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BASIC HUMAN NEEDS:
THE POLITICS OF MOBILIZATION

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This paper is being circulated in a pre-publication form to elicit comments from readers and generate dialogue on the subject at this stage of the research.

This paper, first presented at the GPID III meeting, Geneva, 2-8 October 1978, can be considered a contribution to the Needs sub-project of the GPID project.

Models of Development.

"...the Feuerbachian theory of morals fares like all its predecessors. It is designed to suit all periods, all peoples, and all conditions, and precisely for that reason it is never and nowhere applicable. It remains, as regards the real world, as powerless as Kant's categorical imperative. In reality every class, every profession, has its own morality, and even this it violates when it can do so with impunity. And love which is to right all, manifests itself in wars, altercations, law-suits, domestic broils, divorces and every possible exploitation of one by another".

(Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy: Marx and Engels, Selected Works. Lawrence and Wishart, London 1970. p.607).

Theories of third world development have in the main concentrated upon economic growth measured in terms such as per capita income, on the assumption that growth would ensure that human needs would be met and the general quality of life raised in poor countries. It has become apparent that this is not the case: generalized economic growth does not necessarily raise the quality of life of even a minority in the third world, although if it has any beneficial effect at all it is only on minorities, leaving the majority without benefits. Aggregate indicators of development do not reflect distributional realities, and in no way provide for a raising of the quality of life for the majority in the third world.

Lisk identifies three models of development on the basis of differences in objectives and policy emphases: growth oriented, employment oriented, and poverty oriented models. (1)

Growth oriented development models emphasise the need to increase output within an economy by increasing the rate of capital formation. The models assume that if overall economic growth is promoted the distribution of the benefits of this growth will be distributed to all social groups through a automatic "trickle down" effect (analogous to the "invisible hand" of classical economics).

The models require a withholding of present consumption even for the purpose of meeting obvious social needs, and a distribution of resources away from those likely to consume towards those likely to invest: in other words the models are severely regressive in distributional terms.

The consequence is that in countries where these models have been applied:

"...far from trickling down...modern sector gains are being withheld from the traditional sector which provides a livelihood for the majority of the population". (2)

The result is that:

"...significant growth rates have actually resulted in a decrease in the share of income accruing to the poorest groups". (my emphasis) (3)

Not suprisingly these models have entirely failed in providing a solution to unemployment and poverty in the third world.

Employment oriented development models reflect a definition of development which is broader than the simplistic economic market orientation of growth models. This broader definition admits to the fact that development is social and political as well as economic and includes:

"...improvement in the living conditions of individuals in addition to economic growth. Employment promotion is seen as a principal means of spreading the benefits of economic growth more evenly throughout the economy". (4)

Employment models like growth models attempt to provide for meeting human needs *indirectly*, in this case through job creation in labour intensive rather than capital intensive production technologies. If the indirect mechanism fails, therefore, human needs remain unmet because there is no supporting activity approaching those needs directly.

The assumption that it is possible to achieve gains in both current output and employment by substituting labour for capital appears not to be supported empirically. This is especially the case if there is a need for foreign currency where the expansion of manufacturing for export may call for international levels of efficiency not compatible with labour-intensive production methods in a developing country. For this reason in empirical development situations employment models have been as unsuccessful in overcoming general poverty and unemployment as have growth models.

Poverty eradication development models forge an explicit link between economic and political policies. Despite the enormous productive power of capitalist economic structures, their importation

into third world countries has not resulted in any automatic reduction of poverty or unemployment. Poverty models therefore replace the automaticity assumptions of growth models with a direct policy attack on poverty and attendant problems. Poverty models include a central distributional element in addressing their analysis to those groups who are experiencing the worst forms of poverty because of their position outside the main economically organized sectors: the self-employed, the subsistence farmers, or those in the urban informal sector.

Poverty models are concerned to raise the household income of target groups to a minimum level through improved access to productive assets, employment, and other services whose lack is thought to be responsible for keeping the incomes of the poor at a low level. The credibility of the models depends on adequate employment opportunities either being available, or being capable of creation in the third world, together with the possibility of actually increasing economic growth while effectively redistributing resources and opportunities to the poor.

Poverty models are often substantively the same as employment models in terms of policy and implementation. Like employment models also, if the indirect mechanism for reducing poverty fails, that is the redistribution of productive assets, activities, and other resources in order to raise household income, the goal of poverty eradication cannot be met.

For poverty models to be effective economic and social policies derived from them have to be located in a political context. If poverty eradication involves the redistribution of resources and opportunities within a society resistance can be anticipated from those individuals and groups who are likely to lose by that redistribution. As Lisk points out:

"It is no good planning to eradicate poverty on the basis of an analytical framework that assumes total receptivity to proposed changes if the prevailing political and social structures are characterized by contending factions and interest groups which stand to gain or lose from the proposed policies and the changes they entail in socio-economic status and political influence". (5)

This political dimension is particularly crucial given that there are too few employment opportunities in the third world for these to form the basis of increased earnings for poverty eradication, so that this goal can in effect only be achieved by a redistribution of social resources and opportunities.

Basic Human Needs and Development.

It is the acknowledgement of the failure of existing development models, together with a realization that development, if it is to be achieved within the next generation, is a social and political process, not merely an economic one, that has led to the emergence of the Basic Needs Approach to development.

The ILO has endorsed a Basic Needs Approach as a major contribution to the work of the UN in the remaining years of the Second Development Decade, and as the basis of the Third Development Decade in the 1980's.

The conclusions of the 1976 World Employment Conference state the requirements for satisfying human needs within one generation:

1. *"Strategies and national development plans and policies should include explicitly as a priority objective the promotion of employment and the satisfaction of the basic needs of each countries population". (6)*
2. *"...often these measures will require a transformation of social structures including an initial redistribution of assets". (7)*
3. *"...the Programme of Action puts emphasis on the participation of the people, through organizations of their own choice in making the decisions which affect them". (8)*
4. *"...in view of the highly hierarchical social and economic structure of agrarian societies in some developing countries, measures of redistributive justice are likely to be thwarted unless backed by organizations of rural workers". (9)*

The analysis starts with human needs and the satisfaction of these needs becomes the objective of development. This is achieved directly rather than through a vague goal of long term growth. There is no longer a reliance upon the impersonal forces of the market to meet needs through the working of the invisible hand of economic change and progress. It is accepted that controlling development at the level of the economic system is uncertain, and long term planning almost impossible; particularly in the third world countries where

the local social and economic system is so fundamentally tied into the international order. So the approach becomes local, short run, incremental, and highly pragmatic.

The concept of needs is indicative of a powerful reorientation of development thinking. This reorientation also characterizes many other areas of social and economic planning in social environments of increasing uncertainty and turbulence. In turbulent social environments the task of planning which is to reduce uncertainty, can only be accomplished with a local, short run, pragmatic and incremental approach, if even then.

The concept of needs underlies the new development thinking theoretically, analytically, and epistemologically. As such, even as it promises a new more human orientation to development, it raises important issues of a political kind. The concept of needs makes us aware more than ever before of the intensely political nature of development theories, even when they are presented as consensus seeking (and achieving) technical frameworks.

The Need for Needs.

The concept of human need cannot be separated from the way that need is expressed in different cultures, and the means that are adopted for satisfying that need. Empirically needs are expressed and satisfied in a great variety of ways, even though, at a rather abstract and conceptual level, this variety may be encapsulated within general categorizations.

The variety of expressions and satisfactions of needs is apparent at the level of basic human needs, and even more startling in its diversity at the level of other needs which, (while we may avoid ranking them as higher needs, which implies they can be ignored until other basic needs are met), can at least analytically be separated from the more material requirements of human life.

Diversity of needs in situations of limited resources located in hierarchial and inegalitarian systems of social and economic relationships, (the universal structural norm) provides for actual and potential conflicts of interests. In situations of scarce

resources it is not possible to satisfy everyone's needs at the same time and at the same level unless everyone requires extraordinarily little and is prepared and able to be self sufficient. This is particularly the case in situations of considerable inequality where the satisfaction of even the most basic (or most clearly understood) needs of the poorest must mean that the position of the richest changes, (materially, psychologically, emotionally or in other ways).

In developing countries the needs of the indigenous elite or the expatriate community are different from and *at odds with*, the needs of the majority of the population contained in the subsistence part of a dual economy. Once this is said, needs can be redefined as *interests*, that is those aspects of life and life chances that groups and individuals will fight hard to either protect or promote.

The concept of need as opposed to that of interest tends to be liberal and optimistic. It assumes that there are empirically verifiable requirements of the human condition which are general to all men and women under all circumstances. It also assumes that because the requirements are general and empirical an incontrovertible argument can be made to satisfy those needs. It is for this reason that so much current development needs discussion concerns issues such as nutrition: we can say that human beings need to eat to survive (an empirical absolute), therefore we must find ways to feed them. This ignores two equally empirical facts: (i) what will count as adequate feeding will depend on the person's position in a social opportunity system - (even though we may say 2,500 calories a day is required for adequate nutrition, most people will not get this amount because for them to do so impinges on the access to resources of others); (ii) as a corollary to this, even if a person needs to be fed, whether or not he *will* be fed depends on the judgements of those who can make decisions within the social and economic context in which he is located.

Nutrition at the minimum adequate level, can begin to look like the level of subsistence for maintaining a population or labour force at the position of optimum exploitative potential. Basic needs models, unlike poverty models for example, are not concerned only with minimum or subsistence levels, but if some higher level is recommended it is apparent that the level actually achieved by the population depends either upon what they can *command* or what is doled out to them by those above them who command.

The Components of Needs.

Above a minimum survival level it is almost impossible to itemize let alone rank human needs in any *universal* way. For this reason lists of human needs are invariably highly selective or highly abstract: when abstract they give little guide to action, and when selective the clearly correspond to the value judgements of the composer of the list.

Basic needs are commonly taken to include both goods and services on the assumption that:

"...there are certain minimum levels of personal consumption and access to public services that can be regarded as everywhere essential to a decent standard of living, and in these cases it is possible to define targets in physical units on a global basis". (10)

The ILO include two elements in Basic Needs Programmes:

"First, they include certain minimum requirements of a family for private consumption: adequate food, shelter and clothing, as well as certain household equipment and furniture. Second, they include essential services provided by and for the community at large, such as safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport and health, education and cultural facilities". (11)

The Centre for Research and Documentation on Consumer Affairs (CREDOC) in France identifies three kinds of needs: *elementary needs*, such as food, clothing, toiletries etc; *environmental needs*, such as housing, leisure, transport; and *needs related to the person*, such as education, sports, health and cultural provisions. (12)

Bradshaw (13) distinguishes four basic types of needs:

1. *Normative need*, which is the bureaucratic welfare determination of basic levels of adequacy;
2. *felt need*, the stated wants of those for whom the services are offered;
3. *expressed need*, in which a need actually provokes action to demand services;
4. *comparative need*, which is the identification of the comparative disadvantage of one area relative to another.

Even in this apparently concrete form the definition of needs together with a consideration of the appropriate level of their satisfaction

is highly problematic. At a more abstract level the concept becomes more elegant but, naturally, even less operational.

Carlos Mallman in his holistic approach to identifying human needs demonstrates in the following table (table 1.) the proliferation of the categories that can occur in academic formulations of needs (14).

Similarly, Johan Galtung explores some definitions of needs and the services that might meet them (table 2.) (15).

The first point about these latter two formulations is that they are in Bradshaw's terms, lists of normative needs: that is needs which have been identified on an a priori basis by bureaucratic, welfare or academic elites, and not needs that have been identified by and are rooted in the real life situations of human individuals and groups. (16). Secondly, as an extension of this, the needs are a result of a logical intellectual exercise in model building, aiming at elegance and inclusiveness. This exercise may in practical terms be antithetical to action to satisfy needs. For instance Carlos Mallman writes that in identifying needs which leads to the avoidance of disease:

"...we have to know and classify all the diseases and determine the requirements to be fulfilled in order to avoid them". (17)

This is clearly an intellectual model building requirement not a necessary basis for action to meet needs, for the magnitude of such a task would guarantee that if action had to wait for it to be completed, needs would never be met.

It is of course essential to distinguish between analysis aimed at increasing understanding, and programmes of action designed to bring about some change in the world. These need frameworks are clearly designed to increase understanding, not as programmes of action. In needs analysis, however, which has the concrete objective of improving the lives of the poorest of the world, and which is above all practical and *participatory* the social and political product of model building should be a major consideration in evaluating the models and the methodologies for deriving them.

Thirdly, and obviously related to the previous point, the formulations are extremely abstract while appearing to be concrete, in that general categories which are given are empirically operationalized in a

Table 1.

Classification of needs according to categories of satisfiers which satisfy them to categories of needs		Personal		Extra-personal	
		Psychosomatic or Intra-human	Psychosocial or Inter-human	Psychohabitational or Extra-human	Extra-human
Living	Subsistence	Maintenance	Nutrition Rest Exercise	Earning-Work Reproduction Social Habitability	Shelter Clothing Physical Habitability
		Protection	Prevention Cure Defense	Prevention Restitution Defense	Prevention Restitution Defense
		Love	Belief in oneself, selflove, Identity	Friendship, Sexual and Family love	Rooting, Attachment
Living Together	Belongingness	Understanding	Psychologization Introspection Study	Socialization Education, Information, Observation	Habitatization Observation
		Government	Liberty Independence Autonomy	Autonomous Participation in decisions	Autonomous Participation in management
Growth	Esteem	Recreation	Self-recreation	Social recreation	Recreation in the habitat
		Creation	Creation by oneself	Creation of social environments	Creation of habitational environments
Perfection	Renewal	Meaning	Self-realization	Historic, Prospective and Religious Meaning	Weltanschauung
		Synergy	Authenticity, Equanimity, Security, Humility	Solidarity, Justice, Altruism, Generosity, Responsibility, Adaptability	Beauty Ecological equilibrium
Perfection	Transcendence	Meaning	Self-realization	Historic, Prospective and Religious Meaning	Weltanschauung
		Synergy	Authenticity, Equanimity, Security, Humility	Solidarity, Justice, Altruism, Generosity, Responsibility, Adaptability	Beauty Ecological equilibrium
Perfection	Maturity	Meaning	Self-realization	Historic, Prospective and Religious Meaning	Weltanschauung
		Synergy	Authenticity, Equanimity, Security, Humility	Solidarity, Justice, Altruism, Generosity, Responsibility, Adaptability	Beauty Ecological equilibrium

Table 2.

ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF LIFE PROJECT

Preliminary list of basic human needs -

as possible guide for cost-benefit analysis of ways of life

SECURITY NEEDS (survival needs) - to avoid violence Goods/Services held to be relevant in some societies

- against individual violence (assault, torture) POLICE
- against collective violence (wars, internal, external) MILITARY

WELFARE NEEDS (sufficiency needs) - to avoid misery

- for nutrition, water, air, sleep FOOD, WATER, AIR
- for movement, excretion
- for protection against excessive strain LABORSAVING DEVICES
- for protection against climate CLOTHES, SHELTER
- for protection against diseases MEDICAL TREATMENT
- for self-expression, dialogue. education SCHOOLING

IDENTITY NEEDS (needs for closeness) - to avoid alienation

- for self-expression, creativity, praxis, work JOBS
- for self-actuation, for realizing potentials JOBS + LEISURE
- for well-being, happiness, joy RECREATION, FAMILY
- for being active and subject, not being passive, client, object RECREATION, FAMILY
- for challenge and new experiences RECREATION
- for affection, love, sex; friends, spouse, offspring PRIMARY GROUPS
- for roots, belongingness, support, esteem; association with similar humans SECONDARY GROUPS
- for understanding social forces; for social transparence POLITICAL ACTIVITY
- for partnership with nature NATURAL PARKS
- for a sense of purpose, of meaning with life; closeness to the transcendental, transpersonal RELIGION, IDEOLOGY

FREEDOM NEEDS (freedom to choice, options) - to avoid repression

- choice in receiving and expressing info and opinion COMMUNICATION
- choice of people and places to visit and be visited TRANSPORTATION
- choice in consciousness-formation MEETINGS, MEDIA
- choice in mobilization ORGANIZATION, PARTY
- choice in confrontations ELECTIONS
- choice of occupation VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS
- choice of place to live LABOR MARKET
- choice of spouse MARRIAGE MARKET
- choice of consumer goods (SUPER-)MARKET
- choice of way of life ?

Beyond the absolute minimum where security and welfare needs are concerned there is no built-in assumption of any hierarchy here; all needs are seen as basic. Nor is there any assumption that the goods/services in fact do meet or satisfy the needs; often they do but only up to a certain point beyond which there is over-consumption.

great diversity of ways culturally as well as individually.

Fourthly, and most importantly, in all these formulations it is important to realize that need is not being used as an objective statement of the full range of social diversity in social life-styles and opportunities. Rather the concept of needs is being used selectively to *endorse* certain needs and *reject* others. Needs such as competition, domination and material achievement are often defined within these frameworks as non-needs, or a simply excluded from the framework altogether. And yet competition, domination and material achievement are quite clearly very strong survival needs for certain social groups in certain social systems, if those groups wish to protect their interests within those social systems.

Also, one could add to these frameworks other needs which, also a priori, could be said to play a major role in human social life, and which, depending upon context and conditions, can contribute constructively to that life.

Needs of this sort might be: challenge, threat, aggression, frustration, necessity (the "mother of invention"), excitement, stimulation, uncertainty, loneliness, marginality, ontological insecurity, fear and anger (and maybe violence too). Not only may these needs be constructive socially and personally, but in real life they may actually be the operational need component of abstract needs such as self-realization, authenticity and so on.

Needs as Social Criticism.

Decisions about what will be legitimately accepted as needs indicates that basic needs analysis is not an objective technical framework for determining the diversity of human experience as the goal of development. Rather it is a highly selective value based device for *evaluating* (often implicitly) social systems. Needs categories are defined by values, these values place certain needs rather than others as developmental goals, and accordingly decide to promote the satisfaction of these needs *above* other needs and interests. Both the needs which are promoted and those which are rejected are rooted in concrete social groups and are therefore *interests*. This process is concerned to advance the interests of certain groups *at the expense of others*.

The only alternative to this formulation is to see needs as a latter day expression of an ethical categorical imperative: a universally valid basis for moral and political action which will: (a) be convincing to all reasonable men everywhere, and (b) make the world a *generally* better place if adhered to. This view finds its expression in such powerful movements as 19th Century British Utilitarian philosophy, and contemporary welfare economics with its persuasive consensus seeking tool of cost-benefit analysis.

The Utilitarians conceived of a felicific calculus, a numerical expression of human needs (pleasure and pain), which at the end of a process of addition and subtraction would produce guides to social action in situations of conflict that were to the optimum benefit of the *whole* community. Similarly, economic cost-benefit analysis assumes it is possible to add up the costs and benefits of social actions in any situation where there is a conflict of interest and arrive at a solution which is optimal to the *whole* society.

The reality of social decision making is quite different. In the real world what happens is that in *any* decisions some people lose and some people gain, and in general the gainers are the strong and the losers are the weak. Cost-benefit analysis is a technological edifice on which is inscribed the age old truth that from those that have not, even what they have shall be taken away. (18)

Needs analysis needs to be clearly understood as a technique for identifying the interests of those groups we wish to support with our analysis against the conflicting interests of opposing groups. The promotion of sectional interests in development is a political action, and the concept of basic needs should not be allowed to mystify the political nature of this activity.

This is clearly the case with the frameworks of needs of Galtung and Mallman: empirically it is unlikely that everyone in any social context could maximise on all the need dimensions simultaneously. Scarce resources available for making the categories operational and fulfilling needs, mean a real or potential conflict about need fulfillment amongst and between those seeking it. Also some ways of satisfying needs are in conflict with the needs of others, e.g. domination as a means of self expression or self fulfilment requires the existence of groups or individuals to be dominated. Defining

domination as a non-need will not prevent it occurring as a mode of self expression, and whenever it occurs a decision has to be taken about whether or not to support the interests of those who are subjected to domination.

Needs and Mobilization.

Meeting basic needs requires not only that those who suffer from unmet needs are allowed to *identify* those needs themselves, but they are able to mobilize to *promote* those needs in the face of opposition from others whose interests are threatened by these changes.

The ILO makes this point concretely in the context of third world countries:

"The main thrust of a basic needs strategy must be to ensure that there is effective mass participation of the rural population in the political process in order to safeguard their interests. In view of the highly hierarchical social and economic structure of agrarian societies in some developing countries, measures of redistributive justice are likely to be thwarted unless backed by organizations of rural workers". (my emphasis) (19).

In the national context of third world countries the ILO acknowledge the need to build a power base for the disadvantaged in the struggle for social and economic advancement. In this the ILO drops the rhetoric about needs, and speaks bluntly of the *interests* of rural peasants. Recommendation 149 of the 1975 ILO Conference concerns organizations of rural workers and their role in the social and economic development. The recommendation notes that:

"...it is imperative for rural workers to be given every encouragement to develop free and viable organizations capable of protecting and furthering the interest of their members and ensuring their effective contribution to economic and social development". (my emphasis) (20).

Rural workers' organizations, it is suggested, should represent the workers' interests by engaging in planning development programmes at local and national levels, providing an educational base for workers, and in general mobilizing to improve the resources and services available to the workers as well as ensuring that social and economic development is responsive to the workers' needs. Where such organizations do not exist, governments are recommended to provide the financial and administrative support to foster them.

The Social Audit.

Basic needs analysis in industrialized societies has also been linked to organizations of workers or the disadvantaged, capable of mobilizing politically in support of their interests. In the U.K. it has given rise to the interesting idea of the social audit. The social audit is a practical device which corresponds to the following five characteristics of a Basic Need analysis:

1. it is need oriented;
2. it relies upon a definition of needs and values endogenous to a group or community;
3. it emphasises self-reliance;
4. it is ecologically sound;
5. it is based upon the requirement for structural transformations, based upon group mobilization. (21).

The social audit is a broad based evaluation tool for social decision making, which takes into account all aspects of a decision, not merely those that are economically sound, as narrowly defined, or those that correspond to certain powerful vested interests. In development projects this requires a consideration of all relevant factors including social, economic, political and ecological issues. It is a historically conscious method in that it considers the future as an area of possible impacts of present decisions.

Unlike economic evaluation techniques such as cost-benefit analysis the social audit does not suppose that decisions based upon it will be consensual. Rather it assumes the need for disadvantaged groups to mobilize in the defense of their interests *identified by themselves* through the social audit. As Barratt Brown and Bodington argue, the social audit has two aspects:

- a. *educational: to learn about situations through the audit;*
- b. *agitation and transformation, for:*

"Until groups of citizens seize upon particular examples of abuse and forms of waste, and demand their correction, the will for change will remain undeveloped...The conditions for a revolutionary change are not only the breakdown of old ways of doing things, but the crystallization of groups of human beings around a new way of doing them".
(my emphasis) (22)

As Barratt Brown and Bodington also point out, industrialized societies often have organized groups who carry out social audits and then act

politically to promote their interests as they define them operationally through the audit.

"The trade unions are key groups in this respect today, because of the increased strength of their controls over the workplace conditions and their growing aspirations to extend such controls into full workers self-management". (23)

Third world countries rarely have such groups already in existence. The disadvantaged in these countries are not just relatively impoverished, uneducated, and powerless, but absolutely so, existing at a minimum subsistence level with no access to resources or services. In addition, most third world Governments are unlikely to deliberately encourage in their poor the capacity to mobilize in defense of their interests, because this is unlikely to be consistent with the interests of the middle and upper class ruling elites. For this reason, recommendations of U.N. agencies are only translated into action for change with the greatest difficulty, if at all.

Human Needs in the International Social System.

The political struggle to change the nature of social stratification and the distribution of resources, is also an international one. The constraints to achieving a new international economic order are the same as those on achieving new national economic orders: powerful vested interest. The ILO Conference*reached unanimity on the principle of human needs, but foundered on almost all important issues concerned with making the principle operational. Major amongst these was the role of the multi-national corporations. As the ILO rather coyly conclude after a discussion of these and related issues:

"The (World Employment Conference: 1976) was unable to reach a consensus on the role of the multi-national enterprises in developing countries" (24). "The employers' group wished it to be placed on record that they regarded the section on international co-operation as being outside the proper competence of the ILO, and as being inappropriate for comment by employers". (25)

In adopting a basic needs analysis of development it is essential not to fall into the trap of previous economic and sociological development theories which conceived of societies as being coterminous with nation states.(26). The reality of the modern world is that nations states are units in an international economic and social system, and that when dealing with any of the important aspects of

* ILO World Employment Conference 1976.

national development, economic, cultural, political or intellectual, an understanding of the working of this system is essential. This is true not only of developing but developed countries: the references to international factors by the governments of rich countries in order to explain to furious electorates the reasons for unemployment and inflation, are not simply political rationalizations but reflect the growing interpenetrations of the international social system.

Ul Haq gives a clear statement of the analogy of national and international social change to meet human needs:

"There is sufficient concrete evidence to show that poor nations cannot get an equitable deal from the present international economic structures- much the same way as the poorest sections of society within a country, and for much the same reasons. Once there are major disparities in income distribution within a country, the market mechanism ceases to function either efficiently or equitably since it is weighted heavily in favour of the purchasing power in the hands of the rich. Those who have the money can make the market bend to their will. This is even more true at the international level since there is no world government and none of the usual mechanisms existing within countries which create pressures for redistribution of income and wealth". (27).

The basic needs approach to the international social system has two aspects. Firstly, only by applying the same analysis of needs, problems and solutions to the international social and economic order can poor countries achieve the redistribution of international resources which may be required to sustain economic and social development to meet human needs within one generation. Secondly, it may be that the poor *within* poor countries may first have to produce *nationally* institutional changes, redistribution of resources, and redefinition of development needs as a basis for mobilizing in the international situation. The reason for this is that the coalition of interests between the western oriented elites of the poor countries and the ruling class of the rich countries leads to a greater unity of purpose between these groups than between the elite and poor of the third world. This unity of purpose means the third world elites retard change at the national level and obstruct it at the international level.

Whatever the preconditions of a basic needs approach to the international social system, with its requirements of institutional change and the redistribution of power & resources the organizational base will be the same: the collective mobilization of the poor in their confrontations or dialogues with the rich. The obvious model

for such collective mobilization is the OPEC grouping of oil producing countries since its inception in 1973, although OPEC also demonstrates that mobilization *internationally* does not automatically produce immediate economic or political redistribution *within* cooperating nation states.

One should not be too optimistic in assessing the probability of a third world unity, as is indicated by the tensions within the Arab world and OPEC, despite a clear and overriding single common economic interest. Also, despite the creation of bodies such as the Third World Forum, and the development since 1973 of the U.N. debate on a new international economy, with attendant declarations, the commitment to the new world economic order remains entirely *rhetorical* on the part of the rich nations. The visible weakening of even this rhetorical commitment of the rich countries when OPEC demands began to bite hard, shows that when the stakes are down those who possess advantages and resources are most unlikely to give them up voluntarily unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the risks in doing so are greater than the benefits.

Conclusion.

Popular participation and the mobilization of the disadvantaged both within poor nations, and of the poor nations confronting the rich is an *essential* requirement of a basic human needs approach to development. It is this requirement indeed that distinguishes a basic needs model of development from previous models, including the obviously kindred poverty eradication models. Political mobilization as a central feature of human needs analysis is frequently absent from frameworks employing this model: all too often such frameworks reflect a bureaucratic, welfare, or academic concept of human needs which is distanced from active popular processes for defining and meeting those needs. Many human needs frameworks seem to be based on the assumption that the real need of the poor and the starving is for elegant models of human needs with endless theoretical sophistications. Presumably these classifications of needs are supposed somehow to just simply fit into the real world, automatically making it a better place for the disadvantaged to live in, (a human needs "invisible hand").

In reality, the needs of the poor are either starkly apparent or amenable to easy discovery. The reason why needs are not met is not

that they are not known, or not adequately integrated into analytical frameworks: it is because the poor cannot yet force an improvement in their condition and the rich will not grant it. It is not an intellectual or logical problem, but a political and practical one. Until this is firmly established in the consciousness of those undertaking needs analysis, together with the only real solution which is the political action of the poor on their own behalf, needs analysis will only be a liberal and optimistic intellectual game. At present this game is being played at a furious rate as Ul Haq somewhat cryptically describes:

"The pendulum has begun to swing - in many ways I feel it may have swung to far already since the concern for the bottom 40% is in danger of becoming an intellectual and political fashion rather than a serious policy issue. Conferences and seminars are being organized every day, with such breathless rapidity that almost the same participants stagger from one place to the next bemoaning the fate of the 'by-passed people', 'the marginal men', 'the bottom 40%', 'the forgotten majority', etc, in the relative comfortable and exotic surroundings in which these conferences are increasingly held". (28)

If intellectuals and development analysts wish to be effective as well as fashionable in a needs orientation, their need is to put themselves at the service of the poor in their fight to mobilize in defining and promoting their own interests.

Mass mobilization to identify, promote, and defend the group interests of the poor is the main hope for an effective basic human needs approach. At the same time is that aspect of it which can only be achieved through intense social struggle, and consequently may consign it to failure. Mobilization, economic growth, and structural transformation seem unlikely either to all occur together spontaneously in the third world, or to be actively promoted by many third world elites. Without these changes, however, the Third Development Decade of the United Nations based on the human needs approach, will fail as abysmally as the preceding development decades have done.

POSTSCRIPT.



Requiem For Needs Analysis.

NOTES

1. Lisk, 1977.
2. Ibid., p. 178.
3. Ibid., p. 177.
4. Ibid., p. 179.
5. Ibid., p. 185.
6. ILO, 1977, p. 13.
7. Ibid., p. 13.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p. 14.
10. Lisk, 1977, p. 186.
11. ILO, 1977, p. 24.
12. Cited in Coates, 1976, p. 77.
13. Cited in Coates, 1976, pp. 78-79.
14. Mallman, 1977, p. 8.9.
15. Galtung (no date), mimeo to GPID/UNU network.
16. Bradshaw, 1972, cited in Coates, 1976, pp. 78-79.
17. Mallman, 1977, p. 3.1.
18. These issues are discussed in some detail in relation to physical planning evaluation and decision procedures in Healey, 1977.
19. ILO, 1977, p. 27.
20. ILO, 1975, p. 1.
21. Sterky, 1978, pp. 4-5.
22. Barratt Brown and Bodington, 1976, p. 106.
23. Ibid.
24. ILO, 1977, p. 44.
25. Ibid., p. 30.
26. This issue is explored at length in Hoogvelt, 1976. It is of some importance because of the apparent similarity of basic needs analysis to the concept of functional imperatives in functionalist theory. The particular weakness of functionalist development theory is that it defines a society as coterminous with a nation state and lacks any analysis of international social systems.
27. Ul Haq, 1976, p. 154.
28. Ibid., p. 10.

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