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Boston University

'Self-Help which Ennobles a Nation': Development, citizenship, and the obligations of eating in India's austerity years

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Introduction

In the years immediately following India's independence, the new nation's political leadership, assisted by civic organisations and a network of women's groups, sought to transform what, how, and how much Indians ate. Drawing upon wartime antecedent, global ideologies of population and land management, and an ethos of austerity imbued with the power to actualise economic self-reliance, the new state urged its citizens to give up rice and wheat, whose imports sapped the nation of the foreign currency reserves needed to forward a plan of industrial development. In place of these staples, Indian's new citizens were asked to adopt 'substitute' and 'subsidiary' foods -- including bananas, groundnuts, tapioca, yams, beets, and carrots -- and give up a meal or more each week to conserve India's scant reserve of grains. And as Indian planners awaited the possibility of more fundamental institutional transformations in the form of agrarian reform, they looked to food technology and the promise of 'artificial rice' as a means of making up for India's perennial food deficit. India's women, as anchors of the household -- and therefore, the nation -- were tasked with facilitating these dietary transformations, and were saddled with the blame when these modernist projects failed.

These projects, this article argues, embodied a broader postcolonial project to reimagine the terms of citizenship in a new nation characterised by fundamental scarcity. Indians were being

asked, through these dietary campaigns, to embrace notions of rights contingent upon the completion of duties, which in this case were the bodily transformations needed to actualise the economic self-reliance representing ‘real,’ and not merely formal, independence.¹ India’s nationalist leaders had ascended to power with the promise of sufficient food for the nation’s citizens, yet the actualisation of self-rule found those same leaders unable to deliver upon the promise of material well-being which had animated the final years of the nationalist struggle. Faced with enduring scarcity, and unable to marshal the resources needed to undertake fundamental agricultural reform -- particularly prior to the first Five-Year Plan period -- India’s planners placed greater faith in their ability to exercise authority over certain aspects of Indian citizenship itself. India’s three hundred and fifty million citizens, and its women in particular, were asked to remake daily practices in the name of national development and self-sufficiency, with the tools given to them by industrialists’ plans, women’s associations, and new scientific institutions. India’s postcolonial development regime, in a moment of uncertainty, imagined the remaking of citizenship as an integral precursor to reconstructing the national economy.

By 1951, as the Planning Commission came to exert greater authority over national development, the state began to retreat from the project of reengineering citizenship through dietary transformation. Undertaking projects of land reform and agricultural improvement, India’s leadership transferred a smaller share of the burden of development onto its citizens, reanimating these schemes only at moments of acute scarcity. These schemes courted the resistance of opposition politicians, dissenting Congressmen, and citizens themselves, and by the advent of the ‘new agricultural strategy’ in the mid 1960s, the project of reengineering citizenship had been entirely eclipsed by schemes for technological advance. But for a key period immediately after independence, India’s national leadership saw in changed diets and artificial foodstuffs the possibility of renegotiating the terms of postcolonial citizenship itself.

In recent years, historians and anthropologists have sought to situate the changing meanings of food and nutrition in modern South Asia, drawing upon foundational studies of Indian foodways, ecology, and religion.² This work, in turn, led to a later series of investigations which

1. On this framework, see Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 1011.

2. See, for example, Arjun Appadurai, “Gastro-Politics in Hindu South Asia,” *American Ethnologist* 8, no. 3 (August 1, 1981): 494–511; R.S. Khare, *Culture and Reality: Essays on the Hindu System of*

identified the rise of nutrition as a governing heuristic for colonial administrators in between the two World Wars, giving a new language for those administrators to address the interlinked concerns of population growth, health, labor and food supply.³ An influential call to interrogate the formation and boundaries of Indian ‘national cuisine’ has seen a proliferation of studies of the transformation of cuisines and the cultural boundaries of food.⁴ Much of this work has centred around culinary transformations in Bengal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, demonstrating how the rise of nutrition and transformations to the region’s food economy helped produce the Bengali Hindu middle class, facilitate *bhadralok* nationalism, and articulate cultural difference.⁵ A smaller proportion of this work has looked to North Indian regional contexts, looking to the rise of commensality in urban India, and examining how an inchoate public conversation about food in the Hindi public sphere underwrote the conceptualisation of an idealised and Hindu nation.⁶

Most promising are those recent studies which have sought to demonstrate how the subjects of food, hunger, and nutrition underwrote conversations about welfare, political life, and national

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- Managing Foods* (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1976); R.S. Khare, “Hospitality, Charity, and Rationing: Three Channels of Food Distribution in India,” in *Food, Society, and Culture: Aspects in South Asian Food Systems*, ed. R.S. Khare and M.S.A. Rao (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1986), 277–96; R.S. Khare, *The Eternal Food: Gastronomic Ideas and Experiences of Hindus and Buddhists* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992); and Francis Zimmermann, *The Jungle and the Aroma of Meats: An Ecological Theme in Hindu Medicine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).
3. David E. Ludden, “The ‘Discovery’ of Malnutrition and Diet in Colonial India,” *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 31, no. 1 (1994): 1–26; Michael Worboys, “The Discovery of Colonial Malnutrition between the Wars,” in *Imperial Medicine and Indigenous Societies*, ed. David Arnold (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 208–25.
 4. Arjun Appadurai, “How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (1988): 3–24.
 5. Utsa Ray, “Eating ‘Modernity’: Changing Dietary Practices in Colonial Bengal,” *Modern Asian Studies* 46, no. 03 (2012): 703–29, doi:10.1017/S0026749X11000515; Utsa Ray, “The Body and Its Purity: Dietary Politics in Colonial Bengal,” *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 50, no. 4 (October 1, 2013): 395–421, doi:10.1177/0019464613502413; and Jayanta Sengupta, “Nation on a Platter: The Culture and Politics of Food and Cuisine in Colonial Bengal,” *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. Special Issue 01 (2010): 81–98, doi:10.1017/S0026749X09990072. See also E.M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, C. 1800-1947* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press; Blackwell Publishers, 2001).
 6. Benjamin Siegel, “Learning to Eat in a Capital City: Constructing Public Eating Culture in Delhi,” *Food, Culture and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 13, no. 1 (2010): 71–90, doi:10.2752/175174410X12549021368108; Rachel Berger, “Between Digestion and Desire: Genealogies of Food in Nationalist North India,” *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 05 (2013): 1622–43, doi:10.1017/S0026749X11000850.

development.⁷ Broadly, this work has posited a basic continuity in the terms of the food debate, from Indian economic thinkers' critiques of the colonial state and its neglect of human welfare in the late nineteenth century to the idioms of national development in the decades surrounding independence, and the debates over the 'right to food' in contemporary India.⁸ While affirming the many continuities in India's development discourses over time, this article posits a fundamental shift in paradigms of welfare and development in the years surrounding independence, as Indian nationalists assumed control of state institutions and retained the 'instruments,' but not the 'idioms,' of national development.⁹ A recent treatment of food policy in these same years has identified a set of fundamental developmental tensions in independent India's food planning efforts; this article suggests that those tensions are best explained by the independent state's appeal to new paradigms of postcolonial citizenship.¹⁰

These paradigms, this article proposes, owed much to the promises made by Indian nationalists in the closing decades of colonial rule, and to the shift in developmental thinking which accompanied those same nationalists' assumption of power in 1946-1947. Saddled with the need to reconstruct India's economy, forward a plan of industrial development, and rid itself of the need for foreign imports, India's leadership proposed a vision of citizenship wherein rights derived from the completion of responsibilities, and wherein preferences were to be subsumed in the name of development.¹¹ Jawaharlal Nehru captured this paradigm succinctly when he

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7. Sunil S. Amrith, "Food and Welfare in India, C. 1900–1950," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50 (2008): 1010–35; 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): 571–88, doi:10.1080/00856401.2013.833071; Darren C. Zook, "Famine in the Landscape: Imagining Hunger in South Asian History, 1860-1990," in *India's Environmental History: Colonialism, Modernity, and the Nation*, ed. Mahesh Rangarajan and K Sivaramakrishnan, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2012), 400–428;
 8. This work underscores what David Ludden has described as the consistent "cognitive terrain" of developmentalist thought in India from British rule to the present day. David E. Ludden, "India's Development Regime," in *Colonialism and Culture*, ed. Nicholas Dirks (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 247–87.
 9. Sugata Bose, "Instruments and Idioms of Colonial and National Development," in *International Development and the Social Sciences*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 52–53.
 10. Sherman, "From 'Grow More Food' to 'Miss a Meal.'"
 11. Sudipta Kaviraj contends that Nehru's India was characterized by a 'pure statism,' without a strong redistributive expectation. It was literally a poor people's version of the welfare state, which had too little revenue to provide them with normal everyday welfare, but came to their rescue in a desperate

asserted that India's citizens would 'have to feel that they are partners in the great enterprise of running the State machine [...] sharers in both the benefits and obligations.'¹² Nehru, and the state's, implicit framework owed much to earlier contractualist models of citizenship, beginning with the colonial formulation of William Lee-Warner, and subsequently refined by jurists such as Srinivasa Sastri.¹³ It affirmed a communitarian reconfiguration of citizenship, wherein a citizen's rights exist dialectically alongside responsibilities to co-citizens, rejecting the libertarian notion of citizenship holding rights to exist without attached and inherent responsibilities.¹⁴ And its representatives frequently adopted a religious or ethical idiom, drawing from precepts like that in the Bhagavad-Gita which suggested the right to perform a duty, but rejected a right to the fruit of that action.¹⁵

The residents of independent India were indeed, as Srirupa Roy has argued, 'infantile citizens,' in need of 'state tutelage and protection in order to realise the potentials of citizenship,'

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- mitigation of crisis situations.' Sudipta Kaviraj, "On the Enchantment of the State: Indian Thought on the Role of the State in the Narrative of Modernity," in *The State in India after Liberalization: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. K. Sivaramakrishnan and Akhil Gupta, Routledge Contemporary South Asia Series 31 (London: Routledge, 2011), 36.
12. W.H. Morris-Jones, "Shaping the Post-Imperial State: Nehru's Letters to Chief Ministers," in *Imperialism and the State in the Third World: Essays in Honour of Professor Kenneth Robinson*, ed. Michael Twaddle (London: British Academic Press, 1992), 233.
 13. Niraja Gopal Jayal, "Pedagogies of Duty, Protestations of Rights," in *Citizenship and Its Discontents: An Indian History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 109–35. From a small body of Hindi literature on postcolonial citizenship, see Amba Datt Pant, *Bharatiya Savidhan Tatha Nagarikta [The Indian Constitution and Citizenship]* (Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1959), particularly 97–117.
 14. This formulation and the tension between the two models is found in Upendra Baxi, "The Justice of Human Rights in Indian Constitutionalism," in *Political Ideas in Modern India: Thematic Explorations*, ed. V.R. Mehta and Thomas Pantham (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), 263–84. Baxi's second bibliographic note offers a comprehensive overview of the literature on rights and their genealogies in South Asia; of particular note is G.S. Sharma, *Essays in Indian Jurisprudence* (Lucknow: Eastern Book, 1964). For a related discussion, with references to these categories in a more formal, legal sense, see Marc Galanter, "Introduction," in *Law and Society in Modern India*, ed. Rajeev Dhavan (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), xiii–c. A recent ethnographic account of how rights may be vernacularly mediated in the South Indian context is Ajantha Subramanian, *Shorelines: Space and Rights in South India* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2009).
 15. See Bhagavad-Gita 2:47-51. On postcolonial ethics and connections to religious imperatives of ordinariness and abnegation, see Leela Gandhi, *The Common Cause: Postcolonial Ethics and the Practice of Democracy, 1900-1955* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014). On the state's use of Gandhian conceptions of citizenship, see Ornit Shani, "Gandhi, Citizenship and the Resilience of Indian Nationhood," *Citizenship Studies* 15, no. 6–7 (October 2011): 659–78, doi:10.1080/13621025.2011.600066.

and offered rights only conditionally by the new nation-state.¹⁶ Yet the category of citizenship itself in early independent India drew creatively upon preexisting social and economic debates, and carried with it an increased appeal to ‘public service,’ virtue, and the maintenance of national order.¹⁷ These appeals were increasingly linked to larger questions of national development.¹⁸ And it was in the state’s campaigns for dietary transformation, this article argues, that the connections between the responsibilities of citizenship and the burden of national development were made most explicit.¹⁹

Global Population, National Planning, and Wartime Experimentation

India's mid-century efforts to remake the national diet drew inspiration from a broad range of late colonial antecedents, from the rise of population as a global and a colonial problem to the idioms of nationalist planning and wartime experiments in food policy.

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16. Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 20. Elsewhere, Dipesh Chakrabarty suggests that this qualified package of rights was situated within a broader, 'pedagogical' idiom of postcolonial politics. Leaders of Asian and African countries broadly 'thought of their peasants and workers simultaneously as people who were already full citizens--in that they had the associated rights--but also as people who were not quite full citizens in that they needed to be educated in the habits and manners of citizens.' Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Legacies of Bandung: Decolonization and the Politics of Culture," in *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives*, ed. Christopher Lee (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2010), 53–54.
17. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, "'In the Name of Politics': Democracy and the Power of the Multitude in India," *Public Culture* 19, no. 1 (2007): 35–57; William Gould, "From Subjects to Citizens? Rationing, Refugees and the Publicity of Corruption over Independence in UP," *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. Special Issue 01 (2011): 33–56, doi:10.1017/S0026749X10000302; Eleanor Newbigin, "Personal Law and Citizenship in India's Transition to Independence," *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. Special Issue 01 (2011): 32, doi:10.1017/S0026749X10000338. On the complex genealogy of postcolonial citizenship, see also Joya Chatterji, "South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946–1970," *The Historical Journal* 55, no. 4 (2012): 1049–71.
18. 'Particularly in the years 1946 to 1956,' Stuart Corbridge argues, 'the war on poverty in India was conceived in terms that proposed a close link between the remaking of India and the making of modern citizens.' Stuart Corbridge, *Seeing the State: Governance and Governmentality in India* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 52. Anand Pandian suggests that rural citizens, in particular, have since independence been identified as 'subjects of development, [who] must submit themselves to an order of power identifying their own nature as a problem.' Anand Pandian, "Devoted to Development: Moral Progress, Ethical Work, and Divine Favor in South India," *Anthropological Theory* 8, no. 2 (June 1, 2008): 159, doi:10.1177/1463499608090789.
19. This argument draws inspiration from the essays in C.J. Fuller and Véronique Bénéï, *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India* (London: Hurst & Co., 2001).

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, Indian economic thinkers transformed India's pervasive hunger from a Malthusian inevitability into a trenchant critique of colonial rule.²⁰ Yet as famine and hunger emerged as political concerns -- threatening colonial administrators not only with death and disease, but with shocks to labor and revenue collection -- these administrators began to abstract the idea of India's 'population' as a problem of governance.²¹ These developments dovetailed with a broader, global perception of the world's population and its anticipated 'overpopulation': in the first decades of the twentieth century, experts across the world began to interlink the planetary problems of 'land, migration, territory, soil, density, emptiness, arability, colonisation, and settlement.'²² In the colonial context, the questions of land, populations, and their diets, health and productive capacity for labor grew increasingly interconnected, frequently through the new scientific language of nutrition.²³ In India, these concerns began to take institutional form in the 1920s: the founding of the Nutrition Research Laboratories in Coonoor, and the subsequent publication of India's first nutrition textbooks demonstrated how the legitimacy of colonial sovereignty had grown sutured to the improvement of lands and human health. And studies like American anthropologist and

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20. Sugata Bose, "Pondering Poverty, Fighting Famines: Towards a New History of Economic Ideas," in *Arguments for a Better World: Essays in Honor of Amartya Sen*, ed. Kaushik Basu and Ravi Kanbur, vol. II: Society, Institutions, and Development (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 425–35. On colonial famine policy and vernacular visions of dearth and hunger, see Ravi Ahuja, "State Formation and 'Famine Policy' in Early Colonial South India," *Indian Economic Social History Review* 39, no. 4 (2002): 351–80; S. Ambirajan, "Malthusian Population Theory and Indian Famine Policy in the Nineteenth Century," *Population Studies* 30, no. 1 (1976): 5–14; David Hall-Matthews, "Colonial Ideologies of the Market and Famine Policy in Ahmednagar District, Bombay Presidency, C. 1870-1884," *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 36 (1999); and David Hardiman, *Feeding the Baniya: Peasants and Usurers in Western India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996).
21. Sarah Hodges, "Governmentality, Population and Reproductive Family in Modern India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 39, no. 11 (March 13, 2004): 1157–63.
22. Alison Bashford, "Nation, Empire, Globe: The Spaces of Population Debate in the Interwar Years," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 1 (January 1, 2007): 173–174. Bashford has, in a major recent intervention, interrogated the paradigm of 'global population' through the international and interdisciplinary Anglophone experts who first met in and around the 1927 World Population Conference, among them Radhakamal Mukerjee and John Boyd-Orr, discussed below. Alison Bashford, *Global Population: History, Geopolitics, and Life on Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014). Elsewhere, Samantha Iyer has suggested that colonial ideas of population forged in this period served as the foundation for later Cold War development theories. Samantha Iyer, "Colonial Population and the Idea of Development," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 1 (2013): 65–91, doi:10.1017/S0010417512000588.
23. Ludden, "The 'Discovery of Malnutrition.'"; Worboys, "The Discovery of Colonial Malnutrition between the Wars."

missionary Charlotte Viall Wiser's influential five-year survey of food habits in a United Provinces village suggested how Indians' putatively fixed habits -- a colonial bogey since at least the turn of the twentieth century -- might be rebuilt along scientific lines.²⁴

Indian nationalist planners, by the 1930s, had begun to conceptualise an increasingly bounded Indian economy, proposing the need for 'national food planning' in the name of self-sufficiency.²⁵ As Indians increasingly began to perceive the nation as a body whose national development would be predicated upon 'morally and physically healthy citizens,' they looked to the promise of 'reconstruction' to restore that body to health.²⁶ Reconstruction would not only plan for food production to meet India's growing needs, but would repair the structural defects of India's food economy: beyond problems of production, the nation's food stores were further lessened a deficient transportation system and poor storage facilities which condemned supplies to rot and consumption by rodents and insects. Gandhian thinkers further decried the waste of industrial food practices, from the milling of rice to the manufacture of *vanaspati* [vegetable oil] -- but they and modernist planners alike agreed that nearly ten percent of India's food was wasted annually.²⁷ The imperatives of national food planning were most powerfully expressed by

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24. "Note on the Work of the Nutrition Research Laboratories, Coonoor," 1940, Mysore Residency - Mysore Residency Bangalore - 598-D, 1940, National Archives of India; Robert McCarrison, *Food: A Primer for Use in Schools, Colleges, Welfare Centres, Boy Scout and Girl Guide Organizations, Etc., in India* (Madras: Macmillan, 1928); Charlotte Viall Wiser, *The Foods of a Hindu Village of North India*, Bureau of Statistics and Economic Research, United Provinces 2 (Allahabad: Superintendent, Print. and Stationery, United Provinces, 1937), 115–116. The 'unchangeable' character of Indian diets fuelled at least one colonial fiction in the form of Rudyard Kipling's 1896 short story, 'William the Conquerer,' wherein a sympathetic but misguided administrator from the Punjab sends wheat and millet to famine-stricken, rice-eating Madras. Disaster is averted when an enterprising engineer feeds the grain to goats to give milk to starving children, instead.
25. Sunil Amrith and Patricia Clavin, "Feeding the World: Connecting Europe and Asia, 1930–1945," *Past & Present* 218, no. suppl 8 (2013): 38.
26. Benjamin Zachariah, "Uses of Scientific Argument: The Case of 'Development' in India, C. 1930–1950," *Economic and Political Weekly* 36, no. 39 (2001): 3689–3702. The project of reconstruction as a palliative to India's economic stagnation had been clearly articulated as early as 1920, with the publication of engineer Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya's *Reconstructing India*; fourteen years later, his *Planned Economy for India* forwarded a plan for increasing the productivity of Indian agriculture. Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya, *Reconstructing India* (London: P.S. King & Son, 1920); Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya, *Planned Economy for India* (Bangalore: Bangalore Press, 1934).
27. Joseph Cornelius Kumarappa, *Our Food Problem* (Wardah: All-India Village Industries Association, 1949), 3–4; M.R. Masani, *Your Food, a Study of the Problem of Food and Nutrition in India* (Bombay: Padma Publications for Tata Sons Ltd., 1944), 66; Baljit Singh, *Population and Food Planning in India* (Bombay: Hind Kitabs, 1947), 85–88. On rice milling, see David Arnold, "Technology and Well-Being," in *Everyday Technology: Machines and the Making of India's*

Radhakamal Mukerjee, the Lucknow-based polymath who tied together the concerns of population, land use, and food planning in a series of influential publications in the 1930s and early 1940s, most notably his 1938 *Food Planning for Four Hundred Millions*.²⁸ Among his proposals was a forceful call to promote 'a mixed diet based on several staples' in place of rice and wheat, promoting beans, pulses, and edible roots as salutary for national health, and invaluable 'insurance against the shortage of staples'.²⁹

India's nationalist planners and their incipient institutions began to echo the call for a transformed diet: in 1935, the nationalist physicist Meghnad Saha began underwriting, through the National Institute of Science, the publication of *Science and Culture*, a journal which emerged as the primary vehicle for debates over the future course of national reconstruction.³⁰ In an early issue, Subhas Chandra Bose submitted to the journal a list of key questions about national planning, asking whether it would be desirable to plan a national diet for India.³¹ The question of a 'standard diet' did not presuppose the flattening of culture in the name of national

Modernity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 121–47. The question of waste would endure through the Green Revolution to the present day: advertisements for metal boxes in the late 1960s would tout India's waste as the structural defect necessitating the 'necessary evil' of rationing, while later advocates of foreign direct investment in food continue to use waste and inefficiency to legitimise their investment proposals. Metal Box, "Necessary Evil? [Advertisement]," *Eastern Economist*, January 7, 1966; Amy J. Cohen, "Supermarkets in India: Struggles over the Organization of Agricultural Markets and Food Supply Chains," *University of Miami Law Review* 68 (2013): 19–323.

28. Radhakamal Mukerjee, *Food Planning for Four Hundred Millions* (London: Macmillan, 1938). A complex discussion of Mukerjee's thought and career is in Bashford, *Global Population*, passim.
29. Radhakamal Mukerjee, *The Food Supply*, Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs 8 (London: Oxford University Press, 1942). See also Mukerjee's later discussion of the use of 'inferior food grains' with reference to population pressures in Radhakamal Mukerjee, *Race, Lands, and Food: A Program for World Subsistence* (New York: Dryden Press, 1946), 52–53.
30. A discussion of Saha's influence on India's nationalist leadership and its embrace of planning, see Deepak Kumar, "Reconstructing India: Disunity in the Science and Technology for Development Discourse, 1900-1947," *Osiris* 15 (January 1, 2000): 241–57; on Saha's later critique of the use of science in independent India, see Abha Sur, "Scientism and Social Justice: Meghnad Saha's Critique of the State of Science in India," *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences* 33, no. 1 (2002): 87–105.
31. Subas Chandra Bose, "Some Problems of Nation-Building," *Science and Culture* 1, no. 5 (October 1935): 258. *Science and Culture* explored the potentialities of such a transformation in its pages, delivering a broadly affirmative response at a Science News Association meeting in August 1938. "Improvement of National Diet," *Science and Culture* 2, no. 2 (August 1936): 95–96; D. Dutta Majumder, "Subhas Chandra and National Planning," *Janata: A Journal of Democratic Socialism* 47, no. 2 (February 23, 1992): 11–17. On Bose's political ideology more broadly, see C.A. Bayly, "Subhas Chandra Bose and 'World Forces,'" in *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 325–29.

unity, but it did animate discussions over systematic agricultural planning with India's food needs in mind. When the Congress Working Committee, headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, met that same year to formalise a plan of national reconstruction, it recommended that such planning be coordinated with the new Central Nutrition Board.³² Yet Congress' planning agenda was interrupted in 1939, when Britain's declaration of war against Germany on behalf of India led to the party's mass resignation from its provincial ministries.

The experience of the Bengal Famine of 1943 underscored the fundamental insecurity of diets deriving their weight from cereal staples, and the need to fashion a national diet more resilient to inevitable disruptions. In the wake of famine, India's colonial administrators relinquished moral authority over the food question, leaving nationalists with a potent claim to legitimacy. Yet those nationalists would take many cues from the colonial government's embrace of austerity, and a new set of economic paradigms linking individual behaviour to national outcomes. In the face of nationalist ferment, the British government relied increasingly upon the putatively neutral idioms of economics to express wartime imperatives.³³ And it was under the auspices of the Permanent Economic Adviser to the Government of India, Sir Theodore Gregory, that the transformation of individual consumption was formally sutured to the promise of national strength. Gregory, a confidant of John Maynard Keynes, had served in this position since 1938, exerting a heavy influence over India's wartime economic planning.³⁴ His 1941 treatise, 'Problem of Personal Economy in War-Time,' posited an intensified connection between individual behaviour and macroeconomic outcomes during wartime: even if India's scarcity

32. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Report of the National Planning Committee, 1938* (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Applied Political Research, 1988), 154. An incisive assessment of Nehru's experience with the Congress Planning Commission is Bidyut Chakrabarty, "Jawaharlal Nehru and Planning, 1938-41: India at the Crossroads," *Modern Asian Studies* 26, no. 2 (1992): 275-87. Two influential interpretations are Bose, "Instruments and Idioms of Colonial and National Development.," and Partha Chatterjee, "The National State," in *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 200-219. On the Central Nutrition Board, see Jyoti Bhusan Das Gupta, *Science, Technology, Imperialism, and War* (New Delhi: Pearson Longman, 2007), 140.

33. Benjamin Zachariah, *Developing India: An Intellectual and Social History, C. 1930-50* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 97.

34. Gregory would leave India briefly in 1944 to help plan the Bretton Woods Conference; in 1946, he left India to serve in the same position in Greece. In 1960, Gregory would return to India at the invitation of the Associated Chambers of Commerce to deliver a critical assessment of India's third Five-Year Plan. Theodore Gregory, *India on the Eve of the Third Five-Year Plan* (Calcutta: Thacker Spink, 1961).

conditions allowed for only minimal reduction of consumption, Gregory asserted, guidance, exhortation, and 'sumptuary legislation' were well-suited to Indian economic and cultural contexts.³⁵ Gregory's oversight of many food committees suggests his influence on later state projects. As Chair of the 1943 Foodgrains Policy Committee, Gregory moderated a dispute between Debi Prasad Khaitan, a Calcutta jute merchant representing the Indian Chamber of Commerce, and W.H. Kirby, Rationing Advisor to the Government of India.³⁶ To Khaitan's suggestion that, in the new Calcutta rationing program, individuals be granted some mechanism for choosing their preferred grain, Kirby and Gregory affirmed the notion that choice should be 'entirely subsidiary' to 'keeping the people off the starvation point.' The notion that preference should be subsumed to national ends would grow increasingly important as nationalist food planners took control of policy-making bodies.

Wartime events would bring this notion to new prominence in the Food Department. The fall of Burma in 1942 prompted a memorandum within the department suggesting that the public should be encouraged to replace rice with other grains, since a preponderance of India's rice stores were alleged to come from Burmese imports.³⁷ By early 1944, Delhi's Lady Irwin College, the premier institution of home economics in India, had been tasked with planning wheat and *kambu* [pearl millet] dishes for South India's 'habitual rice-eaters'; in Hyderabad, a thousand people were reported to have attended a cooking demonstration at the War Services Exhibition.³⁸

35. Theodore Gregory, "Problems of Personal Economy in War Time," February 13, 1941, MSS Eur D1163, British Library.

36. "Strictly Confidential - Foodgrains Policy Committee (Item 40), 30th Session, 10:30 AM to 1 PM, on 26 July 1943 Evidence of Mr. WH Kirby, Rationing Adviser to the Government of India, on Rationing. Chairman, Sir Theodore Gregory, D.Sc.," July 26, 1943, IOR/L/E/8/7236, British Library. Kirby, a grain merchant, had spent five years in Karachi between 1919 and 1924 as a merchant, before leaving India for Rhodesia and South Africa, where he had worked as a representative of the Swiss grain company Louis Dreyfus & Co. When war broke out, Kirby had been on leave in London, and became a deputy assistant to Britain's wartime rationing efforts, from where he had arrived in India. On Khaitan, see Joya Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932-47* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 137.

37. "Fixation of Age Limit for Children for Proposal of Control on Food Grains and Rationing on the Recommendation of the Central Food Advisory Council," July 1944, Food - Policy - R-1008/39/1944, National Archives of India. The memorandum was predicated upon the assumption that India was largely dependent on the import of Burmese rice, a popular assertion that was nonetheless ungrounded in reality; at the time of the famine, Bengal imported a small proportion of coarse Burma rice while exporting higher-quality grains.

38. "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.

The import of Australian wheat in September led the Madras government to add wheat in place of some of its rice ration, with a 'wheat propaganda officer' appointed to help popularise its use. And along the Malabar coast, ninety-three public and private 'Civic Restaurants' were set up to showcase new recipes. Yet the alleged beneficiaries of these schemes chafed at the notion that their diets were composed of interchangeable calories. Bombay's nationalist *Free Press Journal* decried its citizens' 'being made to swallow barley' in place of regular grains.³⁹ 'Who are the people whose food is barley,' it groused, 'and for whose benefit was this barley ordered?' Rationing officers had looked favourably upon the deployment of wheat and tapioca in India's South.⁴⁰ But in Cochin, famine relief workers with experience in distribution noted that tapioca could only be deployed in dire emergencies to pad 'those parts of the stomach which the ration is not enough to fill.'⁴¹

Indians' putatively unchangeable dietary preferences -- particularly those of rice-eaters -- were occasionally used to exculpate colonial officials for its late colonial failings. Beverly Nichols' *Verdict on India*, a popular apology for British rule in India, recounted a train ride spent with an Indian officer in the Food Administration in the wake of the 1943 famine. 'Food,' Nichols recounted the officer declaring, in an exoneration of British famine policy 'means [rice], and nothing else. It doesn't mean meat, nor fish nor eggs nor potatoes; it doesn't mean corn, nor millet, nor even *bajri* [pearl millet] which bears many resemblances to rice. [...] If you gave [Bengalis] anything else, most of them wouldn't know what to do with it.'⁴² Yet in the final years of colonial rule, the Department of Food increasingly touted the possibility of Indian dietary reform. In late 1944, W.R. Aykroyd -- the influential nutritionist and Director of the government's Nutrition Research Laboratories in Coonoor since 1935 -- noted that wartime efforts had 'shown that it is possible to exercise a considerable degree of control over the diet of the people,' and that popular canteens staffed by women might be useful in promoting 'socially

39. "In Defence of the Wild Grass-Seed," *Free Press Journal*, January 7, 1944, IOR/L/I/1/1103, British Library. The continuing effort to foist barley upon Bombay's rice-eaters was a source of enduring frustration; see "Barley Again for Bombay?," *Bombay Chronicle*, January 22, 1947.

40. Aubrey Dibdin, "Diary of a Tour of Inspection of Food Supplies and Rationing in India by Aubrey Dibdin, India Office 1920-45," 1945, MSS Eur D907, British Library.

41. K.G. Sivaswamy, J. Ananta Bhat, and Tadepally Shankara Shastry, *Famine, Rationing and Food Policy in Cochin* (Royapettah, Madras: Servindia Kerala Relief Centre, 1946).

42. Beverley Nichols, *Verdict on India* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1944), 203.

inferior' grains in peacetime.⁴³ Ground-level administrators debated the quantity of millets, maize, or other grains which could be substituted in rations before courting public disaffection.⁴⁴ But so, too, did they follow the example of the Madras Food Department, which in early 1946 appointed a permanent public relations officer charged with a press, radio, poster, pamphlet, and cinema campaign designed to explain rationing and austerity schemes, and to popularise unfamiliar foods in the hungry south.⁴⁵ These eleventh hour campaigns hinted at the more ambitious reengineering of citizenship and diets in tandem that India's nationalist leadership would soon attempt.

Independence, National Reconstruction and the Food Question

The post-war ascension of the Indian National Congress to power saw a fundamental transformation to the orientation of development planning. The nationalist leadership, prior to the war, had 'intended to accomplish what they had critiqued the colonial state for not being able to do, i.e., to bring about the benefits of material progress through scientific means to be shared equitably among all citizens.'⁴⁶ Yet its post-war assumption of centralised state power saw the Congress '[lose] sight of the vision of eradicating poverty, morbidity, and illiteracy that had inspired the debates on national development in the colonial era': the 'instruments' of national

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43. W.R. Aykroyd, *Notes on Food and Nutrition Policy in India* (New Delhi: Manager of Publications, Government of India Press, 1944). On Aykroyd's career in India, see Kenneth J. Carpenter, "The Work of Wallace Aykroyd: International Nutritionist and Author," *The Journal of Nutrition* 137, no. 4 (April 1, 2007): 873–78. Among Aykroyd's younger colleagues in Coonoor was M. Swaminathan, widely seen as the progenitor of the Green Revolution in India. W.H. Kirby, too, noted that wartime rationing had 'proved a ready and good medium for popularising the use of unfamiliar foodgrains, [providing] alternative food in place of the foods in acute short supply.' Bureau of Public Information, Government of India, "Necessity for Food Control Measures: Rationing Adviser on Benefits of Food Rationing," October 5, 1945, IOR/L/E/8/7236, British Library.
44. "Inclusion of Millets, Gram and Maize in the Cereal Group Rations: H.M.'s Meeting with Bombay Food Advisory Council," March 1, 1946, Food - Rationing - RP-1000/62/1946, National Archives of India.
45. H.K. Matthews, "Letter to F.W. Brock," April 12, 1946, IOR/L/I/1/1104, British Library.
46. Medha Kudaisya, "'A Mighty Adventure': Institutionalising the Idea of Planning in Postcolonial India, 1947–60," *Modern Asian Studies* 43, no. 4 (October 2008): 940.

development came to enjoy primacy over its ‘idioms,’ drawing greater inspiration from colonial bodies like the Department of Planning and rather than Congress’ National Planning Committee.⁴⁷

Famine in Bengal and enduring post-war shortages had underscored the calls for a transformed national diet: the National Planning Committee, meeting in 1945 and 1946, affirmed that wartime experiences had ‘woken up Government to its wider sphere of duty: [meeting] the food requirements of the people.’⁴⁸ Another subcommittee on national priorities, chaired by Jawaharlal Nehru, affirmed that in ‘any well-conceived plan of national Development, the provision of adequate food must be the most important item with the highest priority.’⁴⁹ As world food prices soared, provincial rations were slashed, and India’s representatives petitioned for an increased allotment of grains at the Combined Food Board in Washington DC, the formation of India’s interim government in September 1946 saw control of India’s food policy shifted into the hands of veteran Congressman Rajendra Prasad, designated Minister of Food and Agriculture.⁵⁰ Yet as the incipient government forwarded the imperatives of economic self-reliance, shifting the object of development from human welfare to national autarky, it looked increasingly to citizens themselves to undertake the burden of that task.⁵¹

47. Bose, “Instruments and Idioms of Colonial and National Development,” 52–53.

48. Col. S.S. Sokhey, “Planning for a New India: Food of the People,” in *Report of the Sub-Committee on National Health*, ed. K.T. Shah, National Planning Committee Series (Bombay: Vora & Co., 1948), 135–39. From a voluminous literature on the Bengal Famine; see Paul R. Greenough, *Prosperity and Misery in Modern Bengal: The Famine of 1943-1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Iftexhar Iqbal, “Between Food Availability Decline and Entitlement Exchange: An Ecological Prehistory of the Bengal Famine of 1943,” in *The Bengal Delta Ecology: State and Social Change, 1840-1943* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 160–93; and Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

49. K.T. Shah, *National Planning Committee: Priorities in Planning (Food, Education, Housing)* (Bombay: Vora & Co., 1946).

50. It is unclear why Prasad was given control of this particular ministry; Prasad’s autobiography and his collected works reveal little previous interest in the subject. In the former, Prasad recalls a more involved role in the food conservation campaigns of the era than the historical record suggests, referencing “my appeal to consume less cereals and to save food grains by missing one meal a day,” and gives no hint as to the influence of other nationalist thinkers. Rajendra Prasad, *Autobiography* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2010), 570–572.

51. The influential economist and planner Ashok Mehta would recall that India’s leadership’s embrace of self-reliance “because, in our view, it was the most rational course,” given that India was seen as having no inherent deficit of natural or human resources. Sanjaya Baru, “Self-Reliance to Dependence in Indian Economic Development,” *Social Scientist* 11, no. 11 (November 1, 1983): 36, doi:10.2307/3517074. On

As nutritionists and economists continued to draft plans for the reconstruction of India's food economy and national diet, customers voiced resentment at the substitutes for wheat and rice which continued to appear in their rations.⁵² India's Bureau of Public Administration, recognising 'the difficulty of persuading the people to consume [coarse] grains such as maize and barley,' suggested that shops appeal to consumers' sense of national sacrifice when distributing them.⁵³ The Congress leadership increasingly framed the food crisis as a matter best solved through individual or household-level action, affirming in a December 1945 meeting that 'everyone should realise his personal duty [regarding food] and perform it to the best of his ability, believing that if everyone acted likewise India will be able to surmount all difficulties with courage and confidence and be able to save thousands of poor lives.'⁵⁴ A Congress Working Committee meeting in March 1946 contended that the responsibility for conserving scarce foodstuffs fell at the level of the household.⁵⁵

Simultaneously, Indian scientists were envisioning new technologies by which individuals and households might actualise their duty to conserve. Addressing the 1946 Indian Science Congress in Bangalore, the agricultural scientist M. Afzal Husain called for the establishment of a 'National Institute of Food Technology' to incubate synthetic foodstuffs: beyond promoting the consumption of yeasts, tapioca, and tubers, reducing cereal consumption and freeing land for valuable cash crops, the institute would promote 'synthetic rice' to free India from the ravages of Malthusian logic.⁵⁶ Later in the year, the chair of the Indian Institute of Sciences's biotechnology department, V. Subrahmanyam, wrote to the Ministry of Food to propose that a new Food Conservation Board include in its mandate the promotion of 'less commonly used food materials' like groundnuts, soybeans, sweet potato and tapioca, which had been given new priority in planning.⁵⁷ A year later, the scientist would publish an extensive article in *Science and Culture*

52. Gopal Chandra Pattanayak, *Planned Diet for India* (Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1946).

53. Government of India, "Draft Reply," December 9, 1946, IOR/L/E/8/7236, British Library.

54. A.M. Zaidi and S.G. Zaidi, eds., "Congress Working Committee, Bombay, March 12-15, 1946," in *The Encyclopaedia of Indian National Congress*, vol. 12: A Fight to the Finish (New Delhi: S. Chand / Indian Institute of Applied Political Research, 1981), 495-96.

55. Ibid.

56. M. Afzal Husein, "Food Problem of India (1946, Bangalore)," in *The Shaping of Indian Science: 1914-1947*, ed. K. Kasturirangan (Hyderabad: Universities Press, 2003), 548-71.

57. "Correspondence with Prof. Subramanian and Food Re: Or Formation of Food Conversation Board at the Center.," 1946, Mysore Residency - Mysore Residency Bangalore - 25(8)-W, 1946, National Archives of India.

outlining his plan for an organisation in New Delhi that would undertake this task.⁵⁸ The journal's editors responded approvingly, contending that 'that which appears to be a strange method of getting food today may become the usual method tomorrow.'⁵⁹

The arrival of independence in August 1947 saw India's citizens looking expectantly to the state to make good on its promise of sustenance. The depth of India's food crisis had grown even more pronounced by partition: the bulk of British India's arable land was now across the border, in Pakistan. The refugees who streamed into camps in West Bengal needed massive quantities of foodgrains, and those who arrived in cities strained India's already-overburdened rationing system.⁶⁰ Beyond its immediate human toll, communal violence also frequently saw the looting and burning of urban grain stores.⁶¹ Days after independence, the new nation's Department of Information and Broadcasting asked press members to help stave off food riots, warning that 'India's political freedom must not be allowed to prove illusory by a complete collapse on her food front.'⁶² 'Until now,' the author of a Hindi booklet, *Our Food Problem*, wrote a few months before independence, 'we have blamed the British for the food problem. But now, as they prepare to depart, we are confident that our own, people-loving government will reach out to farmers, increase our national production, and increase the prosperity of the people through the proper distribution of food.'⁶³ A Congress organiser, introducing a book on *Our Food and Population Problem*, affirmed that same nationalist promise a few months later. 'If a country

58. V. Subrahmanyam, "A Practical Approach to the Food Problem in India," *Science and Culture* 13, no. 6 (December 1947): 213–18.

59. "Food," *Science and Culture* 13, no. 6 (December 1947): 211–13.

60. Two contemporary accounts of the difficulties of feeding and clothing of refugees are Press Information Bureau, Government of India, "Political Freedom and Battle Against Hunger / Planned Withdrawal from Controls / Difficulties of Transition Period," August 15, 1948, IOR/L/E/8/7230, British Library; and *Millions on the Move: The Aftermath of Partition* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1949). On rapid urbanisation in the wake of partition, see Viswambhar Nath, *Urbanization, Urban Development, and Metropolitan Cities in India* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2007), 3 and passim.

61. Writing in June 1947, the *Eastern Economist* warned that the wonton destruction wrought on grain stores by "communal fanatics" was even greater than the losses incurred by insects and rodents, urging the Central Government to secure markets, lest "starvation deaths [put] the casualty list of riots into shade." "Food Wastages," *Eastern Economist*, June 6, 1947, 996.

62. Department of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, "Guidance for Food Publicity," August 8, 1947, IOR/L/I/1/1104, British Library.

63. Jagdish Chandra Jain, *Hamari roti ki samasya [Our Food Problem]* (Bombay: National Information and Publications Limited, 1947), 44.

cannot give its citizens the right food,' he asked, 'and enough of it, are not its economic arrangements useless?'⁶⁴

Indian industrialist, eager to free the Indian economy from imports and increase its citizens' purchasing power, asserted a distinct influence over the nation's economic arrangements. Two of the authors of the 'Bombay Plan,' the textile magnate Lala Shri Ram and industrialist Purshottamdas Thakurdas, quickly assumed control of two major food planning bodies.⁶⁵ Shri Ram, who would soon be placed in charge of the subsidiary food campaign, reached out to representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture's 'Grow More Food Campaign' in June 1947.⁶⁶ Predicting the agricultural losses of partition, Shri Ram encouraged the Ministry to promote the production of potatoes, yams, beets, carrots, and tapioca. The Indian consumer should 'turn to maize, bananas, and date palms, and above all, grow food in every free area of land. [Not] doing so should be considered an unpatriotic act.' Rajendra Prasad soon appointed a Foodgrains Policy Committee with Thakurdas as its chair. Thakurdas -- who had previously chaired Bombay's Provincial Food and Commodity Advisory Board and the Central Foodgrains Policy Committee of 1943 -- echoed Shri Ram in recommending the inclusion of subsidiary foods in rations to lessen the demand for cereals.⁶⁷

The recommendation of these industrialists prompted loud objections. Bombay's Supply Commissioner wrote to the Committee to protest, noting that 'bananas, sweet potatoes, carrots, turnips are *supplementary* and not *substitute* foods.'⁶⁸ P.C. Joshi, general secretary of the Communist Party of India, lambasted the 'reactionary recommendations of the [committee] dominated by representatives of Big Business and rich growers,' which had eschewed discussion

64. Shri Omprakash, *Hamari Khurak Aur Aabadi Ki Samasya [Our Food and Population Problem]* (Delhi: Rajkamal Publications Ltd., 1947), 3.

65. On the Bombay Plan, see Purshotamdas Thakurdas et al., *A Plan of Economic Development for India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1944); and Vivek Chibber, *Locked in Place: State-Building and Capitalist Industrialization in India, 1940- 1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 85–109.

66. "Note by Sir Shri Ram Containing Suggestions for Meeting the Food Shortage in India," 1947, Agriculture - G.M.F. - 8-152/47 - G.M.F., National Archives of India.

67. Purshotamdas Thakurdas, *Final Report, Foodgrains Policy Committee, 1947* (Delhi: Manager of Publications, Government of India Press, 1948). Thakurdas and Shri Ram's enthusiasm for these plans might be seen in light of the Bombay Plan's emphasis on increasing Indians' purchasing power rather than boosting agricultural production itself.

68. V.S. Patvardhan, *Food Control in Bombay Province, 1939-1949* (Poona: D.R. Gadgil, 1958), 128.

of agrarian reform.⁶⁹ Yet objections like these were soon drowned out by state representatives who increasingly linked the question of diet to citizens' responsibility for national unity and development. In March 1947, Rajendra Prasad presided over a 'Food and Nutrition Exhibition' in Delhi, showcasing alternatives to wheat and rice through lectures, films, and cooking demonstrations to female guests.⁷⁰ In December 1948, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting requested media outlets to join the campaign for changed diets, appealing 'to the upper class people to avoid and discourage all activities involving waste of food, and to urge on them the need for a minimum use of cereals in their diet, [enabling] the less rich classes to get more cereals.'⁷¹

In the months after independence, Nehru and the Congress' left-leaning modernisers' national food planning schemes were assailed by Mohandas Gandhi, who, with the support of influential businessmen, successfully campaigned against food controls.⁷² Yet Gandhians and modernists found common ground in asking citizens to steward the project of self-sufficiency in food. Decrying the 'centralisation of foodstuffs' in an October 1947 prayer meeting, Gandhi asked citizens to grow food at home and undertake regular fasts. 'If the whole nation realised the beauty of [religious] partial self-denial,' he contended, 'India would more than cover the deficit caused by the voluntary deprivation of foreign aid [...] If many must die of starvation, let us at least earn the credit of having done our best in the way of self-help, which ennobles a nation.'⁷³

Votaries of a village-centred model of India's economic reconstruction would lose out to the modernising vision of the Nehruvian state. But on the food front, Jawaharlal Nehru and other bureaucrats would frequently use the Gandhian language of self-reliance, denial, and cooperation

69. Letter from P.C. Joshi to Rajendra Prasad, October 25 1947, reprinted in Communist Party of India, *India's Food Crisis, Analysis and Solution: Memo of the CPI to the Government of the Indian Union* (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1947).

70. "Food and Nutrition Exhibitions," 1947, Home - Public - 157/47, National Archives of India.

71. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, "Directive on Food Publicity," December 9, 1948, Home - Public - 51/469/48-Public, National Archives of India.

72. Controls were removed in December 1947 and reinstated after major price spikes in September 1948. R.N. Chopra, *Evolution of Food Policy in India* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1981), 52–56.

73. M.K. Gandhi, 'The Problem of Food [6 October 1947],' in Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Delhi Diary* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1948), 65–68.

to express the imperatives of state-driven development.⁷⁴ As prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru's endorsement was materially and symbolically essential in the campaign for Indians to practice austerity and transform their food habits. In public, Nehru cast these tasks as fundamental responsibilities of postcolonial citizenship, framing personal transformation and individual responsibility as a critical instrument for national development.⁷⁵ Privately, Nehru brooded over the nation's foundering agricultural schemes and Indians' unwillingness to cooperate with these plans in what Judith Brown had described as the Prime Minister's characteristic 'exasperated paternalism.'⁷⁶

The Prime Minister's support underwrote new scientific initiatives: the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research had called, at independence, for a laboratory to advance food technology in the service of the nation, and Subrahmanyam was tasked with establishing it on land donated by the Mysore government.⁷⁷ Nehru inaugurated the All-India Institute of Food Technology in late 1948. 'We are eating wrong things,' Nehru declared in his address, 'and we are eating too much of them.'⁷⁸ Nehru exhorted the Institute to help India conserve foodstuffs by developing 'new types of composite foods which will be useful in times of emergency.'⁷⁹ The veteran Congressman C. Rajagopalachari -- long a foe of centralised planning on Gandhian grounds -- would later defy the Prime Minister by unilaterally removing food controls in 1951, as Chief Minister of Madras. But at the inauguration, the then-Governor General of India echoed the Prime Minister in a second address. 'If the cow or the goat,' the Rajagopalachari asked, 'can build

74. As Ornit Shani notes, the new state "was able to appropriate aspects of the Gandhian citizenship notion and its political vocabulary as a means of justifying some key policies of resource allocations. This gave Indian governments a mantle of legitimacy and the ability to resist contestation and dissent in the early formative decades." Shani, "Gandhi, Citizenship and the Resilience of Indian Nationhood," 661.

75. On Nehru's modernizing philosophy, see Bhikhu Parekh, "Nehru and the National Philosophy of India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 26, no. 1 (January 5, 1991): 35–39, 41, 43, 45–48.

76. Judith M Brown, *Nehru: A Political Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 192.

77. D.P. Burma and Maharani Chakravorty, eds., *History of Science, Philosophy, and Culture in Indian Civilization*, vol. XIII Part 2: From Physiology and Chemistry to Biochemistry (New Delhi: Centre for Studies in Civilizations, 2010).

78. Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's Struggle Against Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 125.

79. 'Importance of Food Technology (Speech on the occasion of taking over of Cheluvamba Mansion at Mysore from the Government of Mysore for the Central Food Technological Research Institute on December 29, 1948),' in Jawaharlal Nehru, *Jawaharlal Nehru on Science and Society: A Collection of His Writings and Speeches*, ed. Baldev Singh (New Delhi: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 1988), 70–71.

her own body and make and give beautiful milk out of the simple grass or leaves she eats, why should man with all the science available to him relegate grass and leaves to the realm of inedible things?⁸⁰

Returning to Delhi, Nehru directed the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in February 1949 to examine whether Delhi's open spaces -- including the length of New Delhi's imposing Rajpath, in particular -- could be used to plant food crops, as an example of the importance of citizens growing their own food.⁸¹ On the same day, inaugurating a planned township several hours from Delhi, the Prime Minister reported that he had begun subsisting on a mixture of wheat and sweet potato flower, and urged citizens to emulate his example. 'The people,' he warned, 'should understand their duties and responsibilities [...] in making the motherland great. They talk of rights and privileges -- and forget all about duties.'⁸² Nehru's timing was not incidental: privately, the Prime Minister was lamenting the failure of the Grow More Food campaign, complaining about Food Minister Jairamdas Daulatram's mediocre performance in a letter to C. Rajagopalachari, and urging a redoubling of the effort to promote new foods as staples.⁸³ Addressing the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Nehru estimated that the 10% food deficit India faced in a bad year could be compensated for only through increased output, more land, or inducing Indians to changing their food habits en masse.⁸⁴

The advisory visit of John Boyd-Orr to India in April and May lent new credence to Nehru's exhortations. The former secretary of the Food and Agriculture Organisation had long viewed India as one of the world's most important battlegrounds in world's struggle for more food: Boyd-Orr had contributed a foreword to Nagendranath Gangulee's's 1939 primer on nutrition in India, and the FAO Chief's proclamations were cited reverentially in Hindi texts on food and

80. C. Rajagopalachari, "Inaugural Speech at the Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore," October 21, 1950, C. Rajagopalachari / V Inst. / Speeches and Writings by Him / 11, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

81. 'Utilisation of Land: Note to Food and Agriculture Ministry and to Ministry of Works, Mines and Power, 6 February 1949 (File No. 31(41)/49-PMS),' *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, ed. S. Gopal (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1984-2006), vol. 9, p. 70. Henceforth *SWJN*.

82. 'Self-Sufficiency in Food,' *SWJN* vol. 9, p. 70.

83. 'Letter to C. Rajagopalachari,' *SWJN* vol. 9, p. 71-2.

84. Jawaharlal Nehru, "We Should Pull Together [A Speech Delivered at the Meeting of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (22nd Annual Session), New Delhi, March 4, 1949]," in *Independence and after: A Collection of Speeches* (New York: Day, 1950), 193-95.

population.⁸⁵ Boyd-Orr spoke at Teen Murti, the Prime Minister's residence, to urge 'a war-like psychology and drive on the part of the people and Government alike' with regard to the food problem.⁸⁶ Several days later, Nehru delivered an address on All India Radio, insisting that 'there must be no waste and there must be no feasting while we fight for every ounce of food.'⁸⁷ Nehru repeated the call in several addresses over the following weeks, exhorting every Indian to think of him or herself as a 'soldier on the food front,' planting food crops and stamping out waste.⁸⁸ Media across the political spectrum rallied behind the Prime Minister's suggestions.⁸⁹ Nehru wrote to India's Chief Ministers in summer 1949 to encourage them to replace the rice or wheat in their province's rations with a substitute starch once a week, and to grow subsidiary foods on their estates.⁹⁰ Nehru did so himself in July, having the lawns of his residence planted with groundnut, millet, maize and sweet potatoes, in addition to bananas, tapioca, bitter gourd, and aubergines -- harking back to the Second World War, when the Viceroy and several governors

85. Nagendranath Gangulee, *Health and Nutrition in India* (London: Faber and Faber, 1939); Rameshwar Gupta, *Aaj ka Manav Jivan Uski Samasyen [Today's Population Problem]* (Bombay: Chetna Prakashan Vibhag, 1952), 32. A rich discussion of Boyd-Orr's career and its contexts is in Bashford, *Global Population*, passim.

86. In private, there was a major debate raging between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Food: the former, with the Prime Minister's support, was holding to the goal of self-sufficiency by 1951 and hoped to use Boyd-Orr's authority to underwrite their claim, while the latter were using the estimates of the current FAO director, Norris Dodd, to suggest that India would perhaps be able to reduce its food imports to 1.5 million tons annually. "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." 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).

87. "Need for All-Out Food Drive: Pandit Nehru's Call to Nation," *Times of India*, June 30, 1949.

88. "Popularise Grow Food Campaign," *Times of India*, July 4, 1949; "Sober Rejoicing Throughout India," *Times of India*, August 17, 1949.

89. 'There is practically nothing new in the Prime Minister's broadcast on food,' the *Indian Express* opined after one broadcast, affirming Nehru's call for sweet potatoes and tapioca to replace wheat and rice. '[If] Pandit Nehru felt called upon to emphasise the obvious, the inference is that the people as a whole have not yet reconciled themselves to the austerity standards recommended.' "Nehru's Broadcast," *Indian Express*, July 1, 1949. Bombay's free-market *Commerce* noted that Nehru's call 'is meant for everyone who has a tendency of treating such appeals as those meant for everybody else but himself -- a tendency which has been responsible, to an appreciable extent, for several of our economic ills to-day.' "India's Food Problem: Pandit Nehru's Appeal," *Commerce*, July 9, 1949, IOR/L/E/8/7230, British Library.

90. Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Letter dated 1 July, 1949,' in Jawaharlal Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers, 1947-1964*, vol. 1 (Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund; distributed by Oxford University Press, 1985), #. In August, Nehru wrote to R.K. Patil, the government's Food Commissioner, to see if Teen Murti could be supplied with boxes for growing food. File No 31(71)/49-PMS, *SWJN* vol. 13, p. 75.

and princes replanted their own estates as vegetable gardens.⁹¹ Indira Gandhi gave tours to visitors, and Nehru proudly proclaimed that his household was free of rice, subsisting instead upon sweet potato.⁹²

Aware of the impropriety of public feasting in the face of widespread shortage, India's food ministers met in Delhi in August 1949 to discuss the imposition of new food austerity measures. Extending wartime legislation, the Ministry of Food enacted a uniform, national Guest Control Order structuring the types and quantity of food legally permissible at gatherings, allowing for unlimited attendees at events where non-rationed food would be served, and capping the number at twenty-five for those serving wheat or rice.⁹³ (Provincial governments, however, balked at the enforcement of these rules, and even ministerial gatherings saw them flouted.⁹⁴)

These enforcement failures did little to shake Nehru from his belief in the possibilities of remaking Indian notions of national responsibility through dietary transformations. Britain's High Commissioner reported on these campaigns with anxiety, worrying that directives like Nehru's were inadequate palliatives for India's serious food problem.⁹⁵ Yet Nehru expressed a deepening commitment to the notion that Indians must remold their diets in the name of national development. In a letter to Jairamdas Daulatram in late October, Nehru encouraged the Food

91. Among other booklets issued, see Indian Council of Agricultural Research, *Vegetable Growing in the Delhi Province*, 2nd ed., ICAR Booklet 5 (New Delhi: Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, 1946).

92. "Compound Lawns Become Farm," *Times of India*, July 25, 1949. In 1942, a confidante had written of Nehru's embarrassment at the indulgent, Western tastes he had inherited from his father, Motilal, contending that the only 'weakness' he indulged was an 'an occasional demand for mashed potatoes.' In 1943, at the height of the Bengal Famine, Indira and Jawaharlal exchanged several letters on the need to plant wheat and rice at Anand Bhavan, their family residence in Allahabad. See Krishnalal Shridharani, *Warning to the West* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942), 259; and 'Letter from Nehru from Ahmadnagar Fort Prison, September 23, 1943,' in Indira Gandhi, ed., *Two Alone, Two Together: Letters between Indira Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru 1940-1960* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992), 273-274.

93. Ministry of Food, "Food Policy - Austerity Measures - Guest Control," November 1, 1949, Home - Public - 51/373/49, National Archives of India.

94. Unable and often unwilling to undertake the burden of monitoring transgressions, particularly as the decontrol of foodgrains outpaced the Order's withdrawal, individual states began to flaunt these regulations, forwarding alternate Guest Control Orders at the provincial levels or sometimes discarding them altogether. Within several years, the Order had been effectively withdrawn throughout the country. "Food Austerity Measures," 1957, Agriculture - Basic Plan - 86(1)57 BP II, National Archives of India; "Food Austerity Measures Adopted by the Assam Government," July 12, 1952, Food - Basic Plan - BP.II/1085(36)/50, National Archives of India.

95. United Kingdom High Commissioner, New Delhi, "Extract from Opdom #26 for the Period 23 - 30 June 1949," June 30, 1949, IOR/L/E/8/7237, British Library.

Minister to cut out rice from the rations allotted to wheat-eating areas. 'We must take this risk in regard to rice,' Nehru wrote, 'and I believe that the country would be prepared for it, if only we set about it in right earnest and tell them what we are doing and what we expect them to do. If certain pinch is felt here and there, we need not be afraid.'⁹⁶ When West Bengal's Chief Minister, B.C. Roy, wrote to Nehru to appeal for increased provision of foodgrains, the Prime Minister tied his support to a demand that Roy persuade Bengalis to change their food habits. 'It is dangerous,' Nehru warned, suggesting that Bengalis might take to tapioca, 'for us to be subservient to a particular type of food which may not be available tomorrow. We live on the verge of a world war, and no one knows what will happen.'⁹⁷ Implicit in Nehru's order was the notion that adherence to regional tastes was an impediment to forging the type of citizenship that would forge national unity through national self-reliance.⁹⁸

Miss-a-Meal, Subsidiary Foods, and the Indian Ersatz

In the wake of independence, public officials and institutions were increasingly expected to embody emerging notions of citizenship and service, and representatives of civic society similarly took this task upon themselves.⁹⁹ Accordingly, the state-driven efforts to transform diets through an appeal to the responsibilities of citizenship were matched by a parallel effort from civil society. In September 1949, a group of Indian leaders -- including representatives of the Congress, the Constituent Assembly, the All-India Harijan Sevak Sangh, the Servants of India Society, All-India Refugee Association, All-India Women's Conference, the All-India

96. 'Letter to Jairamdas Daulatram,' *SWJN* vol. 13, p. 82-3.

97. 'Letter to B.C. Roy, July 13, 1950,' *SWJN* vol. 14, p. 218.

98. The question of standardizing diets and recipes across regions, however, was never entertained seriously by the state: from the earliest nutritional research, it was clear that there was too much in the way of entrenched cultural preferences to even attempt such a project. In 1968, a government committee attempted to assess the possibility of standardizing recipes and nutritional values in government-run canteens nation-wide. But by this period, the primary concern was one of nutritional standardization. "There is a big chance," one committee member wrote, "of the weight, size, and composition of the recipe for a samosa varying between the article sold at Etawah and that sold at Ghaziabad. But a doughnut purchased at Boston differs very little in size and composition from the one purchased at Baltimore." *Report of the Sub-Committee on Standardizing Dietary Patterns, and Menus to Be Served in Restaurants and Other Eating Establishments of the National Nutrition Advisory Committee* (New Delhi: Ministry of Health, Family Planning, Works, Housing, and Urban Development, Government of India, 1968), 44.

99. Gould, "From Subjects to Citizens?"

Hindu Mahasabha and the All-India Anglo-Indian Association -- signed their support for the 'Miss a Meal Movement,' organised by Jag Parvesh Chandra, a Lahore refugee turned Delhi politician, consumer advocate, and Congress worker.¹⁰⁰ The group asked Indians to pledge to give up one meal a week, contributing the grains saved to a national fund, and in so doing, foster 'the national habit of uniting and striving jointly at a time of crisis and emergency.'¹⁰¹

Rajendra Prasad and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur -- a founder of the All-India Women's Conference, and independent India's new health minister -- gave early support, prompting bureaucrats and politicians nationwide to affirm their own approval.¹⁰² The Governor of Punjab's pledge of drawing only six days' rations was followed by the Bombay premiere's announcement that he would be skipping two meals a week; Bengal's Minister of Civil Supplies declared that he had given up rice altogether.¹⁰³ Citizens were urged to make food pledges, like that asked of non-cultivators in Bombay to 'reduce my consumption of food grains by using non-cereal foods and to avoid wastage of food in the kitchen and on the table.'¹⁰⁴ Ration shops in Uttar Pradesh began to stock pledge forms, and representatives of Government godowns announced that they would reduce grain supply to stores in proportion to the number of pledges received.¹⁰⁵

100. Jag Parvesh Chandra, *Miss A Meal Movement: An Experiment in Voluntary Errors and National Co-Operation* (New Delhi: Constitution House, 1949). Chandra would later become Delhi's Chief Minister.

101. "Miss a Meal a Week: Leader's Appeal," *Indian Express*, September 12, 1949.

102. "Miss a Meal Movement: Dr. Prasad's Support," *Sunday Indian Express*, November 4, 1949; "Miss a Meal a Week: Health Minister's Call," *Indian Express*, November 11, 1949.

103. Governor of East Punjab, "Letter to Jag Parvesh Chandra," December 21, 1949, Jag Parvesh Chandra / Subject Files / 2, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library; "Bombay Premier Sets an Example," *Sunday Indian Express*, December 21, 1949; Prafulla Chandra Sen, "Letter to Jag Parvesh Chandra," November 18, 1949, Jag Parvesh Chandra / Subject Files / 2, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

104. "Making Citizens Food-Conscious," *Times of India*, November 23, 1949. Elsewhere, the pledge involved a promise to miss Friday lunch, 'leave my plate clean of leavings,' and return extra ration cards to the ration depot. B.P. Pathak, "Letter to Jag Parvesh Chandra," December 16, 1949, Jag Parvesh Chandra / Subject Files / 2, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. The choice of Friday as a preferred fast day appears to have been influenced by Gandhi's assassination on a Friday four years prior. "Miss a Meal Movement Explained," *Sunday Indian Express*, December 26, 1949.

105. "Miss a Meal Per Week," *Times of India*, November 6, 1949. The movement also inspired a number of poems, essays, and other creative ventures designed at garnering support. One Lucknow resident composed a short doggerel on the movement:

Men sacrifice in times of need,
In every way have shown this deed
Stop a meal in a fortnight please.
Save your Country, roll your sleeve.

In early 1950, Chandra spoke about the movement to a gathering of businessmen and bureaucrats in Hyderabad, estimating that the movement would make up for 7% of India's estimated 10% total food deficit, saving approximately 400 crores rupees each year -- 'the total sum of the amount spent by the nation on 52 meals a year.'¹⁰⁶ Yet more than killing the black market and freeing India from the yoke of foreign imports, missing a meal would

train you in the art of self-discipline, for control of the palate, as Gandhiji taught us, was the basis of self-discipline[.] A country become a great nation, when the people living in that country are not just human beings but think, behave, and act like true citizens, ready to discharge their duties willingly and gladly. A true citizen is he who thinks more of his duties and less of his rights; for in the final analysis, rights flow from duties well performed. Rights divorced from the performance of duties, is a contradiction in terms and a mockery of democracy.

Chandra's speech neatly linked together the project of dietary transformation and the reimagination of rights in postcolonial India. Yet his movement was not infrequently lambasted as misguided and ineffectual. One former prince wrote to Chandra to gripe that 'Out of the 300 and odd millions [in India], His Highness thinks not more than one million could profitably miss a meal. The other 300 million are so under-nourished that they should get an extra meal and not miss a meal.'¹⁰⁷ Orissa's Law Minister concurred that 'more than half of the population do not get two meals a day [...] To such a population I feel diffident to suggest the campaign of fasting.'¹⁰⁸ Yet the ethos resonated in official publicity. Addressing the nation over All-India Radio on the food crisis and the perils of foreign aid, Nehru urged Indians to take up the Movement's signature act. 'Each one of us,' he enjoined, 'should demonstrate active sympathy and desire to

Make in daily meal this sure,
Eat less rice or rice no more.
Ask your people waste no food.
Love your Country love your food.

S. Asghar Ali, "Letter to B.G. Kher," December 21, 1949, Jag Parvesh Chandra / Subject Files / 2, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

106. Jag Parvesh Chandra, "Untitled Speech Delivered at Hyderabad," 1949, Jag Parvesh Chandra / Subject Files / 2, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

107. "Letter to Jag Parvesh Chandra," January 6, 1950, Jag Parvesh Chandra / Subject Files / 2, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

108. Nityanand Kanungo, "Letter to Jag Parvesh Chandra," November 16, 1949, Jag Parvesh Chandra / Subject Files / 2, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

help by giving up one meal a week.¹⁰⁹ Nehru proposed sending surplus foodgrains to send to famine victims, and the Ministry of Food began to devise mechanisms for collecting and distributing them.¹¹⁰

As public institutions and representatives of civil society urged an austerity ethos, the Central Food Technological Research Institute and the government's Subsidiary Food Production Committee worked to provide the institutional and scientific mechanisms for the transformation of Indian diets. In early 1949, as scarcity loomed once more, the Ministry of Health had inquired of state governments whether banana roots were eaten by the poor in their respective provinces, looking to promote them in daily diets and scarcity crises alike.¹¹¹ The Ministry of Food examined a similar proposal to distribute imported Iraqi dates in place of rationed cereals.¹¹² These schemes grew more concrete with the creation of the Subsidiary Food Production Committee, chaired by industrialist Lala Shri Ram, and staffed by the senior Madras bureaucrat Sonti Ramamurty and the Secretary of the Ministry of Food. Shri Ram reported directly to Rajendra Prasad, and asserted 'that meeting the shortage of food is not merely the business of the Governments but of the 330 million people of the country.'¹¹³ Taking as its mandate the promotion of bananas, sweet potatoes, tapioca, groundnut flour and synthetic cereals, the Committee met throughout the following year, building upon the work of the 1947 Foodgrains Policy Committee. The Committee's report posited that a 'substantial reduction in the

109. 'Broadcast to the Nation, New Delhi, 1 May 1951 [AIR Tapes, NMML],' in *SWJN* vol. 16.1, p. 39-42.

110. 'Letter to Food Secretary, Ministry of Food, New Delhi, 2 May 1951 [File No. 31(125)/51-PMS],' in *SWJN* vol. 16.1, p. 43-44.

111. "Banana Roots as Human Food and Assessment of Their Nutritive Value," June 25, 1949, Rajputana Agency / Political / Food / P-183, National Archives of India.

112. "Exploration of Possibility of Utilizing Dates from Iraq to Rations in Scarcity Areas in Order to Avoid Famine," February 9, 1949, Food - Basic Plan - BP-201(96)/49, National Archives of India. The proposal appears to have only been accepted in 1951, when dates were distributed in ration packages in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar; see "Dates given away in Bihar," *Aaj*, February 12, 1951; "Distribution of Dates," *Aaj*, February 15, 1951.

113. Valmiki Choudhary, ed., "Letter from Shri Ram to Rajendra Prasad, 20 May 1949," in *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, vol. 11 (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1988), 69. Later, Shri Ram would pressure Prasad into planting banana shrubs and sweet potato vines at his Delhi residence. Valmiki Choudhary, ed., "Letter from Shri Ram to Rajendra Prasad, 17 September 1949," in *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, vol. 11 (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1988), 160.

consumption of cereals in this country' could be effected through the production and consumption of alternate foodstuffs, beginning by appointing Development Officers to foster the expansion of each crop.¹¹⁴

The campaign offered, at least in theory, the possibility of feeding more citizens at no cost to the state. And as one British intelligence offer reported, the 'attempt to persuade the public to change their diet by eating more 'substitute' foods like potatoes and sweet potatoes is discernible in all statements by government officials about food self-sufficiency.'¹¹⁵ One such statement came from Governor-General C. Rajagopalachari, who called in a radio address for a 'fanatical zeal' for the food campaign. 'The fashion must be set,' he said, 'for greater consumption of *ragi*, *cholam*, maize and millet. [...] Like jail-going, hobnobbing with outcastes, spinning, [and] wearing Gandhi-caps, millet food must be made a patriotic high class fashion.'¹¹⁶ In August 1949, Shri Ram petitioned India's provincial food members to embrace the campaign, through publicity and by bringing subsidiary foods into the ration as soon as production targets were met.¹¹⁷ The Ministry of Food similarly asked provincial ministries to consider distributing subsidiary foods in place of wheat and rice, requesting rationing administrations to estimate 'how far [their] increased consumption can be popularised.'¹¹⁸ By the end of the year, a glut of bananas and sweet potatoes were being made available at cooperative stores and ration shops in Bombay Province; in the new guest control and public austerity measures enacted across India the following year, subsidiary foods would continue to be permitted in unlimited quantities.¹¹⁹

114. No copies of the final report appear to exist in print; a resumé is "Summary of Conclusions of the Subsidiary Food Production Committee (1950)," in *Reports of the Estimates Committee 1960-61* (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1961), 70–72.

115. "Bombay Weekly Political Report No. 21/49 for the Period 23 to 29 May 1949," May 1949, IOR/L/E/8/7230, British Library.

116. C. Rajagopalachari, "The Food Problem [All-India Radio, July 6, 1949]," in *Speeches of C. Rajagopalachari, Governor-General of India. June 1948 - January 1950* (New Delhi: Superintendent, Governor-General's Press, 1950), 251.

117. 'Letter from the Ministry of Food, 1949: Subsidiary Food Production Committee, Shri Ram, Vice Chairman -- Sent to Food and Agriculture Ministers of All Provinces / States,' 1949, Agriculture - Rationing - RP-1084(14)/54, National Archives of India

118. "Banana Roots as Human Food and Assessment of Their Nutritive Value."

119. "Subsidiary Foods' Output," *Times of India*, December 29, 1949; "Concurrence of the Central Govt. to the Withdrawal of Food Austerity Measures Adopted by Kutch Govt. 1950," July 1950, Agriculture - Rationing - RP 1085/26/50, National Archives of India.

Indian's putatively unchangeable preference for rice over any other grain worried administrators of international aid, as well. During the shortages of 1950-1951, American representatives fretted over

Encouraged by the drive for subsidiary and substitute foods, the CFTRI revived earlier, futuristic proposals for an ersatz grain to replace rice and wheat. The Institute's director, V. Subrahmanyam, had pledged to underwrite Nehru's promise of food self-sufficiency by 1951, promising that a quarter of the nation's grain consumption could be replaced by that date with sweet potatoes or tapioca.¹²⁰ 'Artificial rice' would be a key component of that campaign. As early as 1945, the nationalist agricultural scientist M. Afzal Husain had postulated that since 'chemists have produced rayon, nylon, [and] plastics,' there should 'be no reason why they cannot produce artificial rice from tuber starch.'¹²¹ And a decade earlier, Sonti Ramamurthy of the Subsidiary Food Production Committee had witnessed a Travancore Maharaja importing tapioca into the state during the war. The schoolchildren fed on tapioca alone, Ramamurthy recalled, were 'rickety,' but the civil servant continued to tout the possibility of a rice substitute based on tapioca supplemented with groundnut flour for protein.¹²² In 1948, Ramamurthy had contracted a manufacturing firm in Coimbatore to formulate a prototype, and on the Subsidiary Food Production Committee, he took charge of the 'artificial rice' project, while Lala Shri Ram steered the production of 'a flour mixed from tapioca and wheat flour to make chapattis in North India.' Publicly declaring his intent to manufacture a substitute cereal that would satisfy 'the psychology of people accustomed to eat cereals,' Ramamurthy asked the CFTRI's V. Subrahmanyam to

Indian's apparent unwillingness to change their diets during times of crisis. In one of his dispatches as the Indian supervisory officer of the Economic Cooperation Administration, Frank R.J. Gerard wrote that 'In Madras and Travancore-Cochin, there is much concern and complaint over the shortage of rice. This situation cannot be greatly relieved as there is a general shortage of rice throughout India. The maximum quantity of rice is being imported from the rice-producing countries of Asia but additional imports (say from USA) would cost more than the Government of India can afford to pay. With the limited funds at their disposal they must use them to procure the greatest possible quantity of food. Rice is too costly.' Frank R.J. Gerard, "End-Use Report No. 2," September 5, 1951, RG 469 / UD 1234 / Box 1 / End Use and General Reports, United States National Archives.

120. "Achieving Self-Sufficiency in Food by 1951: Mysore Research Body's Proposals," *Times of India*, July 1, 1950.

121. Husein, "Food Problem of India (1946, Bangalore)," 569.

122. Sonti Venkata Ramamurthy, *Looking across Fifty Years* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1964), 117. Ramamurthy had served on the 1946 mission to the Combined Food Board in Washington DC, where he petitioned for increased grain donations to India.

undertake pilot trials for the rice in Kerala.¹²³ A pilot plant was established in Mysore, and the Committee set to work formulating distribution plans for South and North India.¹²⁴

The project captured the imagination of the bureaucrats whose more staid agricultural schemes were stagnating. In April 1951, Rajendra Prasad sampled chapatis and halva made from tapioca in the CFTRI laboratories.¹²⁵ In the summer, Subrahmanyam was called to speak to ministers in Travancore-Cochin about the possibility of scaling up consumption of synthetic rice.¹²⁶ In Delhi, one minister surprised colleagues with the announcement that the rice they had eaten at lunch was in fact the CFTRI's ersatz version.¹²⁷ 'The grains that we now make are round,' V. Subrahmanyam proclaimed at the pilot plant in Mysore, but 'we can make beautiful, white rice-shaped grains which can satisfy even the most fastidious consumers.'¹²⁸

Fastidiousness aside, Indian consumers took poorly to these ersatz grains, evidencing scant demand. An early, critical assessment from Madras, pointed to the reluctance of producers to switch to tapioca from proven cash crops, and the dim potential for the 'dietetic habits of a nation [to] be altered by propaganda, persuasion or fiat.'¹²⁹ The conclusion was not unwarranted. Artificial rice was deployed to a small famine in Southern India in 1952, but there was little interest outside of famine conditions.¹³⁰ The first artificial rice factory in Trivandrum was shuttered shortly after its inauguration.¹³¹ Save for a small number of famine victims in Rayalaseema, producers in Mysore, and enthusiastic bureaucrats in Delhi, few Indians ever

123. "Difficulty in Ending Food Imports: Sir Sonti Ramamurti Urges Attention to Non-Cereals," *Times of India*, May 16, 1949.

124. Ramamurty, *Looking across Fifty Years*, 149.

125. Valmiki Choudhary, ed., "Notes on Mysore Tour," in *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, vol. Presidency Period (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1984), 198–200.

126. B.S. Bawa, "From a Deficit to a Surplus State," *The Punjab Farmer* III, no. 2 (June 1951): 58.

127. "Synthetic Rice and Curds," *Times of India*, October 7, 1952.

128. V. Subramanyam, "Planning for Food Emergency," in *Food and Population and Development of Food Industries in India* (Mysore: Central Food Technological Research Institute, 1952), 133. The CFTRI's efforts gained the attention of observers overseas; "Two Other Artificial Products: Synthetic Rice and Milk," in *Indian Horizons*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1952), 340–41. V. Subrahmanyam and M. Swaminathan -- the father of India's 'Green Revolution' -- published an optimistic early report in *Nature*, touting the promise that artificial rice held to obviate India's food problem. V. Subramanyam et al., "Rice Substitutes," *Nature* 174 (1954): 199–201.

129. Balasubrahmanya Natarajan, *Food and Agriculture in Madras State* (Madras: Director of Information and Publicity, Government of Madras, 1951), 125–127.

130. "Centre to Open Research Units in Villages," *Times of India*, May 29, 1953.

131. E. Ikkanda Warriar, November 13, 1970, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

tasted the much-touted artificial rice.¹³² Before production could be adequately scaled up, the state had grown reluctant to ask citizens to reimagine their rights, their responsibilities, and their diets in tandem.¹³³

Unequal Burdens

As male bureaucrats and scientists forwarded the twinned imperatives of austerity and alternate foodstuffs, Indian women, the 'anchors of the household,' were saddled with the burden of remoulding the diets of their husbands and children, and in so doing, recasting the relationship between the household and the nation.

Colonial planners and nationalist organisations had cast women as essential agents of India's national development, interweaving the aims of household health and national well-being.¹³⁴ One

132. In 1957, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to the Director of India's Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, to ask what had happened to the project. Informed that no production was taking place, Nehru testily brought up the issue of the project's seeming failure several days later with Food and Agriculture Minister AP Jain. The last mention of the artificial rice project seems to have come in 1960, when administrators in Kerala constituted a propaganda team to promote it before an unceremonious disbanding in 1960. 'Letter to M.S. Thacker [28 May 1957],' *SWJN*, vol. 38, p. 112; 'Letter to A.P. Jain, 2 June 1957,' *SWJN*, vol. 38, p. 115; *Administration Report of the Civil Supplies Department for the Year 1961-62* (Trivandrum: Kerala Civil Supplies Department, 1962), 14.

133. The CFTRI nonetheless played an important role in the development of India's modern food processing and preservation industries. In 1951, a government work looked expectantly to the CFTRI for its projects for "the processing of coarse grain to render it acceptable to rice eaters [...] and new and improved methods of processing pulses without affecting their nutritive value." Yet over the next several decades, the Institute's work was dedicated to more mundane matters of canning, preservation, and the prevention of adulteration *Progress of Science* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1951); *Abstracts of CFTRI Papers* (Mysore: Central Food Technological Research Institute, 1966).

134. On the intersections of nationalism and domesticity in colonial India, see Mary Hancock, "Gendering the Modern: Women and Home Science in British India," in *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities*, ed. Antoinette M. Burton (London: Routledge, 1999), 148–60; Mary Hancock, "Home Science and the Nationalization of Domesticity in Colonial India," *Modern Asian Studies* 35, no. 4 (2001): 871–903; and Judith E. Walsh, *Domesticity in Colonial India: What Women Learned When Men Gave Them Advice* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004). More broadly, see Durba Ghosh, "Gender and Colonialism: Expansion or Marginalization?," *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 3 (September 1, 2004): 737–55, doi:10.2307/4091763; and Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation, Community, Religion, and Cultural Nationalism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001). On the complex interplay of women's organizations and the 'politics of consumption' beyond India, see the analysis in Matthew Hilton, "The Female Consumer and the Politics of Consumption in Twentieth-Century Britain," *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 1 (2002): 103–28. The intersections of female politics and food control policies is dealt with elegantly in the American context in Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of*

of the earliest primers on 'domestic science' in India linked the promulgation of the field to the advancement of national health and hygiene.¹³⁵ W.R. Aykroyd would nonetheless lament, a decade later, that 'the women of India have not yet been enlisted in the campaign for improved nutrition'; the National Planning Committee's 1938 sub-committee on 'woman's role in planned economy' suggested that women would play a key role in constructing a national diet after independence.¹³⁶ During the Bengal Famine, the left-wing Mahila Atmaraksha Samiti -- the 'Women's Self-Defence League' -- had affirmed repeatedly that women's duties towards the nation were split equally between self-defence and the provision of food.¹³⁷ The connection between the maintenance of the home and the uplift of the nation grew more explicit after independence. Social worker Rameshwari Nehru would write, shortly after independence, that 'the home is the foundation on which the structure of society is built,' and that its improvement would ultimately underwrite national development.¹³⁸

The All-India Women's Conference, well-connected to the mainstream Congress leadership, emerged as the dominant voice of nationalist women after independence.¹³⁹ One of the Conference's Presidents would declare that 'our aim is to make the woman a healthy and useful member of society; a good mother, self-reliant, and a responsible citizen conscious of her rights and responsibilities.'¹⁴⁰ Those rights and responsibilities quickly converged around the provision of food to the home and the nation. In 1946, the AIWC declared that the fourteenth of every

Domesticity (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); as well as in the German context in Belinda J. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). For an exemplary treatment of women and home economics in China's nationalist era, see Helen M. Schneider, *Keeping the Nation's House: Domestic Management and the Making of Modern China* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011).

135. Mabel A. Needham, *Domestic Science for High Schools in India* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1929).

136. Aykroyd, *Notes on Food and Nutrition Policy in India*; Indian National Congress and K.T. Shah, *Woman's Role in Planned Economy, Report of the Sub-Committee* (Bombay: Vora & Co., 1947).

137. Geraldine Hancock Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, New Cambridge History of India IV.2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 210–211.

138. Rameshwari Nehru, *Gandhi Is My Star: Speeches & Writings* (Patna: Pustakbhandar, 1950).

139. Jawaharlal Nehru nonetheless complained in 1936 that the AIWC was 'superficial' since it did nothing to examine the 'root causes' of the social issues it championed. Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, 81.

140. All India Women's Conference Cultural Section, *Education of Women in Modern India* (Anudh: Anudh Publishing Trust, 1946).

month was to be designated a 'Special Food Day,' tasking each chapter with teaching its members 'the duty of the people to cooperate' in the tasks of avoiding waste and using substitute foods.¹⁴¹ A second resolution in 1949 saw the AIWC ask its members to begin growing substitute foods in kitchen gardens; soon, the group organised mobile demonstrations and canteens to promote the same.¹⁴² One member asserted that the conservation of food and the promotion of new foodstuffs 'is a work suited primarily to the genius of women. Let it not be said that women have failed in a task of such supreme national importance.'¹⁴³

Yet even as the AIWC affirmed, through its initiatives, the state's contention that 'women, more than men, could effectively help Government in the solution of food problem,' India's bureaucrats assigned to women burden of failure for their modernist schemes.¹⁴⁴ Nehru was particularly damning in his twinning of female agency and the food crisis. Visiting the Gujarati village of Gandhinagar, he contended that women should not complain about grain shortages, but instead, 'carry on with what they get.' Noting India's expenditure on food imports, he asserted that it had been women's desire for sugar which had forced the government to purchase it from abroad; their propensity for black market purchases of rationed commodities had further undermined government food control efforts.¹⁴⁵ The failure of women to upkeep the new imperatives of postcolonial citizenship was seen as underwriting India's continued dependence.

AIWC members nonetheless continued to view their efforts as instrumental in modelling domestic solutions to the food crisis. In July 1949, a month after Jawaharlal Nehru delivered a series of speeches on citizenship and the food problem on All India Radio, Indira Gandhi convened a meeting that led to the formation of the Women's Food Committee, Delhi, seeking to popularise subsidiary foods among women.¹⁴⁶ In Bombay, Lilavati Munshi, outgoing AIWC president and wife of Food Minister K.M. Munshi, organised several state-funded substitute food exhibitions.¹⁴⁷ A year later, in the wake of the Subsidiary Foods Production Committee's report, the Ministry of Food announced that it would be turning over the task of substitute food

141. "Food," *Bulletin of Indian Women's Movement*, July 1946.

142. "Resolutions Passed at the Meeting of the Standing Committee of the AIWC at Bombay, August 1949," *Roshni*, September 1949.

143. Kitty Shiva Rao, "Grow More and Eat Wisely," *Roshni*, September 1949.

144. "Housewives Can Help Change Food Habits," *Times of India*, September 9, 1949.

145. "Carry on with Food You Get: Pandit Nehru's Call to Women," *Times of India*, September 20, 1950.

146. "Popularising Subsidiary Foods: Women to Carry on Propaganda," *Times of India*, July 30, 1949.

147. "Subsidiary Foods Education," *Roshni*, November 1949.

promotion to a new All-India Women's Council for Supplementary Foods, funded by the Ministries of Food and Agriculture and comprising 'representatives of all-India Women's Organisations and prominent women active in public, social and Parliamentary life.'¹⁴⁸

The Council soon organised a series of exhibitions in Bombay and Delhi demonstrating recipes without rice and wheat. Rajendra Prasad inaugurated the Delhi exhibition, where Lilavati Munshi contended that the nation's food problem 'had baffled the greatest of our men,' but that women would no doubt find a solution, given that 'it is their province to handle food.'¹⁴⁹ The Council's first booklet, touting substitute foods costing eight annas or less, was soon supplemented by an ambitious two-volume cookbook.¹⁵⁰ And after two initial schemes for cafeterias in Bombay fell through, the Council opened the Annapoorna restaurant in Delhi in January 1951. India's 'most democratic restaurant' was staffed by women and served a buffet of substitute foods, quickly becoming an important political pilgrimage site. Beyond 'thousands of middle class and poor customers,' the cafeteria drew a steady stream of parliamentarians and diplomats, in addition to catering the 1951 Indian National Congress in Delhi. Appealing to women as the 'food ministers' of their own households, the AIWC continued to expand the Annapoorna chain nationwide, establishing thirty-two branches by 1955.¹⁵¹

Even as the state continued to fund and subsidise the AIWC and its Annapoorna chain of restaurants, the nation's bureaucratic leadership continued to saddle women with the blame for Indian households' putative inability or unwillingness to change their food habits. As late as the

148. Ministry of Food, Government of India, "All India Women's Council for Supplementary Foods: Measures for Increased Production and Consumption," August 5, 1950, IOR/L/E/88/8698, British Library.

149. "Supplementary Food: Exhibition in Delhi," *Times of India*, December 4, 1950. See also Rajendra Prasad, 'The Food Problem (Translation of speech delivered in Hindi at the opening of the Food Exhibition at the Town Hall, Delhi, on December 1, 1950), in Verinder Grover, *Political Thinkers of Modern India, Volume 23: Dr. Rajendra Prasad* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1993), 488–490.

150. A.R. Vyas, "Annapoorna: India's Democratic Restaurants," *March of India* IV, no. 2 (December 1951): 29–31; All India Women's Food Council, *Annapurna Recipes of Supplementary Foods*, 2 vols. (New Delhi: All India Women's Food Council, 1951). On cookbooks in India, see Appadurai, "How to Make a National Cuisine.,"; and Berger, "Between Digestion and Desire."

151. *The Fourth Annual Meeting of the All India Women's Food Council, West Bengal Branch, 1954-55* (Calcutta, 1955). The Council began to shift its objectives throughout the 1950s, distributing seeds for kitchen gardening, and working to establish a catering college in Bombay with FAO funding. By 1958, the Council had fallen into a bitter squabble with the Central government over the restaurant's tax status; the restaurant hobbled on until its shuttering a decade later. "Sales Tax on Annapoorna," 1958, Home - Judicial - II - 26758, National Archives of India.

mid-1950s, Nehru was proclaiming that on the matter of food, 'women will justify themselves [sic] not so much by making demands but by the part they play in the building up of new India.'¹⁵² If rights, in postcolonial India's emerging conception of citizenship, stemmed only from the proper completion of duties, that compact was expected even more acutely of the nation's women.¹⁵³

Against the backdrop of a worsening food crisis, and India's continued inability to meet the targets of the renewed Grow More Food Campaign, legislators, writers, and satirists inveighed against the calls to miss meals and transform diets, their objections an implicit rejection of the new state's transferal of developmental responsibilities. These critiques linked substitute foods to the historical deprivations of famine, and rejected the modernist notion that, in the name of nation-building, one calorie might be just as readily taken as another.¹⁵⁴

The earliest, most trenchant critiques came from the Communist Party of India, which accused the Congress of promoting subsidiary foods and austerity at the expense of real agrarian reform. The CPI broadsheet *People's Age* reported frequently upon the callous statements of India's food officials. A 1948 report lambasted the Foodgrains Policy Committee's emphasis on substitute foods, and took Jairamdas Daulatram to task for asking a group of villagers, as they waited outside a ration depot, 'why after getting political freedom they have made themselves slaves of taste.'¹⁵⁵ Two years later, as scarcity broke out nationwide, a party circular doubled

152. 'Food Problem and the Role of Women,' *SWJN* vol. 40, p. 276.

153. A review of recent sociological approaches to the intersections of gender, citizenship, and the welfare state is Ann Shola Orloff, "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States," *American Sociological Review* 58, no. 3 (June 1, 1993): 303–28, doi:10.2307/2095903. See also Manuela Ciotti, "'The Bourgeois Woman and the Half-Naked One': Or the Indian Nation's Contradictions Personified," *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 4 (2010): 785–815, doi:10.1017/S0026749X09003904.

154. Various jungle roots, yams, sago palm and other foodstuffs, for instance, were common famine foods among the Mizos, when rats, a 'preferred' scarcity staple, was unavailable. Sajal Nag, "Bamboo, Rats and Famines: Famine Relief and Perceptions of British Paternalism in the Mizo Hills," in *India's Environmental History: Colonialism, Modernity, and the Nation*, ed. Mahesh Rangarajan and K Sivaramakrishnan, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2012), 389–99.

155. "You Are Slaves of Taste! Food Minister Admonishes Starving Kisans of South," *People's Age*, June 6, 1948.

down on these charges. 'They advise the starving people to "miss a meal a week,"' it read, 'who are not getting even one full meal a day!'¹⁵⁶

The Communist assault anticipated a broader popular critique. In the summer of 1950, India's third Food Minister, Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi, traveled to Bihar, where poor villagers were said to be subsisting on jute leafs, and grinding tree branches into sawdust to pad empty stomachs.¹⁵⁷ Munshi urged villagers to abandon the wheat and rice that kept the country wedded to foreign grain, asking women to mandate a weekly cereal-less day in their homes. A *Times of India* editorial sarcastically wondered if the starvation deaths that the Food Minister had denied were the victims' 'own fault, because they refuse to change their food habits, [and refuse] to eat grass and leaves?' Was it right, the journalist wondered, 'that the Biharis should die in this unpatriotic manner when their ears should be attuned to Ministerial sermons?' The nation could learn much from Bihar, the author continued sarcastically, by adopting Tuesday as a national jute leaf meal day. These days would 'combine nicely with Monday's vegetables, and prepare the stomach for the remaining five cereal-less days of the week.' The satirical journal *Shankar's Weekly*, a regular detractor of government food policy, ran a caricature of a smug K.M. Munshi surveying skeletal Biharis as they gnawed on trees, clutching a proclamation to 'eat more vegetables.'¹⁵⁸

156. Communist Party of India, "The Catastrophic Food Situation and Our Tasks: People's Solution and Demand of the People [P.B. Circular (New Series) No. I, to All Party Units]," August 10, 1950, 1950.91, P.C. Joshi Archives on Contemporary History.

157. "Jute Leaf Days," *Times of India*, July 29, 1950. For a critical account of Munshi's visit, see Jayaprakash Narayan, *Jayaprakash Narayan: Selected Works, 1950-1954*, ed. Bimal Prasad, vol. 6 (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2000). A narrative of the beginning of the 1950-1951 shortage is Dennis Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot: The United States and India's Economic Development, 1947-1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 62. Munshi, a former lawyer at the Bombay High Court, made for an unlikely Food Minister. A social reformer with a religious predilection, Munshi was well-known for his Gujarati novels and religious writings, as well as his founding of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, a nominally apolitical cultural organization with a Hindu nationalist bent. Munshi would later throw in his lot with the conservative Jana Sangh and Swatantra parties. On Munshi, see Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics, 1925 to the 1990s: Strategies of Identity-Building, Implantation and Mobilisation (with Special Reference to Central India)* (London: Hurst & Co., 1996), 84-85; on his literary politics, see Shveta Vyas Pare, "Writing Fiction, Living History: Kanhaiyalal Munshi's Historical Trilogy," *Modern Asian Studies* 48, no. 03 (2014): 596-616, doi:10.1017/S0026749X12000777.

158. "Quick Results! [Cartoon]," *Shankar's Weekly*, August 6, 1950. India's Food Ministers were regular targets of K. Shankar Pillai's ire: his magazine routinely portrayed Jairamdas Daulatram as obese and patronizing, as in one cartoon wherein the Food Minister lectured a peasant to miss more meals until

Increasingly, legislators and politicians voiced their own objections to the state's quixotic projects. Later in 1950, Madras parliamentarian and physician A.L. Mudaliar -- later director of the World Health Organisation -- deplored that 'when such suggestions are made to people who miss not only a meal in a week, but a meal every day, and who have neither vegetables nor anything else to consume, we ask: "What is the competence of the honourable Minister for Food to give such advice?"'¹⁵⁹ An internal Ministry of Agriculture review assessed India's various Guest Control Orders as ineffective as they were unpopular, useful 'mainly for the psychological value.'¹⁶⁰ Nehru's estranged secretary, M.O. Mathai, would recall the Prime Minister's faith in the Subsidiary Food Production Committee as akin to a 'drowning man clutching at a straw.'¹⁶¹ And C. Rajagopalachari drafted a private memorandum in January 1952 decrying state efforts to manage the minutiae of food production and consumption as an affront to personal liberty and a source of India's enduring hunger -- presaging his unilateral lifting of food controls in Madras six months later.¹⁶² Assessments from overseas were no more sympathetic. 'The tragedy,' an *Eastern World* correspondent wrote of the Miss a Meal campaign, 'is that millions of Indians have no choice of forgoing a meal, but are savagely dieted by poverty.'¹⁶³ Implicit in these rejections lurked the notion the India's efforts to remake personal practice and sentiment represented the desperate campaigns of a weak state unable to actualise the promise of sustenance which had animated the nationalist struggle.

The completion of India's First Five-Year Plan at the end of 1951 saw an assertive revision of India's agricultural planning. The Prime Minister had fended off internal political challenges from Sardar Patel and Purshottamdas Tandon -- conservative voices whose antipathy towards

the latter wasted into a supplicating skeleton. "Bright Future [Cartoon]," *Shankar's Weekly*, January 1, 1950.

159. A.L. Mudaliar, "On the Governor's Address (4th August 1950)," in *Searchlight on Council Debates: Speeches of Sir A.L. Mudaliar in the Madras Legislative Council* (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1960), 167.

160. Ministry of Agriculture, 'Austerity Measures - Guest Control Order,' Agriculture - Basic Plan - 86(1)/57 BP II, National Archives of India.

161. M.O. Mathai, *My Days with Nehru* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1979).

162. C. Rajagopalachari, "Amateurish Experiments and Imperial Food Production: An Article," January 1952, C. Rajagopalachari / VI to XI Insts. / Speeches and Writings by Him / 114, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

163. J.F. Stirling, "The Background to Famine," *Eastern World* V, no. 12 (December 1951): 14.

socialist planning may have rendered the transformation of Indian citizenship, rather than that of agrarian structure, a more palatable shared goal.¹⁶⁴ Beyond an emphasis on industrial development, the Plan concentrated on the coordinated transformation of rural India's social and economic conditions, affirming food production as a primary national goal. (These schemes were far more ambitious than the Grow More Food Movement, which had sought to induce production through relatively small monetary investments.) 'Unless the food problem is handled satisfactorily,' the Plan held, 'economic conditions in the country will not be stable enough to permit the implementation of the plan.'¹⁶⁵ Its overwhelming focus on increasing agricultural output rendered the goal of transforming Indian diets a 'valuable supplement to the food supply.'

Yet the campaign to remould citizens' diets and their relationship to the state in consort never fully receded from the national conversation. In years of higher agricultural production, when imports waned, the discussion of subsidiary foods, ersatz foodstuffs, and austerity receded from the limelight -- only to reemerge forcefully at moments of crisis.¹⁶⁶ It was often industrialists and businessmen who continued to press for these ends. A year after the publication of the First Five-Year Plan, the Andhra Chamber of Commerce heard the state's outgoing Industrial and Development Commissioner outline a scheme for a private subsidiary foods lobby.¹⁶⁷ He, like the industrialists who had spearheaded the first subsidiary foods campaigns, was likely motivated by the aim of freeing up agricultural land used for cereals for the increased cultivation of exportable goods.

At moments of uncertainty, however, officials revived the language of citizenship, rights, and responsibility to urge dietary transformations. The 1957 Foodgrains Enquiry Committee, chaired

164. A comprehensive discussion of the internal dynamics of planning is Francine R. Frankel, *India's Political Economy, 1947-2004: The Gradual Revolution* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 71–112.

165. Planning Commission, *The First Five-Year Plan: A Draft Outline* (New Delhi: Manager of Publications, Government of India Press, 1951), 67. For an analysis, see Frankel, *India's Political Economy*, 94–106.

166. In spite of passing references to subsidiary foods and the transformation of diets in the Third and Fourth Five-Year Plans, presented in 1961 and 1966, these operational documents made little reference to the sorts of transformations that Nehru and allies had once framed as national imperatives. "A Nutritionist's View of Third Plan," *The Hindu*, August 29, 1961, 71; and G.R. Madan, *India's Developing Villages* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1990), 131.

167. "Suggestions for Solving the Food Program by Shri V. Ramakrishna, ICS, Retd, Formerly Industrial and Development Commissioner, Government of Madras," 1952, Agriculture - G.M.F. - 10-5/52-GMF(Eng), National Archives of India.]

by Ashok Mehta in the wake of a failed monsoon, lamented the turn away from subsidiary foods, which the economist held was 'an unfortunate result of the feeling that our food problem [was] purely transitory.'¹⁶⁸ Mehta urged the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to establish a new department to promote the production and consumption of substitute foods. In June, a new Congress resolution reaffirmed the need for their consumption; the year afterwards, Lala Shri Ram would resurface to urge the creation of a 'Ministry for Non-Cereal Foods' -- proposals which earned the praise of the *Eastern Economist*.¹⁶⁹ By the end of 1957, the Prime Minister had revived the language of personal transformation, exhorting Indians to 'change your food habits in accordance with the needs of the country.'¹⁷⁰ Nehru's 'exasperated paternalism' remained in evidence. 'I am very worried,' the Prime Minister declared as the crisis continued, 'about this habit which seems to be growing of everybody asking somebody else to feed him, [of] everybody going to the State Government and saying, give us this, give us that. [...] Somehow, mind [sic] has become so perverted that we must have so much rice, and not take the other things which are better than rice, and in fact prefer starvation. I do not understand it.'¹⁷¹ Indians' failure to remake their diets, Nehru proposed, was a fundamental defect in their understanding of rights and responsibilities.

The most iconic revival of the campaign came in in the mid-1960s, with the breakout of war with Pakistan presaging India's most significant food crisis since independence in the form of the Bihar Famine. The new Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, took up the call to 'miss a meal' once more. Newspapers echoed Shastri's call, at rallies, for weekly 'dinnerless days,' with the new slogan *Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan* -- 'Long live the soldier and the farmer' -- braiding together the aims of food and national defence.¹⁷² Congress rallied behind the Prime Minister, asking party

168. Ministry of Food and Agriculture, *Report of the Foodgrains Enquiry Committee, November 1957* (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1957), 103.

169. 'AICC Resolution on Food Production (June 1 and 2, 1957)', Sunil Guha, *India's Food Problem* (New Delhi: Indian National Congress, 1957), 15; "A Plea for Non-Cereal Foods," *Eastern Economist*, August 15, 1958, 218.

170. 'Yoga and Food Habits: Speech while inaugurating the annual celebrations of Vishwayatan Yogashram, New Delhi, 17 November 1957,' *SWJN*, vol. 40, p. 251.

171. *Ibid.*, p. 797

172. "The Threat of Famine," *Time* 86, no. 23 (December 3, 1965): 52. A discussion of the symbology of Shastri's call, and its representation in visual media, is 'Yogendra Rastogi: Visualizing Modernity,' in Christopher Pinney, *Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (London: Reaktion, 2004), 168–174.

workers to go door-to-door in support of a new food austerity campaign.¹⁷³ The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry urged its members to refrain from receptions or dinner parties for the duration of the war, mooted a proposal to grow sweet potatoes in vacant factory lots.¹⁷⁴ And as war ended, the Central Government sponsored a conservation campaign showing two chapattis separated from a third. 'Every third chapati you eat,' it proclaimed, 'is made from imported wheat. Let's not eat it.'¹⁷⁵

These calls for austerity, restraint, and the subjugation of preference were of little concrete value, yet they tapped into a familiar idiom borne of the immediate post-independence years. In January 1966, riots broke out in Kerala over the absence of rice in the rationing system, with protestors rejecting wheat sent from Punjab. As she jailed the Communist leaders said to be organising the riots, Indira Gandhi tapped deeply into that idiom. 'I pledge,' she told the rioters, 'to surrender my rice ration for the people of Kerala. I also pledge not to eat or serve rice until the food situation there is normal.'¹⁷⁶

Conclusion

'Adversity,' Education Minister Maulana Azad stated on India's first anniversary, 'is part of this independence package. The government needs courageous citizens. We have to lift burdens like strong, real men.'¹⁷⁷ An analogous advertisement for a major bank ran a month after India's independence, carrying the words of a nationalist financier, T.A. Pai, who would later become first president of the Food Corporation Of India. 'No food minister can give us food,' Pai wrote,

173. 'Congress Working Committee, New Delhi, November 7, 1965,' in A.M. Zaidi, ed., *INC: The Glorious Tradition: Texts of the Resolutions Passed by the INC, the AICC and the CWC* (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Applied Political Research, 1989), 495–497. The movement also enjoyed a revival in the form of new support from India's trading community, which embraced the conceit of voluntary self-regulation in food consumption as an alternative to federal and provincial legislation. See Ambalal Kilachand, "Letter to Mr. Dhirajlal Maganlal, President, Indian Merchants Chamber," July 28, 1964, Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay / 797 / Food Situation, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library; and Ambalal Kilachand, "Letter to C.L. Gheevala," August 14, 1964, Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay / 797 / Food Situation, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

174. Kilachand, "Letter to C.L. Gheevala."; L.N. Birla, "Letter to G.L. Bansal," October 28, 1965, Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay / 800 / Food: Interim Scheme Of State Trading, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

175. 'Every Third Chapatti [advertisement in Save Food for Self-Sufficiency campaign],' c. 1965-66.

176. "A Particular Hunger," *Time* 87, no. 6 (February 11, 1966): 44.

177. Roy, *Beyond Belief*, 105.

'and no finance minister can give us economic stability and independence, unless and until every man and woman in the country helps them.'¹⁷⁸

The language of adversity, austerity, and sacrifice suffused public institutions and public speech throughout India's early independent years, structuring the efforts of state institutions and national leaders to remake Indian diets. This ethos built upon a diverse range of late colonial antecedents, from the international Malthusian debates over population, land, and people and the economic writing of early Indian nationalists to the colonial language of nutrition and the schemes for reconstruction proposed by Indian planners.¹⁷⁹ Independence brought the nationalist concerns of human welfare and the amelioration of India's agriculture to the fore of national planning efforts, but the need to forward a plan of economic self-reliance and free up resources for industrial development saw India's leadership transferring the burden of food planning to citizens themselves, appealing to the qualities of virtue, shared burden, and sacrifice sutured to notions of postcolonial citizenship. In the years between independence and the Five Five-Year Plan, in particular, that leadership could frame enduring scarcity as an incomplete assumption of the obligations of citizenship. 'If you cannot give up your sugar, your wheat or your rice for a while,' Nehru contended in an emblematic parliamentary debate in 1950, 'then the biggest army will not be able to protect you, because you lack inner strength.'¹⁸⁰

The government of early independent India, Sunil Khilnani has argued, 'was transformed from a distant, alien object into one that aspired to infiltrate the everyday lives of Indians. [...] The state thus etched itself into the imagination of Indians in a way that no previous political agency had ever done.'¹⁸¹ The campaign to remake Indian diets exemplified this transformation, and the ways in which a state initially unable to actualise fundamental social and economic change attempted to restructure the sentiments and behaviours of its citizens themselves, casting

178. "Canara Industrial & King Syndicate, Limited [Advertisement]," *Indian Express*, October 7, 1947.

179. Undoubtedly, it also harkened back to the idioms of *Swadeshi* nationalism, which, Manu Goswami notes, 'radicalized and generalized the nationalist critique of colonialism on multiple, overlapping sociocultural terrains and in a deeply passionate idiom of autonomy, self-reliance, and sacrifice.' Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 243.

180. Jawaharlal Nehru, "The Growth of Violence: Speech in Reply to a Debate on Foreign Affairs in Parliament, New Delhi, December 7, 1950," in *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*, vol. 2, 3rd ed. (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1963), 259–73.

181. Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 41.

them as a fundamental obligation of postcolonial citizenship. Over the next decade, India's postcolonial leadership would grow more confident in the state's ability to undertake fundamental structural reform, and the 1950s were a high water mark in the state's 'romance with developmental planning.'¹⁸² The remaking of diets, however, remained a convenient idiom for a state at moments of scarcity and developmental uncertainty.

By the time the technological advances of the Green Revolution began to take root in India in the form of the 'new agricultural strategy' of the mid-1960s' the focus of development planning had wholly shifted. If, in the earliest years of independence, the new state had looked to citizenship as an opportune site for transformation in the name of development, the relative inattentiveness of the state to the agrarian unrest and concentration of incomes wrought by the Green Revolution spoke to a paradigm of development that had become radically disjunct from questions of citizenship and shared sacrifice.¹⁸³ The connection between citizenship and agricultural development would be left, in years to come, to representatives of the 'new farmers' movements' whose populist narrative suggested that earlier nation-building efforts had been inimical to agrarian citizenship.¹⁸⁴ For a crucial period, however, India's public institutions and figures asked citizens to reimagine their relationship to the new state and their co-citizens, saddling Indians, and women in particular, to steward the transformations that would help realise the goal of national self-reliance. As India's institutions and politicians charged citizens themselves with responsibility for their own sustenance, so, too, it charged them with the burden of the nation's development.

182. Kudaisya, "'A Mighty Adventure': Institutionalising the Idea of Planning in Postcolonial India, 1947–60."

183. On this paradigm, see Francine R. Frankel, *India's Green Revolution: Economic Gains and Political Costs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); 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; and Benjamin Siegel, "Independent India of Plenty: Food, Hunger, and Nation-Building in Modern India" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2014). A prescient contemporary account is Wolf Ladejinsky, *The Green Revolution in Bihar, the Kosi Area: A Field Trip & the Green Revolution in Punjab: A Field Trip* (New York: Agricultural Development Council, 1976); the official perception of these transformations is reflected in Research and Policy Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, *The Causes and Nature of Current Agrarian Tensions* (New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 1969).

184. See Tom Brass, ed., *New Farmers' Movements in India* (Ilford, Essex: Frank Cass, 1995); Akhil Gupta, "Agrarian Populism in the Development of a Modern Nation (India)," in *International Development and the Social Sciences*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 320–44.