



Ten Days

TEN DAYS FOR WORLD DEVELOPMENT is a joint development education programme of the Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United Churches of Canada. Its goal is to bring about changes in Canadian public policy which will broaden the opportunities for human growth, especially by the peoples of developing countries. TEN DAYS seeks to achieve this goal by

- mobilizing public opinion favourable to such changes
- clearly demonstrating positive public opinion to policy makers
- countering resistance to these changes.

In this, its fifth year TEN DAYS continues its support of the international movement towards a "New International Economic Order". Its focus for 1977 is "FOOD".



Here we want to share with you six myths that keep us locked into a misunderstanding of the problem of world hunger. We also wish to commend the alternative view that emerges once we begin to grasp the real issues. Our hope is to help anchor the hunger movement with an unequivocal and cogent analysis.

MYTH ONE: People are hungry because of scarcity - both of food and agricultural land.

The truth is that there is enough arable land in the world to feed 40 billion people using present methods. In some of the hungriest countries agricultural production has increased but so has the number of hungry people, because the land is in the hands of a few who view agriculture as a big business and therefore, grow luxury items for export.

MYTH TWO: A hungry world simply cannot afford the luxury of justice for the small farmer.

A study of several countries concludes that the small farmer is commonly more productive, often many times more productive, than the larger farmer.

MYTH THREE: We are faced with a sad trade-off. Population pressure means we must now use marginal land even at the risk of irreparable erosion.

A closer look at the land use in Africa and elsewhere reveals that it is not people's food needs that threaten to destroy the environment, but other forces: land monopolizers, colonial patterns of cash cropping, food speculation, and profit seeking by the elites. Cutting the number of hungry in half tomorrow would not stop any of these forces.

MYTH FOUR: Hunger is a contest between the Rich World and the Poor World.

This kind of thinking makes the hungry appear as a threat to the material well being of the majority of people in rich countries. In truth, hunger will never be addressed until the average citizens in rich countries can see that the hungry abroad are our allies, not our enemies.

The real enemies are the multi-national agribusiness firms which are creating a single world agricultural system in which they exercise integrated control over all stages of production from farm to consumer.

MYTH FIVE: An under-developed country's best hope for development is to export those crops in which it has a natural advantage and use the earnings to import food and industrial goods.

In truth, the same land that grows cocoa, coffee, rubber, tea and sugar could grow an incredible diversity of nutritious crops—grains, high protein legumes, vegetables and fruits. The people who need food are not the same who benefit from foreign exchange earned by agricultural exports. The food which is often imported is not the basic staples but food which is geared to the tastes of the wealthier people in the urban areas while the poor are deprived of the land.



MYTH SIX: Hunger should be overcome by re-distributing food.

The problem with this is that food redistribution is seen as the solution to hunger. We have to come to a different understanding. Who controls the land determines who can grow food, what is grown and where it goes. Who can grow: a few or all who need to? What is grown: luxury non-food or basic staples? Where does it go: to the hungry or the world's well-feed? The real question is, How can people everywhere begin to democratize the control of food resources?

