News* 5, no. 33 (December 1964): 32.

112. “Aid for Stricken Area in India,” *Freedom From Hunger* 6, no. 36 (June 1965): 32.

'Mysore Week' in Canada, designed to raise attention to and engagement with the Canadian-sponsored International Training Center in Food Technology at Mysore. Canadian Army, Navy, and Air Force Cadets sold ball-point pens with which Canadians were urged to 'write off hunger,' asking Canadian citizens to donate one cent per pound of body weight. 'Share-a-loaf' cards were distributed in groceries for Canadians to make donations.¹¹³ Canada Week was trumpeted in a full-page leader in the *Financial Post*, proclaiming that 'from farm hands to business leaders, Canadians contributed to the \$500,000 five year-project designed to help India and other southeast Asian countries produce badly needed food preservation experts.' An Ontario-based food expert from 'one of the world's food-smartest nations – sprawling, sparsely-populated, well-fed Canada' was sent to India to oversee expansion of the Training Center.¹¹⁴ Two years later, the Center was opened, with trainees being instructed in the prevention of spoilage and the nutritional amelioration of processed foods.¹¹⁵

The final years of the FFHC in India coincided with worsening agricultural returns in staple grains, and a full-on crisis in the form of the Bihar Famine of 1966-67. Work continued throughout the Famine, on a small scale: in March 1966, the French FFHC sent an exploratory mission to India, delivering seven hundred tons of powdered milk (beyond the five hundred tons already sent), alongside 25 million vitamin pills and 21 million iron pills.¹¹⁶ The Campaign also set up a 'Joint Food Development Organization' which would oversee religious relief and development organizations, namely the National Christian Council of India and the Roman Catholic Indian Social Institute.¹¹⁷ At the end of 1970 – B.R. Sen having ended his term in 1967 – the Indian FFHC had overseen fifteen major national projects, fifteen provincial projects, and seventy-two under taken by private groups. The largest single national donor to India had been the Netherlands, followed by Australia and the FAO itself, then Denmark's Board of Cooperation with Foreign Countries and West Germany's Central Agency.¹¹⁸ The United States was notably absent from that list, and that absence spoke to the ultimate toothlessness of the Campaign, and the Organization at large at this moment.

113. "Canadians Mobilize to Aid Food Technology Center in India," *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News* 6, no. 33 (February 1965): 31.

114. "Mysore Week in Canada," *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News* 6, no. 35 (April 1965): 30.

115. "Food Training Center in India," *Freedom From Hunger* 7, no. 40 (February 1966): 30.

116. "French Set Relief Plans After Mission to India," *Freedom From Hunger* 7, no. 43 (August 1966): 28–30.

117. "Churches Unite to Help Meet Indian Crisis," *Freedom From Hunger* 7, no. 43 (August 1966): 27. Less dramatically, late 1966 saw the FAO establishing catering schools in Bombay, Madras, Delhi and Calcutta under the FFHC, using funds donated by Denmark, the Netherlands, and Australia. "Meals for Millions: Catering Changes Indian Food Habits," *Freedom From Hunger* 7, no. 45 (December 1966): 29–30.

118. Kaushal, *Ten Years of Freedom from Hunger Campaign in India (1960-69)*, 7–9.

7. Conclusion

In 1966, senior FAO administrator Cedric Day delivered a cautious assessment of the Organization's work in India, which reflected the deferential stance of the day.¹¹⁹ 'We have no program here as such,' he contended. 'We are here at the request of the Government of India to advise and to participate in the Government's own program. Any work we undertake is in response to a Government demand, including UN Special Fund projects and Freedom From Hunger Campaign projects.' To some degree, this statement spoke to the exigencies of the day, and B.R. Sen's vision of an agency that would overcome limitations of funding by being agile, light, and responsible, facilitating partnerships rather than undertaking major schemes by itself.

Yet Day appended a thought that was more revealing than he might have intended. India, by 1966, he believed, was awash in expertise, in everything from nutrition and dairy to home economics, forestry, cattle breeding and logging. But 'as in so many fields of technology,' he noted, 'India is not so much in need of the advice of experts as in need of material assistance. Indian 'know-how' in the whole field of agriculture is both wide and deep and, indeed, as in the case of other technologies and sciences, FAO draws on Indian expertise in this field and has scores of Indian experts serving not only on the FAO headquarters staff but also in the field on various projects. It is not therefore a lack of knowledge or ability that calls for FAO experts so much as the sheer magnitude of the various problems confronting India.'

Ultimately, it was material assistance that India required. Day was writing in 1966, at the very moment that India's mounting food crisis was wedding it further to American imports, and ultimately, forced its agricultural and political bureaucracy to embrace the imperatives of high-yielding varieties and concentrated agricultural 'packages.'¹²⁰ These reforms tied India to a program of technological modernization without the requisite transformation of its political economy. If the FAO's earliest administrators and those who left national postings to join the Organization once shared this vision, by the mid-1960s, it had been abandoned entirely in favor of an institution that eschewed the goal of a world without hunger, and ceded space for major interventions to Western diplomatic and scientific power and the rising cloud of private foundations and institutions like the World Bank.

Symbolically resonant for its birth at a moment of global scarcity, the FAO could never capitalize on the breathless promises that its earliest planners had offered to a hungry world. Stymied by Anglo-American restraint and foot-dragging, the Organization's

119. Cedric Day, "The Role of F.A.O. in the Changing Indian Agriculture," in *Changing Indian Agriculture*, ed. Sharad Chandra Jain (Bombay: Vora, 1966), 115–127.

120. Three different approaches to this transition are Cullather, *The Hungry World*; Siegel, *Hungry Nation*; and Ashutosh Varshney, "Ideas, Interest and Institutions in Policy Change: Transformation of India's Agricultural Strategy in the Mid-1960s," *Policy Sciences* 22, no. 3/4 (January 1, 1989): 289–323.

savviest heads maneuvered carefully so that it might find a productive space in the pantheon of global expertise. Indian administrators and bureaucrats — from W.R. Akyroyd to the men and women steering FFHC projects — proceeded with equal agility, as a new international organization offered new opportunities for career advancement, the settling of policy debates on the home front, and the ability to boost certain developmental projects, so long as they did not intrude upon the core developmental priorities of a hungry state. The FAO offered space for these motions, and a dynamism that ebbed and flowed with the course of global geopolitics, but its promise of great leaps in the quest for plenty remained tragically unfulfilled.