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LOTS OF FOOD AND LOTS OF HUNGER

Over half the people on our planet go to bed hungry every night. Why?

"The world is hungry because we can't grow enough food to feed all the people." This is what TV analysts, government officials, businessmen, and college professors tell us. They predict massive famines within ten years, killing hundreds of millions of people at a time.

They may be right about the famines. It's hard to say there aren't famines right now when up to five million people, mostly children, starve to death in a year, and when 650 million of the world's billion children won't reach adulthood.

But are they right about *why* these people starve? Has mankind swollen so much there isn't enough food to go around?

To look at the pictures in the news or listen to the experts and officials, you'd think underdeveloped countries are hungry because they are overflowing with people. You see miles and miles of tightly-clumped shanties, filled with gaunt, desperate people, surrounding the cities

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of Brazil. Ask the slum dwellers of Brazil where they came from, however, and many talk of the vast empty countryside. They came because they had lost their land. A few big landowners and some American investors control most of the good land. As these interests develop their property, trying to harvest profits from the soil, they evict the peasants who have always lived on the land.

These families have nowhere else to go but to the city. And the slums continue to swell.

In America, too, we find ourselves packed ever more tightly. Like the peasants of Brazil, more and more of us are *compressed* onto less and less of the land. Like the peasants of Brazil, we do not own or control the land, and so we have no choice: 70% of the people live on 1% of the land in America, and the concentration is growing worse.

The office-building skyscrapers rising in American cities across the country symbolize the fact that more and more people are being crammed onto less and less of the land. And every year, tens of thousands of small farmers are economically forced off the land, and into the cities.

The squeezing together of people is happening in many places. But the plain fact is that there are a lot fewer people for a lot more land in most of the underdeveloped countries. Population density for Africa and Latin America is far below that of Europe.

Only a few Third World countries have high densities—India, Pakistan, Ceylon, the Dominican Republic, and one or two others. But none exceed 450 people per square mile. And yet Holland, with a population density of 972 per square mile, is not called overpopulated, while countries like Venezuela, with only 27 people for each square mile, are said to have a "population problem." There are no hungry people in Holland.

So "overpopulated," to the experts and offi-

cial, primarily means "underfed." Look through the lists these men compile of "overpopulated" countries, and you will find that they have actually compiled a list of hungry countries.

Poor nations have population problems

Virtually all the nations of Latin America are on this list, and most of Africa (the black states), and Asian countries like India, Indonesia and Syria. In other words, the *poor* nations—and people—of the world are the ones said to have "population problems." Experts and officials see hungry people in thinly settled countries and tell us, "If bellies are empty there, then they have too many people."

Does this kind of reasoning trouble you? It should, especially if you've ever been hungry, out of money and standing in the middle of a supermarket. Because that is a much more accurate description of the plight of the hungry.

America itself is the perfect example to prove this. In 1968, the Citizens' Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition in the United States discovered that there are 30 million hungry people right here in the USA. They found that 10 million are not just hungry but live on the edge of starvation. They saw starving children in the fields of Mississippi and in the slums of New York.

The United States is also the world's richest nation. It worries about growing *too much* food. In 1968, the government paid big-time farmers and agribusiness \$4 billion to take 35 million acres of good soil out of production. Otherwise, the bumper crops from this land would have glutted the world market and made prices fall.

Why does the government limit production in a world of hungry people, even when some of those people live in our own country? Said a top official in the Department of Agriculture (as quoted in *Hunger U.S.A.*), "It is true that there may be a greater need for food in some countries, but there is not necessarily a market for such food."

Translation: *In America, food is grown for profit, not to feed people.*

What does this mean in human terms? It means, for one thing, that a place like Stanislaus County, in central California, smack dab in the lushest farmland in the world, can become an official "Hunger Disaster Area." That's what happened in December of 1969, when thousands of unemployed people in the area did not have money to buy food from the fertile fields of their own county—while surplus food was stuffing federal warehouses in the area.

And this is exactly the same situation faced by the hungry countries around the world.

According to the 1969 report of the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), food surpluses—not shortages—are the looming problem in the near future. In the underdeveloped countries, their report points out, food production supposedly outpaced population growth in the last few years. Experts are starting to worry that too much food may accumulate.

One FAO official, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 10, 1969), even predicts that, based on production figures, "There will be no danger of starvation in the next 10 to 15 years." With two billion people underfed right now, that's a rather incredible prediction. The same official tossed off another remark that begins to make sense: "Whether or not people will have income to buy the food . . . is a different matter."

Translation: *Hunger is not lack of food. Hunger is lack of money.*

People are hungry while wheat-glutted Canada will plant no crop in 1970; while American farmers are plowing under thousands of tons of potatoes to raise the market price; while as much grain sits in warehouses around the world as was exported in all 1969.

