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## CONTENTS

The originality of a copy: CEPAL and the idea of development <i>Fernando H. Cardoso</i>	7
Preconditions and propositions for 'Another development' <i>Marshall Wolfe</i>	41
Fiscal policy and integrated development <i>Federico J. Herschel</i>	67
Notes on the future of the western democracies <i>José Medina Echavarría</i>	113
Comments by John Durston	138
Comments by Carlo Geneletti	140
Comments by Eduardo Palma	144
Comments by Gregorio Weinberg	146
Comments by Marshall Wolfe	149
Small nations and the 'constrictive' style of development <i>Carlos Real de Azúa</i>	153
The deficit in urban services: a structural limitation? <i>Francisco Barreto and Roy T. Gilbert</i>	175
On the article by Raúl Prebisch "A critique of peripheral capitalism"	187
Comments by Joseph Hodara	187
Comments by Eugenio Kossarev	191
Comments by Octavio Rodríguez	203
Comments by Marshall Wolfe	217
Some CEPAL publications	223

## Preconditions and propositions for 'Another development' *Marshall Wolfe* \*

The author has asserted in earlier papers that the broad pronouncements made by international organizations —suggesting what must be done without mentioning who is to do it how and when—, the dissemination of 'practical' techniques and the execution of 'pilot projects' have been of very little use in orienting the Latin American countries; because they are too general or too piecemeal, because they are ill adapted to the realities of the technical and economic situation, because they are not politically viable, etc. To avoid such mistakes he does not put forward his proposals as universal panaceas, but as criteria, ideas or guidelines relating to some of the vital issues with which Latin America's national societies will have to cope, if, as may plausibly be supposed, their future scenario turns out to be full of complex mutations.

The preconditions once established, he classifies his proposals under four heads. In principle, he accords priority to questions connected with the satisfaction of basic needs, i.e., the national-scale production, distribution and consumption of goods and services regarded in that light; he then propounds certain theses on employment, stressing in particular that it should not be interpreted merely as a source of production and income, but also in its broad psychosocial significance, as a basis for possible 'meaningful human activities'. Next he goes into the subject of participation and the distribution of power at the national level, and the article culminates in a discussion of international relations problems linked to the idea of self-reliance.

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## 1. Where to?

The present text follows upon papers that have pointed to contradictions in the images of the human future in recent declarations on development and speculated on the reasons for such contradictions; that have described 'seeds of change' in different types of national societies which affect the likelihood of a coherent response to the concerns underlying the declarations; and that have discussed the case for 'critical poverty' as the central policy focus for 'another development'.<sup>1</sup>

The author has thus far evaded the challenge to propose a more adequate focus for development policies capable of realizing the hopes that have been invested in 'another development'. The preceding papers exposed his inability to escape from scepticism concerning the relevance of prescriptions addressed to humanity at large or governments in general by the international bureaucratic and academic machinery that continually generates meetings and reports and missions around the elusive topic of 'development'. The thorniest problem is not the formulation of better strategies for human-oriented development. The efforts of dedicated thinkers over the past two centuries seem to have uncovered all conceivable solutions; some

<sup>1</sup>"The concrete utopias and their confrontation with the world of today" (CEPAL/DRAFT/DS/134, March 1976), and "Poverty as a social phenomenon and as a central issue for development policy" (CEPAL/DRAFT/DS/133, May 1976). The term 'another development' is borrowed from *What now? Another development*, in the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report on development and international cooperation, Upsala, Sweden, 1975.

of these solutions have been tested in practice; and some of them have helped to change the course of history. The institutionalized continuation of these efforts today continually rediscovers, without acknowledgement or even awareness, ideas current among utopian socialists of the early 19th century or late-19th-century Russian populists. The would-be architects of ideal societies have commonly envisaged social change processes as more manipulable and less ambiguous in their consequences than has been the case. While their influence has been very great and has undergone surprising metamorphoses, they have failed to identify and 'conscientize' social forces willing and able to apply strategies oriented to human welfare coherently, realistically, and flexibly over the long term.

A sympathetic study of the experiences of political leaders and planners who have tried to apply coherent strategies to their own national setting conduces to humility, and even suggests that the last thing they need is more generalized advice couched in catchwords, such as the 'unified approach to development', on what they ought to do if they could count on an ideal social consensus and an ideal capacity to acquire and digest information.<sup>2</sup> The 'high-level expert' who pontificates on *what* must be done and evades the questions *who* and *how* is justifiably becoming a figure of fun. At the other extreme, the purveying in international reports of shopping lists of 'practical' techniques and 'pilot projects', on the supposition

<sup>2</sup>A good many studies, some by active participants, of the real vicissitudes of development policy-making are now available. Two books published by the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (Institu-

that policy makers can pick and choose from sketchy descriptions of what has allegedly succeeded elsewhere, is also reaching a dead end of futility. The situation of the real participants in policy-making is generally closer to that of Alice in her Wonderland croquet game than to that of the powerful, benevolent, unimaginative entities to which development prescriptions seem to be addressed.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the propositions now competing for attention in the utopias devised by committees are more promising than others, not as ready-made prescriptions but as criteria against which policies can be assessed, ideas promising a certain capacity to penetrate public opinion and help to modify dominant values, and signposts to paths that national societies may not be able to avoid entering upon, *if* the future evolves along certain lines that seem at least as plausible as the alternatives.

This last point deserves emphasis. If the international economic order recovers its previous dynamism, if the present centres retain their hegemony and use it for the same purposes as heretofore, if the contradictions gener-

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to Latinoamericano de Planificación Económica y Social - ILPES) in 1972 (Carlos Matus, *Estrategia y plan*, and Sergio Molina, *El proceso de cambio en Chile*, both Editorial Universitaria, Santiago, Chile, 1972) and the more recent ILPES papers on *Estado y planificación* are particularly relevant.

<sup>3</sup>"Alice thought she had never seen such a curious croquet-ground in her life; it was all ridges and furrows; the croquet balls were live hedgehogs, and the mallets live flamingoes, and the soldiers had to double themselves up and stand on their hands and feet to make the arches. . . . Alice soon came to the conclusion that it was a very difficult game indeed. The players all played at once without waiting for turns, quarrelling all the while, and fighting for the hedgehogs. . . ."

ated by present styles of development in semi-developed peripheral national societies such as those of Latin America continue to be manageable in one way or another, such propositions can, at most, be received by the dominant forces as 'missing ingredients' to be added to the style of development in order to make it function better, or to forestall criticisms of its inequity, with the likely result of introducing secondary contradictions and anomalies in its functioning. If the medium-term future should bring catastrophic breakdown in the international order, we have no way of offering rational guidelines to the societies as to how to cope, or even of forecasting what social forces would become dominant in these societies.

The following pages will discuss the relevance of certain propositions on the supposition that the medium-term future will be one of frequent and continually changing crises not amounting to catastrophe, of contradictory stimuli from the world centres and waning capacity of the centres to exercise hegemony, of challenges for which neither the forces dominating present governments nor the counter-élites are prepared. In the short term, one can expect successive waves of frantic urgency for action subsiding into complacency at any sign of return to the 'normal'. Measures taken piecemeal to cope with disbenefits of styles of development will cumulatively change the character of the styles, for better or worse.

State interventions in the society will become more pervasive, but not necessarily more coherent, and these interventions will interact with the changing demands and values of social forces, and with changing forms of alienation from and resistance to the State.

Certain propositions from current discussions of 'another development'

may gain political viability through lessons of experience demonstrating their necessity for human survival, and through changes in values, social relationships, and power structures that can accord them effective priority over incompatible social demands.<sup>4</sup>

The propositions in question refer to the meeting of basic human needs, self-reliance, participation, and a theme recurring in discussions of 'another development' but not yet endowed with a uniform label: it will here be called 'meaningful human activity', that is, actively meaningful to the individual as well as contributory to the society's evolution toward 'another development'. All of these propositions can be treated as 'missing ingredients' in current styles

<sup>4</sup>The future here envisaged corresponds to the scenario of 'competitive détente' described by José Medina Echavarría in "Latin America in the possible scenarios of détente" (*CEPAL Review*, N° 2, second half of 1976), but supposes a greater loss of control by the two hegemonic powers, for internal and external reasons, and more freedom of action by the peripheral societies, without, however, the emergence of a coherent 'new international economic order'. The concept of 'mutation' instead of 'crisis', introduced in a recent article by Alain Touraine, helps to clarify the approach proposed here. In his view, a study conducted in terms of crisis leads up to recourse to a rescue plan for the planet envisaged as a vast social system, at the core of which a central authority, or, more simply, a coherent will, could propose reasonable solutions, beneficial, that is, for mankind as a whole, and at the same time technically feasible. When people shout "Fire!", it means that they expect the firemen to come... Conversely, to speak of mutation brings to the fore cultural changes and changes in social relations, particularly power relations; and this is meaningful only within real social systems, i.e., systems defined by institutions and powers. (See Alain Touraine, "Crise ou mutation?" in *Au-delà de la Crise*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1976, pp. 24-25.)

of development, but if the future assumes approximately the traits suggested above, their unavoidability on the one hand and their incompatibility with certain other objectives and with prevailing life-styles on the other will become more evident. The discussion of 'seeds of change' in an earlier paper suggested some of the ways in which this is beginning to happen. The future may then depend on the extent to which emerging forces in human societies can realistically and rationally evolve new life-styles summed up by the four propositions, accepting the sacrifices and making creative use of the opportunities they imply, and keeping under control the drives incompatible with such an evolution. It is possible that human societies will prove so wedded to present life-styles that they will perish rather

than undertake their transformation. It is also possible, unfortunately, that they will find no means of doing so which will not incur such heavy costs—in failed experimentation, substitution of facade achievements and rituals for real achievements, chronic conflict and mutual sabotage between groups trying to impose their own will, regimentation and manipulation of consensus—that 'another development' will satisfy the hopes invested in it no better than the styles now prevailing have done. Part of the case for the four propositions listed above is that, taken together, they point to caution in social engineering. Even if a portion of a national society should achieve the power to fit the whole society to a bed of Procrustes, the exercising of such power is not the most promising way to 'another development'.

## 2.

### Priority for the meeting of basic human needs

This proposition has the virtue of directing attention equally to production, to consumption (as the main legitimate reason for wanting higher production), and to distribution (as the provision of relevant 'basic' goods and services to all). It points to the elimination of critical poverty without singling out the poor as a category to be 'helped'. By itself, it has the disadvantage of being uninspiringly utilitarian. The meeting of basic needs does not constitute an image of the future society adequate to inspire the enormous effort, including the effort of self-restraint and social discipline, that is called for, any more than does the more elaborate lure of consumerism. Man does

not live by bread alone. The symptoms of crisis or breakdown in most national societies today derive as much from the failure of these societies to afford participation in meaningful activity as from their failure to satisfy basic needs for goods and services.

For present purposes, the essential element in a definition of 'basic needs' is that the term refers to the goods and services that can be produced and distributed to the whole of a national population, in accordance with realistic expectations, independently of the achievement of a more equitable world order. This does not mean autarky at the national level; all national societies will

have to satisfy part of their basic needs through exchange of products for which they have comparative advantages, and the smaller the national population the larger this proportion will be. However, a basic needs strategy would presumably mean a smaller role for international trade than at present.

The national definition must respond to an objective criterion for 'basic' (e.g., meeting minimum physiological needs) and also to the subjective criteria of the people whose basic needs are in question. It is important to avoid the trap of making definition and measurement of basic needs ends in themselves, and also the temptation to admit as 'basic needs' the whole range of desiderata that have received international recognition as 'human rights'. A 'right' is meaningful only to the extent that a national society is really capable of honouring it for all its members; otherwise, insistence on rights unavoidably becomes a tactic for the protection and extension of minority privileges. This point is particularly important for societies such as those of Latin America, in which different strata of the national population have quite different norms for basic needs, and in which the strata with relatively elaborate norms have greater power than the others to impose their conceptions on public policies.

Moreover, it cannot be taken for granted that conventional goods and services and conventional systems for their provision constitute the only means or the most efficient means of meeting the basic need to which they are addressed. This problem manifests itself differently in relation to each need and calls for examination of the widest possible range of alternatives. The prior fixing of quantitative targets (e.g. number of years of formal education) may cramp

the search for better alternatives. In the case of education, for example, it now seems probable that concentration on the social *purposes* of education within societies having the overall priorities summed up in 'another development' will sharply diminish the relevance of the conventional norms, which can be satisfied by herding all children for a given number of days and years into buildings labelled 'schools'. As regards transport, within present urban patterns, a considerable expansion of cheap public transport is a real basic need to be preferred to the proliferation of private automobiles; but a transformation of the urban patterns might remove most of the need by bringing places of work within walking distance of homes.<sup>5</sup> The shift in national priorities and popular expectations implied by an authentic basic needs strategy is so extensive and so potentially traumatic to the 'modernized' sectors of the population that such a questioning of conventional solutions and search for alternatives might reduce rather than intensify the political difficulties. It would widen the possibilities for popular participation and introduce an element of creativity counteracting the drab uniformity that might otherwise come to dominate such an approach. Ideally, it should make economic costs more manageable while permitting a more generous and inspiring conception of basic needs. At the same

<sup>5</sup> Ivan Illich and the Centro Intercultural de Documentación (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, have done some of the most stimulating thinking on alternatives, although the alternatives proposed are sometimes simplistic. See Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, New York, Harper & Row, 1973; *Energy and Equity*, London, Calder and Boyers, Ltd., 1973; and *Tools for Conviviality*, New York, Harper & Row, 1973.

time, it would unavoidably complicate the planning and administrative problems; the opening-up of alternatives is a frightening prospect for bureaucratic institutions wedded to standardized procedures, and the capacity of the public to embrace new ways of thinking about needs is an unknown quantity.<sup>6</sup> These considerations lead back to the essential complementary roles of meaningful activity, participation, self-reliance, to be discussed below.

Since the conception of 'basic needs' advocated here is governed by national capacities rather than universal standards, the relevant short-term standards for some national societies may have to be meagre indeed, but in Latin America the norm can be well above the 'rock-bottom level of physical existence' referred to in the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report.<sup>7</sup> Under these circumstances, a basic needs strategy does not require strictly egalitarian distribution -the political and economic costs, if they could

<sup>6</sup> See Win Crowther, "The search for relevance: political ideology, culture and political choice as factors of technological development and dependence in Latin America" (CEPAL, draft, 27 January 1976), for some challenging propositions on the need for and feasibility of a replacement of routines by creative problem-solving.

<sup>7</sup> In reproducing a suggestion for India of an initial target of a daily income per working adult equivalent to 3 kg. of cereals in rural areas and 4.5 kg. in urban areas. (*What Now? Another Development*, *op. cit.*, p. 42.) The recent report of the Director-General of the International Labour Office, *Employment, Growth and Basic Needs: A One-World Problem* (ILO, Geneva, 1976) presents an acceptable classification of basic needs and emphasizes, first, that "basic needs constitute the minimum objective of society, not the full range of desirable attributes . . ."; secondly, that "basic needs can be relative as well as absolute" (p. 33).

be met at all, would outweigh the benefits, and the implied regimentation would be a major disbenefit in itself. But such a strategy does imply that public policy, to the extent that it controls the relevant factors and has mobilized sufficient understanding and support, should restrict the satisfaction of non-basic wants that conflict with the satisfaction of nationally defined basic needs and with the *kind* as well as the amount of capital accumulation required to enhance their satisfaction in the future. The relevant policy instruments would include differential taxation to discourage some forms of consumption, subsidies to other forms of consumption, restriction of non-essential imports, controls on commercial publicity, and others that come readily to mind. The effectiveness of these instruments -most of which have been resorted to for one reason or another even within current 'consumerist' styles of development- would depend on simultaneous changes in the values, expectations, and participatory capacities of different social strata, probably under the impact of crises demonstrating the non-viability of previous expectations.

The proportion of national income devoted to investment within a basic needs strategy might or might not be higher than before. Priority for the meeting of basic needs cannot logically be denied through a *generalized* plea for higher rates of accumulation, since the destinations of a large part of previous 'productive' investment, and also of infrastructural and even social investment, would become irrelevant or worse. It goes without saying that the need for accumulation will remain and that this will warrant austerity in the definition of basic needs for many years to come. However, the dominant forces in the national societies



will be justified in calling for austerity mainly in so far as they can demonstrate that accumulation will, in fact, enhance the capacity to meet basic needs in preference to other ends.

Other things being equal, one might suppose that the conversion of the general proposition on basic needs into a politically and economically viable strategy would become more feasible to the extent that:

- (a) Existing national productive capacity is sufficient and the nature of the main products is such that a level of living can be afforded to all which is not so meagre that the population puts up with it only as far as it cannot help doing so —like the 'critically poor' at present;
- (b) National planning and administrative mechanisms are sufficiently well-developed, and the State has sufficient legitimacy, for State and society to be able to find practicable means of ensuring that basic needs have priority;
- (c) The life styles and expectations of the population are sufficiently homogeneous to imply that realistic basic minima for the whole population would not come into unmanageable conflict with the demands of sizable minorities having specific conceptions of their own basic needs.

The real processes of dependent economic growth and social change in the Third World up to the present make it ingenuous to expect that all three of these conditions will be favourable to a basic needs strategy in any one national society. To the extent that productive and administrative capacity is favourable and the State enjoys wide recognition as the legitimate formulator of national goals, the social differentiation of the

population increases and the groups that stand to lose in the short term by a basic needs strategy become larger and more articulate. Low levels of per capita income do not rule out a basic needs strategy if social solidarity is present and the State has a certain mobilizing capacity. China has demonstrated how much can be done under these circumstances, but also how traumatic are the historical processes that may make the doing possible. Sri Lanka, with a national system of subsidized or free rice distribution in effect most of the time since the 1940s, and with relatively well-developed educational and other social services, has also demonstrated the feasibility of a basic needs strategy at a per capita GNP level well below that of any Latin American country.<sup>8</sup> The Sri Lanka policy seems to have entered into crisis not because of inability to afford the rice distribution and the social services, but because of inability to incorporate these into a coherent alternative style of development affording incentives to productivity and meaningful activity for the educated youth.<sup>9</sup>

A basic needs strategy should become more feasible to the extent that production is already oriented towards

<sup>8</sup> According to the *World Bank Atlas 1974*, the per capita GNP of Sri Lanka in 1973 was 120 dollars; in Latin America in the same year, only two countries fell below 300 dollars, and most were at much higher levels.

<sup>9</sup> "... the package of welfare policies was anti-growth and anti-development not so much because it competed with the development programme for scarce capital, but because it removed the incentives for growth and development in the very sectors in which investments were being made." United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), "Case Study: Sri Lanka (Ceylon)", Marga Institute, October 1972.

staple foods, clothing, simple construction materials, and other mass-consumption goods, and services towards elementary education and basic health care at low unit costs. If production is oriented towards minerals or agricultural products for export, and if the State is able to capture a major part of the proceeds, this may also favour a basic needs strategy—depending on the character of the forces dominating the State—, but with a greater bias toward assistentialism, as seems to have been the case in Sri Lanka. The least favourable initial pattern would be an economic structure oriented towards the production of durable consumer goods, whether for the domestic market or for export, under the control of transnational enterprises, and requiring continual imports of capital equipment, production inputs, technology and promotional innovations.

This last pattern, combined with heavy investment in urban luxury residential and commercial construction, has in recent years come to predominate in some of the larger Latin American countries and exercises significant influence in almost all of them. As previous papers in this series have emphasized, the resulting dependent semi-development *apparently* enhances material capacity to implement a basic needs strategy, but reduces the likelihood of political will to do so. Moreover, the material advantage over poorer, more predominantly rural countries is partly illusory. The endowment of productive capital; the patterns of modernization of productive techniques; the relatively extensive infrastructures of power, transport and communications; the concentrated urbanization; and the elaborate, bureaucratized structures of education, health services, public housing and social security all

have ambivalent roles. They are compatible—some of the time—with relatively high rates of increase in GNP and with either a highly concentrated 'elitist' or a less concentrated 'mesocratic' distribution of incomes<sup>10</sup>; and they may possibly be compatible with a combined assistential-repressive system for the relief of critical poverty, but the weight of evidence indicates that they are not compatible with a strategy giving consistent priority to the meeting of basic needs plus capital accumulation at levels that the economies should, in principle, be able to support.

The character of the capital equipment and technologies that have been introduced are clearly a large part of the problem—an automobile cannot be divided into twenty pieces to satisfy the basic transport needs of the masses, the construction techniques appropriate to modern apartment and office buildings cannot readily be adapted to 'basic' housing, and the manufacture of durable goods cannot revert to simple employment-spreading technologies. The attitudes of the key social groups that benefit or hope to benefit from the prevailing style of development constitute an even more formidable obstacle. University-educated intellectuals and planners who endorse a strategy for priority meeting of basic needs will probably resist its implications for themselves and their children. So will the leaders of the armed forces that will have to tolerate it, curb their own appetite for expensive innovations in military equipment, and turn a deaf ear to appeals from groups whose expectations are threatened.

<sup>10</sup> See Jorge Graciarena, "Types of income concentration and political styles in Latin America", *CEPAL Review*, N° 2, second half of 1976.

If one supposes that continuing crises in the international order, changing stimuli from the world centres, and chronic inability in the national systems of semi-development to satisfy the expectations they have generated will periodically bring the question of 'basic needs' back to each national agenda, it is far from inevitable that the responses will be adequate. The social forces that are prepared to tackle the problem cannot

expect a smooth, consensual, rationally-planned transition, but they must struggle to keep the transformation from going to other extremes, such as doctrinaire solutions hastily imposed on an uncomprehending population; promises and gestures to satisfy the 'basic needs' conceptions of all sectors of opinion; distortion of the strategy to serve the interests of the technobureaucracy and substitute propaganda for the recalcitrant reality.

### 3.

## Meaningful human activity and employment

Up to the present, the satisfaction of basic needs has been, at best, a by-product of economic and political systems that have functioned according to their own laws. Men have had to serve the capitalist system, however irrelevant or even threatening to their own well-being the services demanded and the resulting output might seem to be, in order to make the system erratically and intermittently serve them. If public policy tries to make the system function too directly on behalf of human welfare, curbing waste and potentially destructive activities, the system functions badly and human welfare suffers. If public policy eliminates an intolerable but essential component of the system, such as unemployment, the system responds with inflation. The workers serving the system come to welcome pollution of their environment and insist on rising production of armaments, even if the latter are demonstrably obsolete for defence purposes or are demonstrably intensifying the risk of mutual mass extermination. The paradoxical traits of

the functioning of capitalism have been exhaustively diagnosed since the nineteenth century, and while public policies have managed to raise the satisfaction of basic human needs to a degree that could not have been expected in earlier stages, the means have remained indirect, wasteful, and plagued by unwanted and unexpected by-products.<sup>11</sup> The socialist systems have come closer to an egalitarian distribution of basic goods and

<sup>11</sup> "Keynes did not *want* anyone to dig holes and fill them. He indulged in a pleasant daydream of a world in which, when investment had been kept at the full employment level for thirty years or so, all needs for capital installations would have been met, property income would have been abolished, poverty would have disappeared and civilized life could begin. But the economists took up the argument at the point where it had broken off before the war. When there is unemployment and low profits the government must spend on something or other —it does not matter what. As we know, for twenty-five years serious recessions were avoided by following this policy. The most convenient thing for a government to spend on is armaments. The military-industrial complex took charge. I do not think

services, but here too the demands of the system for accumulation and defence, and the suitability of central planning to accomplish some ends rather than others, have also left men the servants of the system, and the satisfaction of their basic needs more a means to their participation in production than an end.

Proposals for basic needs strategies have commonly accepted that the needs must be satisfied by improving the functioning of the economic system, naturally with major reforms, but with the expansion of employment affording adequate incomes still regarded as the central mechanism for accomplishing the human purpose of development. This is legitimate up to a point, but from the standpoint of the present paper it is essential to distinguish clearly the different reasons why the expansion of employment is expected to enhance the satisfaction of basic needs, to question whether expansion must necessarily amount to maximization, and then to consider whether a different conception of meaningful human activity may not be required as a corrective to the subjection of human beings to systems that exact such a high price for their erratic and frustrating responses to needs. What people *do* and their satisfaction with what they do are just as important as

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it plausible to suppose that the cold war and several hot wars were invented just to solve the employment problem. But certainly they have had that effect. The system had the support not only of the corporations who made profits under it and the workers who got jobs, but also of the economists who advocated government loan-expenditure as a prophylactic against stagnation. . . . So it has come about that Keynes' pleasant daydream was turned into a nightmare of terror." Joan Robinson, "The Second Crisis of Economic Theory", *The American Economic Review*, May 1972.

what they *receive* and their satisfaction with what they receive.

One cannot lightly propose a revolution in the work ethic as motor of development. Explorations along these lines risk intoxication with dreams of technological abundance and dreams of the painless emergence of a creative and altruistic new man. Nevertheless, for better or worse, the traditional carrot and stick of the economic systems are beginning to fall into discredit, and present levels of productive and innovative capacity, even in semi-developed societies, should make it possible for these societies to begin to separate the obligation to work in 'gainful' activities from the right to satisfaction of basic needs. In Latin America, the exceptionally low rates of participation in the labour force, the unproductive and precarious character of much of the existing employment, the prospect of increasing pressures on the system from women and educated youth unable to find a satisfactory entry, make the achievement of conventionally-defined 'full employment' improbable<sup>12</sup> and the quest for original solutions, giving due weight to all the social functions of employment, particularly urgent.

The main functions of employment can be summed up as follows:

- (a) To produce goods and services and perform the social roles valued by the society;
- (b) To give individuals and families access to incomes enabling them to satisfy their needs and wants;
- (c) To enable the individual to enter into relationships with the social

<sup>12</sup> See Charles Rollins, "Population and labour force in Latin America: some simulation exercises", *CEPAL Review* N° 3, first half of 1977.

order, interpret his interests in its maintenance or transformation, associate himself with a class or reference group, and acquire organizational ties;

- (d) To enable the individual to meet psychological needs for meaningful activity, self-realization, creativity, and status as family breadwinner.

The extent to which a given employment situation fulfils all of these functions is inevitably uneven, whether assessed from the standpoint of the individual or from that of the society, and this unevenness is bound to be accentuated by rigidities and discontinuities in the labour market such as prevail in Latin America. Some occupations (e.g., that of the plantation worker) can be satisfactorily productive but wretchedly paid, offering the worker no opportunity to participate actively in the society and no sense of meaningful human activity. Other activities (e.g., the publicist's, certain bureaucratic posts) can be highly paid and conducive to active identification with the society, but contribute little to a sense of personal achievement, and are irrelevant or negative in their relation to the meeting of basic needs. Further examples of incongruities in fulfilment of the basic functions of employment can readily be imagined.

From the policy standpoint, the relative importance of these functions and the possibility of taking them into account as objectives varies according to the style and the level of development. At the most primitive level, the maximum contribution of all able-bodied persons to food production might be of overriding importance. At the other extreme, in a highly-productive automated, egalitarian, post-industrial society the main social policy preoccupation might

be with fulfilment of the fourth function. It can be assumed that any society that has achieved some degree of economic diversification and modern state apparatus needs to and has some ability to pay attention to all four functions. In practically all Latin American countries increases in production of basic goods – or products that can be exchanged for basic goods – and income distribution through employment will have to remain central concerns of policy through the foreseeable future, but exclusive concentration on these functions is not justified and might be self-defeating.

In all modern societies up to the present remunerated employment has been the principal means of accomplishing the first two functions for the bulk of the population, and it is generally also the most important means of accomplishing the last two – as far as they are accomplished at all. It is never the only means, however. The higher the level of productivity, the wider becomes the range of options for the role of employment in fulfilment of the functions, but even in societies at very low income levels other means can be important. Production of goods and services valued by a local group or by the State can be undertaken partly by volunteer labour, with proceeds going to the whole community rather than the direct participants, or the authorities can draft labour for public works. As economic growth proceeds the possibility of substituting capital and technology for labour increases, until in an automated production system the relevance of the number of workers to the volume of production may practically disappear. In any society above a bare subsistence level part of the income generated through employment is redistributed through mechanisms of

family and community solidarity. As the level of productivity rises the feasibility of redistribution through public institutions—social security, social services, social assistance—widens and such redistribution comes to be viewed as both a human right and a political necessity. At a sufficiently high level of per capita income, it is possible to make family livelihood practically independent of gainful employment, through guaranteed annual income policies, or a 'negative income tax'. As to the objectives of integration into the social order and self-realization, the range of alternatives to paid employment is obviously wide, even in the poorer societies. To the extent that production and income distribution objectives require that most of the population spend a large part of its life in gainful employment, social participation and self-realization naturally are hoped for from such employment, and it is a grave deficiency in the social system if most employment does not contribute to these ends. As leisure time increases and the proportion of the normal life-span spent in employment shrinks, the main responsibility for meeting the two ends has to shift elsewhere, but no society has as yet found satisfactory alternatives. The malaise deriving from this deficiency in the high-income countries, particularly in regard to the aging retired population, is well-known.

Optimal accomplishment of the four purposes of employment listed above does not in any society require either maximization of the time spent in employment by the whole population able to work, or maximum intensity of effort. In agricultural societies at low technological levels and with ample land for cultivation it may be essential that the whole population, including young children and the aged, contribute to the

productive effort, but this effort has wide seasonal variations in intensity and includes tasks that are not at all onerous. The early stages of industrialization with relatively simple productive techniques have also involved extremely long working days and extensive use of child labour, but these features seem to have been dictated by the patterns of control of the means of production and by cost-cutting competition between manufacturers rather than by their indispensability for maximum production.

In any case, as economic growth and technological innovation proceed, and as skill requirements in practically all occupational sectors rise, it becomes essential even in the interest of efficient production that part of the potential labour force be excluded from employment or helped to escape from it, and that the working time of the employed population be held well below the limits of physical endurance. In all modernizing societies a number of mechanisms appear through which the age span of the economically active population contracts at both ends, and the proportion of leisure time within the active age span increases, first in urban occupations, and later, as rural activities decline in relative importance and undergo technological and organizational changes, in the rural occupations also. The economic activity of women follows different trends, shrinking with the decline of agricultural and artisan-type activities carried on by the family as an economic unit, then increasing with changes in family size and modern urban occupational opportunities, but in practically all societies covers a shorter average time-span and a smaller percentage of the relevant age groups than does the gainful employment of males.

Ideally, the average age for entering employment should rise mainly because

the period of education lengthens and young people are thus better prepared for their future occupational roles. The average age for leaving employment should decline because the society is better able to support retirement pensions and offer meaningful activities for the persons whose contributions to production are no longer required. During the active span the contraction of the amount of time spent at work should respond to technological levels that permit adequate production and incomes without interminable drudgery. It is obvious that even in the more homogeneous and welfare-oriented of the high-income industrialized societies changes in employment patterns have not corresponded smoothly to these ideals, and in the larger, more internally heterogeneous societies the changes have been conflictive and frustrating enough to shake confidence in the future of the system. The system seems to demand from part of the labour force intense activity in order to earn incomes to provide a market for the goods it produces; and it renders superfluous other parts of the potential labour force, affording them, through the redistribution mechanisms of the State, a subsistence that may cover 'basic needs', but not the consumption wants that the system insistently promotes. It offers opportunities for meaningful human activities outside employment that are in practice accessible only to minorities.

The bringing of a higher proportion of the working-age population into gainful employment is not legitimately an end in itself, although it is understandable that the State, unable to balance the different reasons for wanting employment and with few effective means of making the economic system function for human ends, may not be

able to avoid treating it as such. Expansion of employment is really a means to various ends and at the same time can interfere with the achievement of other socially valued objectives. In Latin America, the definition of realistic employment objectives and instruments is complicated by the co-existence, in increasingly close contact and inter-action with one another, of widely differing technological levels, forms of organization of production, and ways of life, all of them subject to continually changing and increasingly pervasive external influences and constraints. Completely different employment policies might be appropriate for specific population strata and specific sectors of production and provision of services, but the impracticability of isolating the different strata and sectors from one another or from the external influences practically rules out the application of such policies.<sup>13</sup>

Arguments for use by the government of the policy instruments at its disposal to promote labour-intensive or 'intermediate' techniques assume that the primary function of employment is

<sup>13</sup> Women's employment offers a particularly interesting example of complexities in determination of optimal participation in the labour force. Ideally, increased female participation should raise production, facilitate the performance of socially valued roles such as teaching and nursing, contribute to family income, enhance the capacity of women to participate on equal terms in social and political activities, and open to them wider opportunities for self-realization and creativity. Under present conditions of the labour market and the social order, however, increased participation by women might mean low-wage competition for jobs now held by males, thus increasing visible unemployment and depressing family incomes in the poorer strata, while overburdening women unable to escape from household maintenance, disrupting family organization, and reducing the quality of child care.

distribution of income rather than production. Although the arguments commonly imply that labour-intensive techniques are better suited to the production of goods meeting basic needs, and that a basic needs production strategy would automatically expand employment, this seems to be only partly true. Latin American policy-makers have shown an almost instinctive reaction against recommendations of this kind as implying the acceptance of technological backwardness and renunciation of eventual parity with the world centres as industrial societies. The present paper arrives at a similar conclusion from a quite different viewpoint, rejecting the supposition that maximization of gainful employment, whether technologically advanced or otherwise, is the most promising path to a better future.

The solution—at the level of general ideas—lies in the complementation of employment objectives by objectives for meaningful human activity. That is, the social order should guarantee to all adults and youth a right to engage in activities meaningful to themselves and to the society *and* to the satisfaction of their basic needs, within limits set by the productivity of the economy, irrespective of gainful employment status. Production would be carried on by the most efficient techniques available, given relative scarcities of capital, labour, and technical-managerial talents, with a persistent effort to minimize routine drudgery and maximize opportunities for creativity and pride in work. The whole adult population would encounter alternative combinations of activities matching their interests and qualifications, and designed to enhance these qualifications while meeting societal needs and preserving freedom of choice: for example, voluntary labour combined with educa-

tion, ranging from preventive health work, child care, services to the handicapped and the aged, and cultural activities, to harvest labour, repairs to urban or rural infrastructure, and other manual work. As far as possible, the dividing line between employed and unemployed, intellectual and manual workers, 'productive' work and household work would disappear.

There is nothing new in the posing of such a utopian objective for human societies, and the way to it is now less clear than it seemed to certain social thinkers of the nineteenth century. Ideologically coherent forces in each national society would have to struggle towards its achievement, probably over a long period, keeping within bounds the inevitable temptations to opportunism and to doctrinaire rigidity, and measuring progress in large part by the achievement of understanding and active participation on the part of the masses. A strategy of this kind is obviously far from the intentions and the capabilities of the forces controlling the State in most countries at present, and also of the counter-élites that aspire to supplant them. However, once the dominant forces in any society take seriously the satisfaction of basic needs, and find unacceptable the assistential-cum-repressive approach to the alleviation of poverty, they can hardly avoid tackling the questions of meaningful activity and participation.

The few national societies whose governments are making a serious effort to apply a basic needs strategy are also striving to universalize meaningful human activities, whatever terms they may use and however wide the gap between aspirations and realities. The effort can hardly stop short of the kind of egalitarian, participatory, non-capital-



ist society proposed by the Bariloche Foundation as a condition for Latin America's meeting of basic human needs through its own efforts.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4. Participation

The discussion now enters an area in which the gap between the ideal and the real is so wide, the temptation to evasiveness so strong, and the rehashing of verbal good intentions so distasteful that one approaches it almost with despair of saying anything new and useful. 'Participation' for present purposes means having "influence on the decision-making process at all levels of social activity and social institutions".<sup>15</sup> 'Participation' is not coterminous with 'meaningful activity'; it is at least theoretically possible for the individual to be meaningfully occupied from his own standpoint and from that of the values of his society, without participating in or even being aware of the choices made by dominant forces in the society; and participation as a citizen obviously does not guarantee that the individual will find meaningful activity in the greater part of his life that is spent in other pursuits. Nevertheless, in societies such as those of Latin America it is reasonable to suppose that neither will advance very far without support from the other.

<sup>14</sup> *Catastrophe or New Society? A Latin American World Model*, Ottawa, International Development Research Centre, 1976, pp. 24-26.

<sup>15</sup> Carlo Geneletti, "The concept of participation: an evaluation", CEPAL/DRAFT/DS/125, August 1975.

Fernando Henrique Cardoso has summed up, at the end of a harsh diagnosis of the shortcomings of certain channels of participation in Latin America up to the present, the reasons for continuing to insist on it as an indispensable component of any acceptable image of the future. He fears that in default of the reactivation of the masses and without an anti-bureaucratic ideology based on individual responsibilities and awareness of social needs, the leap from what he calls 'patrimonialism' to technocratic corporativism may land the poor Latin Americans in a reproduction of the barbarous life of the 'concrete jungle' that so appalled the socialists of the nineteenth century. Unless society is revived by means of vigorous social drives for political participation and the definition of new kinds of controls applicable to enterprises, to cities, to the State and to the basic social institutions, there will be a risk that a horrifying new world may be created which will replace the city — once the forum of liberty — by Alphavilles endowed with every requisite for reproducing, through mass media technology and apathy, a 'frozen society' style.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See Fernando Henrique Cardoso, *Autoritarismo e Democratização*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1975, p. 163.

The International Labour Office has directed its attention to the same problem in more instrumental terms, in discussing implementation of its proposed 'basic needs' strategy:

"A weakness of many formulations of national development policy is that they are divorced from political reality. They tend to assume the existence of an autonomous State which pursues a generalized national interest as articulated by its technicians, independent of political constraints. . . . In order to put a plan into action account must be taken of the size and organization of the interest groups and regional coalitions which would benefit or lose from the proposed policies and the consequential changes in social status and political influence. . . . Because of the divergences between interest groups and within classes, governments often have some degree of flexibility in initiating policy and strategy changes. Their ability to implement them, however, is clearly related to their ability to promote consensus, weaken groups likely to lose from them and organize support from those who would benefit. . . . The main prerequisite for the effective implementation of this approach would thus appear to be an effective, decentralized and democratic administrative structure to translate policies into decisions and action, and mass participation in the development process by the poverty groups."<sup>17</sup>

This statement starts from a realistic formulation of the political problem and

<sup>17</sup> *Employment, Growth and Basic Needs: A One-World Problem*, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-66.

ends by proposing three acts of faith: (a) that the proposals of the technicians interpret the national interest correctly; (b) that the State has a sufficient measure of rationality and autonomy to seek a political strategy making the proposals viable; (c) that decentralized, democratic decision-making and mass participation, once mobilized, will flow in channels indicated by the proposals and not in others. The statement exemplifies the aspiration to reconcile a technocratic utopia with a participationist utopia and the vacillation between the two that recurs throughout the explorations of 'another development', including the present text.<sup>18</sup> The technocratic utopias imply that every problem has one optimal solution; participation should consist in the education and mobilization of the population to understand and apply this solution. The participationist utopias imply that various satisfactory solutions can emerge from the creativity of the people who need the solutions; that the flowering of collective creativity through the exercising of free choice is central to 'another development'; that technicians should take part as helpers without delusions of their own infallibility; and that in the last analysis people have a right to be wrong. Both utopias are ambiguous in their consequences for human welfare; neither is likely to impose itself over the long term, and it might be disastrous if one or the other did so; the tension between them seems to be necessary and permanent in the efforts of human intelligence to impose human purposes on the future evolution of society.

<sup>18</sup> José Medina Echavarría, in "Las propuestas de un nuevo orden económico internacional en perspectiva" (CEPAL/Borrador/DS/148, November 1976), pp. 20-28, penetratingly discusses this question.

Extremely varied forms and tactics of participation have appeared in Latin America and been hailed by one sector of opinion or another as the key to authentic development. They range from national electoral democracy through mass interest-group organizations to local community organization and workers' management.<sup>19</sup> At present, the shortcomings of all these forms are more evident than their achievements. Some have failed with cruel consequences for the masses drawn into them; others have persisted with extremely ambiguous consequences for development or egalitarian social justice; still others have remained stunted and localized. Two essentially élitist alternatives have gained strength from these shortcomings: manipulated mobilization backed by repression and strictly limited to objectives laid down by the dominant forces; and terrorist tactics intended to make the functioning of the repressive social order impossible. The fact that so many institutional forms of participation have been on the stage for some time and have left behind disillusionment, fear and suppressed resentments stands in the way of imaginative new efforts. The participation-minded planners and the masses both have reason to be wary. The invention of radically different approaches is unpromising. The national societies will continually have to return to a range of well-known institutions and techniques in the hope that they can be made to function better than hitherto. Even the technobureaucratic régimes recurrently try to use the same instruments for their own purposes and encounter some of the same stumbling-blocks as have their predecessors.

<sup>19</sup> See *Social Change and Social Development Policy in Latin America*, United Nations

The shortcomings of the participatory institutions and initiatives can be summed up in a way that suggests an agenda for doing better:

(a) At the national as well as the local level they have been superimposed on political and economic structures with which they were incompatible. These structures might work badly without participation, but with it they could hardly function at all. The recurrent outcome has been that the participatory efforts have mobilized their enemies more effectively than their friends, have set in motion defence mechanisms (from the flight of capital to the discharge of workers and eviction of peasants) that hurt primarily the new participants, and eventually have been swept aside in a conjuncture of demoralization and confusion;

(b) The social groups enhancing their capacity to participate have naturally focused on consumption, whether in the form of housing, cheap food and transport, credit facilities for instalment buying, education or health services. The responses of the State have followed the line of least resistance, meeting the demands that involved least direct cost, and least opposition from other groups. The argument that participation would lead to mass understanding of the need for voluntary restraint of consumption in the interest of accumulation has proved inapplicable in the face of obvious waste and luxury consumption on the part of others backed by the whole array of stimuli of the 'consumerist' style of development;

publication, Sales N°: E.70.II.G.3, chapter XIX, "Popular participation in development"; and Marshall Wolfe, *El Desarrollo Esquivo*, Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1976, chapter V.

(c) The various forms of participation and the participants themselves have focused on the extraction of benefits from the State or on neutralizing adverse State actions, even when this might seem alien to the logic of the specific form of participation – as in the case of workers' management and co-operatives. Thus, participation has meant increasing dependence, bureaucratization, and channels for control by the State, even when the initiative has come from social groups relatively hostile to the State. The well-known expansion of university-educated middle strata seeking posts in bureaucratic agencies charged with participatory activities or offering themselves as intermediaries on the side of the newly participating groups has favoured this trend;

(d) The participatory mechanisms have been able to incorporate the lowest strata of the national populations – the poor, oppressed, marginalized, or sub-proletarian – only to the extent that their participation has been manipulated or neutralized by co-optation of leaders.<sup>20</sup> Such participation has been quite unable to exercise the function of countervailing power, strengthening the government's disposition to undertake 'basic needs' strategy in the teeth of opposition from better-off groups, in the way envisaged in the ILO statement quoted above. Much the same thing applies at the local

<sup>20</sup> Carlo Geneletti has argued (in "The concept of participation: an evaluation", *op. cit.*) that participation means access to political power; those who have least power obtain least from the State as well as the social and economic system; thus the degree of participation can be measured by the benefits accorded by the State to each group. Since the State represents existing power relationships its efforts to mobilize those who lack power can be hardly more than pretence.

level; 'community development' programmes have as often given the locally powerful new ways of exploiting the poor as they have given the poor a stronger voice in the community. Some peasant movements and the well-known 'spontaneous' organizations of urban groups for land seizures, provision of community infrastructure, and negotiations with the authorities are partial exceptions, usually temporary but recurrent, and of considerable promise as 'seeds of change' if radically different overall styles of development eventually emerge. Up to the present, where the forces controlling the State have perceived such movements as a serious threat, they have been repressed without much difficulty; more often, the co-optation of the leaders and the limited and defensive objectives of the members turn them into legitimized and basically conservative neighbourhood organizations or mechanisms for control and relief of tension through assistentialism.<sup>21</sup> Such participation has been assimilable as long as it has been localized, not calling for major changes in the access of the disadvantaged groups to employment and income. The national structures have

<sup>21</sup> A paper on "Popular Participation for the Improvement of the Human Environment in Marginal Settlements", prepared by the Social Development Division of the United Nations Secretariat for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Vancouver, Canada, May-June 1976, contains a good deal of information on these organizations, along with strong arguments for their positive role, given a minimum of governmental tolerance and aid. However, it also makes clear the ambivalent traits of official intervention; the dominance of self-serving leaders (*caciques*) integrated into the national political system; and the tendency for individuals who exploit the settlements (shopkeepers, etc.) to be most active organizationally.

been able to withstand a considerable broadening and diversification of the groups actively competing for higher incomes and status, with ambiguous consequences for the prevailing style of development, but have fallen into serious turmoil or hardened into repression at any prospect that the masses were about to enter the national political game in an organized and autonomous way. The result has sometimes been not only the violent exclusion of the masses but also the barring from effective participation of the middle and lower-middle strata that seemed to have achieved a permanent and secure share in decision-making.

Latin America confronts two kinds of polarization, both increasing in scale with industrialization, agricultural modernization and population growth, that should be equally daunting to the proponents of technocratic and participationist utopias:

(a) Between the population groups already sharing to some degree in the fruits of economic growth, in access to 'modern' or 'formal sector' employment, in post-primary education, etc., whether or not the power structure and the dominant ideology permit them to participate politically; and the groups that have gained little or nothing, that participate politically either not at all or precariously and intermittently through local organizations, clientelism, or electoral support of populist movements. This kind of polarization, and the strategies proposed to overcome it, have been recurrent themes of the present paper;

(b) Between urban agglomerations on a scale unknown in the world up to the present, and highly dispersed rural settlements, both undergoing continual changes in patterns and functions. At the one extreme, the metropolitan area of Mexico City will have nearly 14 million

inhabitants by 1980, and in the unlikely event that present trends continue that long, nearly 32 million by 2000.<sup>22</sup> São Paulo will have about 12.5 million in 1980, and could have 26 million in 2000; while the corresponding figures for Rio de Janeiro are 10 million and 19 million; for Lima 5 million and 12 million; for Bogotá 4.4 million and 9.5 million. While the other present megalopolis of the region, Buenos Aires, can expect a relatively low rate of growth, and only two other cities (Caracas and Santiago) are likely to pass the 5 million mark by 2000, the total number of cities with more than one million inhabitants will be 25 in 1980 and probably around 50 by 2000. At these and smaller city sizes one can expect considerable diversity in rates of growth and in functions, depending on changes in technology, in transport and trade networks, and in the consumption patterns (including consumption of leisure time) imposed by the styles of development: specialized industrial centres, agricultural frontier marketing centres, mineral exploitation centres, political-administrative centres, and resort centres. In all of these urban types, in-migrants will greatly outnumber natives; only certain provincial capital and 'museum cities', of small consequence in the overall trends, might be able to maintain demographic and social structural continuity. The forms

<sup>22</sup> These figures are taken from "Trends and Prospects in the Population of Urban Agglomerations, 1950-2000, as assessed in 1973-1975", prepared by the Population Division, United Nations Secretariat (ESAP/P/WP.58, 21 November 1975). The CEPAL/HABITAT/CIDA project, "Problemas Sociales del Ambiente Humano en América Latina" is elaborating a classification of settlement types drawing on the same information. See also *Desarrollo y cambio social en América Latina*, Cuadernos de la CEPAL, N° 16, Santiago, Chile, 1977.

taken by political participation outside the huge multifunctional agglomerations will depend in part on the kind of population attracted by the specialized functions. At the other pole, the rural and small town population will doubtless continue to grow slowly in some countries, becoming stationary or declining in others, but will be far from static in spatial distribution, social structures, and life styles. It will be increasingly dominated by urban influences, but will manifest peculiar combinations of isolation and horizontal mobility, gaining access to some features of modernization but not others. While the population in the larger centres will continue to have a disproportionate representation of young adults, outmigration will continue to leave this age group under-represented in the countryside.

As long as current styles of development prevail, the greater part of the 'beneficiary' population will be found in the cities, generally constituting a majority, while the greater part of the rural population will remain marginalized or 'critically poor', although the rural share of the total marginalized population will continue to fall, and the relative importance of 'beneficiaries' within the rural population may rise.<sup>23</sup> Both urban and rural populations will continue to be polarized, with large marginalized minorities in the first and large beneficiary minorities in the second. (However, in the countries in which the rural population still outnumbers the urban, a good

<sup>23</sup> The terms 'marginalized' and 'beneficiary' are used here for convenience, as emphasizing the aspects most relevant to the discussion of the well-known split between losers and gainers in the prevailing styles of development; the real divisions in urban and rural class structures are obviously a good deal more complicated.

many of the urban agglomerations, including some of the larger ones, may become dumping-grounds for a subproletariat expelled from the land but still mainly dependent on agricultural wage labour, as seems to have happened in some parts of Brazil, to such an extent that the marginalized part of their population becomes a majority.)<sup>24</sup> In the urban agglomerations, both the beneficiary and the marginalized population will be continually on the move as older neighbourhoods change their class composition or are eradicated by the expansion of commercial and industrial activities, and as transport networks encourage or discourage different patterns of urban sprawl. In the rural areas also, changing demands for crops and for labour, the opening-up of new lands, and the disintegration of traditional tenure systems will keep both the beneficiary and the marginalized population in movement.

Under these conditions, with the population groups segregated in different life styles by their income levels, but in continual contact with each other, in continual spatial movement and continually growing in numbers, a technobureaucratic State and ubiquitous mass communication media under the control

<sup>24</sup> See Paul Israel Singer, "Implicações Econômicas e Sociais da Dinâmica Populacional Brasileira", *Estudos sobre a População Brasileira*, CEBRAP, Caderno 20, São Paulo, 1975, for a comment to the effect that the urbanization of a part of the agricultural labour force brought in its train the unification of the urban and rural labour market. The new in-migrants settled on the outer fringes of the cities, in wretched living conditions, and were available at a low price for the capital invested both in agriculture and in urban activities or construction. See also Franklin de Oliveira, *A Tragedia da Renovação Brasileira, Minas Gerais e São Paulo: a Miséria dentro do Progresso*, Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 1971.

of the State might well become the only effective unifying factors, ushering in the kind of anomic society depicted by Cardoso in the quotation above. However, the consolidation of centralized technobureaucratic controls over such a population may not in the long term prove any easier than the consolidation of the decentralized and democratic mechanisms for decision-making called for by 'another development'. One can expect mutations of interest-group organizations, local community defence organizations, and religious as well as political movements offering security and hope to emerge continually, react in the most diverse ways to 'future shock', and confront continual efforts at control and manipulation from the national centres of power. Probably none of these forms of participation will actively involve the majority, either in the beneficiary or the marginalized population, at any one time. One can expect the nuclear family to continue to struggle with the impossible task of socializing children for a future in which most of them will have to form new families in settings completely different from the 'family of orientation'.<sup>25</sup> One can expect the mass communication media and the educational systems to transmit messages even more diverse and contradictory than at present, partly under the influence of the 'seeds of change' transmitted from the central industrial or post-industrial societies, partly under the influence of domestic crises of consumerist development and incapacity of the labour market to absorb the output of the educational systems. Governmental

<sup>25</sup> See Carlos Borsotti, "Notas sobre la familia como unidad socioeconómica", *Revista Paraguaya de Sociología*, Nº 36, May-August 1976.

efforts to regiment these messages in the interest of a determined style of development may curb the diversity but probably not eliminate it for very long.

One comes back to the not very original propositions that progress toward authentic participation in decision-making will require: (a) simultaneous progress toward a style of development giving priority to basic needs and meaningful human activity; (b) vitality and adaptability in all the organizational forms of participation now on the stage, none of them likely to become panaceas, all of them susceptible to distortions; (c) the marriage of an intellectual élite consciousness and a mass consciousness, both of which are now fragmented and far from accepting the full implications of 'another development'. The attractiveness of idealized versions of the Chinese style of development, even in sectors that have no sympathy for the ideological basis and the political tactics associated with the style, suggests a widening intellectual awareness of what must be done, but no workable idea of how to go about it (and who is to go about it) in the Latin American circumstances of dependent semi-development.

The future can be expected to bring certain harsh lessons insistently and repeatedly to the attention of all strata of the population. If conclusions consistent with the values of 'another development' are gradually to permeate popular consciousness, the minorities that are already reaching these conclusions must undertake a task of conscientization without dogmatism, insisting on the long term non-viability of present trends, risking some exaggeration and over-simplification, but trying to stay well this side of catastrophism, and maintaining sufficient historical consciousness to remember that the future

will always be largely unexpected, that the challenges to human societies are not so much overcome as transformed into new challenges, that 'development' or 'history' does not move from a 'beginning' to an 'end' in utopia or disaster, and that inefficiency and injustice in the functioning of a social system are not sufficient proofs that it cannot continue to function.

Participatory development requires new ways of thinking throughout the national society, and these new ways are possibly coming to birth in a confused and contradictory fashion. The present popularity of speculations on the future, the controversy over 'another development', the proliferating international campaigns on the human environment, habitat, population, poverty, hunger, sexual and racial equality are all contributions to this process, however misdirected or evasive some of their manifestations may seem. It is clear that popular consciousness, giving at least partial assent to militant minorities, is now setting limits to the functioning of the centralized industrial societies that some of the dominant forces in them find deeply alarming — and that inspire the latter, among other things, to devise counter-utopias demonstrating that the only way to achieve the objectives of the campaigns is unfettered economic expansion. Similar currents are agitating technobureaucratic and academic circles in the rest of the world, torn between anxiety to preserve the previous myth of development; suspicion of the motives of 'anti-growth', conservationist and redistributionist campaigns emanating from the world centres; and awareness that somehow their thinking and their policies must incorporate the new objectives.

We know much less about the real reception of the newer preoccupations in

different strata of the populations of the peripheral countries, although generalizations are plentiful. The upper and middle strata cannot avoid some awareness of the questions through the mass media, but probably are even less disposed to draw conclusions relating to their own life-styles than are their counterparts in the central countries; their immediate concerns are to broaden their entry into the consumer society and influence the State to ward off threats from below. It is reasonable to suppose that the masses of the population are also preoccupied by immediate problems of livelihood and security, but that their material expectations, even in the unevenly modernized, semi-developed societies, remain modest. The new preoccupations may add something to the egalitarian ferment that has long been at work among them, but the consequences can only be guessed at, particularly in settings in which rapid advances in popular mobilization have been followed by sudden exclusion. One can suppose a widespread anxiety, only partly conscious, for some meaningful interpretation of what is happening, allowing the individual and family to relate themselves to an image of the future, something more satisfying than the ceaseless struggle to make ends meet. The response, however, may take messianic or xenophobic as well as more conventional political lines.

Earlier papers in these series of explorations of styles of development have criticized the use of the term 'we' by self-appointed intellectual spokesmen for the impoverished masses.<sup>26</sup> One should be particularly wary of attributing a common awareness, uniform

<sup>26</sup> See Marshall Wolfe, "Approaches to development: Who is approaching what?", *CEPAL Review*, No 1, first half of 1976.



aspirations, and capacity for organized action to broad population categories: *the poor, the youth, the women, the workers, the peasants*, etc. Some of these categories constitute social classes with a bent to self-identification and common action; others may be more real, as sources of self-identification, to the eye of the observer dealing with statistical aggregates, than to the supposed members. The preceding paper discussed the limitations of 'poverty' as a frame of reference for group self-identification, and a monograph by Aldo Solari has ridiculed over-generalization on the aspirations of 'youth'.<sup>27</sup> Individuals falling into such broad categories may shift among half a dozen contradictory self-identifications, or have no self-identification disposing them to participate in group action, but declarations deriving from the international movement toward 'another development' commonly assert that such broad categories are making demands on society that only minorities among them have dreamed of. As a corollary, it has been proposed that such categories name representatives to sit with government delegates in international conferences to make their supposed demands heard. One can justify such reification of broad population categories as a tactic designed to create the group consciousness that it assumes already to exist, a deliberate self-fulfilling prophecy. This is undoubtedly happening on a significant scale, and is one of the ways in which variants on the idea of 'another development' are penetrating popular consciousness. It is natural for

the movements convinced that 'something must be done' to project on the social groups for which they feel particular empathy their own values and aspirations. As a guide to political action depending on the real readiness of broad population categories for mobilization, however, the attitude can be disastrously misleading. First, it can obviously lead to over-confidence, defeat, and disillusionment, if the vanguard assumes a mass following that is non-existent, only superficially interested, or really pre-occupied by questions that the vanguard has not understood. Second, the supposition of common perceived interests within broad population categories masks real and perceived conflicts of interests within the category, such as those between different kinds of 'critically poor' and 'relatively poor'. The result is likely to be an alliance between external spokesmen—governmental or otherwise—and the most articulate elements in the population category, excluding or manipulating the remainder.

There can be no substitute for humility and realism in the elite consciousness that tries to serve the consciousness of the masses, and these qualities have been in short supply up to the present. The cause of participation has suffered from excessive manipulateness, on the one hand, and from over-confidence in uniform mass readiness to participate on the other. It has been associated with excessive confidence in the problem-solving ability of the State. This in turn leads us to the topic of self-reliance, even more venerable and ambiguous than that of participation, and now coming back to the foreground after years of relative neglect.

<sup>27</sup> Aldo Solari, "Algunas reflexiones sobre la juventud latinoamericana", *Cuadernos del ILPES*, Series II, N° 14, Santiago, 1971.

## 5. Self-reliance

The theme of self-reliance, like the other broad guidelines to 'another development' discussed in this paper, has reappeared as a dialectical reaction to the preponderance of its opposite in the real trends of economic growth and social change. The terms in which it is imposing itself as a radical criticism of these trends show interesting parallels between the international, the national, the local-community, and the family-individual spheres of action and interaction. The relationships of dominance and dependency have become so frustrating to major forces in central as well as peripheral countries, and the possible consequences of continually rising indebtedness, continually ramifying activities of transnational enterprises, and continual shocks from the economic and political rivalries of the world centres have become so ominous that régimes of many different complexions are seeking means of enhancing their autonomy, tailoring their plans to their internal resources, if only for the purpose of strengthening their bargaining power in the negotiations over a new international economic order. Meanwhile, the inability of the developmentalist-welfare State to satisfy all the demands made on it is generating a reaction on the part of national political leaderships, aiming or pretending to divest the State of some of its responsibilities through controlled decentralization, as well as on the part of different sectors of the public, from which rises a chorus of partly contradictory accusations against the fiscal voracity of the State, its paternalism,

bureaucratization, failure to solve problems, and inability to provide efficient services or sufficient jobs. These reactions are evident in what might seem to be model welfare states. They should be particularly acute in semi-developed countries that have taken over the full accoutrements of the modern State without the command over resources, administrative capacities, or social consensus needed to make them function for the general welfare. In national societies at all levels of development, the resulting frustrations and fears have given renewed vigour to very diverse ideological and religious currents—cultural-nationalist, liberal, communitarian, anarchist—that for diverse reasons reject centralization, regimentation, paternalism, assistentialism, 'mass society', and other contraries to self-reliance. Meanwhile, the momentum of the forces making for national entanglement in the web of dependency and human entanglement in the web of technobureaucracy continues, checked at some points and gaining even more strength at others.

The following quotations sum up the positive reasons for insisting on self-reliance:

"If development is the development of man, as an individual and as a social being, aiming at his liberation and at his fulfilment, it cannot but stem from the inner core of each society. It relies on what a human group has: its natural environment, its cultural heritage, the creativity of the men and women who constitute

it, becoming richer through exchange between them and with other groups. It entails the autonomous definition of development styles and of life styles. . . . it does not ask the question 'how much can we get through exchange', but 'how much can we produce ourselves or with others'. Thus, the basis is laid for a search for new resources, for utilizing known resources in new ways and, sometimes, for questioning the need for the product. . . . A self-reliant society is able to stand up better to crises: it is self-confident and has the means to sustain its dignity."<sup>28</sup>

"Since this entails trying many different paths, so that the law of diversity may operate and there may be a good chance that one is going in the right direction (that is, will not end up in a blind alley), a practical conclusion immediately becomes evident: it is necessary to be nationalist, or at least 'regionalist'.

In point of fact, acceptance of a universal culture means, from this point of view, putting all the eggs in one basket: a risk that should not be run, for although it may somewhat increase the likelihood of gain, it makes the cost of losing infinite. Moreover, giantism reduces flexibility and the capacity for adaptation to unexpected changes."<sup>29</sup>

The positive case for self-reliance thus links it to creativity and participation; it assumes that neither the national society nor the individual will reach their full potential without making their own decisions and taking the consequences. The Dag Hammarskjöld Report couples this with the supposition that all societies will eventually pool their self-reliance in a highly co-operative and interdependent world order responding to common values. The Varsavski formulation is somewhat closer to the survival of the fittest; it is up to each society to demonstrate that its own path is a valuable contribution to a human future of continued diversity and unending new challenges; if some cannot meet the challenges, a benevolent world order is not going to save them.

Both quotations hint at the negative case. Crises are going to come; the greater the training in self-reliance the greater the probability that the society or group or individual will surmount them. The national society can reasonably count on a certain amount of international aid if its leaders set out to transform the style of development; it can also expect a certain amount of obstruction. It will be able to use the one and cope with the other to the extent it reduces its vulnerability and increases its self-sufficiency, whether alone or associated with others in a like position.

<sup>28</sup> See *What Now? Another Development*, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>29</sup> Translated from Oscar Varsavski, *Proyectos nacionales*, Buenos Aires, Ediciones Periferia, 1971, p. 228.