

Concern With It Neglects More Fundamental Issues

The Third World Nations Must Take New Tack To Gain Self-Sufficiency

About the same time as western 'democracies' discovered that they were dumping garbage into their living space, they also noted that the world's population was growing rather rapidly - at a rate of over two people per second. Further, being the observant technocratic statisticians that they were they also realized that almost all of this growth was taking place in the underdeveloped countries. Thus for perhaps the first time they were able to explain the poverty of these people without resorting to the innate laziness, shiftlessness, and stupidity of the poor. After all only nasties like John Birchers and K.K. Klansmen use terms like that. Since they were equal to us there had to be some other explanation.

And the population explosion was it. If only these people would quit acting like rabbits then everything would be hunky-dory. And so by 1975 a major portion of 'aid' programmes are going towards population control efforts. Of course such a solution ignores a few rather minor problems such as contradictions within the capitalist system or even more basic ones like the doubtfulness of Spaceship Earth's life support systems to handle the large increase in resource consumption and effluent production that such a solution would imply.

To deal with just one difficulty, one of the most fundamental laws of demography states in effect that as a people initially comes in contact with modern technology and industry, death

rates decline while birth rates remain at their former high levels, thus creating a condition of rapid population expansion. All presently developed countries went through this stage. As technology results in increasingly high living standards, the birth rates decline to match the death rates. Again, all developed countries have gone through this process as well.

Many theories have been developed to explain this process and one of these is given in the adjoining article on OXFAM, but suffice it to for our purposes that



THIS IS AN UNEDUCATED III WORLD MAN



THIS IS A TRADITIONALLY EDUCATED III WORLD MAN



THIS IS A III WORLD MAN EDUCATED FOR FREEDOM



it exists and therefore any attempts to negate it will inevitably fail. An example is the famous Indian fiasco. The corollary of this fact is, of course, that any one-dimensional attempt at population control not only will fail but also will waste desperately needed human and financial resources.

Since underdeveloped countries cannot slow their population growth and then develop then they must develop in exactly the same way as the presently developed countries did - in the context of a rapidly expanding population.

Yet all this is berating the point. Why have all efforts to develop consistently failed since about 1900? What is it that prevents underdeveloped nations in their drive for self-sufficiency? After all, in many ways the present developed countries had less going for them than the ones which are underdeveloped. They had to create their own technology instead of being able to import one; they had to follow a road that no one had yet travelled while Third World Nations have a ready-made model to imitate. Must we go back to the John Birch theory? If we do not wish to do

so then the only alternative is to assume that the world has changed in some way in the past hundred years, in a way which relates directly to the problem we are now discussing. The obvious difference is that there were no developed nations when, for example the United States developed and that therefore when it developed it did not have competition from others who had a considerable advantage in terms of resources, organization, and sheer size.

Any first year business student will tell you that the capitalist system bases itself on competition between different corporations and in the larger sense, nations. Now, in any case where the available resources (of all types) are so disparate as they are between a trillion dollar post-industrial economy and a million dollar pre-industrial one, there can be little doubt as to

thing with which to obtain them.

Thus the conclusion has to be reached that in order to break out of this vicious cycle, the underdeveloped countries must break a series of relationships which give them nothing but a continuance of their present miserable existence. In other words these nations are playing the role of a modern-day Esau - giving away their birthrights for a bowl of potage.

It is significant that the only countries which appear to have a chance of becoming developed (other than the odd American anti-communist showcase like Taiwan and South Korea) are precisely those that have attempted to break this Imperialistic relationship - China and Cuba. It may be argued that these peoples are not free. Whatever may be said about freedom in a communist society, it must never be forgotten that to a person whose very existence is in doubt every day, freedom is a meaningless word. To him

which will win out.

Further because the latter is so desperate to gain foreign exchange for the necessities of life (e.g. food) it will sell the few assets it does have for next to nothing in return for foodstuffs. Thus an economy is created where few materials are exchanged for food. While both commodities, until recently, have been extremely cheap, the point of view that both sides are thus obtaining a bargain is at best misguided.

In effect the underdeveloped countries are giving away a non-renewable resource made by the crudest of methods in return for a renewable one made with the resources of a modern industrial state. Thus the time will come when these countries have bartered away their only assets in return for - what? They will still need foodstuffs but will have no-

freedom is something much more simple than the right to speak out in public. It merely means a full belly and a roof over his head. Until those very basic necessities are provided the terms which we traditionally use to describe freedom are nothing but a piece of issue-clouding obscurantism.

Incidentally, these people never have conceived of material well-being as meaning two cars with a third of the way and I doubt very much that the people who created our society did either. It is absurd that one-third of the world's population wallows in luxury while the other two-thirds does not have enough to eat. When a third world leader talks of destroying Imperialism this is what he means, not the direct political control of his government

Dave MacRae

