The dynamics of aid and development : Australian and Asian responses to poverty in the region 1950s-1990s

Author:
Sutherland, Faye

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THE DYNAMICS OF AID AND DEVELOPMENT:

AUSTRALIAN AND ASIAN RESPONSES TO POVERTY IN THE REGION 1950s-1990s

Faye Sutherland

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"... in the last decade of the twentieth century, poverty remains a problem of shocking dimensions. The stark facts are ... almost 1.3 billion people live in absolute poverty on less than $US370 a year. Three-quarters of these - about 805 million people - live in Asia, particularly in South and East Asia." [1]

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[1] Hon Gordon Bilney, Minister for Development Cooperation and Pacific Island Affairs, Nov., 1993

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For Annie Preece and Annie Beverley

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Abbreviations

AA	Australian Archives
AAAV	Australian-Asian Association of Victoria
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ACC	Australian Council of Churches
ACES	Agency for Community Education and Services Foundation
ACR	Australian Catholic Relief
ACFOA	Australian Council for Overseas Aid
ACFOD	Asian Cultural Forum on Development
ADAA	Australian Development Assistance Agency
ADAB	Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh
ADAB	Australian Development Assistance Bureau
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFFHC	Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign
AFPRO	Action for Food Production
AID	Agency for International Development (USA)
AIDAB	Australian International Development Assistance Bureau
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANGOC	Asian Non-Government Organisations Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation
APHEDA	Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad
APHD	Asian Partnership for Human Development
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AVARD	Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development
AWARE	Action For Welfare and Rural Awakening
AWD	Action for World Development
BHN	Basic Human Needs
BINGO	Bilateral Non-governmental Organisation
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CAA	Community Aid Abroad
CDP	Community Development Programme
CENDHRRA	Centre for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DEVED	Development Education
DIFF	Development Import Finance Facility
ECAFE	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
ECLA	Economic Commission for Latin America
EEC	European Economic Community
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FFHC	Freedom From Hunger Campaign
FFHC/AD	Freedom From Hunger Campaign/Action for Development
FFPC	Food for Peace Campaign
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HYV	High-Yielding Varieties
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies

IDA	International Development Association
IDSS	International Development Support Services
IGGI	Inter-Governmental Group on Aid to Indonesia
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IWDA	International Women's Development Agency
LDC	Less Developed Countries
MISEREOR	Campaign Against Hunger and Disease in the World
MNC	Multinational Corporation
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCARRD	National Consultation on Agricultural Reform and Development
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NIEO	New International Economic Order
NIC	Newly Industrialised Country
NOVIB	Netherlands Organisation for International Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSB	Overseas Service Bureau
OXFAM	Oxford Committee Against Hunger
PHC	Primary Health Care
PACAP	Philippine Australian Community Assistance Program
PANGOP	Philippine Australian Non-Government Organisations Program
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRIA	Society for Participatory Research in Asia
PSS	Project Subsidy Scheme
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organisation
SEWA	Self-Employed Womens Association
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
THIRD	Thai Institute for Rural Development
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US/USA	United States/United States of America
VIAS	Vedchhi Intensive Area Scheme
WB	World Bank
WCC	World Council of Churches
WHO	World Health Organisation
WID	Women in Development
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WVA	World Vision of Australia
WVI	World Vision International
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

Preface

As delegates made ready to attend a British Commonwealth Foreign Ministers meeting in Colombo in 1950 they were advised: "In view of the baggage restrictions in air travel formal morning dress and tail coats need not be brought."[1] One of the agenda items which Ministers were to address in Colombo involved the question of economic aid to assist the nations of Asia. The plan which evolved from these and subsequent discussions came to be known as the Colombo Plan. Devised substantially to build the economic, commercial and industrial infrastructure of non-Communist Asian nations, the benefits of the Colombo Plan were assumed also to reach down to assist poor communities. As the delegates to the Colombo meeting gathered for the mandatory "photo opportunity", the trappings of formality and privilege both Western and non-Western (despite the absence of morning coats), distanced the group from the general populace, especially from the poor in "developing countries".[2]

The forty years which this thesis spans, from the 1950s to the 1990s, represent a period of both immense change and of stubborn entrenched continuity. Poverty remained a cruel fact of life for hundreds of millions of people with more than 800 million of the world's 1.3 billion poorest people residing in the Asia-Pacific region in 1995.[3] Commonwealth Heads and other multilateral organisations continued to meet to discuss measures to alleviate persistent world need. But while the practice had endured of sealing these forums with the group traditional portrait, by the 1990s they were not so remote from the critical public eye. Such forums were now monitored closely by a well-organised non-government sector which believed that the ethos driving the Colombo Plan had substantially failed poor communities. Non-government organisations (NGOs)[4] now lobbied multilateral and bilateral forums in an attempt to negotiate a better deal for the poor. Changing technology - radio, television, film and critically the micro-chip which spawned computers, modems and fax machines - had enabled groups

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[1] Inward Telegram to Commonwealth Relations Office, From Ceylon, Cm RO, Canada, Australia, N.Z., India, Pakistan, 10th Dec., 1949, from Vaithiannathan, Sec., External Affairs, Colombo

[2] The terms "Developing countries", "Third World" and "South", used to denote poor countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, are cover-all phrases commonly used in foreign relations literature. They are used in the thesis interchangeably.

[3] Morales, H., "Civil Society Must Claim the Future", Proceedings of the Asia-Pacific NGO Symposium on Social Development, 12-15 July, 1994, Bangkok, ACFOA, Deakin, 1994, p.12; *The Reality of Aid 95*, ActionAid, ICVA, Eurostep, Earthscan, London, 1995, p.3

[4] Globally this sector has been described variously as non-profits, voluntary organisations or non-government organisations (NGOs). By 1990 "NGO" was the most widely used term and will be used throughout this thesis to denote those agencies - whether in the developed or developing world - engaged in the international development process. Assistance might take the form of funding, education or advocacy. From time to time the term "non-government organisation" will be used in full to denote the wider non-government community.

outside of government fast access to information on development issues and to each other. With their newsletters, submissions and banners, non-government organisations held meetings alongside important bilateral and multilateral meetings raising issues concerning poverty, de-militarisation, the environment and human rights.[5] The gap between rich and poor was still wide. But, by the 1990s, a robust and professional non-government sector, often in liaison with and represented by poor people, was challenging the policy-makers to be more accountable to the needs of the poor.

This thesis focuses on the issues of aid and development as they impinged on poor people in the Asian region. The term "Asia" is an all-embracing word commonly used in international relations and by the nations themselves as a convenience to denote a large group of nations which share a geographic area. It relates to nations of South Asia, Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia.[6] In relation to aid when used in this thesis, "Asia" generally refers to those Asian nations which were the recipients of Australian aid in any given period. That situation was not static. For example, in the early decades of Australian assistance non-communist Asian nations were excluded. But by the 1980s both China and Vietnam were receiving Australian aid.

While the thesis has a broad canvas, it is centrally concerned with Australian government and NGO aid and the interaction of those two sectors with Asian aid recipients. It is also concerned with the relationship between the Australian government and the Australian NGO community. It questions the extent to which, if at all, the NGO sector had an impact on government aid, and explores the differences in ideology and practice both between the two sectors and within the NGO sector. It traces the evolution of ideology and practice, the influences which motivated various Australian groups to respond to Asian poverty in certain ways, and the impact those activities had on various donors and recipients. It questions whether, overall, aid could be considered an ally of the poor.

It has been necessary to confine discussion of Australian NGOs to a representative sample of organisations. These were either considered typical of certain aid practices in a specific period, or were peculiarly influential in the wider Australian aid context. The organisations have been analysed to demonstrate their contributions to Australian

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[5] Executive Director, OXFAM U.K. of its efforts to influence the United Nation's Security Council to respond adequately to crisis in Rwanda in 1994 said: "Coordination of our actions internationally to get the message through to the main players at the same critical moments was vital. Together, we were able to play a really useful role. Faxes and telephone conferences were our tools - helping to protect people at risk of genocide was our aim." *Horizons*, Community Aid Abroad, Summer 1995, Vol 3, No.3, p.19

[6] These nations are represented by: South Asia - India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh; Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia - or what some analysts prefer to call an all-encompassing East Asia - China, North and South Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei and Malaysia. When used in the context of "Third World" or "developing" nation, the term "Asia" does not include Japan. Sopiee, N., "The Development of an East Asian Consciousness", pp.180-193, in Sheridan, G., Ed., *Living with Dragons, op.cit.*

perceptions of aid and Asia - poverty alleviation, changing aid practices, public education, and NGO/government relations. As well, the thesis examines the reaction of Asian governments to some associated Western initiatives, including international trade issues.

Aid was not the only or even major source of funding designed to stimulate development in "Third World" nations. But in its capacity to fund development programmes, aid was a central index of changing development practices. Aid policy was also a fine barometer of political, economic and social international relations. And to study aid issues is also to examine many of the assumptions, prejudices and ideologies which informed government and community action over time.

The thesis is structured chronologically, divided into decades from the 1950s to the 1990s, because development analysis has frequently been perceived in "development decades", especially since the UN introduced the concept at the beginning of the 1960s. The thesis is also divided into two parts. Part I, "Limits to Growth", covers the years of the 1950s and 1960s and embodies an Australia which, it is argued, was strongly influenced and limited in its approach to aid and development issues by its past history, perceptions and prejudices. Part II, "Breaking Barriers/Maintaining Fences", addresses the period from the 1970s to the 1990s. This section demonstrates the importance of critiques and activity stemming from the activist non-government sector which acted as a force to question old paradigms and to introduce new ones. Also examined are traditional forces which resisted challenges to the status quo.

In each decade, development assistance is examined within the context of changing national and international political, economic and cultural issues. During the 1950s, most Westerners commonly held a Eurocentric view of the world, locating power and all that mattered in Europe and North America. The thesis demonstrates the strong impact that a fundamentally Western world-view had on determining all facets of Australian government aid policy - its rationale, its geographic application, its administration and its type. As a consequence, Australia's aid programme was premised strongly on Western ideas of development which were enmeshed in Western notions of "progress". To be "developed" according to this definition meant building a nations infrastructure - communications, power, industry, agriculture, business and commercial sectors - by exploiting a nation's natural resources and utilising a skilled and educated labour force. The success of such development was measured by a nation's per capita income or Gross National Product - by its economic growth. Nations lacking such structures, skills and resources were considered "undeveloped", "backward", "poor".

There was strong support for this definition of development from most non-Communist nations during the 1950s and 1960s. Australian development aid reflected an emphasis on modernisation centred narrowly on economistic issues. Western ideas about science and quantification were used to judge the success of assistance.

Macroeconomic policy was paramount. "People" were subsumed under the label of the "starving millions". Given this focus, it is argued that most Australian aid, government and private, disregarded the *complexity* of the Asian cultures it was assisting; the *processes* of modernisation which it was introducing and the *effects* of modernisation on Asian communities and environs. Critically, also, Cold War concerns kept Australian government policy focused on strategic, geopolitical issues until the 1980s when trade concerns took centre stage. The alleviation of poverty, though a stated objective of aid policy since the early 1950s, not only took a back seat to strategic and trade imperatives but was frequently exacerbated by them.

These two mutually reinforcing practices - the blanket support for a development model which was disinclined to engage with the cultures it assisted and the emphasis on strategic and trade imperatives rather than on poverty *per se* - were subsequently demonstrated (especially by activist NGOs) to have had a very negative impact on Asia's poorest communities.

Cold War imperatives also determined the relatively unchanging nature of Australian government aid. This was despite challenges made by UN agencies and the non-government sector to the development model based on economic growth. As this type of development failed to adequately address the problem of increasing world poverty, the growth model was scrutinised and reviewed. In consequence the parameters of what constituted "development" broadened decade by decade. More social or human attributes were added to the definition which embraced the concept of basic human needs to provide such facilities as a clean water supply, food, shelter, access to education and healthcare. And further changes broadened the definition when non-material human needs were included to focus on the notions of freedom, self-expression, equity and social justice - issues which required a substantial transformation of social relationships.

Despite embracing much of the changing development rhetoric, actual changes to the Australian government aid programme to reflect this evolving perspective were very minimal. Some attempts were made through the aid programme in the 1980s to engage in social and grassroots activities. However, since the aid programme was operating at the time in an economic rationalist environment supportive of the old growth model, projects with a social focus constituted only a very small part of the aid programme over all. It was not until the early 1990s that the issue of poverty and the means to more effectively address its roots through the Australian aid programme seriously began to be addressed.

What constituted “development” and how to carry it out was at the core of ongoing tensions between the multilateral and bilateral sectors and activist NGOs. NGOs particularly, challenged the idea of an "all-knowing" West imposing its ideas on other societies and demonstrated the importance of recognising the knowledge and skills of

so-called "underdeveloped" communities. By the 1990s, there was a growing consensus among the multilateral and bilateral sectors supporting a more pluralistic definition of development. This encompassed the issues of ecological sustainability, women's equality and minority and human rights which the advocates of a growth and grassroots focus, as opposed to a growth only focus, supported. The means to achieve such ends, however, continued to be frustrated by self-interest and lack of political will.

The activities of the Australian government, the Australian/Asian Association of Victoria, Community Aid Abroad, World Vision, the Australian Council for Overseas Aid and the 1960s Freedom from Hunger Campaign are here analysed to examine how these sectors of the aid community interacted with Asian aid recipients. Ideology, practice and aid discourses have all been considered. Australian governments continually asserted that aid policy should strengthen Australia/Asia relations, thus linking aid policy with Australia's struggle to come to terms with the region. Since aid discourses were driven by the same assumptions, biases and stereotypes which drove aid policy (they were frequently simplistic and Eurocentric), aid discourses projected the view that developing nations were persistent, passive recipients of handouts. Aid discourses, therefore, played a central role in constructing negative images of Asia and the wider community of so-called developing nations.

Existing analyses of Australian perceptions of Asia have tended to ignore aid and development issues.[7] In fact, sustained by Cold War fears, aid discourses, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, reaffirmed with vigour the themes which had historically informed Australian perceptions of Asia: the proximity of Asia; the emptiness of Australia compared with overcrowded Asia - and hence the fear of invasion; cleanliness and order compared with dirt, disease and disorder; the preference for "whiteness" over "colour", and of Christianity over paganism. Accompanied by East-West ideological paranoia, these themes found strong support particularly in early post-war Australian aid and development discourses. Thereafter, despite the influences of so-called "liberation" and anti-colonial movements in moderating racist ideology, some Australian NGOs continued to promote negative images of Third World nations. Analyses of aid discourses therefore, both complement and extend the existing body of literature concerned with Australian perceptions of Asia.

Research into Asian government and Asian NGO activity in fact revealed a quite different, more dynamic and complex reality than that popularly portrayed by the West. The thesis demonstrates that far from being passive recipients of aid, Asian nations, in

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[7] See, for example, Walker, D., & Ingleson, J., "The Impact of Asia", in Meaney, N., *Under New Heavens: Cultural Transmission and the Making of Australia*, Heinemann Educational Australia, Port Melbourne, 1989, pp.288-324; Walker, D., Ed., *Australian Perceptions of Asia*, Australian Cultural History, No.9., 1990, University of New South Wales, Kensington, 1990; Broinowski, A., *The Yellow Lady: Australian Impressions of Asia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1992

concert with other developing nations, were vocal and active in lobbying Western governments, in embracing various "Third World" organisations and in initiating Third World forums. Through such forums Asia's leaders presented spirited arguments in defence of Asian cultures, Asian independence, and Asia's right to economic equity, especially in relation to world trade. This thesis examines the various ongoing attempts made by some Asian governments to assert pressure on the West to have these issues recognised and acted on.

The thesis also considers some of the approaches of Asian governments to alleviating grassroots poverty particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as the activities of Asia's voluntary aid communities. Contrary to common Western perceptions, it is argued that an active Asian welfare-based voluntary sector and many government-sponsored community development activities were being pursued in the 1950s and 1960s. However, it was the case, too, that most governments in Asia were often as enthusiastic about modernisation as their Western counterparts and as disinclined as the West to question the effects of development on the environment or on poor communities. It was also the case that Asian governments and the Asian voluntary sector frequently represented Asia's poor communities with assumptions and prejudices common to an urban elite distant from and ignorant of poor communities. Bias and stereotype, in other words, were not just prerogatives of the West.

In contrast to the activities of local governments, in both Australia and Asia, many individuals were prepared to question prevailing attitudes and assumptions. There was, by the mid-1950s, already evidence of critiques from individuals working with poor communities in Asia who sought to interact on the basis of equality with the poor. India, particularly, could call on a long tradition of social activism, and an activist NGO sector slowly evolved in India and elsewhere with these same characteristics.

In Australia, too, history had regularly thrown up individuals prepared to interact with compassion with Asian cultures. (Alison Broinowski calls them the "specially imaginative, disaffected or eccentric [who] thought the chance of East-West fusion worth investigating...").[8] In the aid arena, in the 1950s, "the specially imaginative" included the Food for Peace Campaign (renamed Community Aid Abroad in 1962) and the Volunteer Graduate Scheme. Their founders took on a more visionary approach to Asia, to aid and, critically, to poor people generally, than was usual in the current environment. The most valuable quality that these scattered and varied individuals shared, in terms of genuinely benefiting poor people, was a willingness to set aside assumptions, bias and stereotypes in order to learn from the communities they assisted. In contrast, as this thesis demonstrates, the majority of Westerners and Asians who assisted Asian communities were beguiled by the "superiority" of Western development,

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[8] *Ibid*, p.198

an attitude which closed them off from exploring alternatives and from critically evaluating their actions.

It is argued that the very openness of activist NGOs made them receptive to arguments and ideas which began to emanate from a wider non-government sector - such as sections of the Catholic and Protestant churches and "liberation" movements - which, by the mid 1960s and 1970s, focused on social justice and human rights issues. Activist NGOs were also influenced by progressive "thinkers" who produced arguments which invited critical new interpretations of Western modernisation ideas and practices. Through cultural interaction and transmission - Western/non-Western and Asian/Asian - activist NGOs and social activists were encouraged to challenge the narrowness of the Eurocentric view of the world with its tendency to control and limit the growth of marginalised peoples. Influenced by post colonial critiques, aid discourses embraced the concepts of pluralism, liberation and the breaking of restricting barriers which barred access to facilities such as education, healthcare and land. The flexibility of activist NGOs, as well as their growing first-hand knowledge of the issues which contributed to the oppression of poor communities, made them particularly well placed to give action to an increasingly global rhetoric on development matters. Activist NGOs took up the discourses and applied them to their grassroots activities.[9] The exercise considerably enlarged the definition of development and challenged the image of undifferentiated "starving millions". Separate Asian nations and communities and groups within these nations were now given visibility.

The thesis demonstrates how activist NGOs gave support to and helped encourage the proliferation of NGOs and also People's Organisations (POs) throughout the developing world in the 1980s. They helped push the boundaries of development thinking by encouraging alternatives to handouts or conventional "development" projects. In liaison with other social activists they helped establish networks - inter-Asian, inter-Third World, North/South - of advocates and lobbyists of Third World NGOs who in conjunction with poor and marginalised groups were focused on increasing the agency and empowerment of the poor. The empirical studies of activist indigenous NGOs in the 1980s also revealed the negative impact of so-called development on poor communities, even as the West focused on Asia's strong economic performance. Paradoxically, the West, having overdrawn the extent of Third World passivity in the 1950s and 1960s, now tended to overdraw the positive consequences of Asia's economic boom in the 1980s. It was the NGOs which still focused on the issues of poverty and debt, dubbing the 1980s the "lost decade" for many Third World communities, rather than a period of all-embracing economic boom.

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[9] While this thesis is generally concerned with NGOs in Asia groups of NGOs in Africa and South America were pursuing similar activities.

The thesis follows the work of Australian NGOs involved in these overseas activities and explores their influence on the policies and practices of less activist NGOs in Australia. Until the mid-to-late 1980s, activist NGOs had only limited success in persuading the Australian government to embrace a poverty agenda. However, changing global circumstances placed a number of competing pressures on the aid programme and encouraged the Australian government to thoroughly reassess its policies. While support for economic rationalism at the time favoured a strong trade focus in the aid programme, it also supported substantial administrative reform. Reform subsequently produced an increasingly more sophisticated government aid organisation equipped and willing to engage in diverse development issues. The broader non-government sector had played a significant role since the 1960s in shifting global opinion to accept the inclusion of a plurality of issues in development practices. For example, the negative effects of modernisation on such areas as health and the environment, which non-government groups had long demonstrated, were now being conceded by the bilateral and multilateral sectors. Significantly, also, the importance of cultural and social development in achieving broader economic goals now began to be recognised by multilateral and bilateral organisations, including the Australian government. These initiatives, coupled with a complementary focus on micro issues, frequently in liaison with the NGO community, suggested that the Australian bilateral programme was now prepared to embrace practices directed towards alleviating poverty, rather than simply espousing rhetoric focused on these ends.

While activist NGOs had some success in supporting poor communities in Asia to gain agency, in Australia they had less success in building a strong, public constituency informed about aid issues. Activist NGOs found it difficult to build support for education campaigns based on making connections with the actions of the developed world and the poverty of the Third World. Several NGOs attempted such an approach in the 1970s and failed. Economic reality thereafter tended to focus activist education campaigns either within the professional aid community (both government and NGO), or on core supporters, rather than on the general public. The absence of an ongoing national development education campaign sponsored by either government or NGOs enabled a small but influential sector of NGOs to continue to promote powerful but anachronistic advertising, proliferating the image of a poor and passive Third World. Ironically, then, while the activities of some sections of the NGO community were path-breaking in that they helped facilitate real change in government and NGO practices overseas, other NGOs continued to reinforce old notions about developing country's being dependent on Australia. Public support for overseas assistance remained strong, but it was frequently motivated by moral concerns rather than by an informed assessment of the varying practices of donors and recipients. A public better educated

on aid issues might have placed more pressure on donors to raise the quality of their aid, and help to break down ideas of First World superiority.

Existing works on Australian aid and development have commonly focused on the practices of either governments or NGOs. A notable exception has been Philip Eldridge's work which pioneered analysis of both Australian government and NGO activity.[10] In his publication, *Indonesia and Australia:The Politics of Aid and Development Since 1966*, Eldridge broadened the aid debate by including the NGO sector when he analysed the work and ideology of several Australian NGOs working in Indonesia in the 1970s.

Of analyses on government aid, Nancy Viviani and Peter Wilenski contributed a significant critique on the first government attempt to establish an official development agency.[11] More broadly, two research theses have added substantially to understanding various aspects of Australian government aid policy since the war. Alan Wilkinson examined the politics of Australian aid between 1950 and 1972. This work is particularly valuable for its series of interviews with Australian aid officials of that period, especially given the restrictions on access to official documents. Juliet Hunt assessed government aid between 1973 and 1983 and presented valuable research on Australian government projects in Thailand. Both theses confirmed the essential unchanging nature of Australian aid which remained focused on strategic and diplomatic imperatives from the 1950s to 1983. Hunt concluded that equity considerations and a concern for the poor were, indeed, largely irrelevant to Australian aid management. Eldridge came to similar conclusions in his study of government aid to Indonesia from 1966 to the late 1970s.[12]

This thesis extends these studies by analysing Australian government aid up to the mid-1990s. It argues that, from the late 1980s, Australian aid policy began to change immeasurably from the policies and practices followed during the previous thirty-five years. But this thesis also has a wider objective to examine the interaction and relationship between the activities of Australia's formal aid programme and Australia's NGO community. The thesis demonstrates how the pioneering work of activist NGOs

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[10] His publications include: Eldridge, P., "Australian Aid to Indonesia:Diplomacy or Development?", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 25, 1971, pp.141-158; *Indonesia and Australia:The Politics of Aid and Development Since 1966*, Development Studies Centre, Monograph, No.18, ANU, Canberra, 1979; "Diplomacy, Development and 'Small Government': Conflicting Directions in Australia's Overseas Aid Program", *Australia-Asia Papers, No.3*, Centre for the Study of Australia-Asian Relations, School of Modern Asian Studies, Griffith University, 1980; "The Jackson Report on Australia's Aid Program:Political Options and Prospects", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 39, No.1, 1985, pp.23-32

[11] Viviani, N., and Wilenski, P., "The Australian Development Assistance Agency, A Post-Mortem Report", National Monograph Series, No.3, Royal Institute of Public Administration, Brisbane, 1978

[12] See *Indonesia and Australia:The Politics of Aid and Development Since 1966*, *op.cit.*, pp.51-52

eventually began to influence government policy to more closely reflect the needs of poor communities.

While NGOs have seen a dramatic growth in the past fifteen years, until recently published literature on the work of NGOs has been fragmented. This is as true in Australia as elsewhere. In fact a much wider body of literature exists on issues which concern and inform activist NGO activities and interests - development theory, North/South relations, trade policy, debt, hunger and poverty,[13] - than on the activities of NGOs. Of a handful of theses focused on Australian NGOs, R. Henry's is particularly informative for its overview of Australian NGOs in the 1960s. Eldridge's co-edited publication, *Australian Overseas Aid:Future Directions*[14] (1986), a valuable critique on the Jackson Committee Review of the Australian Overseas Aid Programme, also brought a useful NGO perspective to its analyses. L. Zivetz's, *et al*, publication, *Doing Good:The Australian NGO Community*[15] (1991), was the first attempt to profile a substantial cross-section of the Australian NGO community, by providing a broad historical overview of the work of sixteen NGOs. Susan Blackburn's study of Community Aid Abroad (1993) was the first publication to analyse an individual Australian NGO in depth.[16] A small group of writers overseas have also contributed analyses of NGOs in North America and Europe.[17]

Another group of NGO material is concerned primarily with specific case studies of NGO fieldwork carried out in the late 1980s and 1990s. Western NGOs have frequently focused their assistance on former colonies in the African region and case studies often

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[13] Refer to the bibliography of this thesis for the major works regarding the following issues: Development Theory: The literature on development theory is extensive. See, for example, the works of Seers, D.& Joy, L., Streeten, P.; Castel, H.; Cockcroft, J., Frank A.G., & Johnson, D.; Higgott, R; Todaro, M.; Blomstrom, M. & Hettne, B.; Kitching, G.; Rostow, W.. North/South Issues: See the reports of the Commission on International Development; Club of Rome, The Independent Commission on Development Issues, The World Commission on Environment and Development and The Report of the South Commission as well as Donaldson, P.; Harrison, P.; Jones, C.; Gauhar, A., Ed.; Trade Policy: *UNCTAD 1964 and 1968 reports;* Crawford, J.; Debt: George, S.; Payer, C.; Hunger/Poverty: Myrdal, G.; Tudge, C.; George, S.; Galbraith, J.; Hayter, T.; Lappe, F., & Collins, J.; Fonseca, A.; Coote, B.; Bennett, J.; Bello, W., *et al.*

[14] Henry, R. J., *A Study of the Voluntary Foreign Aid Movement in Australia*, MA thesis, La Trobe University, Dept., of Political Science, August, 1970; Eldridge, P., Forbes, D., Porter, D., Eds, *Australian Overseas Aid: Future Directions*, Croom Helm, Sydney, 1986

[15] Zivetz, L., *et al, Doing Good:The Australian NGO Community*, Allen and Unwin, North Sydney, 1991

[16] Blackburn, S., *Practical Visionaries, A Study of Community Aid Broad*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1993. A handful of other works gave a broad over-view of individual NGOs, for example: Deane, B., *The Earth Has Enough: The Story of Community Aid ABroad,* Melbourne, 1978; *Australian Volunteers Abroad, 25 Years Working for the World,* Overseas Service Bureau, Fitzroy, Melbourne, nd, c 1988; Campion, E., "Australian Catholic Relief: The First Twenty Years", pp.142-165 in Press, M., & Brown, N. Eds., *Faith and Culture:Living the Gospel Today,* Catholic Institute of Sydney, 1987

[17] For example, J. Tendler, in 1982, reviewed a series of US voluntary organisations. T. Brodhead, *et al*, (1988) examined the work of Canadian voluntary agencies and B. Smith (1990) analysed the work of NGOs in North America and in Europe. See Tendler, J., *Turning Private Voluntary Organizations into Development Agencies:Questions for Evaluation*, US Agency for International Development, Washington, 1982; Brodhead, T., *et al*, *Bridges of Hope? Canadian Voluntary Agencies and the Third World*, The North-South Institute, Ottawa,1988; Smith, B., *More Than Altruism: The Politics of Private Foreign Aid*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1990

reflected that preoccupation. More recently, however, several publications have included case studies which analyse various aspects of NGO activity in Asian countries.[18]

Both the wide professional expertise represented by the various authors of these works, and the inclusion of works written by indigenous NGOs, are important developments. Analysis on aid and development issues by professionals embracing agricultural policy, development economics, geography, history, politics, education, health, and the NGO sector, recognises the complexity of development which earlier analyses, which focused on economics, tended to ignore. The inclusion of materials written by indigenous NGOs is indicative of more recent practices which now seek genuine accommodation and participation between donors and recipients.

Most of the works written by NGOs commonly provide (if at all) only an overview of the evolution of NGOs which transformed many from charity-based "do-gooders" in the 1950s, to sophisticated activists and lobby groups in the 1990s. Indeed, a concept introduced by David Korten, which categorised NGO development into four "generations", has provided a neat shorthand which encapsulates the progression of many NGOs. (Korten identified four generations of activity through which many NGOs pass: Relief and welfare; Community development; Sustainable systems development and People's Movements.)[19] This thesis has revisited the "generations" or stages to examine the context within which Australian NGO assistance evolved. In so doing, it brings the NGO sector and the government sector together. It stresses the importance of change and innovation promoted over twenty to thirty years by activist NGOs (Western and Third World), in influencing the eventual changes which took place in the bilateral aid programme. This thesis neither implies that all development or government aid was negative *per se*, nor that activist NGOs were the purveyors of all wisdom in development matters. It argues rather that the particular focus of activist NGOs made them less inclined to Eurocentricism than other donors - be they government or NGOs. And that stance proved of value to activist NGOs in their attempts to understand and work with poor communities to tackle structural inequalities. But equally, the thesis acknowledges the negative impact that outdated NGO practices, particularly advertising, had on public knowledge and its perceptions of developing nations.

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[18] See Poulton, R., Harris, M., *Putting People First,* Macmillan, London, 1988; Holloway, R., Ed., *Doing Development*, Earthscan Publications, London, 1989; Bhaskara, H., *Against All Odds*, Panos, London, 1989; Madeley, J., *When Aid is No Help*, Intermediate Technology Publications, London, 1991; Edwards, M., Hulme, D., *Making a Difference*, Earthscan Publications, London, 1992; Kramsjo, B., & Wood, G., *Breaking the Chains*, IT Publications, 1992

[19] See Korten, D., *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*, Kumarian Press, West Hartford, 1990

In examining Australian interactions with Asia through the medium of aid and development, this thesis drew on a wide range of source materials. Australian government sources included: government memorandum, Cabinet papers and submissions, Parliamentary debates, Ministerial statements, press releases, speeches and broadcasts. It also drew on Colombo Plan reports and film and a large amount of Australian government aid literature. This included aid policy papers, annual reports, aid forum reports, aid reviews, budget papers and audit reports. Australian NGO sources included: minutes, correspondence, newsletters, evaluation reports, conference and seminar reports, policy papers, briefing papers and reports, media releases, newspaper reports, advocacy campaigns, submissions, film, television and video documentaries and advertisements. In both cases - government and NGO - field visits and interviews were also utilised.

Asian government comment was sought through official bilateral and multilateral publications. But the thesis also drew on a wide variety of NGO sources to reveal Asian NGO activity, comment and diversity. Although most Asian countries are referred to in some capacity, examples of NGO activities were largely drawn from those nations where the NGO community was particularly developed. This was especially notable in South Asia (in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh) and in the Philippines and Thailand.

NGOs in Asia are frequently small organisations with few resources. Their first priority is typically "out there", in the field assisting poor communities. Where records have been kept they are frequently in a chaotic and fragmented state ("in a basement somewhere"). I visited a wide variety of Asian NGO resource centres in the Philippines, Thailand and India. (The Gulf War prevented planned visits to Pakistan and Bangladesh.) The sources drawn on included newsletters, leaflets, reports, evaluations, conference and workshop proceedings, film, video, drama, poetry, novels and posters.

I also visited government resource centres, libraries, UN organisations and universities in the above countries and in Malaysia, over a period of nine months. Many hours of interviews from development workers, academics and government personnel - whose combined experience spanned forty years of development work in Asia - were utilised. Attendance at workshops and seminars in Asia represented by NGOs from South Asia and South-East Asia, including Vietnam, as well as visits to diverse communities who were the recipients of Australian aid, also helped to present an Asian dimension. Projects visited covered the full range of assistance - from child sponsorship to political lobbying and activism, and included agricultural projects, combined government/NGO rural development projects, special women's projects, credit banks, social forestry projects, health projects, income generating projects and water projects. The projects were as far apart as Isabella in the Northern Philippines, to Mindanao in the South, from Gujarat and Tamil Nadu in India and Khon Kaen in Thailand.

General Introduction

In the decades since WW II, which saw the evolution of a vast aid industry, many low-income, aid recipient nations of Africa, Latin America and Asia experienced improved standards of living and increases in real incomes. Life expectancy, for example, rose dramatically. Collectively the above three regions comprised 70% of the world's population in 1950, 78% in 1990 and they are projected to comprise 85% by the year 2020.[1] Based on past trends, which saw world population more than double between 1950 and 1990, that represents 85% of some 7,992 million people.[2] Much of this exceptional rise in population growth has been attributed to a fall in death rates. Todaro asserts that from the mid-1960s to 1990, mortality rates were reduced by up to 50% in parts of Asia and Latin America and by more than 30% in "much of Africa".[3]

This increase in life expectancy in the developing world was reflected even in the lives of people living in the poorest developing nations. For example, in Bangladesh, Nepal and India between 1965 and 1993 the life expectancy at birth of females rose from 44yrs to 56yrs, 40yrs to 54yrs and 44yrs to 61yrs respectively.[4] During the same period in Ethiopia female life expectancy rose from 43yrs to 50yrs and in Mozambique from 39yrs to 48yrs.[5] In the more affluent Asian nations of South Korea and Singapore life expectancy of females in the corresponding period rose from 58yrs to 75yrs and 68yrs to 78yrs respectively, while in the up-and-coming Asian economies of Thailand and Malaysia female life expectancy rose from 58yrs to 72yrs and 59yrs to 73yrs.[6]

Patently, public health initiatives such as immunisation, oral rehydration therapy, clean water supplies and improved sanitation had contributed substantially to lowering death rates. By the 1990s smallpox had been eradicated. Vaccination, antibiotics and other drugs had substantially reduced incidents of diptheria, yellow fever, cholera, polio, measles and tuberculosis.

Falling death rates could also be attributed to increased food supplies and improved nutrition. Technological advances substantially affected agricultural production

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[1] Todaro, M., *Economic Development in the Third World*, Longman, London, 1990, p.192

[2] *Ibid*, pp.190,193

[3] *Ibid*, p.195

[4] The life expectancy of females (F) and males (M) between 1965 and 1993 for the following Asian nations was: China F 58yrs/71yrs, M 55yrs/68yrs; Pakistan F 44yrs/63yrs, M 47yrs/61yrs; Sri Lanka F 64yrs/74yrs, M 63yrs/70yrs; Philippines F 57yrs/69yrs, M 54yrs/65yrs, *World Development Report 1989*, World Bank, Published for the World Bank by Oxford University Press, New York, 1989, pp.226-7; *World Development Report 1995,* World Bank, Published for the World Bank by Oxford University Press, New York, pp.218-9

[5] *Ibid*

[6] *Ibid*

resulting in an increase in average annual world food supplies by some 2.6% between 1950 and 1980 ahead of an annual population growth rate of 2%.[7] Green Revolution[8] techniques using high-yielding seed varieties, fertiliser, pesticide and water helped contribute to this increase in world food supplies resulting in sufficient food being produced by the 1980s to provide adequate sustenance for the world's population.[9] Certainly, famine which had stalked some Asian nations in the 1960s and 1970s, had for the most part disappeared by the 1980s, although in parts of Africa in the 1990s the spectre of famine remained.

Increased school enrolments and falling infant mortality rates represented other social indicators pointing to improved living standards. For example, female primary school enrolments in Bangladesh and Nepal rose from 31% in 1965 to 70% in 1992 and from 4% to 36% respectively.[10] The infant mortality rate in Nepal declined from 171 per thousand live births in 1965 to 96 in 1993 and in Bangladesh the rate fell from 144 to 106.[11]

The gross national product per capita of most developing nations had risen steadily since WW II. For the years 1975, 1987 and 1993 GDP per capita for the following nations was in $US: Nepal $105, $160, $190; Bangladesh $111, $160, $220; Thailand $289, $850, $2,110; Malaysia $780, $1810, $3,140; South Korea $551, $2,690, $7,660. The GDP per capita of other nations had fluctuating fortunes. Ethiopia (a country at war) rose and then decreased from $103, $130 to $100. India rose from $139 to $300 between 1975 and 1987 but remained static at $300 in 1993.[12]

As the Ethiopian and Indian figures suggest political instability and large population increases could frustrate or blunt development efforts. (Despite a decrease in the population annual growth rate from 2.3% in 1965 to 1.8% in the late 1980s India's population was 898 million in 1989 with a projection of 1,022 million by the year 2000.)[13] As well, despite development improvements since the 1950s many disparities existing between regions, between nations which shared the same region and within individual nations determined that the fruits of those improvements were not equally shared. Regionally, Asia and Latin America were comparatively better off than Africa. Within Asia, Bangladesh, Nepal and Vietnam on most indices were comparatively worse off than Malaysia, Thailand or Indonesia. At the end of the 1980s South Asia accounted for a third of the world's child deaths and the GDPs of Nepal, Bangladesh and

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[7] Bennett, J and George, S., *The Hunger Machine,* Polity Press, Cambridge, 1987, p.32

[8] The Green Revolution is discussed in detail on pages 137-139 of this thesis.

[9] Lappé, F., & Collins, J., *World Hunger 10 Myths,* Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1982

[10] *World Development Report 1989, op.cit.*, p.220; *World Development Report 1995, op.cit.*, p.216

[11] *Ibid*, p.214; *World Development Report 1989, op.cit.*, p.232

[12] *Australia and the Third World,* Report of the Committee on Australia's Relations with the Third World, AGPS, Canberra, 1979, pp.197-9; *World Development Report 1989, op.cit.*, pp.164-5; *World Development Report 1995, op.cit.*, pp.162-3

[13] *World Development Report 1989, op.cit.*, p.214; *World Development Report 1995, op.cit.*, p.210

Vietnam were among the twenty lowest in the world.[14] On the other hand, between 1980 and 1991, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia were enjoying average annual % increases in real GNP of 7.8%, 5.8% and 5.6% respectively.[15]

Yet rising GDP in itself was not an indicator of how equally GDP was distributed throughout a given population - great disparity of wealth existed within nations. World Bank income distribution figures in the late 1980s and early 1990s revealed that the percentage of income received by the poorest and richest 20% of peope living in Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia was - Indonesia (1990) 8.7%/42.3%; Thailand (1988) 6.1%/50.7%; Malaysia (1989) 4.6%/53.7%. Income distribution in Vietnam, Bangladesh and India was on the other hand slightly more favourable - Vietnam (1992) 7.8%/44.0%; Bangladesh (1988-1989) 9.5%/38.6%; India (1989-90) 8.8%/41.3%. In many Latin American and African nations income distribution was less equitable, as the following examples illustrate. Colombia (1991) 3.6%/55.8%; Chile (1992) 3.3%/60.4%; Tanzania (1991) 2.4%/62.7%; Kenya (1992) 3.4%/61.8% and Zimbabwe (1990-91) 4.0%/62.3%.[16]

Despite the acknowledged gains from development since WW II in 1993 some 1.3 billion people lived in absolute poverty. 805 million of them resided in Asia.[17] Had development failed? Had aid failed? Had population increases finally outstripped the capacity of aid or development to provide 1.3 billion people adequate basic needs?

Aid was just one vehicle which developing nations relied on to assist the development process. Other measures included foreign investment from multinational organisations and financial institutions and export earnings and savings. It was the shortage of the latter two elements - export earnings and savings - which suggested the economic necessity for aid. Aid, then, was intended to fund some of the development efforts of Third World nations across a broad spectrum of development endeavours. These included technical assistance to build infrastructure, educational and training assistance to build expertise and health initiatives - such as mass vaccination projects - to improve social welfare. The volume of aid from Western bilateral and multilateral sectors, including grants, loans and technical assistance rose from some US$1-2 billion in 1950-55 to US$54 billion in 1993.[18] By the 1990s the non-government sector was also contributing some $5.5 billion.[19]

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[14] For a broader discussion refer to pp.331-332 of this thesis

[15] *The Economist Pocket World in Figures,* 1994 Edition, The Economist in Association with Hamish Hamilton Ltd, Ringwood, 1993, p.26

[16] *World Development Report 1995, op.cit.*, pp.220-21

[17] The Hon Gordon Bilney, *Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth in Australia's Development Cooperation Program*, Fourth Annual Report, AIDAB, Canberra, Nov., 1993, p.1

[18] Todaro, *op.cit.*, pp.468,482; *World Development Report 1995, op.cit*, pp.196-7; OECD, "Twenty-five Years of Development Co-operation:A Review" , in Mosley, P., *Overseas Aid:Its Defence and Reform*, Wheatsheaf Books, Brighton, 1987, p.28

[19] Zivetz *et al, Doing Good The Australian NGO Community,* Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1987

Much has been written about the efficacy or otherwise of aid and the issue draws strong supporters and detractors. Roger Riddell marshalled a good deal of this criticism in his book *Foreign Aid Reconsidered* (1987) to examine the moral arguments for and against aid and the theoretical arguments underpinning the aid debate. Riddell then sought to establish whether the critics' various arguments could be supported or refuted by evaluating selective aid programmes.[20] Riddell argued that critics of aid on the right - Milton Friedman, Peter Bauer, Melvyn Krauss - supported the notion of vigorous free market forces to create strong economic growth and development. Such critics believed central government planning and aid would impede that process. Social justice and the well-being of the masses was to be achieved through economic freedom. Supporters of those views argued a moral obligation not to give aid since that would frustrate the alleviation of poverty.[21] Bauer in fact argued an even harder line, that difference existed as a result of the capacities and motivations of people: those who did not help themselves should not be assisted.[22] And still others supporting the case against foreign aid argued that charity began at home.

Critics on the left, while frequently supporting aid in principle, were sceptical about the ability of market forces to assist the poor. Frances Lappé, Joseph Collins and David Kingley argued that aid channelled through the powerful would not reach the poor.[23] While critics on the right believed aid prevented the expansion of market forces those on the left argued that aid reinforced market forces which supported structures that alienated the poor. In this view aid would not be beneficial until the poor could direct the development process to suit its own best interest.[24] For critics such as Teresa Hayter until those circumstances existed there was no moral imperative to give aid.[25]

Between those views others argued the moral case for aid (some with reference to theology) as a matter of justice, shared humanity, need, equality or history - meaning, in the latter case, that the West owed a debt to developing nations, especially to its past colonies.[26] In these cases aid was assumed to be beneficial and to contribute to development. The influential development specialists Gunnar Myrdal and Dudley Seers initially shared those views being strong advocates of large infusions of aid in the 1950s and 1960s. During that period economists theorised that the fruits of economies with strong economic growth would "trickle down" to benefit the poorest communities. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, when this assumption had not been realised, a growth and basic needs strategy was suggested to target the poorest groups.

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20 Riddell, R., *Foreign Aid Reconsidered*, James Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1987
21 *Ibid*, pp.46-48
22 *Ibid*, p.28
23 *Ibid*, pp.48-9
24 *Ibid*, p.49
25 *Ibid*, p.50,53
26 *Ibid*, pp.17, 20, 28, 46, 81

That approach, however, was only ever adopted in a half-hearted way by aid donors and in the "debt-ridden" 1980s structural adjustment programmes became the preferred focus.[27] By the 1980s Mydral and Seers had modified their views on aid even where nations had achieved strong economic growth. They based their revised views on perceived waste and corruption in the distribtion of aid and a perceived lack of benefit to the poor. Myrdal and Seers argued that while the moral basis for "aiding" or "assisting" still existed (that is, large numbers of poor people continued to exist) the "moral argument for providing *aid* [was] only satisfied when ... [there was] good reason for expecting it to be used in the interests of the poor." [28]

Riddell concluded that neither the moral arguments of any persuasion nor the theoretical arguments proved or disproved the advocacy of aid. Claims and counterclaims for or against giving aid frequently could not be substantiated. Yet turning to empirical data in an effort to evaluate how aid had assisted development in practise Riddell found that: "To date, aid evaluation has been a very blunt and inadequate tool with which to construct firm and incontestable conclusions ...".[29] Historically the vast majority of projects had not been evaluated. Evaluation had often been non-existent or flawed. That was certainly frequently the case when Riddell's book was published in 1987. However, there was by then growing criticism of past practices, a growing body of work suggesting how projects could be improved and mounting pressure from some quarters to redress the problems.

As Riddell found and this thesis demonstrates judging the success or otherwise of aid was an extremely complex matter as was judging the positive or negative links between aid and so-called development in Third World nations. There were of course instances when the positive effects of aid could be assumed - when a direct correlation could be made between a "successful" aid project and a positive "development" outcome. The positive outcomes of public health initiatives referred to above were in strong measure faciltated by all three aid sectors over the past forty-five years - multilateral, bilateral and NGO. UNICEF and WHO in particular undertook widespread immunisation programmes, oral rehydration therapy and malaria eradication programmes. That the outcomes of these initiatives eradicated or curtailed disease was reasonable evidence of their success.

Judging the success of many other aid projects could be more nebulous and viewed from a 1990s perspective required numerous qualifications. The Colombo Plan provided thousands of students with specialist qualifications - engineering, agricultural, medical - which in turn helped to develop large-scale infrastructure support such as ports, roads,

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[27] The various theoretical debates which influenced Australian aid are discussed in detail in the main body of the thesis.
[28] *Ibid*, p.53
[29] *Ibid*, pp.184,267

power stations and dams. Some of the fruits of that training, such as rural feeder roads or the provision of electricity or schools, represented a successful marriage between aid and development when it gave poor communities easier access to markets or education or health services.[30]

Yet, as this thesis demonstrates, the likely or real effects of aid programmes could not be generalised. What worked in one circumstance was frequently not transferable to another. Different social and environmental conditions demanded different approaches. It could not be taken for granted that feeder roads to rural areas would be beneficial to all communities in all circumstances. A case in point was an ADAB project in the Philippines (discussed on pages 316-19 below in detail) where the main beneficiaries were demonstrated to have been the better-off in the community often at the expense of poorer members. The projects took place at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s but ADAB only acknowledged this criticism as being valid in 1990, even though analyses and criticism from the nongovernment sector had been provided substantiating the problems in 1981.[31] That was because ADAB was not willing in the early 1980s to take such evaluations on board. Criticism and analysis from parts of the NGO sector, from analysts such as Seers and Myrdal and indeed from Riddell in 1987, pointing out the necessity for a more sophisticated approach to aid and development was little heeded in practice by bilateral or multilateral organisations in the 1980s. At that time economic rationalism, debt and restructuring were placed ahead of social welfare and poverty concerns.

While acknowledging in 1987 the " ... limited knowledge we have in practice of the effects of aid ...", Riddell expressed the hope that "future work" would isolate the "*range* of factors" affecting the aid/development relationship and "clarify the *degree to which* particular factors effected it ...".[32] The ending of the Cold War provided the opportunity for the aid community to begin that process.

It was only after the Cold War ended that the Australian government began to substantially change its evaluation techniques enabling it to judge the "success" or "failure" of an aid project against a whole series of criteria. When such criteria began to be taken on board in the 1990s - projects which on previous occasions might have gone ahead - were stopped. For example, recognition of the high social, environmental and cultural costs of a planned series of dams in India caused the World Bank (and also the Australian Government) in the wake of much lobbying and an in depth study, to withdraw its funding in 1994.[33]

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[30] These issues are discussed in more detail throughout the thesis, see, for example, pp.330-31 and 399-400.

[31] "The Zamboanga Del Sur Development Project, The Impact on the Poor", Dr R Richards, November, 1981

[32] Riddell, *op.cit.*, pp.268-267 (emphasis in text)

[33] See pages 384-385 of this thesis for a detailed comment on the World Bank Morse report in 1992.

To suggest that one can evaluate the success or failure of forty-five years of aid-giving by comparing the situation before and after aid was given, is to impute knowledge, expertise, willingness and intent on the part of most aid donors which for the best part of the first forty years of giving aid did not exist. Generally the "successful" outcomes of providing aid were simply assumed by the donors. Yet, as Riddell found, donor optimism which commonly represented aid to the public as successfully "acclerating Third World development" and "helping to alleviate poverty ..." was in fact misplaced.[34] Similarly, government claims for Australian aid could rarely be substantiated. Rather, the fundamental changes to Australian government aid policy from the late 1980s which incorporated detailed screening guidelines on environment, social, gender and community issues into aid practices and which critically acknowledged poverty as a major factor in the development process increasingly targeting poverty issues, strongly suggested that former aid strategies which did not facilitate these issues were in fact deficient.

In trying to establish the efficacy of forty-five years of aid one might start from the premise that aid was given to assist nations, less well-off than the donors, to develop and to become less poor. Aid-giving after-all carried with it a notion of altruism and moral good. The moral justification for giving aid certainly commonly accompanied Australian government rhetoric on aid, however feebly. However, as this thesis analyses in detail, political and trade agendas and an uncritical application of development practices subsumed any moral agenda which might have focused on poverty issues.

The distribution of aid to developing nations by many donors in fact suggests that aid was very frequently used as a political expedient rather than to target the world's poorest people. In 1989 over 30% of the USA's non-military aid went to Egypt and Israel. The latter had a GNP per capita of $US8,650 in 1988. India's GNP per capita in that year was $340. But neither it nor sub-Saharan Africa were among the ten top USA aid recipients. An independent report on British aid during the same period affirmed that its aid was not focused on the poorest nations or on the poorest groups within the nations it did assist.[35] Australia also followed a political agenda when it focused its aid on PNG and Indonesia, when it financed roads in insurgency areas in the Philippines and Thailand and when it took punitive measures at times against Vietnam and India by cutting aid. All of these issues are discussed below, see especially Chapter 6.

Together with a political agenda aid was also frequently harnessed to the dictates of Western-style development. As this thesis demonstrates while such development practises had positive outcomes for some segments of developing nations others were severely disadvantaged. Despite, for example, the successes of the Green Revolution it

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[34] Riddell, *op.cit.*, p.70

[35] The State of the World's Children, UNICEF, Published by Oxford University Press, Oxfordshire, 1989, p.17

was shown to have widened the gap between large landowners and the landless and small landowners and in India to have impacted negatively on women cultivators. Female agricultural labour increased by 50% in the decade 1961-1971 (when Green Revolution practices were initiated) while female cultivators declined dramatically.[36] Had aid been granted a poverty focus which sought to understand the needs of the poor it might have softened the impact of development practices. The critics of those processes - the more progressive NGOs or the communities who were recipients of such development, were frequently ignored by bilateral and multilateral institutions until the late 1980s.

This thesis does not attempt to evaluate individual aid projects, although a variety of projects were visited. It rather assesses the evidence of poor communities alienated by development practices assisted by aid; the evidence of communities and Government commissions into Australian aid processes - which conceded past deficient evaluation practices and lacunae in aid practice; the evidence of scholars who undertook evaluations on specific Australian aid projects and the evidence of NGOs which had witnessed the impact of forty years of development on poor rural and urban communities. The thesis does not conclude that all aid has failed, or more generally, that aid failed because the number of people living below a certain level of poverty increased - when population increases may have been a contributing factor. The many barriers to effective aid policy - some of which were created by governments and elites of developing nations - are fully acknowledged. It is, however, suggested that many aid and development practices increased the poverty of poor communities.

The thesis certainly does not argue that the definitive answer to reducing poverty in developing nations has been found. It makes a rather more modest claim that aid which takes into account many sophisticated variables - local conditions, local knowledge and the commitment and consent of the poor is more likely to succeed than aid which does not consider the full impact of its interventions.

Also recognised is the need for considerable changes to the ways governments deal with global poverty. Despite global population sizes resources do exist to meet basic needs. Greater equity between nations of the "North" and "South" and between different groups within nations as well as political stability might see more of those basic needs being met. That this frequently has not happened is not an argument to abandon aid - even given the many criticisms which have been applied to aid. The following pages demonstrate how Australia's aid community evolved and matured within the broader global aid community from the 1950s. They examine the part played by progressive NGOs and thinkers in helping to evolve a style of aid and development that would be of most benefit to poor people. And they look at the growing dynamism and assertiveness

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[36] See below pp.137-139, 235

of Third World representatives of poor people as they took development issues into their own hands.

In the 1950s Australian government aid documents exuded confidence in the untrammelled capacity of development to "improve" Third World nations. By 1989 a report commissioned by AIDAB on the status of aid and development revealed a much more muted, cautious and qualified approach for development by government when it concluded:

> The possibility exists now that development itself, if not planned and implemented taking into account ecological principles and social welfare consequences, is the biggest threat to sustainable human prosperity.[37]

Rather than abandoning aid it needed to be administered in the future with those "principles" and "consequencies" firmly embedded in aid policy.

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[37] Australian Environmental Expertise, Resources for Development Assistance, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1989, pp.22-23

PART I

LIMITS TO GROWTH

Chapter 1
"A True Consciousness of Destiny"[1]
Government Assistance and the Colombo Plan

"The logical completion of Communism's conquest of Asia is the rounding-off of Communism's Asian empire by the inclusion of Australia"..... *Pamphlet issued by Archbishops and Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church of Australia, 1951*

[Australia must] "...draw the teeth of Communist imperialism by carefully applied measures of economic assistance"..... *P.C. Spender 1950*

The practice of giving material assistance to "less fortunate" individuals in society, was well established prior to World War II, both in the West and in Asia. "Alms", "relief," or "charity",[2] was commonly dispensed to the poor by non-government organisations, many of which had religious affiliations. The concept of transferring resources or "aid" from Western countries to "less fortunate" nations, as a means of promoting economic development, was, on the other hand, essentially a post-war phenomenon. For as H.W. Arndt has argued, the very concept of "economic development" as "a process which societies undergo", hardly existed prior to World War II.[3]

Aid, Economic Development and Economic Growth

Events during World War II dramatically changed the balance of world power, encouraging a robust debate in the West about the necessity to develop the nations of Asia, Africa and South America, many of which were under Western colonial rule. The West's interest in the issue was primarily pragmatic. It was generated by strong economic self-interest and the fear of communist expansionism. But it was also partly supported by a keen desire for world peace and by humanitarian concerns raised by empirical evidence emerging about the prevailing economic conditions in non-Western nations. Statistical data presented by the League of Nations in 1935,[4] recorded the extent of hunger and malnutrition in the world.[5] Further statistical evidence was provided in 1939 in Colin Clark's seminal work, *Conditions of Economic Progress*, which demonstrated the disparity in living standards between rich and poor nations.[6]

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[1] Menzies, Sir Robert, *Afternoon Light, Some Memories of Men and Events*, Penguin Books, 1969, Ringwood, Victoria, p.261

[2] Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Rerum Novarum, The Worker's Charter*, May 15th, 1891, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1960, pp.20-21, 25

[3] Ardnt, H.W., *Economic Development:The History of an Idea*, The University of Chicago Press, London, 1987, pp.1-2

[4] Suggested in part by Australians Stanley Bruce and one of the founders of FAO, F.L.McDougall

[5] *Ibid*, p.35

[6] *Ibid;* Clark, C., *The Conditions of Economic Progress,* MacMillan, London, 3rd Edition 1957, contains a chapter titled, "Real National Products in 1950", pp.18-74

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) also provided comparative international studies on people's access to food, clothing, housing, medical care and education.[7] For the first time, then, governments were being exposed to hard evidence of global economic inequalities.

How economic development would be achieved in the Asian region (the focus of this thesis), was a difficult question, since the West was operating from a position of comparative ignorance. Western classical economic theorists, Adam Smith, Stuart Mill, David Ricardo, had been concerned with material development or progress in a Western context.[8] Similarly, "populist"[9] or progessive 19th century thinkers, who had focused on the unequal distributional effects of capitalism and raised ethical and social issues created by industrialisation - Sismondi, Hodgkin, John Gray, William Thompson, Robert Owen, Proudhon - were all concerned with poverty in the European context.[10] While a scattering of Western colonial government officials had concerned themselves with "native" welfare,[11] and lobbied colonial governments on the issue, it was treated as a separate issue from economic progress which was solely concerned with profits for the colonial country.

A small proportion of the writings of Karl Marx was devoted to Asian societies, particularly to China and India. However, although his vision for the progress of humanity extended world-wide, Marx tended to regard Asian societies as inferior to those of Europe. He believed that economic and political activity was being repressed in Asia by what he called the "Asiatic mode of production" or "oriental despotism".[12] In *The Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels referred to the "idiocy of rural life" and to the barbarian and semi-barbarian nations of the East which were dependent on the "civilized" West.[13] Marx did not condemn Asia to perpetual stagnation but expected it to become Westernised, in effect to cease worshipping nature (he referred to the Indian adoration of the cow and Hanuman the monkey) to conquer it, in true Promethean spirit.

Early writers on the theory of imperialism, such as Hobson and Lenin, had emphasised the negative impact of Western imperialism on colonised peoples. Hobson

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[7] Arndt, *op.cit.*, p.35

[8] *Ibid*, p.30; Kitching, G, *Development and Underdevelopment in Historical Perspective:Populism, Nationalism and Industrialization*, Methuen, London, 1988, pp.15-16

[9] Kitching uses the term about thinkers who "offered an alternative [to industrialization] of small-scale individual enterprise.", *Ibid*, p.19

[10] Kitching, *op.cit.*, Ch. 2

[11] They were frequently informed by missionaries who though ostensibly interested in evangelism, sometimes became motivated to seek social reform. See Oddie, G., *Social Protest in India:British Missionaries and Social Reforms, 1850-1900*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1979

[12] Carrère d'Encausse, H., Schram, S., *Marxism and Asia*, Allen Lane, Penguin Press, London, 1969, pp.8-9

[13] Marx, K., Engels, F., *The Communist Manifesto*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1974, p.84

described it as sordid, Lenin as parasitic.[14] Yet for Lenin, imperialism, which he described as the monopoly stage of capitalism, was ultimately beneficial being an inevitable stage towards socialism. He argued that while the negative influences of imperialism would find expression in national movements for liberation in the colonised countries, in the West they were likely to corrupt and "eat away at the dynamism" of the Western working classes.[15] Hence the necessity for the destruction of colonialism to enable the proletariat to rise against the bourgeoisie.[16] In that process the "backward East" and the developed West would be linked in the inevitable evolution of world revolution. When Western economists were challenged to assist those "backward" nations most of them turned for inspiration to current economic orthodoxy rather than to Marxism-Leninism.

The preoccupation with less developed countries took place as economists sought means to increase material progress in the West in an environment of full employment. (Some indeed regarded the opportunity to transfer capital to developing countries as a convenient process to help maintain full employment.)[17] Given the West's comparative affluence, economists were encouraged to apply Western economic practices to the needs of developing countries. It led them to focus on the concept of economic growth, measured by growth in per capita income or in Gross National Product (GNP). *Economic development,* it was argued, would be achieved by using the model of *economic growth*. The first concept was applied to developing countries, the second to "developed", although the terms eventually were used synonymously.[18]

W.W. Rostow's notion of development, as a linear progression of stages of growth through which all countries must travel, dominated economic thinking and practice during the late 1950s and 1960s.[19] Rostow suggested five stages through which all countries must inevitably proceed. The stages, he argued, had their own "inner logic and continuity".[20] Since this progression had successfully led developed countries to "take-off" into sustained economic growth, developing countries need only follow the model.[21] The Harrod-Domar Growth model added to the Rostow by stressing that the

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[14] Hobson, J., "Imperialism:A Study", and Lenin,V., "The Highest Stage of Capitalism", in Wright, H., Ed., *New Imperialism: Analysis of Late 19th Century Expansion,* D.C. Heath and Co., U.S.A., 1976

[15] Ibid; Carrère d'Encausse, H., Schram, S., *op.cit.*, p.24

[16] *Ibid*

[17] Arndt, *op.cit.*, pp.55-56

[18] Arndt, *op. cit.*, pp.2,51-52; Blomstrom, M., & Hettne, B., *Development Theory in Transition, The Dependency Theory and Beyond:Third World Responses*, Zed Books, London, 1984, p.8

[19] Streeten, Paul, "Development Ideas in Historical Perspective", *Economic Impact,* No. 40, 1982/4, U.S. International Communications Agency, Washington, USA, pp.11-19

[20] These included "The traditional society, the pre-conditions for take-off into self-sustaining growth, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass consumption...", Todaro, Michael, *Economic Development in the Third World,* Longman, Harlow, 1989, p.64; "Rostow's Theory of Economic Growth", in Rostow,W.W., *Theorists of Economic Growth from David Hume to the Present*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990

[21] Streeten, Paul, *op. cit.*

rate of growth measured by GNP, depended on the existence of both savings and productive investment.[22] Rostow's "take-off" stage would occur and be self-sustaining, it was argued, once countries could save 15 to 20% of their GNP.[23] Such analysis supported a mixed economy with both public and private investment, and especially as it related to the less developed countries, capital intensive agriculture and a growing industrial sector. Capital formation was seen as imperative for development. Yet domestic savings and taxation in the less developed countries were considered insufficient to stimulate such growth. Foreign investment and aid - in the form of large transfers of capital and technical assistance - were therefore legitimised, to cut through what was referred to as the "vicious circle" of poverty.

The preoccupation with developing national growth led to a new academic discipline of development economics, within which (and against some criticism and modifications[24]), the economic growth paradigm tended to dominate Western thinking and practice. Maintaining and supporting that Western economic model were a set of assumptions with strong continuities with the past - man's idea of progress; the belief in man's dominion over nature; the influences of social Darwinism; a strong Christian Eurocentricism - which would considerably influence the application of the model. This economic model and Western assumptions would both impinge heavily on less developed nations, not the least through programmes of economic aid or assistance, which were central to the efforts of Western nations in the less-developed world.

USA Economic Supremacy

The most dedicated advocate of economic aid abroad was the USA. A weakened British economy affected by WWI and the depression, furthered long-held US ambitions to break the nexus of the Imperial preference system which favoured Britain and her colonies.[25] That ambition was realised after WW II when Britain became a debtor nation to the USA through Lend Lease arrangements. Those circumstances enabled the US dollar to edge out sterling, previously with gold the world's major reserve currency. The centre of world economic power thus moved from The City in London, to Wall Street in New York.[26]

In all of the major theatres of war in Europe and in Asia and the Pacific, national economies were thoroughly in turmoil by the mid-1940s. The expansion of communism into Eastern Europe and Asia resulted in the gradual buildup of the Cold War. At the

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22 Todaro, *op. cit.*, p.66-67

23 *Ibid*

24 See both Arndt, *op.cit*, Ch.3 and Rostow, *op.cit* ., Ch. 17, for discussion and analyses of the major contributors to the debate, including Singer, H., Rosenstein-Rodan, P., Nurkse, R. and Lewis, A.

25 Magdoff, H., *The Age of Imperialism, The Economics of U.S. Foreign Policy*, Monthly Review, New York, 1969, p.80

26 *Ibid*

same time it closed markets to the West and served to legitimise, at least in the West's eyes, the role of the USA as global policeman. The US used the unstable world environment, centred on the Cold War and decolonisation, to consolidate a commanding military and economic position in the world. In Europe, the USA concluded military treaties, created military bases and provided an economic aid package, known as the Marshall Plan, to help European reconstruction.[27] In Asia, the US used similar tactics to contain both Russia and China. It supported Pakistan, Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, South Vietnam, Laos and the Philippines, which were regarded as strategic buffers to the spread of communism. It would also give its suppport to a British Commonwealth economic initiative, the Colombo Plan, designed to assist the Asian region.

The provision of military and economic aid expanded America's widespread access to world trade and investment. Continuing to support its 1930s "open door" policy, the USA protected its investments, ownership and management with multilateral agreements.[28] The US government assisted the growth of American banking and large American corporations both within Europe and in the developing countries. By 1950 American banks were established in Singapore, Thailand and Guam and shortly after in Malaya, Taiwan and South Vietnam.[29] The aggressive expansion of American capital which took advantage of the weakened post-war European economies was by no means confined to Asia. A considerable number of American-controlled companies were ensconsed in Britain and Europe by the mid-1960s.[30]

A network of institutions to orchestrate the international economic community was developed in the 1940s. Conferences held at the legendary Hot Springs, Bretton Woods and Dumbarton Oaks, established the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (later re-named the World Bank), to regulate the international monetary system. They supplied funds to aid Europe's post-war reconstruction and later to build the infrastructure of the "Third World" nations of Asia, Africa and South America. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, or GATT, was established in 1947 to facilitate and liberalise world trade.

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[27] Mee, C., *The Marshall Plan*, Touchstone, Simon & Schuster,1985; Ambrose, S., *Rise to Globalism, American Foreign Policy 1938-1970,* Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1973, Chs.4-6

[28] Magdoff, H., *The Age of Imperialism op.cit.,* p.127

[29] *Ibid.*, pp.74-75

[30] They included in Britain: "80 percent or more of the production of boot and shoe machinery, canned baby food, carbon black, color film, custard powder and starch, sewing machines, typewriters; 60-79 percent of boilers, breakfast cerials, calculating machines, cigarette lighters, potato chips, razor blades, spark plugs; 50-59 percent of automobiles, cake mixers, canned milk, cosmetics and toilet preparations, electric shavers, electric switches, drugs, foundation garments, pens and pencils, pet foods, petroleum-refining construction equipment, tractors, vacuum cleaners; 40-49 percent of computers, locks and keys, photographic equipment, printing and typesetting machinery, rubber tires, soaps and detergents, watches and clocks". Mee, C., *op.cit.*, pp.259-60

These institutions were largely developed by the West, to the advantage of the West and following the West's rules.[31] Voting power in the international financial institutions, for example, was based on quotas reflecting a country's size and significance in terms of trade. By 1980 the USA's quota in the IMF was equal to almost 20% of total quotas.[32] The USA could therefore apply pressure, and influence for political purposes where multilateral funds were placed, as it did in relation to Vietnam in the 1970s and 1980s. And both the USA and later the European Economic Community (EEC) manipulated GATT by excluding textiles and agriculture from GATT rules, thus seriously disadvantaging those developing countries which had major exports in those areas.

Developing countries gained slightly more influence within the United Nations system, through its specialist agencies - the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO)[33] - as the numerical strength of Third World nations increased with their Independence. Yet the influence of developing nations in the international economic community was weak.[34] An Australian government report on the Third World acknowledged in 1979: "The Third World's combined economic weight in the international system remains limited...".[35]

The economic revitalisation of Europe and the economic development of the nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America, were imperative to USA post-war foreign policy and its prosperity. All non-communist countries were under strong pressure to support the Western development model. It was promoted as a passport to strong economic growth and an effective mechanism with which to rebut communism. The assumption that "economic growth" would enable the developing country economies to "take-off", to create a snowball or a catalytic effect,[36] was embraced with enthusiasm and confidence by all Western governments, Australia's among them.

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[31] The voting interests of the developing countries in the IMF and WB in 1979, amounted to less than a third of the total. See Haq, Mahbub ul,"A View from the South:The Second Phase of the North-South Dialogue", in Todaro, M., *The Struggle for Economic Development: Readings in Problems and Politics*, Longman, New York, 1983, pp.385-391; *The Challenge of the South:The Report of the South Commission*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, Ch.1

[32] "The 1980 IMF/IBRD Boards of Governors' Meeting", *Australian Foreign Affairs Record (AFAR)*, Vol 51, No.10., Oct., 1980, p.373

[33] "Post-War International Aid Programmes", The United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, *Current Notes on International Affairs (C..N.)*, Department of External Affairs, Canberra, *C.N.*, Vol. 25, No.3, Mar., 1954, pp.168-178

[34] *The Challenge of the South:.., op.cit.*, p.386

[35] *Australia and the Third World*, Report of the Committee on Australia's Relations with the Third World, Australian Government Printing Service, (AGPS), Canberra, 1979, p.15

[36] *The Colombo Plan for Co-operative Development in South and South-East Asia, Report by the Commonwealth Consultative Committee, London September-October 1950*, p.49, CRS CP259/1, Item 16A8, Australian Archives (AA); "... India hopes to reach what has now become called the 'take-off' stage, when her development will become self-generating and no longer depend on outside help.." *The Colombo Plan Story, 10 Years of Progress, 1951-1961*, p.18, The Colombo Plan Bureau, Colombo, nd,

Developing countries were rigorously discouraged by the West from pursuing economic self-sufficiency. The first major Colombo Plan Report, for example, argued that no country could hope to survive outside the world market. It stressed that the Asian economies with the highest national incomes in 1950, were those most heavily dependent on international trade.[37] Indeed, subsequent reports inferred that to opt out of the world market was to let the side down: "In an era when means of transportation and communication reduce miles to minutes, lack of progress in one country is of concern to its neighbours. While economic development is no doubt a national process, its effects are international."[38] The report added that the problems of developing countries would be more easily solved with the benefit of Western experience.[39] Although China's displays of unilateralism after 1949 were anathema to such Western neo-classical economic thinking, other Asian countries proved more compliant.[40]

Australian Responses to the Changing World Order

During the 1940s, Labor's External Affairs Minister Dr. H. Evatt had made attempts to draw Australia into the international forum, largely during the formation of the United Nations.[41] His concern was to safeguard the interests of small powers and to assume a role for Australia in the Pacific as the United Kingdom withdrew from the region.[42] But events in China in 1949, followed by the election of a conservative government in Australia in December of the same year, discouraged a policy of independent internationalism. Instead, Australian foreign policy was centred firmly and cautiously on the side of regional security and stability.[43] These events impinged strongly on Australia because of its historical dependence on Britain and its geographical position in the Asia-Pacific region. The emergence of atomic weapons and the increase in communist held territory after WW II in Europe and in Asia were interpreted by Western analysts as destabilising forces and major threats to a lasting

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c1961; Casey, R.G.,"I think I can say with truth that our Colombo Plan aid has acted as a catalyst..","The Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 25, No.1, Jan., 1954, p.23

37 *The Colombo Plan for Co-operative Development ..., op.cit.*, p.11

38 "Communique of the Tenth Meeting of the Consultative Committee for Co-operative Economic Development in South and South-East Asia, Seattle, 13th November, 1958", *CN*, Vol 29, No.11, Nov., 1958, p.754

39 *Ibid*

40 By the 1960s Karachi, with a far from adequate milk supply, was the recipient of the following USA imports: Bubble Up, Canada Dry, Citra, Coca Cola, Double Cola, Kola Kola, Fanta, Hoffman's Mission, Pepsi Cola, Peri Cola and Seven Up. Magdoff, *op.cit.*, pp.126-127

41 See, for example, Evatt, H., *Australia in World Affairs*, including, "The Smaller Powers and U.N.O.", Address given at Dutch Threat Club, Nov. 1945, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1946, pp.96-103; Watt, A., *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 1938-1965*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1967, pp.78ff

42 Evatt, *op.cit.*

43 Watt, *op.cit*, Ch.5

peace.[44] The "mother country's" gradual withdrawal from the Asian region did little to reduce Australia's anxieties. They were epitomised by the remarks of Australian External Affairs Minister P.C. Spender. He believed the world was in ... "a trance of uncertainty, doubt and fear" ... which ... "called for a major, sustained and determined effort in every field of human activity, including the political, economic and spiritual...".[45]

Those altered post 1949 conditions demanded and encouraged a major reappraisal of Australian foreign policy, including the rapid expansion of the Department of External Affairs. As T. Buesst remarked in 1955, while reviewing External Affairs Minister R. G. Casey's book, *Friends and Neighbours - Australia and the World*:

> Until only the other day... a distinct and independent Australian foreign policy... appeared to be neither necessary nor desirable. A tradition of carefree isolation, dating from the period of British naval supremacy, induced the comfortable belief that the formulation of policy, no less than the maintenance of a foreign service, could be regarded as almost entirely the business of the mother country.[46]

At the out-break of war in 1939, Australia's diplomatic experience was limited to the appointment of a liaison officer in London in 1924 and another in Washington in 1937.[47] The Australian government rectified this situation fairly swiftly, however, concentrating on the region most critical to its interests - the Pacific. Between 1940 and 1944, Australian representation was established in Japan, Canada, Portuguese Timor, Malaya, China, Holland (representing Indonesia), the USSR, India and New Zealand.[48] A decade later, External Affairs' staff had expanded to 423 and Australian representation covered the globe. It extended from the Commonwealth countries to Europe, the Middle-East and South America. As well, it had representation in the newly emerging United Nations organisations.[49]

It was clear that the Asian region was critical to Australia and should represent a major focus of its foreign policy. Yet Australia's historical isolation and its close indentification with Britain, had not left it well placed either to forge an independent foreign policy or to come to terms quickly with the Asian region. Rather than following an independent and innovative foreign policy Australia chose a reactive course. It was

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[44] The threat of atomic warfare was frequently referred to. "...the years have shown that peace is an impermanent, elusive shade who needs constant wooing.", *Food for Peace News (FFPN)* in *"NOW!"*, Sept. 1957, p.6; "The whole world yearned for a firmly established peace", P.C. Spender, External Affairs Minister 1/9/50, *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)* , p.2; "Australia was dedicated to the cause of peace...", Spender, P.C. "British Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting at Colombo", *C.N.,* Vol 21, No.1, Jan., 1950, p.47

[45] "Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, the Hon. P.C. Spender, 9th March, 1950", *C.N.,* Vol 21, No.2, Feb., 1950, pp.155,171

[46] Buesst, T., reviewing, Casey, R.G. *Friends and Neighbours - Australia and the World*, *Australian Outlook*, Vol 9, No. 4, 1955, p.253

[47] Casey, R., *Friends and Neighbours, Australia and the World*, pp.30-31, F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1954

[48] Casey, *op. cit.*, p.32

[49] *Ibid,* pp.32-33

driven by self-interest and fear - a fear born of racism, ideology and geography - and frequently informed by notions of superiority and conservatism.

Although individual Australians had long recommended that Australia should develop its relations with Asia, they had been largely ignored. Casey acknowledged the oversight on several occasions remarking: "Before World War II, Australia was inclined to pay insufficient attention to the area...".[50] Without trying to excuse this policy, Casey did offer a partial explanation:

> Until the Second World War the countries of South and South-East Asia were, despite their geographic closeness to Australia, nevertheless in many ways further away from us than Europe and America. Before the war, if Australia wanted to have relationship with these Asian countries, we talked to London or Washington or Paris or The Hague.[51]

In other words, the fact that all the countries in the region except Thailand were under Western colonial rule, simply compounded Australia's propensity to look westward to its psychological home rather than to its geographic one. An *Age* newspaper commentator put it more wryly: "For years, having no need for a foreign policy, Australia treated its Asian neighbours with indifference; it was much easier to sing,'Rule Britannia' than to work out 'relations' with heathens...."[52] The postwar political climate, with its fear of communist expansion throughout Europe and Asia, jolted Australia out of this indifference, but contrived with Australian conservatism against any swift transition to an informed, sympathetic and equal alliance with the region. When Australia became party to the programme of economic assistance to the Asian region through the Colombo Plan, therefore, the scheme was largely received in an environment at best ignorant or indifferent to Asia, and at worst hostile to it.

"A true consciousness of destiny" [53]

The ruling Liberal-Country Party's staunch support for British institutions and ways of life (of which Prime Minister R. Menzies was their prime supporter), guaranteed that the government would embrace Western solutions for Asia's development problems. Such prescriptions, with their strong assumptions of Western superiority, tended to work against attempts by individuals in the government to foster friendship in the Asian region. Even Casey, External Affairs Minister from 1951-1960, and frequently lauded for his "Friends and Neighbours" policy in the region, ultimately viewed Asia through the lens of a British/Australian gentleman and considered himself first and foremost an

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[50] "Report presented to the Australian Parliament by The Minister for External Affairs, The Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, April, 1954", *C.N.*,Vol 25, No.4, April, 1954, p.244

[51] "Address by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt Hon. R.G. Casey, on the occasion of receiving the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws from the Michigan State University, East Lansing, 6th October, 1958", *C.N.*,Vol 29, No. 10, Oct., 1958, p.659

[52] Bruce Grant in *The Age*, quoted in Food For Peace News, "Australia in World Affairs", *NOW!*, Oct.1957, p.7

[53] Menzies, R, *op.cit.*, p.261

"Englishman". His autobiography, published in 1954, rang with references to "We the British" and his allegiances were clear. He wrote for example: "Our Mother country is Great Britain, and I yield to none in my loyalty and regard for Britain, for the British Commonwealth and Empire, and what the world owes to the British race".[54] Prime Minister Menzies echoed these sentiments when he described Britain as ..."a great and civilised power, ...with a real vision of what the world needs for the prosperity and happiness of its people." Menzies admitted that Britain might encounter some resistence, or as he called them, ..."selfish objections in various quarters"... but, he counselled "A true consciousness of destiny is not to be brushed aside as 'imperialism'".[55]

This "consciousness of destiny", while it might pay homage to Asia's classical civilizations, much as it might the Greek, regarded contemporary Asia as cultures in decline. It denied any complicity in that decline, believing that the "modernising" influences of British colonialism, for example, had clearly outweighed any of its harmful aspects. In that regard, conservative Australia in 1950 stood in firm accord with 19th century attitudes. These were epitomised by William Wilberforce's belief that European laws and institutions - particularly British institutions - were vastly superior to Asia's.[56] Casey regarded the introduction of Western financial and technical resources and legal and administrative institutions as particularly worthy legacies of colonialism.[57]

The Australian experience of colonialism as perceived by Casey was a benign one, like a loving mother gently leading its off-spring to full sovereignty. He remarked:

> I belong to a country which has developed through the colonial stage to full independence..... Along with many other colonial countries, our mother country, Great Britain, protected us and assisted us in every possible way until progressively we achieved complete representative self-government....[58]

Such uncritical and undivided loyalty stubbornly ignored the limitations and pain inflicted by colonialism, both inside and outside Australia,[59] as well as the racial divide within the Commonwealth itself. As such, it would be difficult for Australian governments of the 1950s to fully appreciate the joy with which Asian countries were throwing off colonialism - British colonies among them. While the benign side of colonialism was a centre of focus, or "what the world owes the British race", negative

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[54] Casey, R.G., *Friends and Neighbours...*, *op.cit.*, p.41
[55] Menzies, *op. cit.*, p.261
[56] Arndt, *op. cit.*, p.24
[57] Casey, R.G., *Friends and Neighbours... op. cit.*, p.111
[58] *Ibid.*, pp.111-112; "Text of Statement made by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, in the House of Representatives, 2nd April, 1957", *C.N.*, Vol 28, No. 4, April 1957, p.314
[59] Most specifically affecting the Australian Aboriginals, but including limitations placed on the Australian ruling group itself.

aspects of the colonial experience in Asia were not considered.[60] These attitudes were highly inconducive to a relationship based on equality and undermined government efforts to understand and befriend Asia.

Ironically, Spender and Casey frequently stressed the need for Australia to develop its relations with Asia. Spender spoke of the desirability of developing a two-way partnership between Asia and the West in order to "... dissipate our mutual ignorance of each other's philosophies, religions, social ideals and political objectives."[61] It was a theme that Casey reiterated constantly.[62] As Minister of External Affairs he became well versed about the Asian region and travelled widely throughout Asia to meet the "great men" of the time who were reshaping their newly independent countries: Sukarno, Nehru and Chou En-lai.[63] In Australia, he instigated the Australian-Asian Association in the mid-1950s, encouraged Australians to extend their friendship to the thousands of Asians studying in the country and urged that such friendship be extended where possible overseas.[64] Yet despite such initiatives, Casey's efforts were substantially undermined by the hostility and indifference of his colleagues; by his own conservatism which affirmed widespread support for Western solutions for Asia's problems; and by the wider negative social milieu within which he was operating.

Even the rhetoric, which flowed fairly freely over the decade, urging "friendly relations", "goodwill", and "personal contacts" with Australia's "good friends and neighbours", frequently betrayed the transparency of government policy by being defensive and cautionary.[65] In 1950 Spender remarked, "The cultivation of friendly relations with our neighbours ... has as its ultimate objective the protection of Australia

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60 Such as the dislocation of traditional land-tenancy patterns - changing workers from subsistence farmers to plantation workers; the introduction of migrant labour - such as Indian and Chinese labour introduced into Malaya and Indonesia; and the lost of national self-esteem, encouraged by arrogant white colonialists.

61 Spender, Hon., P.C., "Partnership With Asia", *C.N.,* Vol., 22, Jan., 1951, p.19

62 "Australia's Friends and Neighbours. Extracts from an Address by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. R.G.Casey, at Wesley Church, Melbourne, 2nd January, 1956", *C.N.*, Vol 27, No.1, Jan., 1956, pp.29-30; "Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, The Rt Hon. Mr R.G. Casey, 31st Dec., 1958, *C.N.*, Vol 29, No.12, 1958, pp.807-809

63 "Visit to South-East Asia and East Asia: Report to Parliament by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon R.G. Casey, 27th September, 1951, *C.N.,* Sept, 1951, pp.511-517; R.G. Casey, "Friends and Neighbours...", *op. cit.*, p 8; "... I come to this meeting straight from visits to Pakistan, India, Burma and Thailand. ... I always try to spend a month or two each year in visiting the capitals of the countries of particular concern to Australia, in the course of which the Governments of these countries cease to be remote entities and are transformed into terms of human beings that I know", "Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, Opening Session, Singapore, 17th October, 1955", Colombo Plan Consultative Committee Meeting, *C.N.,* Vol 26, No.10, Oct., 1955, p.726-7

64 Casey, R.G., *Friends and Neighbours...*, *op. cit.*; "Australia's Friends and Neighbours..., *op.cit.*, p.29; "Events in Asia", Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, in the House of Representatives, 15th April, 1958, *C.N.*, Vol 29, No 4, April, 1958, p.237-241; "Statement by the Minister for External Affairs...", *op.cit*, *C.N.,* Vol 29, No.12, Dec., 1958, p.809; Prime Minister Mr Menzie's statement to the House of Representatives, 20th April, 1955, quoted in Cabinet Submission 409, 21st June, 1955, R.G. Casey, A4906/XM1, Vol. 17, AA

65 "The Colombo Plan", *C.N.,* Vol 26, No.11, Nov., 1955, p.759

against aggression from any quarter and in any guise".[66] And on another occasion: "Our self-preservation largely depends upon becoming the acknowledged friends of the new nations of Asia".[67] Casey continued the theme reiterating that regrettable misunderstandings might adversely affect Australia's relations with Asia if it did not make an effort to understand the region.[68]

Racism

The preference for European law and institutions over Asian ones, was not the only prejudice with strong echoes of the 19th century which influenced Australian post-World War II foreign policy. The continued bipartisan support for the White Australia Policy in the 1940s and 1950s, only too closely allied itself with 19th century enthusiasm for keeping Australia white. A *SMH* editorial of 1949 reported: "And by deliberate, perhaps heroic, policy, at the risk of offending Asian susceptibilities, we are striving to maintain a white homogenous population, unmarked by any strain of colour."[69]

Preferences for maintaining a white Australia had a long and complex antecedent. As early as the 1830s and 1840s opposition was voiced against the use of migrant Chinese labour.[70] Opposition and vilification continued with regularity throughout the 19th century. It was directed against anyone of colour - Indians, Chinese, Pacific Islanders (Kanakas), Maoris....[71] Such prejudices reflected the widely held perception of those of European descent, of a belief in the superiority - intellectual, physical and moral - of "whiteness" over peoples of colour. "Paganism" and physical difference were particularly viewed negatively. The notion of intermarriage was widely disparaged. Fear of economic competition, best illustrated during the gold rush days between diggers and Chinese, or of large numbers of Asians over-running the vast and empty continent, all combined to keep racism in Australia vividly alive.[72]

The White Australia policy was legitimised in many forms in the 19th century and entered the 20th with strong support. It was made a rallying point and "major virtue" of

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66 Statement by the Minister for External Affairs..., *op. cit.*, *C.N.*, Vol 21, No.2, Feb., 1950, p.163

67 Spender, P.C., "' We Must Be Friends With Asia', Australia's Future At Stake: Spender", *SMH*, 7/9/50, p.3

68 "Visit to South-East Asia and East Asia...", *op.cit.*, p.511; "Australia needs cordial relations with its neighbours in the north, so that they will regard us and other Western nations as partners in progress and not as objects of their envy and hostility." Casey, R., 19 Feb., "International Aid Controlled by Australia", Cabinet Submission No.399, CRS A4905, Item XM1, Vol 16, AA

69 *SMH*, 8/1/49, p.2

70 McQueen, H., *A New Britannia*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, 1970, Ch.2; Clark, M. *A Short History of Australia*, pp.196-7, NAL Penguin, New York, 1987

71 McQueen, *op.cit.*

72 *Ibid*

the campaign for a Federated Australia.[73] W.M. Hughes told the *Bulletin* in 1901, "Our chief plank is, of course, a White Australia. There's no compromise about that! The industrious coloured brother has to go - and remain away!"[74] And the objectives of the Labor Party adopted in 1905 called for :"The cultivation of an Australian sentiment based on the maintenance of racial purity and the development in Australia of an enlightened and self-reliant community."[75] The men who fashioned these objectives might have been proud of a 1950s Australia which had perpetuated the "enlightened" "self-reliance" of its forebears, based on racism and a combination of dependence on a distant Western power and parochialism.

Not surprisingly, the Labor Party's position on White Australia affected government policy when, in the 1940s and 1950s, it considered the issue of mass immigration. Labor Immigration Minister A. Calwell, carried away with "populate or perish" rhetoric, declared:

> It would be prudent for us... not to ignore the possibility of a further formidable challenge to our right to hold this land. We may have only [the] next 25 years in which to make the best possible use of our second chance to survive. Our first requirement is additional population. We need it for reasons of defence and for the fullest expansion of our economy. ...We cannot afford to fail. There is so much dependent on the success of our population policy that failure will spell national disaster.[76]

These sentiments were shared by the opposition and were spelt out even more clearly by Senator D. Grant. During a debate on migration he declared: " ... populate the country or sooner or later be overrun by Asiatic peoples."[77]

Calwell subsequently informed an audience at a Summer School on immigration in 1953 how he had persuaded the public to support mass European immigration. Calwell was reported as saying that he had "... adopted the policy of playing subtly on the fears of decent citizens for the future of their children: 'we must fill our country or lose it' was his theme."[78] Calwell's argument that Australia's immigration policy was not racially based but was rather based on "a desire to preserve the homogeneity of our race"[79] was unconvincing. His flippant and derogatory remark : "... two Wongs do not make a White,"[80] hardly strengthened his case.

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[73] *Ibid;* The "White Australia Policy" was officially enshrined in the 1901 Immigration Act, See Collins, J., *Migrant Hands in a Distant Land,* Pluto Press, Sydney, 1988

[74] *Ibid*

[75] *Ibid*

[76] Calwell, A., Minister for Immigration and Information, Parliamentary Debates, Session 1945, HR., 2 August, 1945, Vol.184, pp.4911-4915, Commonwealth of Australia

[77] Grant, D., Senate Debates, Session 1945, 3 October, 1945, Vol.185, p.6294, 1945, Commonwealth of Australia

[78] "Discussion on Mr Calwell's Paper", p.25, *Australia and the Migrant*, Proceedings of the 19th Summer School of the Australian Institute of Political Science, Canberra, 24-26 Jan., 1953, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1953

[79] *"Discussion on Mr Cawell's Paper", op.cit.*, p.26

[80] Calwell, A., House of Representatives, Parliamentary Debates, Vol 195, p.2948, 2, Dec., 1947, Commonwealth of Australia

The newspapers of the day happily fed the prejudices. Typical comments were: "We are a white community at the end of a limb of the great Asian tree. On that limb swarm more than a thousand million coloured people, We have to live at peace with them or face destruction".[81] While the editorials of the *SMH* and others did become more conciliatory as the decade wore on, the *Bulletin* continued to use the motto "Australia for the White Man" and to sustain the myths that supported those views. In 1957 it referred to the Chinese as, "The bloodstained Russian-backed conquerors of Peking", the Japanese "yellow press", "the easygoing Malay", "the steady drift to Communism via chaos in Indonesia", and New Guinea, as a nation of "innumerable small tribes with a mentality developed scarcely beyond the Garden of Eden stage", [such that it was] "impossible for anybody outside an infant-school to envisage the place as a nation capable of managing its own affairs for at least a century...".[82] The influence of social Darwinism, which encouraged the West to disregard the knowledge of indigenous tribal peoples, to regard them as "primitive", and therefore as expendible, was widely supported in Australia. This combination of racism and cultural superiority would retard the progress of enlightened aid policy in Australia in both the government and non-government sphere for more than three decades.

Australia's preoccupation with matters of defence and economic expansionism supported an aggressive immigration policy to attract British citizens to Australia. However, when too few answered the call, the government was forced to cast its net ever wider to include other European areas. Given the government's support for British values, it hoped to accommodate non-English migrants by encouraging an aggressive programme of assimilation. In essence, assimilation implied that non-English European migrants were welcome, as long as they behaved like British/Australians. A somewhat self-conscious attempt was made through the Australian Good Neighbour Movement, established throughout Australia in the 1950s, to assist the assimilation of such migrants. A Department of Immigration booklet, "A Handbook of the Good Neighbour Movement", stated:

> Many newcomers feel twinges of home-sickness. Talking about their homeland may provide the safety valve for their feelings, ... Explain Australia to newcomers, but don't boast about your country or make comparisons to the disadvantage of the newcomer's former homeland. ... Organise afternoon teas, dances, concerts, tournaments. It is better to include migrants with Australians in competitive events rather than have 'Australia versus Migrants'.[83]

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81 "White Australia", *SMH*, Editorial, 11/7/54, p.2

82 "The Race For Safety", *The Bulletin*, Wed., Aug., 28, 1957, p.4 ;"Malaya Remembered", *The Bulletin*, Jan., 1957, p.32; "Dutch New Guinea", *The Bulletin*, Wed., Nov. 27, 1957, p.4; "Nation's Attitude to April Conference", Letters to the Editor, *SMH*, Jan., 7, 1955, p.2

83 Dugan, M., & Szware, J., *There Goes the Neighbourhood: Australia's Migrant Experience*, Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1984, p.165-6

Despite the thin attempts to understand other cultures, in reality the Australian government was uncomfortable with difference, as Andrew Riemer's family experienced when it arrived in Australia in 1947.[84] The attempt to deal with complex cultural differences by handing out cups of tea to new arrivals, was simplistic and naive. But the institution of afternoon tea - a passive, "civilised" ritual - was somewhat symbolic of the 1950s. The period encouraged conformity and complacency rather than engagement, agency, self-examination and dialogue.

The Friends and Neighbours ethos promoted to host Asian Colombo Plan students, had similar hallmarks of the Australian Good Neighbour policy. Whether migrant or Asian student, however, some visitors were not slow to recognise the contradictions between public rhetoric and personal experience. One migrant thought the Good Neighbour Movement activities were "frivolous, superficial and unrealistic",[85] while an Asian student retorted "... Asians are not fools. They can tell when they are not accepted as equals." Another commented:

> Australian leaders, political, religious and commercial, make speeches in Asia about friendship and brotherhood and tells us that Australia has at last realised her geographic position and is now thinking in terms of Asia. Asians are very pleased to hear it. They welcome it. But don't you think it's time somebody told the Australian people?[86]

The smiling photographs of welcome issued by the government to advertise arrivals of the millionth migrant or the thousandth Colombo Plan student obviously belied the experiences of many of them.[87]

The emphasis on European immigration with its attendant policy of assimilation had a negative impact on Australian aid policy and delivery. The aggressive focus on European immigration just as Australia was developing its aid programme in Asia, served to highlight in Asia, the White Australia Policy. That the White Australia policy was offensive to Asians was obvious. The fact that unlettered Europeans were allowed entry while well-educated and well-qualified Asians were not, proved to many Asians Australia's racism. The Australian Student Christian Movement reported that many leading editorials in Singapore, Jakarta and elsewhere "firmly believe[d] that our immigration policy is an expression of racial superiority". The *Straits Times* of July 1958 reported:

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[84] "Everyone assumed that it was the new-comer's duty to fit in, to learn the language, to adopt the customs of the country. Whatever cultural heritage you had brought with you had to be discarded; the past was irrelevant to the new life you were about to forge. With ominous symbolism, the only items from my parents' luggage to be seized by His Majesty's Customs were half a dozen or so decorated wooden platters, garish examples of Hungarian folk art." Riemer, A., *Inside Outside*, Angus & Robertson, Pymble, 1992, describing his arrival in Australia in 1947, p.1; *Australia and the Migrant, op.cit.*, pp.24-25

[85] Milanov, K., "Towards the Assimilation of New Australians", *Australian Quarterly*, 23, 2, 1951, p.75

[86] "Students From Asia Are Finding Us Hard to Understand", *SMH*, 19/1/54, p.2

[87] Casey, R.G., "The Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 25, No.1, Jan., 1954, p.24

> The Australian immigration policy is for an Asian a reminder of the days when he was treated as racially inferior. The Asian does not object to Australia ... regulating its immigration. What he resents is the absolute exclusion of Asians. The most backward peasant from Central Europe with untutored customs and language Australia welcomes, but the Asian, however cultured, finds Australia's door shut in his face. This is exclusion on racial grounds not economic or cultural as the champions of 'White Australia' claim it to be.[88]

The strength of feeling in Asia against the White Australia Policy was detrimental to positive Australian/Asian relations and therefore incompatible with Colombo Plan aims to foster good relations in the region.[89] Members of the non-government aid organisation, the Food For Peace Campaign, reported being embarrassed by references to the White Australia Policy during their visits to Asia: "Our White Australia Policy alone is an insult to the coloured races who are by no means insensitive to our attitude."[90]

The Asians most directly affected by the policy were students studying in Australia either under the Colombo Plan or independently. Fairly regularly, Asian students in Australia made the comment that they entered Australia with some misgivings. "When my superiors told me two years ago that I had been offered a Colombo Plan scholarship to study at Sydney University my reactions were a little confused. The papers were full of reports about the White Australia policy. I was unsure whether two years studying social welfare there would be a period of humilation and unfriendliness".[91]

An Asian medical student reported:

> The average Asian student lands in Australia with the idea in the back of his mind that Australians do not want Asians in this country....You must remember that in Asian countries there is much confusion about Australia. You are known for your White Australia Policy. ... When I first came to Australia, people at home used to write and ask me was Australia worse than South Africa .... [92]

Another Asian student's candid comments about student attitudes to the Colombo Plan suggested that the Australian government's public relations' plans for the Colombo Plan had limitations:

> He knows the Colombo Plan is very generous.... He asks himself why does Australia do this?... Is it because Australians are very friendly to Asians and sincerely want to help them? Perhaps. But if he doesn't find friendship towards himself when he is looking for accommodation or trying to mix with Australians, then he will start to doubt Australia's motives. Many of them develop cynical attitudes to the Colombo Plan. They usually look at it in three ways. These are: Asia has been dominated for many years and it is time we received something in return.

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[88] The Indian newspaper *The Leader* reported: "There are people in Asia whose standards of living are not lower than that of immigrants [to Australia] from some of [sic] European countries", "White Australia Policy", *Leader*, Allahabad, 2 August, 1954, Sent from Australian High Commission, New Delhi, 5/8/54, to The Secretary, Dept. of External Affairs, Canberra, File No.7/6/5, Memo No.1246, CRS 1838, Item 156/5, AA; Editoral, *Straits Times*, Singapore, July 12, 1958, quoted in "A.S.C.M. Policy on White Australia", FFPN, *NOW*, March, 1959, p.6

[89] Warner, D., "Where Do We Stand With S.E. Asia?", *FFPN*, July, 1959, p.6

[90] Dorothy Matthews, "Do We Really Want Peace?", *FFPN*, Oct., 1958, p.7; See also *Australia and the Migrant, op.cit.*, p.22

[91] Aung, Hua, "An Asian Takes a Critical Look at Australia", *SMH*, 10/3/56, p.2

[92] "Students From Asia ...", *op.cit*.

> Australia is afraid of Asia. Whatever the reason behind the plan, it is a good opportunity to study and we may as well take advantage of it.[93]

Unlike the Colombo Plan scholars who were protected to a degree by special welfare officers who found them housing and hospitality,[94] unsponsored Asian students had to fend for themselves. This could be a distressing experience. Many Malay students reported an unfavourable reception in Australia frequently referring to the problem of accommodation and racism. "Recent reports from Malaya stated that Malayan students returning home had said that many of them were forced to live in slums because colour-conscious landladies refused them rooms."[95] This attitude was not exclusive to Australia. Some English landlords in the 1950s also enforced a "colour-bar" against non-white tenants.

The reaction from the Australian public to the issue was varied, though the tone was usually apologetic. One who worked in a hostel for University students and had close contact with Asian students felt, "... there is little deliberate colour prejudice here, but a vague legacy remains from 'the white man's burden' era, and only constant re-education will eradicate it."[96] Another, felt the churches had been responsible for fashioning the attitude of the older English generation. In her own case she grew up, "...with the firm impression that anyone who did not have a white skin was crude, uneducated, and primitive in the extreme." [97] A *Sun-Herald* editorial in March 1954 criticised the Australian public for the reception they had given Asian students, for being indifferent and slow to help. (That was a touch ironic, given the paper's sustained negative portrayal of Asia over the years). The paper said: "It is not easy, of course, for the average Australian to make the effort. He has not been used to contact with foreigners, and is easily discouraged by difficulties of language and of unfamiliar ideas. So he is apt to take refuge in an off-hand attitude."[98]

Occasionally comments from Asia helped fuel the image sustained in some Australian minds (and hence to confirm their prejudices), that the "starving millions" or

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[93] *Ibid;* The government stated that one aim of the Colombo Plan was to introduce Australians to Asian students... "so that each may learn of the other so as to promote understanding and good-will." Casey, R., "Colombo Plan", *C.N.* Vol 25, No.4, April, 1954, p.266

[94] One reported a rather poignant story about a student they were delegated to meet at the airport. "I met an Indian student at Mascot one morning in 1950. He was a doctor of philosophy, and was going to study at the University of Melbourne. I took this cultured gentleman to the buffet. There we had sandwiches and coffee and a yarn. Before he boarded the plane he shook my hand and said I was the first Britisher who had ever treated him as an equal. He said he now felt he could succeed in this country, and he did." Bartels, D., Liaison Officer between Commonwealth Office of Education and Universities of N.S.W. and the Education Department, responsible for reception, accommodation and placement of all the students going to N.S.W. until mid 1952. Letters to the Editor, *SMH*, 14, Aug., 1956, p.2

[95] "Students From Asia..." *op.cit.*

[96] Winton, R., Letters to the Editor, *SMH* , 21 Jan., 1954, p.2

[97] Murphy, Alice, Letter to the Editor, *SMH*, 2/2/54, p.2

[98] "A Helping Hand For the Asian Students", *Sun-Herald* , Mar. 8, 1954, p.18

"yellow hordes" intended to descend on Australia. India's Prime Minister Nehru, for example, while accepting that Australia was entitled to maintain a White Australia policy on economic but not on racial grounds, believed it was hardly feasible to keep a vast continent such as Australia relatively unpopulated.[99] The Indian newspaper, *The Leader,* agreed. It commented:

> A total population of about one crore is much too small for a big country like Australia. There are large areas of land of which no use is being made and which no use will be made for want of men. To prevent Asians from entering Australia and making use of that land is to pursue a dog in the manger policy....[100]

While some Australians interpreted such comments as a push by Asia to open up Australia, others dismissed the claims. They were highly critical of the White Australia Policy and by the late 1950s argued for its abolition and the introduction of some form of quota system for Asian immigration.[101] Aspects of the White Australia policy were to remain, however, into the 1970s. As such the policy would continue to undermine one of the stated objectives of aid - to foster friendship in the Asian region.

More broadly, the assumptions underpinning the ideology of assimilation - particularly assumptions of conformity - also underpinned development ideology. The Western bias in Colombo Plan study courses was an obvious exercise in assimilation. The emphasis on donor knowledge and processes which ignored Asian customs and conditions, echoed the disregard shown by the assimilation policy for the cultural heritage of Australian immigrants. That focus was both symptomatic of and helped reinforce the Western biases which influenced development practices. Such was the conviction and certitude of Western development planners in that Eurocentric form of development, it would take some thirty years for the value of recipient methods and conditions to be seriously recognised and entertained. And it would take until the mid-1970s for Australia's immigration policy to undergo a gradual metamorphosis from a policy of assimilation to a policy of "multiculturalism".

Ideology and Geography

The spread of communism after WW II and especially the failure of Chiang Kai-shek's nationalists to defeat the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, added heightened ideological and demographic fears to Australia's growing discomfort. Newspapers early in the 1950s fuelled this fear. They depicted Asia with sinister images like a looming monster ready to menace Australia: "... the menacing tentacle of Communism now

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[99] Reported from the Asian Conference in New Delhi."An Asiatic Pressure Group", Editorial, *SMH,* Tues, Jan.5, 1949, p.2

[100] One crore = 10 million. "White Australia Policy", *Leader, op.cit.*

[101] "White Australia Humbug", Editorial, *NOW!* Aug., 1958, p.3; Warner, D.,"Where Do we Stand ...", *op.cit.*

reaching southwards from the body of Asia"; "the great archipelago that provides a stepping stone to this country. On practically every one of these stepping-stones there is a formidable community of Chinese, watching closely, and being influenced by, the fortunes of the new Communist regime in Mother China."[102] North Korea's invasion of South Korea in June 1950 seemed only to confirm those fears and to justify Prime Minister Menzies' swift response to back the USA with Australian army, navy and air support.[103] And that Australia's geographic position increased its feeling of vulnerability, was clear from a comment reportedly made by Casey to journalists in Washington in 1954. He remarked: "I think you could say that we feel the hot breath of international communism on our necks in Australia."[104]

Set as Australia was in the Asia Pacific region far from the roots of its white settlers, white Australians frequently displayed a keen awareness of location. Spender made no bones about it early in 1950 when he remarked: "No nation can escape its geography. That is an axiom which should be written deep into the mind of every Australian".[105] And a *SMH* Editorial, confirming that this was considered a singularly negative reality, reported: "We are physically overshadowed by the countries of Asia ... which no wave of a magic wand will ever dissolve...".[106] The growing use of air travel only compounded the anxiety of some Australians. Used to a leisurely sea passage to the "mother country", air travel confirmed that Asia was on Australia's doorstep, was only "a few hours flying distance away."[107] Casey referred to, "the shrinking of the world [which] forced Australia into a new role of its own in international affairs".[108] He reported to parliament in 1951:

> Soon after taking over the portfolio of External Affairs, I came to the conclusion that it was in Australian interests to give special attention to the relationships between Australia and the countries to our north. A glance at the map makes it clear that the geographical situation of Australia is such that any direct threat to Australian security in the foreseeable future can come only through South-East Asia. ... It is essential that we do our utmost to ensure that friendly and

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102 "The Communist Threat to South-East Asia", *SMH*, Editorial, 26/2/49, p.2; "White Australia", *SMH*, Editorial, 11/7/54, p.2

103 Clark, M., *op. cit.*, p.256

104 *Brisbane Telegraph*, July, 13, 1954 quoted in Neale, R.G., "Australian Interests in and Attitudes Towards Economic Assistance to Asia," p.18 in Greenwood, G., Ed., *Australian Policies Toward Asia*, Australian Papers, Institute of Pacific Relations Conference, 1954, Australian Institute of International Affairs, Melbourne, 1956

105 "Statement by the Minister for External Affairs ..." *op.cit.*, *C.N.* Vol 21, No.2, Feb. 1950, p.160

106 "Ties with our Asian Neighbours", *SMH*, Editorial, 23/8/51, p.2

107 *FFPN, NOW!*, Oct., 1957, p.6 and *NOW!*, Dec., 1957, p.6. The question of reciprocal landing rights was frequently on the agenda at this time. In 1949 Indonesian Airlines was about to be formed and the Philippines applied for, but was not granted, reciprocal landing rights. In 1950, Ceylon, India and Pakistan all sought landing rights. Percival, J., "Conference Examines our Policy in Asia", *SMH*, 12/11/49, p.2 and "Seeking an Empire Plan to Meet Asian Problems", *SMH*, 3/1/50, p.2; External Affairs Minister P.C. Spender at the British Commonwealth Foreign Ministers meeting at Colombo in Jan, 1950 said:"... the whole world lived under the shadow of an approaching storm and therefore there was a great urgency about their deliberations", "British Commonwealth...", *op. cit.*

108 Casey, R.G., *Friends and Neighbours ...*, *op.cit.*, p.3

> stable governments are formed and maintained in South-East Asia. ... and although our cultural past and our present connections are such that our eyes turn most naturally towards Europe, our geographical situation is such that we must inevitably be bought into close touch with the peoples of Asia.[109]

The government was by no means the only institution to reflect attitudes of superiority, racism and fear. Australians in the late 1940s and 1950s received these messages through film, newspapers, language, cartoons and magazines which lampooned, exaggerated fears and perpetuated stereotypes and assumptions. Elements in the churches disregarded Asia's extant religions and assumed responsibility for converting the "Asian millions" to Christianity. Members of the Roman Catholic Church, reading from its pulpits on "Social Justice Sunday" in 1951, declared: "Australia will have to become a great Christian Commonwealth and then play a major role in converting Asia to Christianity".[110] Canon R. J. Hewett, repeated the sentiment in 1953 from St. Andrew's Cathedral, stating "The Church in Australia had a spiritual responsibility to the millions of unevangelised people in Asia and the Pacific...".[111]

Language usage in the 1950s played a vital role in maintaining stereotypes, myths and images about Asia. Even groups which approached Asia from a basis of tolerance and equality carried with them an unconscious cultural baggage which held assumptions of racial superiority. The Food for Peace Campaign, for example, used phrases such as "the hungry in Starv-asian countries", "the starving millions of Asia", and "nigger in the woodpile".[112]

The non-government organisation, Australian-Asian Association of Victoria commonly solicited a response of the heart rather than the head, to its calls to assist the "heart-rending" ... "starving and needy of Asia".[113] Some of the langauge used by the government also devalued rather than enhanced Asian countries. In discussing Colombo Plan requests, Casey said, "The free countries of Asia tell us what they need, and we say to what extent we can supply their "shopping list".[114] The use of domestic images such as - "friends and neighbours", "the family nature of the Colombo Plan"[115] and "shopping lists", in reference to Asia, far from evoking images of pleasant intimacy, suggested the lack of importance afforded those countries who were marginalised into the domestic sphere.

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109 *Ibid*

110 "The Future of Australia", pamphlet, quoted in "Australia's Duty to Asia, R.C. Views", *SMH*, 27/8/51, p.2

111 "Church Duty in Asia", *SMH*, 20/7/55, p.2

112 "Our Near Neighbours", p.7, "Extension of the Colombo Plan, Some Suggestions", *FFPN*, *NOW!* May, 1959, p.6

113 "Women's Group", *Newsletter Australian-Asian Association of Victoria,* May, 1965, p.2

114 "The Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 25 , No.1, Jan., 1954, p.23

115 "The Colombo Plan", *C.N.,* Vol 26, No.11, Nov.,1955, p.759

Newspapers, especially early in the decade, made their contribution to maintaining the stereotypes about Asia. They frequently referred to the "have-not countries", "backward areas", "Asia's underfed and underclothed millions", "the Asian masses", "Communist Menace" and the implied racism and intolerance in the cartoon captioned "Muchee talkee about us".[116] When the government began to promote Colombo Plan activities it added to and embellished the stereotypes by promoting Asia much like a slow-witted, impoverished next-door-neighbour which Western ingenuity alone would remedy. This image was promoted most blatantly through the medium of film.

In the years before mass television ownership in the 1960s, the Movietone news at the cinema was a popular method to keep Australians up-to-date with the week's politics, current affairs, sports and leisure. Before the main feature they could learn of Australia's progress: how the sugar industry was growing and how much it exported, how Duntroon Military College was turning out recruits to protect Australia, how the Australian National University was growing as a centre of research excellence.[117] Above all, those fifties domestic images reported an Australia which was ordered, disciplined, industrious, prosperous and leisured; the very hallmark of Christian values. Images proliferated of clean tree-lined streets somewhat emptied of people, of busy factories, of the impressive Snowy Mountains scheme, of the wool industry and of sports and beaches. They also portrayed conservatism - hats and gloves and besuited university students in a man's world in which many smoked. Women looked on admiringly but were rarely involved. The images presented a feeling of safety and prosperity. Aided by breezy music and breezy voices, they were designed to convey to the audience a feeling of comfort, safety and assurance that the country was in good hands.[118] Such images were likely to anaesthetise rather than to encourage critical dialogue, but were doubtless welcomed by a people wearied from war and enjoying increased post-war prosperity.

The images that were projected about Asia through Movietone news and documentaries, were unlikely to break down existing biases and stereotypes, since they portrayed the same cultural assumptions as other media. Headlines, tone of voice, choice of music and juxtaposition of images, often accentuated - almost caricatured -

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116 "Disappointing Trend at Colombo Conference", *SMH*, Editorial, 13/1/50, p.2; "Colombo Conference and Communist Menace", *SMH*, Editorial, 29/12/49, p.2; "Aid for Backward World Areas", Editorial, *SMH*, 7/5/51, p.2; *SMH*, 10/1/50, p.2

117 *Australian Diary No 75,* Directed by Jack S Allan ABA 254, "Colombo Plan in Operation in Canberra". No date, Australian Film and Sound Archives

118 *Ibid*; *Our Neighbour Australia*, 1952, made by Agha Bashir Ahmad and Rashid Khan students from Pakistan, as part of their training under the Colombo Plan with assistance from the Film Division of the Dept of Interior, Australian Film and Sound Archives; *The Australian Scene*, Directed by Victor Natividad, Photographed by Gregorio M Carofino, 014371 C.P., ABB000169, Australian Film and Sound Archives

public information about Asia, while reducing the messages to their most simplistic. An Australian government film on the Colombo Plan, *The Builders*, began with a panorama of Asian street images - bustling streets crowded with life.[119] Camels dragging carts, old men dragging carts, people jostling, cooking, begging, digging, planting, praying. Into this cacophony the Colombo Plan was introduced with its over-arching impulse to tame and to "civilise".

Government documents and press releases about the Colombo Plan catalogued the turgid facts (what even Casey called, "... the sober language of an official record").[120] They recorded that x many tractors and x many nurses and all-manner of experts contributed to dams and road-works, hospitals and schools. The fifties screen images of the Colombo Plan on the other hand, portrayed by the Australian National Film Board Productions for the Department of the Interior, promoted vividly the arrogance and intrusiveness of Western development aid. Here unequivocally scientific/technology-conscious Western society - Australian, Canadian and British - was imbued with god-like and saviour-like qualities: raging waters could be harnessed, deserts could be made fertile, above all people could be tamed. The Western conservative penchant for controlling everything, was triumphantly if incongruously depicted by tamed "warrior tribesmen". Having come down from the hills to participate in water control in the Khyber Pass, they had exchanged their horses for Australian tractors, causing, as the dialogue said, "great changes in the patterns of their lives".[121]

Film images presented the miracle of development, the certainty of the Western way, the precious gift Australia/the West was bequeathing Asia. Australian rolling stock was shown in India, Malaysia and Singapore; Australian radio transmitters in Nepal; Australian buses in Jakarta; Australian equipment crushing, screening and loading brown coal in "Siam"; Australian processes producing cement in Karachi, and the Burmese teak industry being "brought back to life again".[122] Images of power were portrayed with earth-moving machines gouging out the forests, into the interiors. "We must replace the winding caravan routes through the passes in the Himalayas" ran the commentary. Lacking analysis, issues were portrayed as simply black or white, usually by the use of "before" and "after" images. Over and over the film attested that Asian techniques and methods were too slow. Mechanical aids must "speed production and cut costs". Every effort must be made to link Asia to the markets of the world. "The old ways, the old methods, picturesque as they were are not good enough anymore", ... "the old ways are going", while [proudly], "noisy little Australian pumps are chugging away

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119 *The Builders,* Direction James Fitzpatrick, Commentary Osmar White, Australian National Film Board Production, Dept. of the Interior, National Film and Sound Archives, ABC438, 1959

120 "Statement by Mr. Casey, R.G., Minister for External Affairs of Australia", Ottawa, 4th Oct., 1954, A3102, Item 112/2/1/2, AA

121 *The Builders*, *op. cit* .

122 *Ibid*

on the banks of Asian rivers".[123] "Local", "out-moded", "quaint", "parochial", "domestic", "village", "people-based" images were juxtaposed with images of giant and powerful machines, scientific instruments and Australian experts. Colombo Plan literature also commonly used this technique to denote progress, showing weedy little crops of maize, dwarfed by a giant crop behind it.[124] And everywhere Australia's dark-skinned "neighbours" clustered gratefully around white-skinned experts. In Kuala Lumpur the film reported that Australian nursing sisters "pass on their knowledge and skills to Asian girls eager to learn"; and of Colombo it claimed in racist terms "young Asians learn fast, craftsmenship is in their blood".[125]

Where Colombo Plan assistance was introduced, the anarchy depicted at the beginning of the film was transformed into sanitised neatness - rows of school desks, neat school uniforms, crisp starched nurses uniforms, miles of straight roads, torrents stilled into dams. On one level, the Friends and Neighbours focus of the Colombo Plan projected a "British nanny or maiden-aunt stance" stepping in, filling the breach, bossily organising and tidying recipients up. The theme was evident also in the Colombo Plan documents. One such read:

> Indeed the governments of the countries are well aware that they must either plan and develop or live in poverty, a poverty which would become more oppressive as the pressure of population on existing developed resources increased.... Fortunately the challenge has been accepted and a new spirit is evident in the area. Nearly every country in the area has energetically worked out its own development programme and is trying out new techniques and methods.[126]

But on another level, they strongly reflected the ordered 1950s Australian society, which sought to impose order on anarchy and judged a societies "progress" by its own standards of conformity, acceptance and cleanliness - fearful, suspicious of difference. This was an attitude which severely limited its own potential for growth. Ambassador Crocker, while promoting Australia at the diplomatic level in Asia at the time, bemoaned the paucity of Australian public relations' exercises overseas, which usually consisted of [the always appealing and non-threatening] "kangeroos and koalas" or [images of power and success] "... photographs of factories and mines and statistics of economic development".[127] So much for assimilation which had firmly encouraged that model, studiously ignoring the colourful, the different, the flamboyant, to dwell on discipline and "progress", Anglo-Saxon style.

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123 *Ibid*

124 *The Task Ahead, Progress of The Colombo Plan For Economic Co-operative Development in South and South-East Asia,* Colombo Plan Information Unit, Colombo, 1956, p.9

125 *The Builders, op. cit.*

126 "Report presented to the Australian Parliament by The Minister for External Affairs, The Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, April, 1954", *C.N.,* April, 1954, p.244

127 Crocker, W., *Australian Ambassador: International Relations At First Hand,* Melbourne University Press, 1971, p.59

The indifference and ignorance of Asian culture was shown graphically in consecutive images in *The Builders*, - beautiful stone carved Buddhas in the Ceylonese jungle were depicted as "ruined images" of an ancient civilization, swallowed up by jungle: "but", went the commentary, "today there is a rebirth" (cut to an Australian tractor). Communism gave the West a sense of urgency, Christianity a sense of righteous zeal, but scientific and technological advances - such as the atom bomb tests, and the satellite flights - imbued the West with a confidence that seemed to have placed it above God. There was an arrogant assumption now that the West could control everything with science and technology, that it was unassailable, and it was tremendously encouraged by its own ingeniousness.[128] *The Builders'* commentary portrayed that theme perfectly, it ran: "The desert wastes... arid and unproductive from the beginning of time", were to be transformed by "the miracle of irrigation". "... prodigal waters [would be] tamed and turned to the use of men."[129] The sense one was left with after viewing the film, was that GOD had been replaced by WESTERN MAN.

The West's preoccupation with sweeping out the old to facilitate speedy development, with its attendant arrogance towards "developing" nations, was an attitude common to most Western European nations at the time. In such an environment the West commonly undervalued the skills of "... village craftsmen and artisans working as individuals with simple tools and using traditional methods".[130] The Australian government was no exception. In an address given by economist and Australian High Commissioner to Canada in New York in 1954, Sir Douglas Copland stated:

> There is the great weight of a long tradition of peasant economy with its primitive methods of cultivation, its reliance on human labour and its largely self-sufficient structure. ... There are the gravest deficiencies in knowledge of modern technique and in technical skills, and little interest in them except for the veneer on the top who have come into contact with the West.[131]

Copland believed it was important "... to secure in the East a more widespread understanding of the nature of the problem...",[132] by which he meant a thoroughly Western understanding of economic change.

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[128] The first Colombo Plan report commented that progress in science and technology had shown the way - "... in an age when other countries are increasingly reaping the advantages of scientific and industrial advance, the hastening of a similar process in Asia cannot safely be delayed." *The Colombo Plan .. op.cit.*, CRS CP259/1, Item16A8, p.63

[129] *The Builders, op .cit.*. As I viewed the film the dialogue brought to mind the 23rd Psalm and as I reached for the words the scene changed to peasants walking out of a valley. The commentary stated: "So the people of South and Southeast Asia are climbing out of the valley, out of the valley of the past and into a future of their own building.... This future has its roots and foundations in freedom". The psalm of course reads, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters....Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me...".

[130] *The Colombo Plan ...*, CRS CP259/1, p.48

[131] Copland, D., "The Economic Future of Asia", Mar.19, 1954, A1838, Item 156/5, AA, pp.3-4

[132] *Ibid*

The amalgam of Australian attitudes about Asia, depicted in their various forms throughout the 1950s suggested that Asians were to be despised for their colour and their "backwardness", feared for their numbers and proximity, and pitied for their state of "ungodliness" and their poverty. More specifically the majority of Asian countries were individually portrayed in a negative light. Many Australians felt ill-will towards Japan because of Australia's war-time experiences.[133] China, Korea, increasingly Vietnam, as well as pockets of Malaya and Indonesia were popularly portrayed as countries which Australians should fear because of communist activity. The popular focus on India and Pakistan, on the other hand, which received the lion's share of Australian aid in Asia during the 1950s, was portrayed in terms of poverty, famine, flood and general disasters. It was an image which attracted a high percentage of private Australian aid and it was an image that the region would find great difficulty in shrugging off. An article in the *Weekend Australian* of December 1989, for example, was headed: "India the Epicentre of Misery: Malnutrition, Poverty Kill 4m Children."[134]

Such attitudes helped determine Australian aid policy for more than thirty years. They encouraged the government's foreign policy focus and frequently underpinned the private sector's emphasis on humanitarian, religious and foreign policy concerns. These concerns kept the aid donations flowing, but in the process Asian society was frequently misinterpreted to the Australian public.

Australian Foreign Policy in the 1950s

In March 1950, External Affairs Minister Spender stated: "There are two instruments of foreign policy which can be used to avert the dangers to our country... one primarily economic, the other primarily military."[135] Casey reaffirmed that view in 1955 when he said: "... Short of armed force, economic assistance and technical advice are the only methods open to us maintaining stable democratic governments in the area."[136] Australia's perceived vulnerability, given the withdrawal of Britain and increased communist activity in the region, led it to support two defence treaties. In July 1951 it signed the ANZUS Pact with the United States and New Zealand, and in 1954 the South East Asia Treaty Organisation - SEATO - with France, the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines.

Many in the cabinet had a preference for a foreign policy with a strong emphasis on defence. They lobbied for an increased defence budget along with increased European

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133 *Japanese Peace Treaty*, Minutes of Fifth Meeting of Commonwealth Meeting on Foreign Affairs, Colombo, 11th January, 1950, CRS A1838, Item 540/1, AA, pp.1-2

134 "India the Epicentre of Misery: Malnutrition, Poverty Kill 4m Children", headline in *The Weekend Australian*, Dec. 30-31, 1989, p.11

135 "Australian Foreign Policy", Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, the Hon. P.C. Spender, 9th March, 1950, *op.cit.*, p.160

136 Casey, R.G., Minister of State for External Affairs, Cabinet Submission No 409, Canberra, 21st June, 1955, CRS A4906/XM1, Item Vol 17, AA, p.1

immigration and a firm alliance with the USA, to safe-guard Australia's national interests. Never happy with its "Far Eastern" position (Australia typically saw itself as "... this far outpost of Western civilization in the South-West Pacific", or "a kind of Britain in the Pacific"), Australia chose to clutch onto what Casey called "... the world-wide chain of democratic countries."[137] Like an umbilical cord, they, rather than Asia, represented Australia's survival.

With regard to its relationship with the USA, Spender outlined the government's position in 1950, reporting:

> ... as the greatest Pacific power is the United States, and as, moreover, we have a common tradition, heritage and way of life, it is absolutely essential that we should maintain the closest and best possible relations with her and initiate and carry out our Pacific policies as far as possible in co-operation with her.
>
> I feel, in the face of the advancing tide of world events in Asia, Australia must seek to revive the close working [sic] with our American friends which existed during the war. I believe - it is my hope - that in any crisis, the Commonwealth and United States would act spontaneously and vigorously together, and that this would be facilitated if we had the same kind of continuous consultation between the U.S. and Australia as we have had for a long period of time in the British family group.[138]

As Australia was assuming greater autonomy over its foreign affairs it chose to transfer its dependency from Britain to the USA. While the alliance was far from passive or uncritical it had many long-term consequences. In particular it worked directly against Casey's efforts to improve Australian/Asian relations. Significantly the alliance made the voices of Casey and his Ambassadors in Asia exceptionally thin when they came to representing Australia in any independent light. Already considered racist, Australia was now considered a pawn of the United States. Ambassador Crocker reported: "Nehru, as I learnt rather painfully more than once, used to consider Australia a stooge of the United States and was convinced that we could have no opinion of our own on the great international issues or freedom to express it".[139]

Support for the USA, would involve Australia in areas of Asia with which it had little knowledge. Ambassador Crocker reported: "We made the speeches required of us by the United States at the United Nations, including such follies as proclaiming that the future of Laos (the exact geographic position of which or its language or its history, was unknown to most members of the government) was a vital national interest to

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137 Erwin, G., MHR Balarat, p.832, Cairns, J., MHR Yarra, p.837, *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates*, 2nd Sept., 1959, Vol HR, No.24, 11th Aug-1st Oct, 1959; Casey, R., *Friends and Neighbours ... op.cit.*, Foreward: "Our survival depends on all the links in the chain", and p.5

138 "Australian Foreign Policy", Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, the Hon. P.C. Spender, 9th March, 1950, *op.cit.*, p.155 and pp.167-168; "Relations with the United States", Broadcast by the Minister for External Affairs, Hon. P.C. Spender, K.C., M.P., in the 'Advance Australia' series over the Macquarie Network, Sunday, 6th August, 1950, *C.N.*, Vol 21, No.8, Aug,. 1950, pp.582-583; "We believe that our two countries are linked in a dependable and enduring alliance", Casey to Michigan State University, *C..N.*, Vol.29, No.10, Oct., 1958, *op. cit*. p.665

139 Crocker, W., *op. cit*, p.200

Australia".[140] More significantly the alliance led Australia into combat in Korea and Vietnam. Australia's support for the USA also influenced the Australian government's lack of support for Casey's campaign to recognise China in the mid 1950s, after his meeting with Chou En-lai at the Geneva Conference in 1954,[141] and to subsequently recognise USA-backed Taiwan. These policies helped to strengthen the Cold War climate and added considerably to poverty in the region. The most obvious example was the poverty inflicted by the protracted Indochina war. But the Cold War also encouraged sustained military spending, utilising monies which might have been directed to facilitate constructive development. Ironically the Cold War climate did also encourage enthusiastic capitalist development in Third World nations. It was the uncritical application of such development (partly fuelled by Cold War paranoia) that was found in later decades to have added to the poverty of some Asian communities.

The Colombo Plan

Australia's second line of defence was marshalled through a programme of economic aid. Having already contributed aid through multilateral organisations after WW11,[142] at a meeting of British Commonwealth Foreign Ministers in Ceylon in 1950, Australia with Ceylon and New Zealand, put forward a proposal for a concentrated effort of aid and development in the Asian region.[143] Influenced strongly by the Marshall Plan, and after meetings during the year held in Sydney and London, the scheme was unveiled in London, on 28th November, 1950. It was titled, The Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and South East Asia.[144] The Colombo Plan became a major vehicle for current economic orthodoxy.

The report which introduced the Colombo Plan put forward three central reasons justifying economic intervention in the Asian region. The first addressed the political reasons for initiating the Plan. These were clearly linked with the West's desire to keep the region free from communist influences. That goal, it was argued, could only be achieved by improving economic conditions: "... the political stability of the area, and indeed of the world, depend[ed] upon it...", the report insisted.[145] By far the most

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140 *Ibid*, p.7

141 Hudson, W., *Casey*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1986, pp.251-254

142 Neale, R.G., "Australian Interests in and Attitudes Towards Economic Assistance to Asia," *op.cit.*

143 "Meeting of British Commonwealth Foreign Ministers, Colombo, January, 1950", Department of External Affairs, A1838, Item 540/ Pt. 1, AA, p.2

144 The shortened name "Colombo Plan" - from the city that saw its genesis - was chosen for its promised popular appeal and publicity value. *Departmental Notes on the London Meeting of the Commonwealth Consultative Committee, September 6 to October 4, 1950*, Department of External Affairs, CRS A1838, Item 708/13/4, AA, p.6; "The Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and South East Asia, Statement in the House of Representatives by the Minister for External Affairs, the Hon. P.C. Spender, K.C., on the Presentation of the Report, 28th November, 1950", *C.N.*, Vol 21, No. 11, Nov., 1950, p.816

145 *The Colombo Plan for Co-operative Development ..., op.cit.*, CRS CP259/1, Item 16A8, p.10

important function of the Plan to Australia's perceived national interest was the Plan's strategic aims. Spender argued that Australia must "... draw the teeth of Communist imperialism by carefully applied measures of economic assistance". His successor Casey, wrote, ..."the simple purpose of the Colombo Plan [was] to help the countries concerned to maintain democracy and to combat communism."[146] The government also hoped that economic aid would make the region think well of Australia, although as has been demonstrated other Australian policies worked to undermine that goal.

The second reason focused on the economic potential of the region and was obviously of critical interest to the West. The area possessed many key natural resources which were considered heavily under-utilised. Before WW II, the area had provided "almost all the world's supplies of jute and rubber, more than three quarters of the tea, almost two thirds of the tin and a third of the oils and fat".[147] It was clearly in Asia's interest to develop these resources and the West, as their major utiliser was more than a little keen to receive them.[148] Much of the prewar infrastructure in Asia had been seriously depleted by the early 1950s, destroyed, removed or neglected during the war and the ensuing struggles for independence. Economic assistance was therefore ear-marked both to reconstruct and to extend basic infrastructure. Railways, roads, ports and harbour installations, irrigation, power and communications, were considered an essential prerequisite to advancing both industrial and agricultural sectors.[149] That approach supported current economic theory which advocated generating large levels of capital formation in developing countries.

The third reason for giving aid touched on humanitarian issues. The report argued that in a region which comprised a quarter of the world's population, poverty and hardship were endemic.[150] A high percentage of citizens existed on a meagre diet, lived in inadequate housing and had little or no access to medical facilities. Illiteracy and mortality rates were high.[151] Average per capita income of most of the nations of South and South-East Asia was around £20 compared with more than ten times that in the

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146 Statement by the Minister for External Affairs... *op.cit.*, *C.N.*, Vol 21, No.2, 1950, p.163; Richard Casey to Arthur Tange, 13 June 1952, quoted in Hudson, W., *Casey*, *op. cit.*, p.249; Casey, R., "Contributions are a defence against the advance of Communism...", "Australian Contribution to International Economic Aid and Relief", Cabinet Submission No.10, A4906/XM1, Item Vol 1 (1-40), AA, p.5; "...economic stagnation in South and South East Asia exposes it to grave instability and communist penetration...", Casey, R.G., Cabinet Submission No.409, *op.cit.*, p.1

147 *Ibid*; Social and economic progress of the type raised in the Colombo Plan had not previously flowed to Asia from the profits of these commodities.

148 "Economic Policy in South and South-East Asia", Memorandum by the Australian Delegation, Annexure 4 to "Meeting of British Commonwealth Foreign Ministers, Colombo, January, 1950", A1838, Item 540/ Pt 1, AA, p.1

149 *The Colombo Plan...* , Item 16A8, CRS CP259/1, *op.cit.*, p.9

150 The countries in question comprised India, Pakistan, Ceylon, the Federation of Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei, Thailand, the Associate States of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, and Indonesia. *The Colombo Plan for Co-operative Development ...*, *op.cit.*, CRS CP259/1, Item 16A8, p.1

151 *Ibid*, p.8

United Kingdom and with almost £400 in the United States.[152] Rising population was considered a great obstacle to development in the region, which was being exacerbated by a lowered death rate created by improved standards of public health. Development was therefore considered a matter of great urgency - a race against time - which even in 1950 was seen as a "formidable task".[153]

Despite the passing references to humanitarian concerns, the issue of poverty alleviation in the Third World was essentially a by-product of development assistance in the 1950s. Just as the first Colombo Plan document had not dwelt heavily on poverty issues, so Australian aid policy during the 1950s lacked a strong poverty focus. References to poverty were both general and infrequent, paying only lip-service to the problem. That poverty was an issue was assumed by the need to keep the region free of communist influences. The fear was that poor people would be susceptible to the communist message which promised to liberate them from their economic oppression. That poverty was a factor was also assumed by the adoption of Colombo Plan projects which focused on public health issues and increased food production.[154]

Early in the drafting stages of the Colombo Plan document in London in 1950, Australia had objected to the United Kingdom's proclivity to all but ignore Asia's poor, giving an indication that Australia might have adopted a firmer focus on the issue in its own aid policy. Britain's attempts to dominate the drafting stage of the report irritated Australia. It complained that the U.K. had a large staff which was "able to control the organization of material and the drafting of reports. Other delegates could do little more than submit drafts of small sections or propose amendments".[155] Australia insisted, however, that the report should include a greater emphasis on people. External Affairs' notes on the meeting claimed:

> The original drafts as prepared by the United Kingdom officials showed little interest in, or understanding of the attitude of the peoples of the area, and the Australian delegation found it necessary to insist on more emphasis on the 'humanitarian' approach. In this respect we were strongly supported by the Indian delegation, which pointed out that a report which suggested that the first aim of the plan was to earn dollars for Europe would not only be coldly received in South and South East Asia, but could prove extremely embarrassing to the Governments concerned. ... the Australian delegation found it necessary to balance United Kingdom emphasis of the benefits of multilateral trade with more detailed statements on the real needs of the area itself. It was also necessary to correct implications that the U.K. alone of the Commonwealth countries, through its release of sterling balances, had made any real contribution to the area.[156]

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152 *Ibid*, p.10

153 *The Colombo Plan...* , Item 16A8, CRS CP259/1, *op.cit.*, pp.4-5 & 40, p.9, "The problem may be described as one of increasing the capital equipment of the countries in order not only to keep pace with the growth of populations, but also through increased production per head to permit some rise in the level of consumption. This is a formidable task."

154 Report presented to the Australian Parliament by the Minster for External Affairs, R.G. Casey, April, 1954, *C.N.*, Vol 25, No.4, April, 1954, pp.255-264

155 *Departmental Notes on the London Meeting ... op.cit.*, pp.18-19

156 *Ibid*, pp.19-20

It was an interesting vignette of a country whose conservatism aligned it naturally with Britain but who could still feel the hand of colonialism itself. Of course, pragmatically, as an occupant of the Asian region, and one that had placed some faith in the Colombo Plan initiative to help protect its national interest, Australia had more to lose than Britain if the Colombo Plan objectives were rejected by the Asian delegates.

In the closing paragraphs of the report reference was made to the dignity of peasants who tilled the soil and to the "incalculable capital in the form of the traditions of civilisations ... older than history"[157] possessed by Asian nations. Otherwise only the opening and closing paragraphs focused directly on the issue of poverty and hunger. Other references to poverty tended to be addressed obliquely in economic terminology. It was hoped, for example, that an allocation of 18% of the initial capital to housing, health and education purposes, would have a "considerable effect on productivity by enhancing the mobility, physical fitness and efficiency of labour".[158] The proclivity was to view Asia either in terms of impoverished masses or in terms of statistics and percentages. Both the Colombo Plan economic growth/capital formation bias and Australian cultural biases fed into that view.

Although the Australian government paid lip-service to the notion of poverty, especially in public forums, poverty was commonly treated in general or abstract terms, far removed from individual human experience.[159] Such reports served to add to the general impression that Asia was backward and inferior, and would be ill-advised to ignore Western-style development. Casey reported in 1954 that:

> The people of the area as a whole are suffering from wide-spread poverty, disease, malnutrition and illiteracy.... Despite its rich resources, the area is very under-developed and indeed scarcely developed at all industrially except in India and a few isolated centres elsewhere. The lack of development is a major cause of the low standards of living. Other causes are the pressure of population, the high rate of illiteracy, the lack of technical skills and, above all, the primitive state of agriculture.[160]

In fact, Australia was usually too absorbed with its own self-interest and its obsession with communism to treat the issue of poverty in Asia discretely. If the subject of poverty was raised, therefore, it was practically always juxtaposed with the political justification for giving aid. For example, "...the development of low standard countries demanded every consideration not only as a humanitarian duty but in order to achieve

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157 *The Colombo Plan...* , Item 16A8, CRS CP259/1, p.63, AA

158 *The Colombo Plan...* , *op.cit.*, CRS CP259/1, Item 16A8, p.43, AA

159 "Progress Under the Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 23, No. 10, Oct., 1952, pp.554-561; *C.N.*, Vol 24, No.6, June, 1953, pp.325-333; "Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 25, No.4, Ap., 1954, pp.243-266; "Australian Participation in the Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 26, No.3, Mar., 1955, pp.181-193; "Colombo Plan Progress Report", *C.N.*, Vol 27, No.7, Jul.,1956, pp.423-432; "Colombo Plan Progress Report Australia's Part", *C.N.*, Vol 29, No.1, Jan., 1958, pp.20-32; "Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 30, No.8, Aug, 1959, pp.426-437; *The Colombo Plan Story:... op.cit.*; *The Task Ahead, op.cit.*

160 "Report presented to the Australian Parliament by The Minister for External Affairs, The Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, April, 1954", *op.cit.*, p.244

political stability and thus contribute to world peace and order."[161] While the focus was directed fearfully inwards, and assisted by abstract economic analysis, there was little place for policy led by humanitarian concerns, which might set out to discover whether the confident assumptions of the Western economists were anywhere near the mark. In these circumstances it was substantially left to faith in current economic wisdom and chance, to effect equitable and effective change. And more broadly and on a longer term, as articulated by Spender, it was left to:

> ... the assimilation by Asia of the best in Western democracy - liberal institutions, efficient government, principles of economic equality and techniques of social welfare, and the technology of production, [since] ... the democracies have the advantage of vast resources, a genuine humanitarianism and the desire to work for the full sovereign independence of Asian people.[162]

Unfortunately for the poor, nowhere in the West was the execution of the model as pristine as Spender suggested. Large segments of the West's population, could be and were exploited under the system. It was rarely "the best in Western democra[tic principles]" that were exported to Asia, which contributed to sections of Asia's population being exploited by Western transnational corporations.[163] And within Asia, the economic elite were encouraged to follow the practice rather than the ideal of Western democractic principles, compounding the hardships already felt in highly unequal societies.

It was unfortunate indeed, that Australia's official aid programme had its genesis in the defence of Australia, rather than in an attack on world poverty, that it grew from political rather than humanitarian motives. Even had the aid programme stemmed from humanitarianism, an enlightened leadership was required to promote a culture of informed debate in the Australian community about the nature of poverty and development. The causes of poverty in developing nations were complex. The will to affect substantial change requiried strong support from an informed electorate across the more affluent nations. Australians were by no means indifferent to poverty in Asia and were frequently generous with their private aid donations. But a government aid programme created out of self-interest and backed by conservative assumptions and stereotypes did little to encourage the Australian public to challenge and question government assistance.

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161 "Broadcast by the Minister of External Affairs, Hon. P.C. Spender, K.C., M.P., in the 'Advance Australia' Series, over the Macquarie Network, 21st May, 1950", *C.N.*, Vol 21, No.5, May, 1950, p.351

162 "Partnership with Asia", *op.cit.*, pp.15,23

163 The South Commission said of the Developing countries from the 1950s: "...[W]hat was copied most extensively was some of the less estimable aspects of Western societies - individualism, conspicuous consumption, waste, a media culture manipulated for the purposes of money-making, the abuse of drugs," and the "influence of transnational investment unrelated to the needs of the host country". *The Challenge to the South: The Report of the South Commission*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, pp.45-46

The issue of Australia's future trading prospects in the Asian region in fact, while not a central focus of the 1950s Colombo Plan reports, generated more comment than the causes of poverty. While the comments might have been aimed at persuading a possibly sceptical public or cabinet to support the aid programme, both Spender and Casey recorded that they looked forward to the time when Australia could reap the fruits of its assistance by enjoying favourable trading conditions in the region. In March 1950 Spender said: "It is not the purpose of the scheme that it should be a matter of what I might call "hand-outs to Asia. We contemplate that it should aim at stimulating the productive capacity of these countries, and to that extent we look upon it as a prelude to the promotion of trade from which Australia can profit in full measure".[164] His successor continued the theme in 1954: "Although the Colombo Plan is not an instrument for trade promotion or expansion of our export markets in the area, a significant expansion should result from the greater productivity and increases granted by the Colombo Plan and similar programmes of international aid".[165]

Colombo Plan Donors and Recipients

In the initial stages of the plan, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada were the major donors. There was also a provision for the major recipients of aid to provide aid when and if they could, as well as an intention to attract large amounts of assistance from the USA. Spender in 1950 made it clear that Commonwealth aid would be insufficient to make a rapid impact on Asian economies and therefore suggested that: "...the prime objective [was] to induce the participation of the United States."[166] Having satisfied a USA requirement that the initiative came from the area, the USA did provide substantial assistance throughout the region from 1952.

More contentious for Australia was the question of Japanese participation as a donor. In 1950 many Australians harboured considerable ill-will towards Japan, which was expressed by Spender in Colombo when the issue of a Japanese Peace Treaty was discussed. He said:

> The Australian people felt great bitterness towards the Japanese. Though it might be unwise to allow such feelings to cloud political judgement, there could be no doubt that it would be many years before the Australians would forget the barbarism shown by the Japanese during the war. Nor did they believe that the Japanese character was likely to change rapidly. They realised,

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164 *C.N.* Vol 21, No.3, Mar., 1950; Spender, P., "Australian Foreign Policy", *C.N.*, Vol 21, No.2, Feb., 1950, p.162; Spender, P.C., : "... the increase in living standards which it [the Colombo Plan] will promote, would result in ever-increasing trade with mutual advantages to the nations of this area and ourselves". *C.N.*, Vol 21, No.12, Dec., 1950, p.887

165 "Report presented to the Australian Parliament by The Minister for External Affairs, The Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, April, 1954" *op.cit.*, p.245

166 Quoted in Cabinet Submission No 409, Casey, R.G., 21st June, 1955, CRS A4906/XM1, Item Vol 17, pp.1-2, AA

> however, that the Japanese must ultimately be allowed to take her place in the comity of nations....[167]

Australia successfully resisted Japanese participation in the Colombo Plan in 1952;[168] side-tracked the issue on a procedural matter in 1953, and reluctantly assented in 1954.[169] By that time, all but Australia and Indonesia favoured Japan's association. Australia's objections went beyond the emotional. They included such questions as a possible adverse public reaction to the Colombo Plan, the possible loss of incipient Australian trade interests in the Asian region (involving diesel locomotives and tractors), and the danger that Japan might politically exploit and dominate the area through the economic advantages gained by Colombo Plan membership.[170] Clearly, Colombo Plan economic links in themselves, as carried out by the West, were not perceived as exploitative, only beneficial and neutral.[171] Not unswayed by Australia's possible isolation from its Western colleagues, Cabinet adopted the following policy:

> Generally the view was reluctantly adopted that, overall, Australia should adopt a more liberal policy towards Japan because of (i) the very real danger over the next few years of Japan becoming aligned with Communist China; and (ii) the need for Australia to join with other nations particularly the United Kingdom and the United States.[172]

While the Australian cabinet was reluctant to allow Japan into the Colombo Plan as a donor, many cabinet members would have preferred Australia to stay out of the Plan altogether. Casey's enthusiasm for the Colombo Plan was not shared by many of his colleagues. Casey frequently faced a cabinet which was unsympathetic to Asia and indifferent to aid. His battles in cabinet on behalf of the Colombo Plan at times left him on the brink of resignation.[173] Casey's biographer recorded a despondent note to High Commissioner Walter Crocker in New Delhi in 1953: "... the Colombo Plan is not notably popular in the Cabinet or amongst the supporters of the Government... it represents a few million pounds of money that goes to other countries and in respect of which Australia sees no immediate advantage."[174] And in his diary the following year

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167 *Japanese Peace Treaty, op.cit.*, pp.1-2

168 The matter was raised informally by the United Kingdom at the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee meeting but dropped because of Australia's adverse reaction. *Japanese Participation in the Colombo Plan*, pp.1-2, Appendix K to Submission No 30, *Australian Policy Towards Japan,* CRS A 4906/XM1, Item Vol. 1 (1-40), AA

169 *Ibid*

170 *Ibid*

171 See *Ibid* , p.1 point (d)

172 Cabinet Minute, Prime Minister's Committee, Canberra, 17th August, 1954, Minute No. 2 (PM), Submission No. 30 Australian Policy towards Japan, CRS A4906/XM1, Item Vol 1 (1-40), AA (emphasis in original)

173 "I came very close to the edge of things today", "Diary", 28 July, 1954, quoted in Hudson,W.J., *Casey,* Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1986, p.249

174 Richard Casey to Walter Crocker in New Delhi, 25 March, 1953, quoted in Hudson, W.H., *op. cit.*, p.249; Crocker, struggling to raise awareness of Australia in India confirmed that Casey's lack of support among his cabinet colleagues to raise awareness of Asia was long standing. Crocker wrote in his

Casey wrote: "The simple fact is that most people are - hostile to the U.N. - hostile to the Colombo Plan - and unsympathetic to Asia ... The fact that we are not pulling our weight internationally doesn't cut any ice at all".[175]

Treasury was particularly resistant. On one occasion, while fielding allegations that Treasury officers were intolerant and arrogant in their dealing with External Affairs officers in Colombo Plan matters, Treasury questioned the viability of supplying certain types of aid to Asia at all.[176] Treasurer A.W. Fadden, while sympathetic to the notion of "... assisting the development of Asian countries as an antidote to the spread of Communism", argued forcefully that a higher priority should be placed on building Australia's industrial capacity and potential [which would stengthen its defensive capabilites], than on providing scarce resources to Colombo Plan countries.[177] He questioned the wisdom of giving away wheat and flour, which could have been sold to ease Australia's balance of payments: "It could indeed be argued that, at a time when our resources are running down, it is wrong to be giving away anything which can be sold abroad." Fadden objected to providing 2000 rail wagons to India, which would use an appreciable amount of Australia's scarce steel stocks, and was even more adamant over the matter of 300 trucks for Pakistan, about which he stated:

> ... we represented to the International Bank that there was a critical shortage of transport equipment here and that we needed dollars to ease the shortage. If now we give away not the actual equipment obtained but equipment in the class which we told the Bank was short, the Bank would have every right to say that our representations were humbug.[178]

The Food for Peace Campaign's newspaper *NOW!* in 1959, supported the contention that Fadden was a reluctant Colombo Plan participant. It reported: "When Mr Casey addressed a meeting of students at the University in 1957 he hinted that the then Federal Treasurer was the 'nigger in the woodpile' which prevented the scale of our aid being stepped up."[179] As "keeper of the public purse" Fadden obviously had to exercise caution and demonstrated that dealing with the finer details of assistance was no simple exercise. Nevertheless, those who supported Fadden's position preferred a defensive attitude rather than considering arguments along the lines of Australia's comparative wealth advantage with the developing countries.

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autobiography, " The conquest of some measure of confidence was greatly helped by Lord Casey's personal standing in India gained during his Governorship of Bengal though his efforts at the time received little encouragement from some of his highly-placed cabinet colleagues". W. R. Crocker, *Australian Amabassador ...op.cit.,* p.10

175 Richard Casey,"Diary", 28 July, 1954, quoted in Hudson,W.H., *op.cit*, p.249; Millar, T., Ed., *Australian Foreign Minister, The Diaries of R G Casey 1951-60*, Collins, London, 1972, p.173

176 Fadden, A.W. Treasurer, "Relations between the Department of the Treasury and Department of External Affairs and other Departments", 30th June, 1955, A4906/XM1, Item Vol 17, p.2, AA; Fadden, A.W., Treasurer, "The Colombo Plan", Cabinet Submission No.416, 27th June, 1955, CRS A4906/XM1, Item Vol 17, AA

177 *Ibid*, pp.1-8,

178 *Ibid,* p.4

179 "Extension of the Colombo Plan, Some Suggestions", FFPN, *NOW!* May, 1959, p.6

Delegates to the Sydney meeting of the Colombo Plan in May 1950, had decided that all countries in the region of South and Southeast Asia should be eligible to receive immediate technical assistance. Development assistance would be available only to members of the Commonwealth: India, Pakistan, Ceylon and the British territories of Malaya, Singapore, Brunei, Sarawak and North Borneo. Since the United Kingdom decided to take responsibility for its British Territories, Australia's development aid was focused on India, Pakistan and Ceylon.[180] The volume of Australia's aid would be conditioned mainly by strategic considerations and historical ties, except in cases warranting immediate emergency relief aid. Papua New Guinea as a colony of Australia and in geographic proximity, received the lion's share of Australia's aid. India, Pakistan and Ceylon, as independent Commonwealth members received the largest contributions in Asia. By mid-1955 Pakistan had received just over £12.25m, India just under £9.25m and Ceylon £2.50m.[181] The initial stages of the Plan therefore saw a definite bias towards the nations of Britain's former empire.

Despite this preference pragmatism dictated that the Colombo Plan should not be seen by other nations as an exclusive Commonwealth club. Such a perception might create more tension in the region and dissuade the United States from becoming a donor. Several non-Commonwealth observers from the region had therefore attended the London Colombo Plan meeting and were actively encouraged to join.[182] By the middle of 1953 most had decided to do so including the Associated States of Indo-China - Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos - and Indonesia.[183] By the end of the decade Australian aid was spread throughout the region. In descending order of monetary value assistance went to India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Indonesia, Burma, Malaya, Vietnam, Laos, Singapore, Cambodia, Thailand, North Borneo, the Philippines, Sarawak, Nepal and Brunei. The greatest concentration of aid was given to the first four nations listed.[184] Indonesia became the fourth largest recipient of Australian aid in the 1950s, being considered strategically crucial to Australia as Australia's nearest "neighbour". (Papua New Guinea still being under Australian jurisdiction). Despite arguably the greater need in South

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180 Casey, R.G., *Australian Government's Contribution to the Colombo Plan*, 25 May, 1951, Canberra, Cabinet document, Agenda 21, Copy No. 22, File No. 353 CRS A4905/XM1, Item Vol 2, AA; "Report presented to the Australian Parliament by The Minister for External Affairs, The Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, April, 1954" *op.cit.*, p.263

181 *Ibid;* "Australia's Part in the Colombo Plan, Progress report to 30th June, 1959, tabled in the House of Representatives by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. R.G.Casey, 11th August, 1959", *C.N.*, Vol 30, No.8, Aug., 1959, pp. 429-437; "The Colombo Plan Progress Report, Australia's Part", *C.N.*, Vol 29, No. 1, Jan., 1958, p.32

182 *Departmental Notes on the London Meeting of the Commonwealth Consultative Committee, Sept. 6 to Oct., 4, 1950, op.cit.*, pp.4-5; *The Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and South-East Asia, op.cit.*, Foreword p.v

183 "Progress Under the Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 24, No.6, June 1953, pp.325-327

184 Casey, R.G., "Australian Government's Contribution to the Colombo Plan", 1951, *op.cit.*; Australia's Part in the Colombo Plan..., 1959, *op.cit.*; "The Colombo Plan Progress Report, 1958, *op.cit.*

Asia, strategic interests, fanned by Australia's nervousness at Indonesian instability in the mid 1960s, would increasingly see Indonesia as the principal Asian recipient of Australian aid in the future.

Australia's involvement in the Plan was co-ordinated and directed by the Department of External Affairs. The department worked closely with diplomatic staff in the field, with a small Colombo Plan bureau in Colombo and in conjunction with other Australian government departments - Treasury, Commerce and Agriculture, Trade and Customs and National Developments, as well as Universities and Technical Colleges. Australian reports frequently reiterated that requests for assistance were to be unsolicited. The recipient country was required to make a formal request through the local Australian diplomatic mission for preliminary vetting.[185] The request was then passed to Australia for examination and considered along the lines of whether it fitted the scope of the Colombo Plan, was one which Australia wished to be associated with and whether the equipment could be supplied in Australia.[186] If accepted, tenders were placed and the equipment eventually dispatched.

It was decided in 1951 that Australia's contributions should be in the form of a gift - which would benefit the recipient economically and Australia, politically. As Casey put it, "...by making gifts we shall give proof of our sincerity, and of our desire to assist these countries".[187] The practice of giving aid in grant form rather than as a loan did prove to be beneficial to the recipient nations. In particular, grants avoided adding to developing country debt. Such gifts were made in the form of commodities - such as wheat, barley or flour (which were sold by the recipient government and the proceeds used for Colombo Plan projects) - or technical supplies. Only rarely was currency given.[188] For example, the proceeds of the sale of wheat and flour from Australia to India in 1952 went towards a multi-purpose project in Hyderabad.[189] Similar sales of Australian flour in Ceylon were used to establish chest clinics to combat tuberculosis.[190] Developmental equipment as near as possible would also be "100 per cent manufactured in Australia".[191] Substantial amounts of the aid budget, therefore, accrued to Australian farmers, manufacturers and experts who supplied commodities or expertise to the scheme.

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185 "Annual Report on the Colombo Plan, Statement by the Australian Delegate, the Hon. G. Freeth, M.P.", *C.N.*, Vol. 30, No.11, Nov., 1959, p.641

186 "The Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 25, No.1, Jan, 1954, p.14

187 "To make our relatively small contributions by way of loan would, I am sure, greatly reduce both the short and long-term benefits to be derived from them and also the political and other advantages to ourselves." Australian Government's Contribution to the Colombo Plan", Agenda 21, Copy No. 22, 1951, *op.cit.*, p.3

188 *Ibid*, pp.4-5

189 "Progress Under the Colombo Plan", 1952, p.559, *op.cit.*

190 *Ibid*, p.560

191 "The Colombo Plan: Address by the Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, Minister for External Affairs, to the Melbourne Junior Chamber of Commerce, 20th July, 1953, *C.N.*,Vol 25, No.7, July 1954, p.399

The Colombo Plan initially made provision to grant assistance for 6 years, from July 1st, 1951 to 30th June, 1957, though it was continually extended thereafter. Assistance comprised two components which followed closely current Western economic theory. Development Assistance was to provide the means to increase plant infrastructure. Under this scheme tractors, rail waggons, earth-moving equipment, telecommunications and irrigation equipment were supplied. They were used for large projects like dams, roads, broadcasting facilities, telecommunications and electrical installations. Technical Assistance was intended to increase trained "manpower", usually by sending students to the West for training or by sending Western experts to instruct local Asian personnel. There was also provision to send books and technical equipment to educational institutions, to encourage training within the country.[192]

By the end of the decade, Australian aid to Asia covered a wide spectrum of activities. It had provided pumping equipment, experts and livestock for a large project in Pakistan called the Thal Development project, as well as broadcasting and communications equipment, electric locomotives, a pipe-manufacturing plant, electrical equipment and tractors.[193] In Ceylon, besides tractors for a project to help Ceylon's "dry zone", assistance focused on funds to combat tuberculosis and to assist fisheries.[194] Burma received the services of a blood transfusion advisor, a veterinary expert and a neurologist. Cambodia received bull-dozers, excavators, road rollers, bitumen sprayers and trucks, as well as teachers of English and a radio technician. India's aid included heavy earth-moving equipment, rail cars, mobile cinema vans, equipment for All-India Radio and medical staff. Malaya received nurses and teachers, Nepal X-ray equipment, transmitting equipment and road-making equipment and North Borneo, the assistance of teachers and engineers.[195]

An Australian delegation reported in the 1959 Colombo Plan annual report that: "We have found our most successful aid projects have been those where we have supplied experts to help in the formulation and implementation of the project as well as providing training for personnel associated with the project both in the field and sometimes also in Australia."[196] From these experiences more creative project funding emerged linking technical assistance with capital aid. Australia, for example, supplied buses and advisors to Jakarta, while training Indonesian engineers and executive personnel for the same project, in Australia.[197] Ceylonese bakers were trained in Australia through the

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192 "Colombo Plan Technical Co-operation Scheme, Expenditure on Aid to Individual Countries as at 30th June, 1955", A1838, Item 156/5, AA; "Colombo Plan - Economic Development Programme, Status of Aid for Individual Countries as at 30th June 1955", A1838, Item 156/5 pp.1-3, AA

193 "Colombo Plan Progress Report Australia's Part", 1958, pp. 20-32, *op.cit.*

194 *Ibid*

195 *Ibid*

196 "Annual Report on the Colombo Plan", 1959, *op.cit.*, p.640

197 *Ibid*

Technical Co-operation scheme, while a bakery for them to use for demonstration purposes was built under the projects' budget in Ceylon.

As the decade progressed, the number of students studying in Australia and the number of Australian experts working in Asia, had risen steadily in response to increased demands for trained personnel.[198] By June 1958, Australia had provided the largest number of training facilities to students - 2286 places compared with 2075 provided by the United Kingdom. Students were engaged in the full range of studies available in Australia, with the largest concentration in public administration, engineering, social studies, agricultural science, education and food technology.[199] Australia had also provided 284 experts to Asian countries compared with 315 supplied by the United Kingdom.[200]

The growing emphasis on human capital as opposed to physical capital was promoted by the newly emerging "development economists" towards the end of the 1950s. H.W. Singer's comments were illustrative of this view. He said: " The fundamental problem is no longer considered to be the creation of wealth, but rather the *capacity* to create wealth, and this capacity resides in the people of a country. 'It consists of *brain power*'."[201] Significantly "brain-power" and the focus on utilising the capacity of the "people" of developing countries was seen solely in Western terms of elite Western-trained specialists. Australia noted the increased emphasis on skilled personnel in the 1959 Colombo Plan report and responded: "It is in the field of technical assistance... that we feel Australia's facilities and experience can be of most value to countries of the area."[202] In view of the complaints from Treasury that Australia was short of physical capital resources, the focus on "brain power" and investment in education was no doubt welcomed. The continuing focus on the value of "brain power" during the 1960s, however, also set in motion a "brain drain" noticably from Europe to the USA, but also from developing countries. This caused consternation among developing countries which feared the loss of its Western-trained students once the conditions of their contracts had expired.[203] The fear was not unfounded and continued

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198 "It is in the area of technical assistance ... that we feel Australia's facilities and experience can be most value to countries of the area.", "Annual Report on the Colombo Plan, Statement by the Australian Delegate, the Hon. G. Freeth, M.P.", *C.N.*, Vol 30, No. 11, 1959, p.640; "Colombo Plan Progress Report," *C.N.* , Vol 27, No.7, Jul.,1956, p.423

199 "Colombo Plan Technical Co-operation, Summary of Annual Report", *C.N.*, Vol 29, No.10, Oct., 1958, p.679-680

200 *Ibid*

201 Quoted in Arndt, *Economic Development... op.cit.*, p.60. The Consultative Committee of the Colombo Plan in 1958 stressed the urgent need for developing countries to give greater attention to the development of "human skills" to ensure the appropriate utilisation of capital resources. "Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 29, No. 11, Nov. 1958, p.753

202 "Annual Report on the Colombo Plan", 1959, *op.cit,*

203 Arnove, R., "Foundations and the Transfer of knowledge:Implications for India, *Social Action,* Vol 31, No.2, Apr-June 1981, p.153

into the 1980s. Lack of nursing and medical staff in the West in the 1980s enticed many Filipinos to Western countries, notably to the USA.[204]

It was government policy to extract as much public relations value from assistance as possible.[205] Since it was thought by Casey that students who were brought to Australia for training, "...maybe an important factor in our future relations with the countries of the area", the 100th, 500th, 1000th, 2000th student to arrive, was seized upon ceremoniously to promote government policy.[206] On the occasion of the 2000th arrival (a nurse from Malaysia who was to study in Royal Perth hospital) it was reported: "The Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Casey, will greet Miss Ummi Kelsom in Melbourne and will present her with an air ticket for visits to the other capital cities, and a small piece of Australian jewellry as a memento of the occasion".[207]

And in the field, the proclivity for proclaiming the worth of Australian assistance was marked with Australian maps and plaques. Typical was one in Ceylon which read - "Chest Clinic Kandy. This building was Constructed and Equipped from funds gifted by the Australian government under the Colombo Plan"; while Australian equipment was marked prominently - "Colombo Plan Supplies from Australia".[208] The Australian Government was not alone in this. Members of the non-government organisation, The Food for Peace Campaign, were also frequently photographed by large hoardings advertising their projects. Numerous handing-over ceremonies were performed throughout Asia by Australian officials, like the 100 Australian tractors ceremoniously presented by the Australian High Commissioner to Ceylon, amidst "the Cabinet, heads of Departments and a large gathering". His cablegram to Canberra read:

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[204] The *New Internationalist* reported in 1982 that the Philippines was the world's second largest exporter of doctors with 40% practising outside the country, *New Internationalist*, Issue No. 111, May, 1982, p.28

[205] "Schemes of this kind have a great appeal for the country providing the experts, the equipment and the training facilities. They provide a visible and permanent record of the assistance...and the institutions are a permanent asset to the countries in which they are located." "Colombo Plan", Report of the Council for the Technical Co-operation in South and South-East Asia for 1952, *C.N.*, Vol. 23, No. 3, Mar., 1952, p.146; "Council for Technical Co-operation", Ministerial Despatch No.3, 19th Oct., 1951, "Publicity", CRS A1838, Item 160/11/1/1, Pt.1, p.47, AA

[206] Casey, R.G., "The Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 25, No.1, Jan., 1954, p.24; "A great opportunity is provided by the presence among us of many hundreds of Asian students...", "Address by the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, Mr. A.H. Tange, to the Rotary Club, Sydney, 22nd June, 1954, *C.N.*, Vol 25, No.6, Jun,1954, p.416; "Australia also benefits immeasurably from the presence in our country of trainees from the Colombo Plan area. Students are good representatives of their country and they bring a knowledge and understanding of their countries to Australian people in all walks of life", "Annual Report on the Colombo Plan", Statement by the Hon G. Freeth, M.P., *C.N.*, Vol 30, No.11, Nov.,1959, p.641

[207] "Australia's 2000th Trainee: Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, 12th June, 1957, *C.N.*, Vol 28, No.6, June, 1957, p.503; *C.N.*, Vol 29, No.1, Jan., 1958, p.8. Migrants to Australia were similarly singled out for publicity when "significant" milestones were reached, the millionth post-war migrant being welcomed in 1955.

[208] *Ibid*

> One tractor driven through the ranks of the other 99 to official table where I finally handed over the tractors by indicating and reading inscription. Jayawardene and Kumaraswamy thanked Australia for vital aid extended at crucial time and praised the shining example of the Colombo Plan and the Commonwealth. Jayawardene said Australia's generosity was like her cricket as it was in centuries.[209]

While such prominance given to assistance was supposed to further the Friends and Neighbour policy it ironically highlighted the dependency and charity aspects of receiving assistance, of which the recipients were only too aware.

Behind the pleasant ceremonial face of the Colombo Plan lay flurries of cablegrams between Canberra and Missions, urgent and acid memoes between Departments, exasperated comments between Ministers, revealing that there were many headaches in providing aid to Asia. Indeed, the Australian High Commissioner's comments that he had "finally" handed over the 100 tractors, referred to numerous problems encountered by the Australian team with unloading, delivering, assembling and training tractor operators. However, those particular tractors, were in good working order and had ploughed many acres of paddy land, when inspected a year later by the High Commissioner.[210]

The quality of Australian aid in the 1950s was judged almost exclusively by its contribution to the recipient country's economic growth. Evaluation therefore relied heavily on quantification - tables, graphs, facts and figures, monies spent, equipment given and people trained. The extent to which this course was pursued led one commentator to remark that the government was obsessed with statistical compilation.[211] The assumption was that the numbers of projects completed or students trained would lead to increased economic growth. "Success" was therefore gauged somewhat nebulously in terms of, what Casey called "discovering new initiatives", such as introducing correspondence courses, or in increasing numbers of experts and students or acreages under irrigation or the plough. The challenge was to find "development stimulators", and "catalyzers", in order to "trigger off activity",[212] which fostered an image of inert and passive communities waiting to be prodded into life by Western aid.

The lack of any systematic evaluation of projects in the field was partly conditioned by Australia's off-stated diplomatic reluctance - in that post-colonial period - to interfere

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209 Australian High Commissioner's Office, Colombo, 20th June, 1953, to External Affairs, C & A and P M's offices, Cablegram 132, CRS A1838, Item 160/11/1/1 Pt. 2, AA

210 "Australian High Commissioner Inspects Tractors", *Ceylon Newsletter*, 3rd July 1954, CRS A1838, Item 160/11/1/1, Pt. 2, AA

211 "Progress Under the Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 23, No.10, Oct., 1952, pp.554-561; *C.N.*, Vol 24, No.6., June, 1953, pp.325-333; "Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 25, No.4, Ap.,1954, pp.243-266; "Australian Participation in the Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 26, No.3, Mar., 1955, pp.181-193; "Colombo Plan Progress Report", *C.N.*, Vol 27, No.7, Jul.,1956, pp.423-432; "Colombo Plan Progress Report Australia's Part", *C.N.*, Vol 29, No.1, Jan., 1958, pp.20-32; "Colombo Plan", *C.N.*., Vol 30, No.8, Aug.,1959, pp.426-437; *The Colombo Plan Story: 10 Years of Progress, op.cit*; *The Task Ahead, op.cit.*; Taylor, K.W.,"Towards a New Foreign Aid Policy", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 19, No.2, 1965, p.134

212 "Colombo Plan Consultative Committee Meeting", 1955, *op.cit.*, p.727

in the internal affairs of recipient countries.[213] A cabinet submission detailing the conditions under which Australian aid should be granted, stated:

> ...the conditions associated with the provision of aid...should be as simple and as straight forward as possible, and not such as might imply interference with domestic policy or a wish to bring pressures to bear on the recipient Government. The main condition should be that the aid contributes to the purpose for which it is given, namely to assist in carrying out the development programmes of the Colombo Plan. [214]

It was axiomatic to development logic in the 1950s that once a project was deemed worthy of support it would be capable of delivering Colombo Plan objectives. The combined policies of non-interference and a blind faith in economic growth discouraged rigorous enquiry. Evaluation in the field was therefore an informal, seldom rigorous procedure, focusing on such issues as waste or the mis-handling of aid.[215]

While investigating the request for tractors to Ceylon, Australian advisors declared that the Ceylonese Government store held Rs .6 million worth of spare parts "... for all types of tractors but that the Government does not know which spares belong to which tractors".[216] Such criticism was intended to highlight the recipient's inadequacies, though it also emphasised the problems that developing countries encountered when forced to receive equipment as aid. The practice tied them to numerous countries for spare parts and to the added probability that they were not getting the most competitive use of the money provided.

Tractors were reported unserviceable "through cannibalism" in Ceylon and in Pakistan because parts had been "pilfered" or "'milked' for parts for other tractors".[217] Such incidents served to compound the West's negative views of Asia - it was seen as corrupt, lazy or ignorant. Few links were made during the 1950s to suggest that

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213 "Annexure II, Details of Proposed Contributions", p.3, "Australian Government's Contribution to the Colombo Plan", 25/5/51, Cabinet Submission , Agenda No. 21, A 4905/XM1, Item Vol 2, AA; "In no way does our aid seek to influence the self-determined plans for economic development of other countries or to interfere in their social or cultural traditions", Statement by the Australian Delegate, the Hon. G. Freeth, M.P., Annual Report on the Colombo Plan", *C. N.*, Vol 30, No.11, 1959, p.641

214 "Australian Government's Contribution to the Colombo Plan", p.4, Cabinet Submission, 1951, *op.cit.*; "Statement by the Hon. P.C. Spender, K.C., M.P., Minister for External Affairs and Leader of the Australian Delegation", Opening Session of the Commonwealth Consultative Committee, 15th May, 1950, *C.N.*, Vol 21, No. 5, May, 1950, p.351; "We do not propose to ask India, Pakistan and Ceylon to observe any detailed conditions in respect of the aid that we are able to give - other than that it should be used in ways that will contribute towards the objectives of the Colombo Plan - which is in short towards the well-being of their peoples", "Colombo Plan - Allocation by Australia: Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, 15th June, 1951", *C.N.*, Vol 22, No.6, June 1951, p.334; "Colombo Plan Exchange of Letters: Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, 24th September, 1951", *C.N.*, Vol 22, No.9, Sept., 1951, pp.506-507

215 Annexure II p.3, to Cabinet Submission No.21, "Australian Government's Contribution to the Colombo Plan", A4905/XM1, Item Vol.2, AA; Ward, E.E., "The Colombo Plan", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 5, Dec., 1951, p.2201-2

216 "Australian High Commissioner Inspects Tractors"..., *op.cit.*

217 Australian High Commission Karachi to Department of External Affairs, Canberra, Inward Savingram, I.368, 2nd March, 1957, p.2, CRS A1838, Item 189/11/1/1, AA; Memo No 198, 12th Feb., 1953 from Official Secretary, A.St.A. Dexter Australian High Commission, Ceylon to The Secretary Department of External Affairs, p.4, CRS A 1838, Item 160/11/1/1 Pt. 2, AA

pilferage and wastage might be symptomatic of larger problems notably that "top down" aid and certain technologies might be inappropriate to local conditions.

In the absence of any rigorous formal evaluation process, comment and criticism of the Colombo Plan was largely left to a few concerned individuals in the non-government sector. As Australians working in the field became familiar with Asian conditions, some began to question the suitability of the West's approach to development. In a small flurry of correspondence in the *SMH* in April 1958, correspondents questioned the West's preference for using sophisticated technology in developing countries. Richard Aspinall, remarked with foresight: "Perhaps we have been attempting to apply [the Colombo Plan] within a framework of European experience, rather than attempting to understand Asia's lesser need for capital aid but greater need for a knowledge of simple techniques directly related to low agrarian economies".[218] R. E. Stewart, with experience gained from a UN technical assistance mission to Laos, supported the suggestion, stating:" ...there may, in certain circumstances, be more advantage to all concerned in supplying simple hand tools such as hand ploughs and hoes....[219] And another Australian observer of the Plan pointed up some of the deficiencies when requests for tractors to be modified to suit Indonesian conditions were ignored and supplied from "ready stock".[220]

In the universities in the 1950s few economics departments were concerned with development economics. Sydney University, for example, appears not to have incorporated courses in development issues until the end of the decade, although H.W. Arndt began a regular course in the subject at the Australian National University in the mid-1950s.[221] However analyses of the Colombo Plan by the academic community appeared sporadically throughout the decade in journals or as the topic of public lectures.[222] Among these, concerns were voiced about the lack of an attempt to evaluate the political and economic assumptions on which the Plan was based: whether economic assistance could indeed achieve political stability; whether Australian/Asian relations were substantially furthered by educational and other contacts; whether the amount of aid given was capable of creating the desired catalyst effect, or on the otherhand and more cautionary, if it did, whether by giving aid, Australia was helping to promote strong, hostile economies on its doorstep.[223]

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218 Aspinall, R., Letter to the Editor, *SMH* , 24/4/58, p.2

219 Stewart, R.E., Letter to the Editor, *SMH*, 26/4/58, p.2

220 Anderson, G.S., *Ibid*

221 Sydney University Calenders, 1950-1959; Arndt, H.W., *A Course Through Life, Memoirs of an Australian Economist*, p.43, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1985

222 For example, Ward, E.E., "The Colombo Plan", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 5, Dec., 1951 pp.191-202; Wilson, J., "The Colombo Plan", *Current Affairs Bulletin*, Vol. 13, No. 9, Feb., 1954, pp.131-143; James, C.W., "The Colombo Plan Passes Halfway", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 9, No.1, 1955, pp.29-42; Burns, C., "The Colombo Plan and Australian Foreign Policy", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 12, No.1, 1958, pp.37-49

223 Ward, *op.cit.*; Burns, *op.cit.*

The "public relations" side of the Colombo Plan was also questioned. Some doubted (despite the placards and ceremonies) whether many Asians involved with the projects were likely to associate them with Australia; others that relatively few Australians would come in contact with Colombo Plan students.[224] Even more pertinently it was argued that many of Australia's other foreign policy initiatives were contrary to good relations with Asia, and could therefore destroy any public relations value the Colombo Plan might have.[225] There was, for example, Asian opposition to Australia's support of Britain and France over the Suez crisis and to Australia's support for Britain, rather than Singapore, in relation to the details of Singapore's independence.[226] There was also a broad dislike of SEATO, of which Australia was a member, by most non-SEATO Asian nations. There was little specific response by the Australian government dealing with the above issues. Comments tended rather to be general and self-congratulatory to the effect that Mr Percy Spender had been a prime mover in initiating the Colombo Plan.[227]

Several other observations might be made about the Colombo Plan exercise. Although the Australian government frequently affirmed the equality and autonomy of Colombo Plan recipients - the "no-strings" basis of the Plan, [228] - the Plan in reality served to institutionalise Western economic models along with their biases, assumptions and stereotypes about Asia and other developing nations. It can be readily observed from a 1990s vantage point that Colombo Plan literature relied heavily on Western economic analyses, indices, precedents and assumptions. The West placed the Asian area under the microscope and on public display, in a way that had never been required of the participating Western countries. Certainly, that activity forced individual countries to take a hard look at themselves. Yet in so doing, they had placed themselves in a position of relative weakness to the West. Firstly, by focusing on Asia's weaknesses (as perceived by the West), Asia was consistently perceived as inferior in the West's mind. Secondly, by defining development in a strictly economistic sense according to a country's GNP, other indicators such as distribution of income, access to land, education, water, clean air and health care, family and community cohesiveness or low crime levels were ignored. Thirdly, a precedent had been established for Western

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224 Wilson, *op.cit.*
225 Burns, *op.cit*.
226 *Ibid*
227 "Visit to South-East Asia and East Asia...", Sept.1951, p.512, *op.cit*.; "Report presented to the Australian Parliament by the Minister for External Affairs, April, 1954, p.245, *op.cit.*; Spender, P. "Australia's Financial Contribution...", *C.N*., Vol 21, No.12, Dec. 1950, p.886, *op.cit*.
228 "The Colombo Plan", Address by Casey, R. to Junior Chamber of Commerce, 20 July, 1953, *C.N*., Vol 24, No.7, July, 1953, p.398; Casey told the NSW branch of the Economic Society of Australia and New Zealand in January 1954, "There are no political strings attached to any aid coming under the Colombo Plan.", *C.N.*, Vol 25, No.1, Jan., 1954, p.14

institutional interference and unimpeded access to local knowledge and information. A Colombo Plan Report stated:

> The problems of the whole area have been in the forefront of discussions in the United Nations and its Specialised Agencies, and valuable expert investigations have been made, particularly by the Economic and Social Council and the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East .... Much useful experience has been gained without which it would have been impossible to proceed with the formulation and execution of realistic programmes. ... Now, for the first time, it is possible, as is shown by such detailed programmes... to proceed with the comprehensive attack on the problem which the situation demands. [229]

Such attitudes encouraged the West to treat developing countries like a giant laboratory, hence Australia's preoccupation with quantification. Everything was counted and compared: calorie intakes, populations, birthrates, death rates, infant mortality rates, average life spans, crop yields, usually in comparison to the West.[230] Such procedures were again strongly reminiscent of past colonial practices which sought to "possess" the knowledge of colonies by gathering, measuring and cataloguing specimens before placing them in museums. In the 1950s, the information was destined primarily for the economist's study and the scientist's laboratory. In the 1960s under the influence of FAO, the scientists would extend the laboratory to the field.[231]

Knowledge gained from this intrusion frequently served Western self-interest not Asian. That attitude, that the West had the right to intrude fostered by ventures like the Colombo Plan, existed in many fields, such as tourism and even conservationism during the next forty years. It was supported by Western newspapers, newsreels, magazines and television which encouraged the Western public to be voyeurs, onlookers to misfortune and distress.

In the 1950s the West felt little need to question its role in Asia's economic development. The West remained supremely confident of the efficacy of its social, economic and political institutions to effect satisfactory change in the region. Indeed the first Colombo Plan report noted confidently "Development will by its own momentum ultimately bring about a solution..." to the vicious circle of poverty.[232]

The report conceded that the level of development reached by the West by 1950 was the result of 150 years of economic development.[233] Obviously compared to Asia, Western economic development was extremely high, but even so, the report stated ... "The levels now reached in the advanced countries...are themselves insufficient to

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229 *The Colombo Plan...*, p.12, Item 16A8, CRS CP259/1 AA; Copland, D.,"The Economic Future of Asia", *op.cit.*, p.1

230 The initial Colombo Plan report compared the consumption of electricity, coal, petroleum, steel, cement, fertiliser, and the numbers of locomotives, tractors, load-carrying road vehicles, rail freight capacity, telephones and all-weather roads in Asia compared with the U.K. and the USA. *The Colombo Plan...*, p.10, Item 16A8, CRS CP259/1 AA

231 *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News*, Vol 2, No.11, Feb., 1962; "Action Projects", *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News*, Vol 3, No.12, Mar.1962, p.1

232 *The Colombo Plan...*, pp.54-5, Item 16A8, CRS CP259/1, AA

233 *Ibid*, p.11

satisfy their peoples' aspirations". [234] Such remarks were a strong support for free market economics. Hence it was axiomatic that development was both highly desirable and was assumed to be open-ended, and that increasingly sophisticated levels of consumption were both fitting and sustainable.

The report energetically promoted capital intensive agriculture stating:"It is the application of capital which enables the farm worker in the United States to produce so much more than the peasant of South and South-East Asia." The report cited the USA's successes, with its 2,400,000 tractors to India's 10,000 and its use of 13 million tons of fertiliser per year to India's 200,000 tons, on comparable land size - resulting in US production levels far out-stripping India's.[235] Buoyed by past agricultural production successes in the West and confident in the miracles of "modern techniques", the Colombo Plan prepared to "demonstrate throughout the area the possibilities and advantages of new systems of agriculture", aided by the greater use of fertilisers, pesticides, double-cropping, seed-farms and water control.[236] The assumption behind that all-out attack on agricultural problems by "scientific means", was that the land and environment should and could be manipulated *ad infinitum*. Such assumptions were strongly illustrative of Western Christian, capitalist ideas of progress, modernisation and of man's prowess over nature.

A report marking the first ten years of the Colombo Plan reflected this confidence. Pictorially, progress was represented as vast projects, steel works, hydro-electric programmes, thermal power plants and highways which powered their way into the heartland of countries like Thailand and Cambodia. Such capital formation was designed, both to enable the less developed countries to "take-off", and to open up regions, like the northern areas of Thailand, which harboured communist supporters. In either case, the prime motivation was political. The value of these large projects - considered great engineering and technical feats - was unquestioned.

The sociological and ecological affects of such development - issues which became critical in later years - were inconsequential in the 1950s. Yet in the case of ecology it is obvious with hindsight that much of the destruction of Asian land began with such 1950s development. Aid was harnessed as an ally to this development. The prevalent attitude held by Western economists that, "Progress occurs only when people believe that man can, by conscious effort, master nature...",[237] was strongly supported in Australian Colombo Plan literature and film footage. These sources emphasised "man's" battle with nature, and they celebrated "man's" victory over controlling it.

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234 *Ibid*
235 *Ibid*, p.10
236 *Ibid*, p.42
237 Arthur Lewis, quoted in Ardnt, H.W., *Economic Development..., op.cit*, p.53

Of the technical difficulties encountered by Pakistan and the USA in harnessing the waters of the Karnaphuli River, Colombo Plan literature remarked "...when two partners really bend their efforts together in this way, 'mother nature happily bows down to them'".[238] The caption to a picture of the vast Klang Gates Dam in Malaya read: "Harnessing Nature to Man's Aid", and a commentary in the film *The Builders* ran, "The Asian farmer uses Colombo Plan machines, in the never ending battle against nature".[239]

The sources also gave an indication of the potential for over-utilisation of natural resources. The 92 mile "Friendship Highway" built in Thailand was said to "... give access to virtually untapped forest and mineral resources". And of a similar road in Cambodia it was said, "... the large tracts of forest now exposed will certainly induce the development of lumbering and sawmill industries".[240] The overall impression was of an attempt to break nature's back to the will of man. The documents displayed an antagonism and contempt towards nature which was vastly alien to the practices of many traditional farmers who were used to living in symbiosis with nature.

The more obvious ecological consequences of much of this development became well documented in future years, though the extent of the loss of species was likely never to be known. Bangladesh, for example, was to suffer recurring massive flooding because of heavy logging in the Himalayas. It was one region where Australian bull-dozers, among others, in the 1950s so confidently gouged out the earth for roads which gave the loggers access to forests, while optimistically proclaiming, "We must replace the winding caravan routes through the passes in the Himalayas".[241] True, colonial exploitation of resources had been taking place in some cases for centuries, but never with the speed or breadth prompted by technological advances and political expediency of the 1950s. Because aid was motivated by foreign policy, technical and economic growth concerns, it did not act to monitor or to moderate such development excesses as it might, had its central purpose been the alleviation of poverty.

By neglecting a poverty focus important social and economic issues were also ignored by all but a few astute observers.[242] If, as E.E.Ward observed as early as 1951, for example, "... as a result of an agricultural project, the standard of living of the peasant is raised two per cent, and that of his absentee landlord ten per cent., social injustice has been made more glaring."[243] Such outcomes did not only apply to

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238 *The Colombo Plan Story...op.cit.*, p.28
239 *Ibid*, pp.29-30; *The Builders, op. cit.*
240 *The Colombo Plan Story...op.cit.*, pp.29-30
241 *The Builders, op. cit.*
242 For example, Ward, E.E., "The Colombo Plan", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 5, Dec., 1951 pp.191-202; Burns, C., "The Colombo Plan and Australian Foreign Policy", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 12, No.1, 1958, pp.37-49
243 Ward, *op.cit.*, pp.195-6, 202

inequalities between the rich and the poor. Non-government organisations working with very poor communities realised in subsequent decades that unequal aid distribution could create similar anomalies between different poor communities. In other cases, if aid encouraged increased consumption among one sector rather than investment, the effects of economic development could be just as socially and politically disruptive as stagnation and poverty.[244] In much the same way that nature was seen as expendable, the capital intensive phase of the 1950s ignored the social displacement created by large-scale projects, many of which opened up areas which intruded upon minority tribal communities. Equity, distribution, social justice and land reform were major considerations to the alleviation of poverty. But distracted by other considerations, such issues were rarely in the purview of Western policy-makers in the 1950s.

Efforts in the Australian Federal Parliament by Labor opposition MP Jim Cairns, to focus on poverty questions, were discredited for their "leftist" overtones, by government members. Cairns questioned in late 1959 the practice of using finance as a weapon of diplomacy, rather than addressing social and economic issues. He criticised the West's earlier refusal to support proposals through the United Nations, for a Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development (known as SUNFED). He believed that scheme would have been "a thousand times more powerful than the Colombo Plan." The scheme, Cairns argued was killed by the West because: "They wanted to use international finance as a method of winning or cultivating friends among nations. They wanted to use it to invest at high rates of interest, and not sufficiently to direct it towards solving the economic problems of those countries...." Cairns supported a much greater international effort, through multilateral organisations, focused on social economic problems.[245]

Cairns also criticised the government's over preoccupation with countries with right-wing military dictatorships, Taiwan, South Korea, South Vietnam and Pakistan. While he believed it was necessary to understand the situation of the people of those countries and to sympathise with them, he said it was "... not enough to think only in terms of those countries." [246] Illustrating the difficulty of debating social, economic issues of developing countries especially those with left-wing governments, in the charged atmosphere of the 1950s, Cairns' criticisms were dismissed by the following speaker with the observation: "I do not propose to waste anytime on the remarks of the honorable member for Yarra... except to say that they were definitely typical of his suspected affiliations."[247]

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[244] Ward, *op.cit.*, p.202, Burns, *op.cit*.
[245] Cairns, *op.cit.*, pp.835-836
[246] *Ibid*, p.835
[247] Mackinnon, MHR Corangamite in *Ibid*, p.837

The first major Colombo Plan document addressed only tangentially the negative aspects of industrialisation which had accompanied Western development, especially through the movement of people from the land to city-based industries.[248] The report argued that there was a general tendency for participating countries to move away from intensive urban development in favour of rural industries and a more balanced village economy.[249] The support for highly centralised agriculture, however, in the event worked directly against many village economies. The growth of export mono-crops would lead to the economic disintegration of many Asian villages. This increased the pressure on urban poverty since villagers had no option but to leave the countryside.[250] The report also did not address in this context the massive differences in population density between Asia and the West. Neither did less developed countries have access to the immigration opportunities previously enjoyed by the Western industrialising countries. Those opportunities had dealt with problems of surplus labour in the home country and helped develop the country of emmigration. Developing nations, as former Western colonies, had also significantly helped to finance Western development.

And there were other assumptions of the Western economic growth model's capacity to be replicated which were flawed. As Todaro has argued many of the conditions which existed when Western countries started to develop did not exist in most developing countries in 1950.[251] Almost all developing countries were located in tropical or sub-tropical areas which severely restricted their productive capacity - through lack of water, the effects of heat and humidity or extremes of climate.[252] The model, too, assumed a more stable and participatory political environment than many developing countries enjoyed.[253] This would remain a critical issue since economic development depended on some equity in distributing the gains in economic growth. But vested interests in developing countries - from the ruling elites to the village money-lender or local landlord - fought hard to retain their interests, even against legislation brought in to protect the rights of the poor. Lastly, the model assumed equity in trade and commerce - a "level playing-field" in 1990s parlance - which developing countries generally did not enjoy, and which the institutions established to oversee the world's economic and trading system did not encourage.

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248 Which were described so graphically in the novels of Charles Dickens

249 *The Colombo Plan...* , p.43, CRS CP259/1, Item 16A8, AA. In areas of Thailand, for example, which had a high land ownership and mixed self-sufficient economy, the pressure to increase production of agricultural raw materials and the emphasis on mono-cropping had very negative results, as discussed in Chapter 10.

250 Wasi, P., "Back to the Communal Culture: A Solution to the Rural Problems?", *Thai Development Newsletter*, Third Quarter, No.14, 1987, pp.6-10; Ekachai, S., *Behind the Smile: Voices of Thailand*, Thai Development Support Committee, Bangkok, 1991

251 Todaro, *Economic Development in the Third World, op.cit.,* pp.127-136

252 *Ibid*, p.129

253 *Ibid*, p.30

Many of the characteristics which would mark Australia's official aid programme to Asia for years to come, were established during the 1950s. The rationale for giving aid was firmly linked to foreign policy initiatives. Predominantly, aid was viewed as a strategic weapon to help combat communism in the region. Assistance was administered, however, in an *ad hoc* fashion, spread over many departments and encountered ambivalence in different government departments over the efficacy of aid. Ambivalence was a persistent hallmark of Australia's wider participation in the Asian region. It was a thread which ran through the Colombo Plan from the most basic daily interactions to the broad policy level. Ambivalence and apprehension about Asia, therefore, largely determined that the Colombo Plan served Australia's ideological, cultural and geographic preoccupations. It did not seriously address the needs of Asia's poor, or foster a strong and growing alliance with the region.

Chapter 2
"Do-Gooders" and the "Starving, Pagan Millions"
Non-Government Organisations in the 1950s

Providence would give the poor the gift of patience, and would give the wealthy the gift of sympathy and practical benevolence..... *L.F. Heydon, 1902*

We must not... be content in doing mere ambulance work...We must get at the causes that make that ambulance work necessary ..... *Father Tucker, 1954*

While Australia's official government aid programme to Asia began with the inception of the Colombo Plan in 1950, Australian voluntary organisations had been active in relief, welfare and mission work in Asia for many years - some since the mid 19th century. Most of these organisations (which became known as non-government organisations or NGOs), were affiliated to an international parent organisation. They included the Red Cross and the Young Women and Young Men's Christian Associations.[1] The Save the Children Fund established in Australia in 1921, sent monies raised for overseas assistance directly to the parent organisation in Britain for distribution. A fair amount of that early contact with Asia, through church missions or voluntary organisations, was *ad hoc*, conservative, amateur and charity-based and drew on the traditions of Victorian philanthropy. Voluntary organisations acted independently of government, though with its tacit approval.

It was the churches, through missions, which had the longest links with developing countries. And it was through the churches that the majority of Australians gave their assistance in the 1950s. Much of that church contact with the poor, be it Australian or "foreign", continued to proliferate either the notion of giving charity to society's "cast-offs", or the notion of saving the souls of the "pagan" - whether in Aboriginal Australia, New Guinea or Asia.[2] An article titled :"Cast-off Goods Raise Vast Sum For Charity During Past 10 Years" stating: "The collection of rags, bottles, wastepaper and cast-off household furniture, is providing a "treasure-chest" for the destitute and homeless families of Sydney today,"[3] reflected the "sympathy and practical benevolence" attitude which was frequently inculcated by the churches. It was an attitude which provided sporadic relief for recipients rather than long-term self-sufficiency, and which upheld

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[1] The Red Cross began in Australia in 1914, the YWCA in 1860.

[2] Donations to missions were regularly solicited and published in church newspapers with the general theme that, "Thousands and thousands of pagans await conversion...". *The Catholic Weekly*, Feb., 10, 1955, Vol XIV, No. 674, p.7; Feb., 17, 1955, Vol XIV, No. 675, p.1; Jan. 6, 1955, Vol XIV, No. 669, The Catholic Press Newspaper Co., Sydney; *The Anglican*, Feb. 25, 1955, No. 133, The Anglican Press, Sydney

[3] *The Catholic Weekly, op.cit.*, referring to the St.Vincent de Paul Society stores, Feb., 17, 1955, Vol XIV, No. 675, p.1

the image of deficient victims needing to be saved by the West. While the churches at times linked evangelism with social welfare activities,[4] evangelism frequently remained their central purpose, and indeed gained added attention after WW II.[5]

The relief activities of NGOs to developing countries projected a marginally less dependent image of assistance than the charity/saving souls image. Many NGOs (such as the Red Cross), formed in response to war. They provided medical relief or relief for the victims of war. The Save the Children Fund assisted children dislocated by war. The Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies, established in 1947, assisted refugees.

In the 1950s, an amalgam of such voluntary aid left Australia's shores for the developing world informed by humanitarianism, the Cross and fear. It accompanied and entrenched all of the common Australian stereotypes of the period.[6] The Saint Vincent de Paul Society sent food to Palestine and Japan. The Anglican church supported an Australian doctor in Korea, a medical school in Indonesia, medical work among Atomic bomb victims in Japan and a "deaf and dumb" school in Burma.[7] Solutions for misfortune were presented in the same simplistic "before and after images" popularised by the Colombo Plan. They were typified in an advertisement for a tuberculosis hospital which claimed "They come in ill, They go -- Well".[8] Another advertisement requesting assistance for orphaned babies read, "You can turn tears (picture of a child crying) into Joy" (picture of a child smiling); adding, to play on the reader's guilt: "The happiness of a little orphan babe Depends on your generosity".[9]

An equally familiar portrait of assistance in Australia in the 1950s, was the support provided by "society" women to "the needy". This tradition was another vestige of the past - a link to the 19th century when a woman's status and class was partially expressed by her involvement in charitable activities.[10] And such assistance, like church and relief assistance, sharply demarcated those who had wealth from those who did not. The women's group of the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria was formed in 1957. Its activities provide an example typical of Western, secular, well-meaning but charity-style assistance sent to developing countries in the 1950s and 1960s. Such assistance

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[4] The Anglican, *op.cit.*, Ap., 1955, No.137, "Evangelism Goes Hand-in-Hand with Social Welfare"; Oddie, G., *Social Protest in India:British Protestant Missionaries and Social Reforms, 1850-1900*, New Delhi, 1979

[5] Anglicans were urged in 1955 to support the Primate's appeal for the people of Southeast Asia, "If the Cross and not the Hammer and Sickle is to be triumphant...", *The Anglican, op.cit.*, June, 24, No.150, 1955, p.3; Campaigns to rally missionaries to the field for conversion purposes continued to be vigorously supported in this decade. *The Anglican, op.cit.*, Feb., 25, No.133, 1955, p.1 & Mar.,4, No.134, 1955.

[6] See Chapter One

[7] *The Catholic Weekly, op.cit.*, Mar .2, 1950, Vol IX, No. 418, p.7; *The Anglican, op.cit.*, "Christmas Bowl Appeal to Aid Refugees", Dec. 25, 1959, No.385, p.1

[8] *The Catholic Weekly, op.cit.*, Sept.15, 1955, Vol XIV, No.705, p.9

[9] *The Catholic Weekly, op.cit.*, Aug. 18, 1955, Vol XIV, No.701, p.2

[10] Godden, J., "Portrait of a Lady", in Bevege, M., *et al*, Eds, *Worth Her Salt:Women at Work in Australia*, Hale & Ironmonger, Sydney, 1982, p.37

frequently helped to maintain the negative stereotypes about Asia so prevalent in Australia at the time rather than to challenge them.

The Australian-Asian Association of Victoria

The inauguration of the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria was part of External Affairs Minister Casey's "Friends and Neighbours" initiative. It was designed to involve "the people" with Asia at a level not open to governments. Similar organisations were formed in other states though each group developed autonomously.[11] In his inaugural speech of the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria, Casey promoted its aims. The association was concerned with "'person to person diplomacy' as distinct from relations between governments."[12] It sought to " ... foster and promote friendship, understanding and good fellowship between the peoples of Australia and Asia by all means within its power and particularly to educate each of the peoples in the knowledge and understanding of the problems and difficulties of others."[13]

The Association's constitution also declared the organisation's apolitical status. Since membership was drawn heavily from the elite social and political classes, it included, for example, External Affairs Minister Casey and Prime Minister Menzies, as well as high court judges, governors and premiers, the association's activities and publications naturally reflected strongly the attitudes and ideology of the ruling conservatives. As such the organisation was extremely political. Like Australia's interaction through the Colombo Plan, interaction through this organisation was largely designed to promote the Western way. This was frequently conducted through personal contacts with Asian diplomatic missions in Australia.[14] People to people contact then, was at a highly privileged level.

The association focused on a variety of activities to promote its aims: it regularly invited prominent Asians and Australians to speak at luncheons, coffee parties and dinner parties; it published a *Bulletin* from 1957 which carried extracts from Asian newspapers, and a *Newsletter* from the mid-1960s to disseminate its activities more widely; it hosted activities for Asian students who were studying in Australia under the Colombo Plan, and provided hospitality to individuals or groups of professional Asians visiting Australia; it also funded aid projects in Asia.[15]

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[11] In New South Wales, South Australia, West Australia and Queensland. Letter from Sir Charles Lowe President AAAV to Miss Jessie Robertson President AAA West Australia, 10/11/1964; Hon. Sir Charles Lowe discussing E.G. Casey's inaugural talk of the AAAV, *Bulletin of the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria*, Ap., 1957, p.3; Casey outlined his ideas about such an association in 1956, "Australia's Friends and Neighbours", Address Wesley Church, Melbourne, 22 Jan., 1956, *CN*, Vol 27, No.1, Jan., 1956

[12] *Ibid*, p.3

[13] *Ibid*, p.1

[14] Australian-Asian Association of Victoria, *Women's Group, First Annual Report 30th July 1957 - 13th April 1959*

[15] *Ibid*

The Australian-Asian Association of Victoria gradually divided into three groups. The main and male dominated group, as well as being the ultimate decision-making body, took responsibility for the major guest speakers and for publications. The Junior group, formed in 1962, was created to initiate greater contact with Asian Colombo Plan students, and the Women's group, formed in 1957, became involved in overseas aid work as well as a great deal of the association's organisational functions.[16]

This demarcation by gender and age was fairly typical of Australian life in the 1950s, when a "men, women and children" hierarchy was firmly in place. It was reflected in Australia's aid policy to Asia where Australian diplomats and "experts" tended to be male, with the exception of the few areas freely open to women such as nursing, teaching or secretarial work. The boards of voluntary organisations were also heavily dominated by men, while the workers were normally women and the aid recipients women and children.

The increased professionalisation of overseas aid organisations, which accompanied the growth of the post WW II aid industry, did not guarantee women fast access to voluntary boards. But it did encourage debate on aid and development issues which would place pressure on all groups involved in distributing aid to developing countries to continually examine their aid practices.

The overseas aid focus of the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria emerged with the inauguration of the Women's Group, even though the association had not been formed specifically as an aid organisation. On gaining autonomy through its own group the women members appropriated many of the society's otherwise essentially educational and "friendship" activities for charity-raising purposes. As the Hon. Secretary explained: " ...if we have a top man from Asia or Australia to speak at some function, then we are able to pop the price on a bit and so make enough to cover some of our projects".[17] The women viewed such assistance as "giving a little help along".[18]

It is significant that the Women's Group moved so easily into the role of charity fund-raisers, presumably because few of its members were encouraged to divert their talent and energy into professionally paid areas. Lady Casey, an active member of the association, reflected in her autobiography that as a school girl she had been taught, "It will be your responsibility as women to make men happy. So you must begin now to be aware of other persons".[19] And though she would have liked to have gone to university she said "At that time [around 1914] not many felt sure of the capacity for endurance of

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[16] *Newsletter*, p.4, Australian-Asian Association of Victoria, Dec., 1964; AAAV, *Women's Group, First... op.cit.;* AAAV Women's Group, Minute Book, *op.cit.*

[17] Letter Mrs W.H. Dobson, Hon Secretary AAAV Women's Group to Mr Vaughan Hinton Hon Sec, Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA), 3/11/67

[18] *Ibid*

[19] Casey, Maie, *Tides and Eddies*, Michael Joseph, London, 1966, p.1

the female mind. It was also thought by some that I was rather serious for my age and that it would be nicer if I got married".[20]

Given this situation, many upper-middle and upper-class Australian women in the 1950s, continued the tradition of their class, throwing their energies into some form of charity work. The women's fund-raising activities and their choice of projects tended to mirror the constraints imposed on their gender and the conservatism of their class. Comprised predominantly of "society ladies" (a fair percentage of whose husbands held knighthoods) and Asian diplomatic wives, the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria's women's group was no exception. Assistance was focused on institutional help and concentrated especially on children in orphanages, hospitals and children's homes.[21] In its first decade the group assisted orphanages in Singapore, Taiwan, and Burma; baby clinics in Calcutta and Sabah; "Roof Top" schools in Hong Kong and a maternity hospital in Pakistan.[22] Assistance was in the form of milk powder, money, used clothes and toys, second-hand books, medical instruments and drugs. The group also paid the university fees for two orphans from "China" (Taiwan), and for the services of an Australian social worker in Bangkok.[23]

The choice to fund the institutional "deserving poor",[24] meant the group's contact with Asia was highly selective and narrowly focused. Contact with the Asian recipients of the organisation's aid was generally remote and brief through letters, photographs, slides and personal accounts from the infrequent visits made to Asia by individual members.[25] Its mission, to be friendly and apolitical, worked against the group engaging in any deep discussion about inequalities in Asia.

The association's approach bore a remarkable resemblance to the charity activities of 19th century Australian women. The group concentrated on assisting children and was supported by other women's groups which provided knitted clothing. The Presbyterian Ladies Guild and the Parkdale Women's Group, for example, provided bootees and socks. The association's members also displayed enormous energy and an obvious sense of obligation and compassion.[26] The group shared too, a reluctance to question the causes of poverty or to link the wealth and privileges of its class with the structural reasons for inequality. Its concentration on funding hungry, sick, orphaned and retarded

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[20] *Ibid*, p.23

[21] "Victorian" refers to the era rather than the place

[22] "Minutes of the Meeting of the Australian Asian Association of Victoria, Women's Group", 13/10/58; 22/5/59; 24/5/60; 25/7/61; 23/4/63; 28/4/64;19/10/65, AAAV *Women's Group Min ... op.cit.*

[23] Letter Hobson to Hinton, *op.cit.*; The orphans were from Taiwan, mainland China barely existed for this group. *"Minutes of the Meeting of the Australian Asian Association of Victoria, Women's Group"*, 22/6/65; 12/8/67

[24] Those considered poor through no fault of their own, in this case because of their age, and therefore "deserving" of relief; as opposed to the "undeserving poor", who were considered poor because of their idleness. For a full discussion on this term as it applied to Australia in the 19th century see, Kennedy, R., Ed., *Australian Welfare History*, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1982

[25] *Minutes of the Meeting ..., op.cit.*, 21/2/61, 23/2/65, 23/5/61, 28/5/63

[26] *Ibid*, 15/2/66, 22/3/66

children, provided a comfortable route for it to ignore these larger questions. The children of the wealthy were taught at an early age about service, being encouraged to donate toys and used children's clothing for "poor children in Asia" to the annual Christmas party.[27]

The documents of the Women's Group, often in fact revealed a dualism. Within the organisational sphere, which revolved around an extension of its members' domestic duties, the group was highly professional and confident. This involved arranging food and flowers for luncheons and coffee mornings and organising mannequin parades, Christmas parties and film premieres. The group had access to and was skilled in using influential networks which it utilised to persuade hotels, or Myers, or Qantas to donate rooms, or goods or air space.[28] It gained maximum coverage for its activities in the society pages of the press and later, in the 1960s, on television.[29] The detailed organisational plans outlined in the Group's minutes, displayed formidable logistical skills and gave some small indication of what society might have gained had women's skills generally been better utilised.

From dozens of possible examples, the following illustration of attention to detail was typical. The occasion was a fund-raising curry lunch, and each member was assigned a special function. Rice, chocolate biscuits, pineapples, cashew nuts, power points and jam jars for left-over food were all delegated. Platters, heaters and flowers were similarly organised.[30]

But on other occasions, when confronted with the reality of Asian poverty, its members were less confident and mature. They responded in language more appropriate to telling fairy tales than to coming to terms with that reality. Juxtaposed with the analyses of the Food for Peace Campaign (another group involved in overseas assistance at the time) the different use of language was striking. The group used "happily-ever-after" language and attempted in both its language and its actions to be the creators of fairy tales, to make princes out of frogs. An event sponsored to collect toys for "poor children in Asia" was described as having, "hundreds of gay balloons, colourful floral decorations, and two shimmering Christmas trees...".[31]

Most of the projects which the group funded came to the group's notice through social networks. One such connection enabled a small child to have a heart operation in Melbourne, and a member of the women's group to display her particular penchant for story-telling. The association's newsletter in 1964, detailed the story of a small boy with a heart condition living in the York Hill Orphanage, Singapore. ..."His father is dead,

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[27] "Women's Group", *Newsletter AAAV*, Dec., 1966; "Women's Page", *Newsletter AAAV*, Oct. 1967, "...children are to be asked to bring gifts of clothing for less fortunate Asian children".
[28] *Minutes of the Meeting... op.cit.*, 13/3/58, 11/8/58, 13/10/58, 4/6/60
[29] *Ibid*, 14/4/58
[30] *Ibid*, 23/4/63
[31] Women's Group, *Newsletter*, *op.cit*, Dec.1964, p.2

and his mother very sick, so he has never had any visitors. ..The home is understaffed, and nurses have not been able to give him much of their time, and the love he needs so badly. He has been a rather lonely little boy, seemingly a child without hope...".[32] The scene thus set in a style typical of story or myth, and using the same simplistic before and after technique that the Colombo Plan footage utilised, into the sad tale stepped Australian assistance to the rescue: "... one day one of our Melbourne members, whose husband is a heart specialist,....met Toh Tiong Sun and learned of his medical history. Now the wheels of hope are turning for the little blue boy." In Melbourne he had a "free operation", was given "an abundance of toys", and was "being wonderfully well looked after by his doctors and the staff of St Vincent's hospital, and our Mrs Clarke, so that he is not wanting for anything. What a wonderful thing it is that this Fairy Godmother story is actually coming true for a Chinese child from Singapore".[33]

The Fairy Godmother role was one that the group obviously enjoyed, supplying extra treats at Christmas time, of "brocade trinket boxes and hankies", chocolate, ice creams, barley sugar and orange drinks, to orphaned children in Singapore and elsewhere.[34] It even borrowed "Miss Australia Quest's" pearl crown to display at one point, a veritable symbol of a modern Australian, fairy godmother.[35]

Some of External Affairs Minister Casey's forays into aid were typical of this old-styled philanthropy. He intervened at times at a personal level, for example, recruiting surgeons "to repair faces of congenitally disfigured Malayan children".[36] It was a highly selective and unequal practice concentrating on individual acts of misfortune. It was a practice to which Western medical aid teams in particular frequently subscribed. In the worst cases they typically moved in for short periods as "missionaries" to perform "miracle" operations without passing on their techniques to local doctors; they used expensive techniques unsuited to local conditions and they concentrated on specific medical problems without simultaneously addressing their causes. Eye camps - a popular focus of philanthropic organisations - were a case in point. Australian eye specialist, Professor Fred Hollows, would later attribute the high incidence of follicular trachoma in Nepal (and also in Aboriginal Australia) to "poor living conditions, inadequate water for washing [and] overcrowding".[37] These were the issues which philanthropic organisations who funded eye camps neglected.

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[32] *Ibid*
[33] *Ibid*
[34] *Minutes of the Meeting...op.cit.*, 27/7/65
[35] *Ibid.*, 13/10/58, 23/2/65
[36] Quoted in Hudson, W.J., *Casey*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1986, p.249; To External, Canberra , From Austcom, Ottawa, 9 Oct., 1954, No.224 CRS A3102, Item 1|2/2/1/2, AA
[37] Hollows, F., & Corris, P., *Fred Hollows an Autobiography*, John Kerr, Sydney, 1992, p.188

The Australian-Asian Association's approach to educating its members and the broader community about Asia was equally shallow. Speakers were drawn from ambassadorial, government and professional circles through to the group's own "travellers tales".[38] The transcripts of the monthly key public speakers were published in the *Newsletter* from 1964, but the minutes and newsletters of the association contained an exasperating lack of critical analysis of the dozens of other talks and lectures on Asia sponsored by the group. Typical were comments such as: "Question time held everyone's attention...No-one seemed to want to go home".[39] Invariably comments focused on the personal attributes of the speaker rather than the content of the talk.[40] The record of Dr Sushila Gore's visit - Medical Consultant and Chief of the South-East Asian and Oceanic Division of the Planned Parenthood Federation - was typical. It stated: "In her graceful sari, a striking figure with her waving grey hair, and fine dark eyes sparkling with enthusiasm, she told us of her work, with particular reference to Fiji".[41] A demonstration on origami drew the response, "We can all learn so much from our Asian neighbours."[42] Though such comments reflected a common Western propensity to dwell on the exotic when viewing Asian cultures, the group displayed a strong reluctance to engage in issues of substance. This style of reporting continued over two decades.

The group's "understanding" of Asia was largely confined to supporting the realisation of Western-style institutions - both public and private. The Asian newspaper extract service which the Association ran, for example, tended to emphasise the twin Western preoccupations of the period - democracy and Western economic development. The most common themes adopted by speakers from the newly independent Asian Commonwealth nations, besides declaring reciprocal bonds of friendship through the Commonwealth, trade, and the English language,[43] dwelt on their support for democratic institutions and the economic problems of the region, which invited and supported a strong Australian interest in the region. When a delegate from Pakistan deviated from these themes and criticised India's handling of the Kashmir issue, the

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[38] "Women's Group" *Newsletter*, *op.cit.*, Dec. 1965, p.2; *Ibid.*, Oct. 1966, p.2

[39] *Newsletter, op.cit.*, Oct. 1967, p.4

[40] "Womens Group" *Newsletter, op.cit.*, Sept., 1964 and Women's Page, *Newsletter, op.cit.*, May, 1966, p.2

[41] "Women's Group", *Newsletter, op.cit.*, Dec., 1965; May, 1965

[42] *Newsletter, op.cit.*, Feb., 1967; "Women's Page", *Newsletter*, *op.cit*, May 1966, p.2; Even a visit from Mrs Gandhi as Prime Minister of India only rated the comment: "Mrs Gandhi showed herself to be a superb diplomat for her country and wore during her State visit a wardrobe of colorful saris", *Newsletter*, *op.cit.*, July 1968, p.1

[43] Text of address by His Excellency, Major-General Anton Muttukaru, High Commissioner for Ceylon, 12/3/65, reported in *Newsletter*, *op.cit.*, May, 1965; His Excellency Tun Lim Yew Hock, High Commissioner for Malaysia, Hotel Australia 26/8/64, *Newsletter, op.cit.*, Dec, 1964, pp.3-4. He also dwelt on confrontation with Indonesia.

president Sir Charles Lowe, immediately disassociated the Association from his remarks.[44]

In other words, like the Colombo Plan exercise, despite the rhetoric about understanding Asia, the region was in fact being invited to emulate Australia. Australians involved with such groups, dabbled on the fringes of Asian culture - dressing up in saris and cooking Indian curry lunches - while supporting the colonial tradition of Westernising the indigenous elite.[45] The Association encouraged strong alliances with Colombo Plan students through its Junior Group awarding a yearly prize to Asian students who fostered Australian-Asian relations.[46] Of the Geelong Junior group's committee it said: "The point of functional friendship is most important. It has been found that the best basis for creating a "real" communication and understanding is to work side by side, enabling each to appreciate the values of the other".[47] The association's interaction with Colombo Plan students did not, however, extend to trying to convert them, as was the wish of some observers. The Rev. Dr P.Chang, for example, urged through the *Catholic Weekly* that Colombo Plan students be converted to Catholicism. Chang reasoned that as Asia's future leaders, Colombo Plan students would be much better equipped to convert their countries than European missionaries had been.[48]

The Women's Group retained its charity focus well into the 1960s when it increasingly sought to promote the aims of the association into the broader community. This was frequently achieved through its extensive networks with other women's groups. Many of them, like the Country Women's Association, the National Council of Women and the Girl Guides' Association, all provided strong support to the association. The latter in return supplied Asian speakers, Asian hostesses and posters for national functions.[49] In its Women's Page the association reported:

> Many of our Women's Group and Main Group have gone out far and wide since the last newsletter, telling the story of the Australian-Asian Association .... The response to these talks has been most gratifying. Several groups said they had been unaware of the work being done in response to appeals from Clinics, Schools, Orphanages, and Hospitals in Asia ... we hope to send out many more speakers, especially to country areas.[50]

Admirable though such endeavours appeared, when the message that was received dwelt either on the exotic or the "starving millions", then its overall effect on promoting a very real knowledge and understanding of Asian cultures was questionable.

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[44] *Newsletter, op.cit,* Sept.,1964

[45] "Women's Page", *Newsletter, op.cit.,* Oct. 1966, p.3. "After the talk, she dressed various members in glorious Ceylonese saris, and these were paraded before guests".

[46] *Minutes of the Meeting*...op.cit., 24/9/63

[47] "Geelong Juniors", *Newsletter, op.cit.*, Dec. 1964, p.4; *Minutes of the Meeting*...op.cit., 25/8/59

[48] Chang, P., "It's still not too late - to win Asia's leaders for Christ", *Catholic Weekly*, Vol XVIII, No.916, 1959, p.13

[49] *Newsletter, op.cit.,* Oct.1967

[50] *Newsletter, op.cit.,* Oct.,1966

Sentiments along the lines: "We could make a particularly strong New Year's resolution this year to help the starving and needy of Asia",[51] did little to change the "Asians as victims image" - so readily supported in the Australian media. On the other hand, the Association was responding in a humanitarian way to what it perceived as great want. On being confronted with slides and a talk on the "plight of children in Korea", by a representative of the Save the Children Fund, the organisation said, "We were so horrified and touched by what we heard and saw, we had a collection then and there, which amounted to twenty pounds."[52] On another occasion when viewing slides of "near starving mothers and babies" in the St. John's Baby Clinic at Calcutta, a member reported: "When we saw those heart-rending slides we felt grateful that we had been given the opportunity to help those needy people".[53] These "well meaning" gestures which carried the group (and many other welfare organisations working in Australia) through the 1950s and beyond, were not helpful in significantly attacking the very basis of poverty that it was trying to assist. In many respects then, the organisation neither helped cut through stereotypes about Asia nor seriously addressed the question of poverty.

Ignorance of the larger issues behind poverty was of course not confined to the wealthy. Many Australians contributed to voluntary organisations to assist the poor in Australia and overseas with little understanding of the consequences of their donation and unable to recognise the often superficial and uninformed nature of their sources. The significance of such high profile groups as the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria, was that it legitimised acts of charity, motivated by pity and sentimentality. Its close interaction with a myriad of Women's groups helped entrench those practices. This was particularly the case in a 1950s social environment in which women were frequently not encouraged to question the status quo.

Australian NGO assistance was frequently concerned primarily either with saving souls, with doing good works, or with short-term relief. The issue of finding ways to permanently alleviate poverty in the region through non-government aid was generally not considered. In terms of aid, the question of the economic development of the region was left to governments. Non-government assistance at best eased the lives of relatively small numbers of individuals. At worst it created a feeling of dependency and inferiority among the recipients (as Asian NGOs would frequently claim in later years). An Indian doctor visiting Australia in 1963 remarked: "Since independence, we have received help from wealthy countries, who in the process of helping us have made us feel poor

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51 "Women's Group", *Newsletter*, *op.cit.*, Feb.1967, p.4
52 *Ibid*, Dec. 1965, p.2
53 *Ibid*, May 1965, p.2

cousins or worse".[54] The strong focus on the efficacy of charity encouraged donors to believe there was merit in habitually providing the "less fortunate" with goods.

In terms of ideology, therefore, NGO activities frequently supported and entrenched those commonly held negative assumptions about Asia discussed in Chapter I. In other words, the NGOs were as keen to establish the milieu into which economic development in the region would be received - democratic, Christian and highly influenced by Western institutions - as the Australian government was. As such, the messages about poverty and Asia that Australia's NGOs imprinted on their constituents, made a critical contribution towards the way Australians formulated their assumptions and attitudes towards the region. While the economic impact of their aid in the 1950s may have been slight in Asia - the psychological impact of their ideology in Australia was potentially far more damaging.

The Australian government's contact with the Australian non-government sector both in terms of Australia-Asia relations and Australian private overseas' assistance was minimal. The Australian government was supportive of those non-government groups which extended hospitality to visiting Asians by providing assistance and entertainment to Asian students. The Australian-Asian Association of Victoria was in amicable administrative contact with the External Affairs Department. It supplied lists or made special requests when Asian visitors needed housing, and provided details of arriving Colombo Plan students.[55] In 1958 Casey thanked all those non-government organisations (some of which also assisted groups in developing countries) who had been engaged in such activities.[56] They included the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Apex Clubs, Rotary, the Country Women's Association, the Girl Guides, the YWCA and church groups as well as the Australian-Asian Association. These groups generally supported and entrenched the government's position.

If the government's links with non-government organisations on Asian issues were nominal, on the issue of private overseas aid they were practically non-existent. The government saw a clear demarcation between the public and private aid sector. A.H.Tange, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs in 1954, summed up the government's attitude to Australian overseas voluntary agencies when he observed in a very rare reference to voluntary overseas work: "Our churches have many points of contact with Asia, and have under-taken some noteworthy humanitarian labours there.

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[54] "Australia As Seen Through The Eyes of An Indian Doctor", *NOW!*, March, 1963, p.6

[55] *Women's Group, First Annual report ...op.cit.;* "Australia and the Pacific", Address by the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, Mr.A.H.Tange, to the Rotary Club, Sydney, 22nd June, 1954, *C.N.*, Vol 25, No.6, June, 1954, p.416

[56] "Statement by the Minister for External Affairs", Casey, R.G., 31st December, 1958, *C.N.*, Vol 29, No.12, Dec., 1958, p.809

This is a field in which governments have no place but where individual help and interest is always welcome."[57]

There was consequently little substantial dialogue during the 1950s between the government and the NGO sector. Some NGOs (such as the Food For Peace Campaign) lobbied the government to increase its aid, but there was no dialogue which discussed the type of aid being donated by NGOs, or the countries that NGOs were assisting. Indeed, from government literature there is little evidence that overseas NGOs actually existed in Australia. There was a small meeting of minds when the Australian government paid the fares of Australian graduates working in Indonesia, under the Volunteer Graduates Scheme in 1955.[58] Otherwise the Australian Government's attitude to Australian NGOs was that governments had no place in their affairs and vice versa. At best the work of NGOs was viewed by government as "noteworthy humanitarian labours", at worst they were thought of as "harmless do-gooders".[59]

The report of the 11th meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Colombo Plan held in November 1959, briefly acknowledged the work of overseas aid agencies in Asian countries. It noted that ".... foreign philanthropic organizations continued to receive a warm welcome and to play an active and substantial role in helping to improve the area's social and economic framework".[60] The Australian government also made reference to the assistance of large overseas organisations such as the Ford Foundation, which was supplying "... experts, fellowships and equipment" to Asia.[61] Such references in the 1950s were particularly relevant to the USA, where the government was directly co-opting NGOs and foundations like the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation to assist its efforts to "stabilise" the Asian region. Lissner has pointed out the frequent emphasis in USA literature of the 1950s and early 1960s on the usefulness of voluntary organisations in keeping communism at bay.[62]

An American evangelical Christian NGO - World Vision - was a case in point. World Vision organised children's and widows' homes, blankets and food in Korea while taking the gospel to the front line during the Korean war. Though World Vision professed itself apolitical, its strong ties with the leaders of Asian countries engaged in fighting communists: with Chiang Kai-Shek first in China and later in Formosa, with President Syngman Rhee of Korea and with President Diem in Vietnam, belied the claim. Through groups like World Vision American evangelism supported a plethora of other measures to back the American effort to defeat communism in Asia. They

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57 "Australia and the Pacific", *op.cit.*

58 "Australian Participation Under the Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 26, No.3. Mar., 1955, p.186

59 "Australia and the Pacific", *op.cit.*, p.416; David Scott interview 23/8/90

60 "Colombo Plan Consultative Committee Meeting, 1959", *C.N.*, Vol 30, No.11, Nov., 1959, p.612

61 "Colombo Plan Progress Report Australia's Part", *C.N.*, Vol 29, No.1, Jan., 1958, p.22; "Colombo Plan", *CN*, Vol 30, No.8, Aug., 1959 p.428

62 Lissner, J., *The Politics of Altruism: A Study of the Political Behaviour of Voluntary Development Agencies*, Lutheran World Federation, Dept., of Studies, Geneva 1977, p.62

included military, economic, community development, large NGOs like the Ford Foundation, smaller NGO welfare and relief groups and (from the 1960s) the Peace Corp.

Unlike the American government, the Australian government in the 1950s did not harness the aid of NGOs directly to promote its foreign policy objectives. It did create a milieu which encouraged a non-government sector supportive of government policy, with all its Eurocentric biases. To that extent the Australian government can be said to have influenced NGO policy towards Asia. But the government did not directly co-opt Australian NGOs to further its Cold War imperatives.

In the broader non-government sphere contact between Australia and Asia in the 1950s was gradually increasing. Special interest groups visited Australia from Asia - journalists, teachers and welfare workers - hosted by the Australian government. Asian communities began to gain access to information on Australia through the newly formed Radio Australia.[63] Several Australian universities established Asian language courses. The Institute of Pacific Relations promoted a conference on *Australian Policies Towards Asia* and groups such as trade unions, newspaper editors and scientists increased their contacts with the region.[64] Most of this was fairly specialist contact, whereas interaction at the popular level tended to focus on the region's artistic culture rather than on social, economic or political issues. Various States, for example, hosted Asia weeks presenting examples of Asian dance, film, music, art and food.[65]

Among those interested in increasing their contact with Asia were a handful of Australians who went out of their way to interact with the region as equals and to disseminate that approach to the broader Australian community. The Volunteer Graduate Scheme for Indonesia arranged for Australian graduates to work in Indonesia on the basis of equal local pay and living conditions.[66] The scheme grew from an idea mooted at the 1950 World University Service Assembly in India. An Indonesian delegate suggested that instead of sending technical experts to Asia to contribute knowledge to under-developed countries, as the Colombo Plan envisaged, it would be

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[63] "Australia's Friends and Neighbours", *op.cit.*; "Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, in the House of Representatives, 15th April, 1958, *C.N.*, Vol 29, No.4, April, 1958, p.241, "... the government decided two years ago to initiate a scheme to enable individuals and groups of individuals from Asia to be invited to visit Australia."Asian Journalists - Visit to Australia", Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, 10 April, 1958", *C.N.*, Vol 29, No.4, April, 1958, p.236; "Australia's Voice is Heard from Malta to Pago Pago", *SMH* , 27/3/54, p.2

[64] Spender, Hon., P.C., "Partnership With Asia", *C.N.*, Vol 22, Jan., 1951, p.19; "Australia's Friends and Neighbours, Extracts from an Address by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, at Wesley Church, Melbourne, 22nd January, 1956", *C.N.*, Vol 27, Jan., 1956, p.29-30; "How Important are Asian Languages?", *SMH*, 19/4/53, p.2; "Long Neglect of Study of Oriental Languages", *SMH*, 28/3/55, p.2; *Australian Policies Towards Asia*, Institute of International Affairs, Melbourne, Victoria, 1956

[65] "Good Work, Perth! -Asia Week Sets Fine Example", *Food For Peace News (FFPN)*, Sept., 1958, p.7

[66] "A New Approach to Asia", *Ibid*, p.8

more valuable if experts could enter into the whole life of the community.[67] Students at Melbourne University took the idea further. The first Australian volunteer, Herb Feith, sailed to Indonesia to work with the Public Service in 1951. The concept of volunteering subsequently developed in Europe and in the USA.[68] In Australia, the Scheme developed into the Overseas Service Bureau, whose expanded Australian Volunteers Abroad programme would eventually supply over two thousand volunteers throughout the developing world by 1988.[69]

Jim Webb, who administered the Volunteer Graduate Scheme, encouraged young graduates to work in Indonesia in order to develop a realistic appreciation of modern Asia and not, as he said, in "refrigerated comfort ... cut off from the local people...."[70] It was Webb's belief that Australia was not prepared either in attitude or policy to live alongside Asian nations. He was however pleased that the opportunity for Australians to live in Asia was increasing.[71]

Macmahon Ball, Professor of Political Science at Melbourne University, developed courses on Japanese, Indian and Chinese politics. He also worked actively in the wider community promoting Asia through public speaking engagements.[72] Ball believed that Australia rarely, if ever, showed an understanding of Asian peoples and on international issues always sided with London or Washington. He urged Australians to increase their knowledge of Asia so that they could speak independently.[73]

The Food For Peace Campaign, which commenced in 1953, supported with conviction Casey's policy of promoting Australian-Asian relations as a way of promoting peace. It urged Australia to take an independent stand on Asia and to promote the notion of equality between the two. It supported the Archbishop of Melbourne's sentiments: "Shall we spend out time building walls against them or bridges to meet them?", and pressed for old barriers to be broken down such as the persistent phobia that the " ... teeming millions [were] waiting to overrun Australia.".[74] Rather it suggested Australia might promote some of its more "humanistic values" to counteract the dominating aspects it was more commonly known for in Asia.[75]

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67 *Ibid.*

68 The European International Voluntary Service was founded in 1953, the British Voluntary Service Overseas in 1958 and the USA Peace Corp in 1961. Australian Volunteers Abroad, *25 Years Working for the World*, Overseas Service Bureau, Fitzroy, Australia, nd, c 1988

69 *Ibid*

70 "A New Approach...", *op.cit.*, p.8

71 *Ibid*

72 "Asian Politics", *FFPN*, Jan., 1959, p.6; "Professor to Speak at Film Night", *FFPN*, Aug.,1958, p.6; "Successful Food For Peace Campaign Film Night", and "65% of World Population Produces 17% of World's Income", *FFPN*, Oct., 1958, pp.6-7

73 "Understanding of Asia", *FFPN*, May, 1958, p.6

74 "Let Us Use Charity Towards the East, Says Archbishop of Melbourne", *FFPN*, April, 1958, p.6; "With Their Pence and Their Prayers They Started It", *FFPN*, Aug., 1958, p.6

75 "Are We Waking Up? And in Time?", *FFPN*, June, 1958, p.6

The Food for Peace Campaign encouraged schools to examine Asia's under-development and lobbied school educators to bring these ideas into the school curriculum.[76] In 1958 the Campaign's *Food For Peace News (FFPN)* sent an "SOS to Educationalists", captioning a picture of young Australian school children: "These children study British history. Asian history and affairs have little place in Australian Schools".[77]

What singled out these organisations and individuals was their conviction to present Asia as an equal to the West, without being patronising or carried away by exotica. They did so through talks, seminars and articles informed by contact with Asian communities. In the field of aid, the Food For Peace Campaign particularly would start to develop a critique which looked beyond handouts to examine the causes of poverty. An autonomous, secular, Australian organisation, the Food for Peace Campaign would expand to be renamed Community Aid Abroad in 1962. It became deeply involved in development, education and advocacy issues throughout the developing world, and had a substantial impact on Australia's government and non-government aid culture.

The Food for Peace Campaign and the People's Colombo Plan

The contrast between the inauguration of the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria meeting in the Royal Empire Societies Rooms and that of the Food for Peace Campaign was marked. The Food for Peace Campaign began with a two shilling donation from pensioner Frank Gregory sometime between 1951 and 1953.[78] His gesture was followed by other pensioner-residents, "... elderly people who, themselves, knew how it felt to be not overburdened with this world's goods",[79] at the Brotherhood of St. Laurence's, Carrum Downs Settlement for the elderly. The group became the foundation members of the Food For Peace Campaign.[80] Each Wednesday the group attended chapel to pray for the relief of hunger and distress in Asian countries and to contribute small sums from their pensions for food relief in India.[81] Meagre though these first offerings might seem, they had been inspired to donate them because of the concerns of a remarkable man - founder of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, Father Gerard K Tucker. History had already shown that his efforts on behalf of the poor, the unemployed, the homeless were anything but meagre. Already 68 years old, Father

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76 "Teach More about Asia", *FFPN*, July, 1957, p.6; "Too little attention by far is given by eduationalists to the study of things Asian in schools and in universities." "SOS to Educationalists", *FFPN*, June, 1958, p.7

77 "Too little attention by far...", *op.cit.;* "Teach More about Asia", *op.cit.*

78 N.B. Most of the Food for Peace Campaign's [FFPC] early documents were destroyed by water, consequently the FFPC newsletter *FFPN* located in *NOW*, plus interviews, have had to be heavily relied upon for the fifties and some of the sixties period.; "A Message From the Founder", *FFPN*, Aug., 1973, No. 20, p.1

79 "With Their Pence and Their Prayers ...", *op.cit.*

80 "Pensioners to Finance Shipload of Food", *FFPN*, Feb., 1954; *FFPN*, August, 1958, p.6

81 "With Their Pence ....*op.cit.*

Tucker was to remain as Chairman of the Food For Peace Campaign/Community Aid Abroad until 1968. During that time the ideology of the organisation was shaped in the Tucker family mould.

Principles of social service enshrined in his father's parish when Tucker was a child[82] had already been applied and extended in his work for the Brotherhood. These experiences and convictions in turn set the tenor for the Food For Peace Campaign's work. Indeed, much of the groundwork for what was to form the essential characteristics of Community Aid Abroad, was laid years before its official formation. Of his work with Victoria's poor Tucker said:

> It is good to give the youngsters of the slums some fun at Christmas time, to enable their parents to buy cheap, cast-off clothes and to arrange camps for the under-privileged, but it should be the duty of all social workers to make such tasks unnecessary. We must not... be content in doing mere ambulance work...We must get at the causes that make that ambulance work necessary.[83]

From its inception, therefore, because of its experience and approach to social work through the Brotherhood of Saint Laurence, the Food for Peace Campaign adopted a more informed and professional interest in the poor than the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria and other NGOs. Tucker was firmly against the mere giving of assistance, which characterised most of the world's agencies at that time. Certainly, he acknowledged the need for interim relief - a bed for the homeless, grain for the famine-stricken - but the strength of his contribution towards addressing poverty, both in Australia and later in Asia, was his insistence on examining and acting upon the underlying causes of poverty.[84]

The major part of the Brotherhood's work was in action among the disadvantaged. To get away from handouts, action meant fostering the notion of self-sufficiency and dignity. In the Brotherhood's Carrum Down Settlement, in Victoria, one of many Brotherhood ventures in the 1950s, residents could participate in the management of the community according to their capacities and interests. For this they received a small payment. Residents might work in the library or cafeteria or produce vegetables, flowers or handcrafts to sell in their own shop.[85] This was not dragooned labour. Rather it enabled residents to live a useful, happy and dignified life in their later years. In other circumstances, they might have been neglected, impoverished and lonely.

The Brotherhood's opposition to engaging in "first aid work" on the long term - a position it believed was particularly fostered by government policy - led the

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[82] Tucker, G., *"Thanks Be", The Autobiography of Gerard Kennedy Tucker,* The Brotherhood of St. Laurence, Melbourne, 1954, pp.4-5
[83] *Ibid*, p.24
[84] "The Brotherhood of St Laurence", p.1, nd
[85] "Public Education and Social Action"..., *op.cit.*, pp.93-98; *The Brotherhood Story,* Annual Report of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, 1957-1958, p.8

Brotherhood to champion preventive services.[86] The Brotherhood witnessed many people who were unable to afford housing or to obtain employment frequently become institutionalised in nursing homes, hospitals and prisons. These were the very symbols of a "first-aid", government, reactive response. Others were not institutionalised, but became members of the street poor. The Director of Social Services with the Brotherhood, G. Sambell, was firmly of the opinion, for example, that many of Melbourne's derelicts in the mid-1950s, were products of depression youth who had lost self-respect and initiative in the 1930s because of society's treatment of them.[87] The Brotherhood's work consequently revolved very strongly around preventive action in support of what it called "the inarticulate and unorganised in the community".[88] These groups included the ".. low-income families, young people, widows, deserted wives and elderly people who [were] attempting to live on small, fixed incomes or pensions".[89] It would be the same group, the "inarticulate and unorganised", that would increasingly engage its attention in its work overseas. The Brotherhood's public education and social action policy aimed at "... creating better understanding of the problems faced by such people." But it went further to state:

> It is concerned with trying to determine the causes of social problems and critically examining the social services provided by Governments and voluntary organisations. Social action is carried out through research and study of social questions and by passing on the experience of social workers and the results of research to the public and to those engaged in Government and social work.[90]

To facilitate its research and education interests the publication activities of the Brotherhood and the Food For Peace Campaign were expanded when another committed member of the Tucker family - Tucker's nephew David Scott - joined the organisation in 1953. The Food For Peace Campaign's small roneoed publication, the *Food For Peace News*, was incorporated into the Brotherhood's newspaper *NOW!*. Apparently even in the early 1950s, *NOW!* raised the interest of press and government, who frequently quoted it or used it as ammunition, one party against another.[91]

The Brotherhood adopted strong civic responsibilities. It gave evidence to government committees on rents and social welfare. It networked extensively with other community organisations involved with such issues as mental health, the elderly, penal reform, alcoholism and family services. It also discussed its work with church organisations, political parties, elderly citizen's clubs, schools and colleges.[92] Always

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[86] Sambell, Rev. G, Director of Social Services, BSL, "Brotherhood Social Service Director Criticise Victorian Welfare Policy", *NOW!*, Dec., 1955, p.6
[87] *Ibid*, p.7
[88] "Public Education and Social Action", *The Brotherhood of St Laurence Story, Annual Report, 1959-1960*
[89] *Ibid*
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] "Public Education and Social Action", ... *op.cit.*, p.130
[92] *Ibid*

prepared to be the proverbial thorn in the side especially of government, the Brotherhood was not, and is still not, typical of the majority of welfare organisations. And among the overseas NGO community too, it would take more than three decades before the level of thinking, organisation and networking, displayed by the Brotherhood in the 1950s, would become widespread. The majority of Western NGOs assisting Asia in the 1960s and 1970s, were slow to change. Social work practices borrowed from the West by Asia's teaching institutes frequently compounded that stance.

Tucker's disenchantment with government inactivity in the area of poverty led both the Brotherhood and Food For Peace Campaign to develop a strong grassroots focus.[93] In his autobiography he wrote:-

> I have tried in vain to influence the Government in regard to that matter on which depends the safety of mankind - the feeding of a hungry world. After having battered in vain on the doors of Parliament House in regard to slum clearance, I should have learnt the futility of such methods. My hope now, however, does not lie in governments but in ordinary people, and in doing what one can to rectify those things which one knows to be wrong.[94]

Believing that too much was being left to organisations like the United Nations and the Colombo Plan, Tucker promoted the need for a public conscience and grassroots involvement. "From the people to the people" the July 1957 edition of *FFPN* exhorted.[95] But involvement had to be from an informed base - from an understanding of the region - not from a base of charity or sentimentality.[96] Tucker was confident that Australia had the organising ability, and people of character and vision enough to take the lead and encourage other nations to follow.[97] We are not, he said "a little replica of England"..."we passed the Olympic Games test...combated Poliomyelitis... and T.B". "We have a good record in war... we can do things.We can lead the world".[98] Nevertheless he felt that Australia was too slow to take the less orthodox path, requiring energy and innovation and independent action like the Food For Peace Campaign. He felt frustrated, for example, that it had taken 20 years of lobbying to get action on slum clearance.[99]

Article after article rang with that frustration as Father Tucker tried to infuse others with some of his own energy in an attempt to galvanise them into action.[100] Tucker envisaged a day when every Australian would make a weekly contribution, however

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93 "Pensioners...", *op.cit.*
94 Tucker, *op.cit.*, p.132
95 "The Role of a Small Word In World Affairs", *FFPN*, July, 1957, p.6
96 "Australia Leads in Diminishing One Fear", *FFPN*, Sept., 1957, p.7; "You Will Realise", *FFPN*, Sept., 1958, p.6
97 "The Role of a Small Word In World Affairs", *op.cit.*
98 *Ibid*, p.8; "We Should ...", *op.cit.*
99 *Ibid*
100 *Ibid*; "The Role ...", *op.cit.*

small, to what could be a people's equivalent of the Colombo Plan.[101] The frustration displayed by Tucker about government and public apathy and lack of vision, as well as the length of time it took to create effective change, became a hallmark of the period 1950s to around the mid-1980s. While the period witnessed extraordinary changes, in the area of development assistance Australian government bilateral policy in particular was generally unchanging and lack-lustre.

The frustration voiced by Tucker in the 1950s would be echoed by other visionary aid activists in subsequent decades: in the early 1970s by staff of CAA, ACFOA and AWD[102] attempting to cajole the Australian public to act on global economic injustices; in the 1980s by innovative NGO leaders in Asia trying to put the rhetoric of alternative practices into action. The energy, creativeness and fearlessness of such "prime-movers" was essential to the ability of the activist NGO sector to continuously push aid policy beyond currently accepted boundaries. The length of time it took to accomplish this - for their ideas to filter into mainstream policy (sometimes ten to thirty years) - frustrated and often demoralised them. Yet they remained essential to the overall process of change in development thinking.

When the fledgling Food For Peace Campaign became emersed in overseas aid and development matters it had a substantial body of ideology and action on which to draw. It favoured practical aid which addressed the causes of poverty and encouraged self-sufficiency. It strongly supported lobbying and education among the general public and professionals and it sought to raise funds through small well-informed groups.

The Food For Peace Campaign promoted the idea of clusters of people organised through shops, neighbourhoods, schools, clubs or factories to collect funds and to become involved in the key issues connected with poverty.[103] Following the establishment of the Carram Down's group another was convened in Hawthorn, Victoria, which assumed much of the responsibility for running the campaign. Others followed.[104] The groups, like countless Australian groups before them, adopted all the techniques they could muster to raise funds for the cause. Typical was the "Bring Something - Buy Something" stall organised by the Hawthorn branch, and the film night run by the Box Hill branch in 1957.[105] These events were frequently organised by

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[101] *Ibid.*; "Let Us Use Charity Towards East, Says Archbishop of Melbourne", *FFPN*, Ap., 1958, p.6; "Let Us Pile...", *op .cit* .

[102] Community Aid Abroad, the Australian Council for Overseas Aid and Action for World Development

[103] "Pensioners...", *op.cit.*; "Our Daily Bread, Milk, Eggs, Meat and Butter", *FFPN*, Feb., 1958, p.6

[104] Miss Jean MacKenzie."Our Twentieth Year", *NOW!*, Aug., 1973, No. 20, p.1; "Campaign Seeks £10,000", *FFPN*, Sept., 1957, p.6

[105] "Hawthorn Food For Peace Function", *FFPN*, Nov., 1957, p.6; *NOW!* Aug., 1957, p.7

women though the *FFPC* did not approve of this arguing that it was important for men, women, young and old to become involved.[106]

The recipients of these first contributions lived in a small Nepalese settlement in the Himalayan foothills called "Mitraniketan", or "The Abode of Peace". An Indian doctor and her architect British husband had built a hospital and a primary school for the local people there.[107] The money was conveyed for the Food For Peace Campaign by a field liaison representative, Swiss aid worker Pierre Oppliger, through the Society of Friends in New Delhi.[108] An early report from Oppliger revealed:

> This trip made me realise once more the very poor conditions in which almost all the hill people are living. Very few of them can afford milk, their usual diet is rice, a cereal like wheat jawar, and pulses. They hardly take vegetables and fruit only occasionally. It is quite safe to state that malnutrition is a common curse all over the district... TB is spreading so fast.[109]

While the monies collected were sent to purchase milk powder and vitamins for the Mitraniketan settlement, Father Tucker also emphasised the value of the link between two such different cultures.[110]

Food For Peace Campaign literature stressed that it assisted people in small settlements.[111] Links were forged through regular correspondence which kept donors informed of the project's progress, how the money was being spent and the most pressing issues needing to be addressed.[112] Pierre Oppliger was the link at the Indian end and in Australia the *Food For Peace News* provided news about Asia and about development issues from commentators in Australia, Europe and America.

With minor exceptions (like the coined word "starvasia"), the *FFPN* avoided the "starving millions" and "communist threat" rhetoric, which was the diet of the daily newspapers in the fifties. At its meetings members were informed by guest speakers, films or slides about Asia or by issues addressed in the *FFPN*.[113] Typically articles outlined the conditions of hills' people, their land-holding size, their problems of employment, the lack of local industry and the obstacles of class and caste with which they had to contend.[114] Other issues examined the inadequacy of the diet of half the world's population, malaria and population increases. They also addressed the

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106 "Men Wanted", *FFPN*, Sept., 1957, p.8; "Food For Peace Wants Men and Money", *FFPN*, Nov., 1957, p.6

107 "This is What Food For Peace Stands For", *FFPN*, July, 1957, p.6

108 Pierre Oppliger was working for the Voluntary Service for Peace, "The Force of Hunger", *FFPN*, Aug., 1957, p.6

109 *Ibid*

110 "With Their Pence ...", *op.cit.*

111 "Complacency in Our Time is a Very Real Danger", *NOW!*, Feb., 1959, p.6

112 "There Can Be No Lasting Peace While Millions Starve", *FFPN*, May, 1958, p.7

113 "Speaker for Hawthorn", and "Film Night Raises Funds", *FFPN*, 1957, pp.7, 8; "Indonesia Visitor at Hawthorn", *FFPN*, May, 1958, p.7

114 See for example, "The Force of Hunger", *FFPN*, Aug., 1957, pp.6,7; "News Items From India", *FFPN*, Ap.,1958, p.7; "Tackling the Land Shortage Problem of India", *FFPN*, Feb.,1959, p.7; "Getting to Know Our Neighbours in South East Asia", *FFPN*, Aug., 1958, p.7; "The Facts of India's Food Crisis", *FFPN*, Sept., 1959, p.6

questionable ethics of storing and hoarding wheat, undertaken by both the Australian and USA governments.[115] Photographs tended to depict groups of Asian villagers actively participating in life rather than passively receiving assistance. A typical caption read, "The world over, the family circle offers an image of warmth and security. Around the cooking pots in Assam the family symbolises unmistakedly the essential one-ness of mankind".[116] The Food For Peace Campaign was also involved in public relations work through public meetings, letters to the editors of newspapers and radio interviews.[117]

The organisation also dwelt on some of the preoccupations which were engaging other interest groups at the time such as the place of science in development. The importance of science, as epitomised by UN agency involvement in Asia - particularly in the areas of health and agriculture - was constantly stressed. These views tended to be counter-balanced, however, with an equal emphasis on human values. Scientific achievement was important but the "mellowing influence of goodwill could not be played down".[118]

The Food For Peace Campaign's initial contacts with Asia in many respects followed traditional charity lines, since the provision of money for food was the only option open to the organisation in 1953.[119] Voluntary aid was viewed as a quick solution to deal with an immediate crisis. The Colombo Plan would provide the infrastructure for the changes necessary to attack the root causes of poverty.[120]

It was the case, also, that innovative though Tucker's ideas were with regard to his fight against poverty in Australia, Tucker's ideas about Asia were influenced by and reflected the rhetoric of the day. As a staunch Christian Tucker was vehemently anti-communist. He believed that no less than the survival of civilisation itself was at stake, because of the possible use of atomic weapons, in the current war being waged between Christianity and Communism.[121] It was imperative to feed the poor, so that the conditions that promoted communism would be removed and peace would ensue.[122] The Campaign paraphrased a statement expressed by the 1951 Prime Ministers of the British Commonwealth of Nations conference and adopted it for the Food for Peace Campaign's letterhead - "There can be no lasting peace while millions starve".[123]

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115 "Half the World is Hungry", and "United Nations Beats Disease to Help Feed Asia", *FFPN,* Nov., 1957, pp.6, 7; "Every Month the World's Population Increases Another 2.5 Million", *FFPN,* Feb., 1958 p.7; *FFPN*, Sept., 1959, p.7

116 *FFPN*, Feb., 1959, p.7; *FFPN,* Nov., 1957, p.1

117 "Talk on India", *FFPN*, June, 1959, p.7; "The Need For More F.F.P.C. Groups", Reporting an interview on 3AW Melbourne, *FFPN*, Oct., 1958, p 6; "Talk by F.F.P. Campaign to University Women", *FFPN*, Nov.,1958, p.7; "A Speaker on the Food For Peace Campaign", *FFPN*, Dec., 1958, p.7

118 "Food for Peace Campaign Aims for £10,000, *FFPN*., Dec., 1957, p.6

119 Interview with David Scott, Melbourne, August, 1990

120 "This is What ...", and "Melbourne "AGE" on Food For Peace", *FFPN*, July, 1957, p.6

121 *Ibid*, p.91

122 "Pensioners...", *op.cit*

123 Paraphrased from the words of the Prime Ministers' of the British Commonwealth of Nations conference. Father G. Kennedy Tucker, "Let Us Pile Up Goodwill Among the Nations", *FFPN,* July

Up to that point, the Campaign's views differed little from the government's. But critically, it went on to specifically focus on and target poverty. It looked poverty in the face to discover its antecedence and sought to teach Australians about the broader reality of Asian poverty, and to urge them into positive action.[124] The Campaign recognised why some people supported communism, finding it hard to argue with them when they criticised the Christian church for not denouncing poverty. Such an attitude Tucker suggested, led critics to label those working with the poor as communist "fellow travellers". This was an accusation, which Tucker commented, "is even used against those who work in the sacred cause of peace". The saying of Catholic Archbishop, DOM Helder Camara, immortalised later on the walls of community workers in the developing world, embodied his dilemma: "If I feed the hungry, they call me a saint, if I ask why they are hungry, they call me a communist".[125]

As Tucker had discovered many times during his controversial fights against poverty in Australia, getting too close to the poor could be construed as a highly political act. Tucker had lobbied the government and the church fearlessly over the years, which had brought him into collision with the powerful and led him to be stood over and even "warned off" on occasion, for his outspokenness.[126]

Community Aid Abroad was to inherit this tradition of outspokenness and to target both the Australian Federal government as well as Asian governments many times in its forty year history. Concerns held by Food For Peace Campaign organisers about the underlying causes of poverty and the need to address them, eventually launched it along an activist path beyond one based on material handouts. And that path as Father Tucker had found in the 1920s, 30s and 40s, led to confrontation, be it with the church, government, business or overseas with the local elites. Being "at the cutting edge" was a brave but uncomfortable place to be, especially in many developing countries. It could place the development worker, particularly the indigenous worker working with the poor, at risk from harassment, imprisonment or in some cases death.[127]

1957, p.7; "The Role of a Small Word in World Affairs", *FFPN*, Oct., 1957, p.6; "The Force of Hunger", *FFPN*, Aug., 1957, p.7

124 "We Should Share Our Plenty", *FFPN*, Sept., 1957, p.6

125 The accusation would also become familiar to Community Aid Abroad over the next 30 years. In 1988, a Philippines' report on overseas NGOs, listed Community Aid Abroad as "Communist Aid Abroad", which reflected more the state of Filipino poverty and right-wing politics, than Community Aid Abroad ideology. But it was linked to a mentality prevalent in developing countries which attempted to discredit a group when its work with the poor might threaten the status quo.

126 "Public Education and Social Action", ... *op.cit.*, pp.123-130; The Brotherhood continued the tradition long after his death. The Brotherhood had "run-ins" with Prime Minister Hawke in 1990 and with the Leader of the Opposition in 1991, causing broadcaster Andrew Ollie on ABC radio to reflect,"Those Brotherhood people seem to have a habit of biting Prime Ministers or inspiring ones", 2BL, 9.10 am, 10/10/91

127 In the course of researching for this thesis, I spoke with several people who had either suffered themselves or whose colleagues and friends had been imprisoned, beaten, raped, intimidated, or killed in the late 1980s in the Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India because of their work with the poor.

As the Food for Peace Campaign became more familiar with Asia it was more able to incorporate the ideas it had gained from the Brotherhood into its overseas assistance. The Campaign rapidly moved beyond the idea of giving money for food, willingly consenting to a request from Mitraniketan to use funds to connect the hospital to a water supply. Gradually, as Pierre Oppliger introduced it to a broad range of social activities, more creative opportunities to contribute to India's sustained development presented themselves. The Food For Peace Campaign became familiar with various groups working with the poor in India - Gandhian development practices; the Bharat Sevak Samaj, which established youth and student work camps; and with Vinoba Bhave who was championing a scheme of land redistribution.[128]

As has been intimated, much of the energy in voluntary organisations frequently evolved around the vision of strong individuals. This emphasis on the individual could have various consequences. Some leaders never progressed beyond a paternalistic relationship with those they helped. Others created large national movements which had a significant impact on the independence and self-sufficiency of its members. Many of the projects in India in the 1950s were centred around a benevolent matriarch or patriarch, men and women of strength and character, who devoted their lives to helping the less fortunate. By March 1958, the Food For Peace Campaign was invited to support two such individuals.

Miss K.M. Hillman was an English woman, who after going to India in the early thirties to teach, had joined Gandhi in his non-co-operation movement, and was gaoled several times because of it. Immediately after Independence, she started a school for tribal girls and for adult women in the district of Almora, where she had been sent by Gandhi.[129] Recruits were slow to arrive since it was felt unnecessary to educate tribal girls, but by 1959 she had around 80 students.[130] Situated near the Nepalese border the girls were taught farm management, weaving and spinning, as well as regular school work and the women from the surrounding villages were taught standards of hygiene and health.[131] These activities were supported by a Government grant and by a grant from the Kasturba Gandhi Memorial Trust. Since it survived on very minimal funds, Hillman had written to Pierre Oppliger requesting some dried dates to supplement their winter diet.[132] The Food For Peace Campaign suggested that it might be interesting for both parties if an Australian girls' school adopted the project.[133]

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128 "Indonesia", *FFPN*, Oct., 1957, p.7; "Food For Peace From the Receiving End", *FFPN*, Jan., 1958, p.7; "Work Camp Projects of South East Asia", *FFPN*, July, 1958, p.7; *FFPN*, Feb., 1959

129 "Work in India', *FFPN*, Mar., 1959, p.7; "These Children are of Very Special Interest; Let Us Help Them All We Can", *FFPN*, Dec., 1959, p.7

130 *Ibid*

131 *Ibid*

132 *Ibid*

133 *Ibid*

In the same letter, Oppliger asked,"I wish you could feel free to give to Mr Amte and his remarkable work".[134] A few lines which began a long association with a man of exceptional vision and energy. His story in India was by the 1990s legendary. (His example by then, through supporting NGO and People's Organisations in protest movements against destructive development processes, helped strengthen the growth and influence of the NGO sector.) A lawyer, who upon coming across a leper who was dying, took him home to nurse, M.D. Amte gave up his practice to study the treatment of leprosy in the School of Tropical Medicine in Calcutta. He returned to the central area of India near Nagpur, received a plot of jungle land from the government and started "Anand Bhuvan", the "Abode of Peace". Amte carried out social and medical work for lepers with only his own resources and those of his friends to support him. Oppliger came across him in 1953, when working in an international work-camp near-by. The work-camp assisted Amte by constructing a treatment centre and because of this attracted support from the local community which had previously ignored Amte's work. Amte and his wife gave the lepers a home, treated them and gave them a chance to work, thus restoring the dignity of those forgotten people. The project grew with local support until it had 150 inmates and a fine and flourishing farm which supplied milk to the surrounding districts.[135]

The Food For Peace Campaign approved of both projects which taught skills, ran economically and challenged current attitudes. In these ways the Food For Peace Campaign gradually progressed to consider a more self-help approach. By November 1959 it advertised itself as not simply sending "handouts of food", since " the hungry man is hungry again tomorrow". In future it planned "to concentrate its efforts, where possible, on projects of self-help", where "every instance of assistance [was] known to and recommended by a social worker liaison officer...".[136] The transition was obviously not quick enough for one supporter. They challenged the organisation in 1960 as to whether aid in the form of milk powder, vitamins and food rather than providing the means to produce was "along the soundest of lines".[137]

By December 1958, the Food For Peace Campaign had sent £5000 to India.[138] By then requests for assistance were being received with greater frequency and from wider sources. Australians working with the Volunteer Graduate Scheme in Indonesia, for example, asked the Campaign to provide support for crop improvement. The concept of becoming involved in longer-lasting structural change interested the Campaign immensely. But it felt constrained administratively, which it solved by appealing for

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134 "Work in India, *FFPN*, Mar., 1959, p.7

135 "Lawyer-Mayor Founds Leper Colony in India", *FFPN*, Jan., 1958, p.7; "Work in India, *FFPN*, Mar., 1959, p.7

136 "A Bridge of Friendship - Australia/Asia", *FFPN*, 1959, p.6

137 *NOW!*, Feb. 1960, p.7

138 "A Giant Unleashed", *FFPN*, Dec., 1958, p.7

£1000 towards engaging a full-time organiser.[139] It also felt constrained to change its focus because of its name - the Food For Peace Campaign.[140] In the event it adopted the name Community Aid Abroad in 1962.

Like the Brotherhood, the Food For Peace Campaign was never slow to criticise government policy. On the very page that the organisation was announced in the February, 1954 edition of *NOW!*, an article criticised the government for its discriminatory White Australia Policy, for its "pitifully small" contribution to aid and for its over-spending on defence.[141] The article set the tone for the organisation in the future. In 1958 *NOW!* criticised the Australian cabinet for its lack of contact with Indonesia. It argued that at a time when West Irian, "bedevils Australian/Indonesian relations", only one member of the present Australian Cabinet had ever visited Indonesia.[142]

The Campaign monitored the annual aid budget, noting a decrease in 1958 and arguing forcefully for a major reappraisal of Australia's contribution.[143] It would maintain this pressure on government in succeeding decades. The Campaign meanwhile lambasted the Australian public for its complacency, for having "an almost bovine content" to leave everything to the Government.[144] Complaining that the government was sparing only a "crumb", "only small change", "a puny effort" for the Colombo Plan it urged "thinking Australians" to send letters to the press, to contact members of Parliament, and "all other possible methods of public opinion", to throw more weight behind the Colombo Plan.[145]

The Food For Peace Campaign believed the Colombo Plan was too remote from the Australian people to meet the Commonwealth's objective to enhance Australian-Asian relations. It also believed the Colombo Plan was insufficiently funded. But in other respects it strongly supported the Plan.[146] As Father Tucker saw the Colombo Plan: "Machinery and equipment are put into Asian hands to allow them the dignity of reconstituting barren land for their own future food crops".[147]

The Campaign presented the Colombo Plan less extravagantly than the government believing that assistance was nothing more than Asia's due. Casey, for example, claimed that the Colombo Plan was a "new departure in international democracy" and that there

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139 They engaged the previous honorary secretary, Miss Jean Mackenzie, in October 1959,"Food For Peace Looks to the Future", *FFPN*, Jan., 1959, p.6; "Organiser Appointed For Food For Peace Campaign", *FFPN*, Oct., 1959

140 "Food For Peace Looks to the Future", *FFPN*, Jan., 1959, p.7

141 Walton, L., "Feed Asian People to Earn Friendship", *FFPN*, Feb., 1954

142 Webb, J., "A New Approach to Asia", *FFPN*, Sept., 1958, p.6

143 "We Spend Less on Aid to Other Countries", *FFPN*, Oct. 1958, p.9; "Australia Should Look Again At Its Colombo Plan Investment", *FFPN*, Jan., 1959, p.7.

144 "A Giant Unleashed", *FFPN*, Dec. 1958, p.6

145 *Ibid.*, pp.6-7; "Australia Should Look Again ...", *op.cit.*

146 Father G.K. Tucker, "Our Modern Barley Loaves and Fishes", *FFPN*, May, 1958, p.6

147 "This is What Food For Peace Stands For", *FFPN*, July, 1957, p.6

was neither "superiority in giving [nor] inferiority in receiving". [148] The Food for Peace Campaign questioned the last assertion believing that Australia did tend to patronise its Asian neighbours because they were "handicapped economically".[149] (The arguments put forward in Chapter One support that view.) However, the Food for Peace Campaign put the arrogance down to "Beginners' mistakes", arguing that the "no strings" caveat would protect the recipients of assistance.[150] Given that stance the Food For Peace Campaign did have a benign assumption that such aid could do nothing but good.[151]

There was a certain paradox running through the ideas and action of the Food for Peace Campaign. It was implicit in the organisation's views about development and its support for the concept of equality with Asia, that the growth/trickle down model would be flawed if Australia was ignorant about the cultures it was assisting. On the other hand, there was also an assumption that the "no strings" caveat would allow developing countries to control the foreign experts, technology and advice to their own advantage, or that assistance was benign. Such assumptions meant that activist NGOs were very slow to question the quality of government assistance and to lobby for changes to government aid policy.

Nevertheless, groups like the Food for Peace Campaign did scrutinise and gradually evolve their own assistance to more fairly reflect the needs of the poor. While the Campaign's assistance in the early 1950s did not help recipients to "develop", by 1959 the organisation was committed to moving beyond the provision of food, to consider ways to actively alleviate Asian poverty at the grassroots level. At that point the FFPC's aid and ideology began to clearly diverge from other agencies. They were frequently still preoccupied with collecting monies through the traditional church plates or envelopes to assist overseas missions.

The singular approach of organisations like the Food For Peace Campaign and Australian Volunteers Abroad was rare. True their assault on Asian poverty was initially frequently envisaged in terms of transfers of Western knowledge, goods and expertise. Yet activist NGOs approached assistance with some recognition of the complexity of poverty issues and prepared to learn from the recipients of their assistance. The Food For Peace Campaign was not entirely devoid of support. It drew extensively on the practical social work experiences of the Brotherhood. It also drew on an emerging international discourse on development issues which was starting to broaden debate beyond the economic growth focus. These influences affected the Food for Peace

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[148] Casey, R., "The Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 25, No.1, Jan. 1954, p.24

[149] Wood, Rev Dr H, Head of the Methodist Conference for Australasia, "Conference Head Speaks on Asia- Australian Matters"

[150] "The Colombo Plan to Continue", *FFPN, Nov.*, 1959, p.6

[151] It stated: "...[T]he Colombo Plan has been acclaimed as one of the finest aid programmes conceived in the postwar years""Australia Should Look Again ...", *op.cit.;* "The Colombo Plan to Continue", *op.cit.*

Campaign's work in Asia and would contribute to debate and policy in the wider and growing Australian NGO community in the 1960s.

The Food For Peace Campaign analysed and reported on the activities of the United Nations agencies and world church groups and of influential development thinkers. They included Gunnar Myrdal, who visited Australia in the 1950s, and economist Barbara Ward who was pressing the USA to provide 1% of its GNP for 50 years to under-developed nations.[152] It presented the views also of Australian analysts such as Professor Macmahon Ball, journalist Denis Warner, the Volunteer Graduate Society's Jim Webb, economist Professor Arndt, and the contributors to *Australia in World Affairs,* edited by Norman Harper and Gordon Greenwood.[153] It took note of conditions in Indonesia from information supplied by returned graduate volunteers, and through Pierre Oppliger was introduced to and influenced by the rich variety of groups and individuals working in India on behalf of the poor.[154]

Just as at the international level it was the economists who most influenced discussion on economic growth and development in the 1950s, at the NGO level social work theory and practice frequently informed discussions on community development. These discourses were critical to the evolution of NGO practice since some of the debates challenged current social work methods and invited and facilitated gradual change. A World Congress of the Catholic International Union of Social Service in 1958, for example, examined social work practices in the developed and developing countries. It concluded that Western social work frequently fell short of the developing world's needs and should be adapted to become more appropriate. It also agreed that since many missionaries did not fully recognise the importance of using trained social workers, Catholic social workers should link with "neutral" bodies to train social workers and implement social welfare programmes.[155]

Many Catholic religious long involved in welfare work in India joined in the debate. They recognised the need to change the traditional charity emphasis of their work and its institutions. (They described these as "... charitable institutions for aiding the victims of poverty, of disease, of faults of character and handicapped.") Some Catholic Sisters in the 1950s decided to widen the scope of their work to encompass the current "scientific" approach to social work. A paper given at a workshop for Sisters at the

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[152] Myrdal who became well-known for his 3 volume *Asian Drama,* gave the 1957 Dyason lecture, "Whither Internationalism", *FFPN,* Nov., 1957, p.6; "Eminent British Editor Says: Australia Must Come to Terms with Asia", *FFPN,* Nov., 1958, p.6; Warner, D., *FFPN,* July 1959, p.6

[153] "Australia in World Affairs", *NOW!,* Oct., 1957, p.7

[154] "Indonesia", *FFPN,* Oct., 1957, p.7; "Food For Peace From the Receiving End", *NOW!,* Jan., 1958, p.7; "Work Camp Projects of South East Asia", *FFPN,* July, 1958, p.7; *FFPN,* Feb., 1959

[155] "Social Service in Countries Undergoing Rapid Change", pp.39-44, Document of Synthesis for Commission 4 of the 9th World Congress of the Catholic International Union of Social Service, Brussels, July 1958, *Social Action, [SA],* Vol 9, No. 1, Jan., 1959

Catholic Social Conference in 1957, supported the need to reorient their focus from immediate temporary relief "... to discover the conditions of these various maladjustments, to trace their causes, devise agencies and methods of relief, and go to the root of the problem by initiating programmes for the prevention and rehabilitation of these unfortunate individuals." The direction and content of modern social work was changing greatly, from merely administrating services, to focus on rehabilitating individuals and families so that they could ultimately live independently.[156]

Cardinal V. Gracias in an address to the students of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences Bombay in 1959 outlined the long historical link between religion and social work. He cited the work of the Quakers, of St.Vincent de Paul and the Salesians. Religion, he argued, had been "the driving force of charity", worked out in the hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged, for the lepers and for the handicapped all over the world.[157]

Unfortunately for many of the recipients, however, the concept and even the name "charity", had become debased since St Paul declared that Charity was "patient, kind and sustains". It had evolved into a tradition of alms-giving for welfare relief, which frequently sustained the poverty and stigma of those receiving assistance. The change in focus from welfare to what was referred to as a more "scientific approach" of social service, therefore, offered not only a change in method but a chance to make the present concept of charity obsolescent. The message being received was that handouts were no longer appropriate. Charity, as it had evolved was unacceptable. Gracias sent the message to young graduate social workers in Bombay:

> Charity in the form of unorganised voluntary service that merely seeks for a palliative to the problem, but never reaches its causes, is regarded with a certain amount of misgiving, especially when it assumes the patronising approach of the educated well-to-do-woman of fashion trying to help her poor neighbours.[158]

The "educated well-to-do-woman of fashion", certainly did not have a mortgage on patronising the poor. But the Cardinal's comments were a further indication that the old premises on which alms, charity and relief were previously based were starting to be questioned. This step was vital to begin to change first the attitudes and then the practices of donors and those working with poor communities. It was a tentative step towards recognising that all marginalised peoples must have agency. Given the number of missions in the developing world, spreading the word about the new techniques to missionaries was going to be no small task. Equally, changing the attitude of the alms' givers about poverty and charity was also vital if difficult and contentious. It was after

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156 Valvai, J.P., "Minimum Standards in Care Institutions", A Paper read at the Workshop for the Sisters during the Catholic Social Conference, Madras, 1957, *SA*, Vol 8, No. 2, Feb.,1958, pp.72-78
157 Valerian Cardinal Gracias, "The Contribution of Religion to Social Work", speech to the Faculty and Students of the Tata Institute of Social Science, nd, *SA*, Vol 9, Nos.5 & 6, May & June 1959, pp.199-212
158 *Ibid*

all much simpler to continue to receive donations by appealing to people's "charity", than by discussing the causes of poverty.

The move to change the old notions of charity was considerably hampered by an out-dated vocabulary which did little to lift the dignity of the recipients: societies rang with titles of benevolence, charity and mercy. (Even as the Catholic sisters sought to change their social work methods they continued to use the vocabulary belonging to the charity focus when they referred to "maladjustments" and "unfortunate individuals".) Just as language had a critical influence on the way that Australian's perceived Asia, so the words and phrases - the jargon - which evolved to describe the development process would assume equal importance. It was not before time that as some groups searched for new approaches to assist the poor, a vocabulary would evolve which expressed their support for a more preventive, rather than welfare solution to poverty. In the 1950s, the phrase "self-help" which was being canvassed widely in progressive social work analyses and linked to the notion of agency and independence, was one of the first to evolve from this thinking. It would remain a central theme of the NGO development aid culture into the 1990s. While a litany of new words helped to dignify the recipients and professionalise the debate, their use was not without problems. The use of the current "appropriate" language would become essential when vying for funds in a competitive market, whether in a proposal to government or to the public. Consequently in-vogue jargon - such as an emphasis on the special needs of women, indigenous people or the environment - could be appropriated to enhance project proposals and reports by development workers, whether or not they intended or were qualified to "practice what they preached".

Appropriation in this manner became a pressing argument for accurate government and public education about aid and development issues. Otherwise, reassured by the words, donors might hand over their funds oblivious of whether the donation aided or aggravated poverty. In the 1950s, the phrase "self-help" usually implied the provision of equipment to enable recipients to grow food. The decision of the World Council of Churches in 1957 that "... agricultural machinery and other ... self-help equipment were more desirable gifts than money", was typical of this change in thinking.[159] The idea would later be embodied in the phrase," If you give a man a fish you feed him for one day. If you teach him to fish you feed him for many days".[160]

As the NGO movement evolved in the West and especially at the grassroots' level in the developing countries, there grew with it too a more personal "in-house" jargon. This was a rich culture of phrases, poetry, songs, pictures, cartoons, posters, even embroidery - witty, loving, hard-hitting, sardonic, sad. They adorned the walls of groups working with poor communities, fortifying them and highlighting the roots of poverty. Though

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159 "Aid to Asia", FFPN, *NOW!*, Oct., 1957, p.6

160 *Freedom from Hunger Campaign News*, Vol 3, No.17, Aug., 1962, FAO, Rome, p.5

the issues might change over the decades at base they all embodied the ideas of equality and justice. The first of such statements that the Food For Peace Campaign published in 1957, emanated from the World YWCA. Its theme was one that would become central to activist NGO ideology in the future - the question of the over abundance of the developed world amidst shocking global poverty.

WORLD CALL

I planned an ultra-modern house,
but a Belgian citizen whispered: "I have no home at all."

I dreamed of a country place for the pleasure of my children,
but an Arab lad kept saying: "I have no country."

I decided on a new cupboard in my kitchen,
but a child from China cried out: "I have no cup."

I started to purchase a new kind of washing machine,
but a Polish woman whispered softly: "I have nothing to wash."

I wanted a large freezing unit to store quantities of food,
but across the waters came the cry: "We have no food."

I ordered a new car for the pleasure of my loved ones,
but a war orphan sobbed: "I have no loved ones"....[161]

The task of activist NGOs, like the Food For Peace Campaign, was to steer those sentiments away from the charity response to focus on practical, self-help assistance.

In the 1950s there was little sense of a strong community of NGOs either nationally or internationally, and little discussion about the role of such groups. The Brotherhood published an article from the USA in 1958, which discussed the role of philanthropy and the attributes of voluntary agencies, whose arguments applied equally to NGOs engaged in overseas assistance.[162] Many of the salient points made in the article would be taken up by the NGO community in future years to promote their special attributes. It suggested that voluntary agencies could:

> ... supplement government in pioneering, experimentation and research and respond more rapidly to emergencies. [They could also] ... do an invaluable job in planning and social action which government agencies traditionally find difficult. Voluntary agencies have a character-building and educational role in arousing public opinion in support of social and health organisation.[163]

The Food For Peace Campaign agreed arguing, "Despite the work of inter-governmental agencies there is still a vital place for voluntary organisations such as the Food for Peace Campaign".[164] During the last six months of the decade the Food for Peace Campaign began to find international support for this view. The Food and

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161 "Talk on India", *FFPN*, June, 1959, p.7
162 "Fund Raising in the U.S.A., Philanthropy-Fourth Largest Industry", *NOW!*, Dec., 1958, p.3
163 *Ibid*
164 *NOW!*, July, 1959, p.7

Agricultural Organisation (FAO) announced it would launch a worldwide Freedom From Hunger Campaign in 1960. It would culminate in a World Food Congress in 1963 to co-incide with FAO's 20th anniversary.[165] The proposal was an ambitious one. An information and education programme would implement studies to suggest ways to increase food production and distribution. An action programme would attempt to broaden the whole scope of development with the use of pilot and demonstration projects.[166] FAO's enthusiastic support for "scientific farming" - chemical fertilisers, improved seed varieties and pesticides[167] - suggested that any leaps in creativity emerging from this programme would continue to embrace the Western modernisation paradigm which was increasingly becoming part of the global culture, accepted in the developing world as well as the developed. (This issue is discussed in Chapter 4.)

Yet FAO's Director, B.R. Sen, *was* calling for a shift in focus when he asked for world-wide attention to be placed on "all aspects of the problem of hunger and poverty". Like Father Tucker he was prepared, as Australian government aid typically was not, to make poverty the issue rather than anti-communism, defence or fear. When Sen presented his proposal to the Royal Commonwealth Society in London in 1959, he remarked:

> Statistics ... have to be reduced to human terms in order to reveal the suffering and tragedy they conceal. Hidden hunger, which is another name for malnutrition, is a close and constant companion of poverty, both individual and national. It leads to impaired vigour and lowered vitality and thus to idle hands, to higher mortality rates among infants and expectant mothers, to deficiency diseases and tuberculosis and to much suffering which is preventable but not prevented. Those of you who have witnessed, as I have done, the emaciated children, prematurely ageing mothers and idle youth in various parts of the world, will comprehend the true measure of the human tragedy that can be traced directly to poverty and malnutrition.[168]

Sen gained support for his proposal from the world's leaders. They included President Eisenhower and the British Prime Minister, Harold MacMillan, both of whom publicly endorsed the campaign.[169] It is unlikely that either was suddenly smitten by altruism. Rather their support was in reaction to assertions which had been floating for more than a year especially in the developing countries. In the late 1950s, the suggestion was being made by leaders such as Indian Prime Minister Nehru, that the economic division between developed and under-developed nations was a more critical issue than the Soviet-Western divide. Commentators were just starting to introduce the idea that White European led nations - Western Europe, Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and white South Africa - constituted an aristocracy in the world.[170] The West, it

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165 Sen, B.R., Director General of FAO, "Free the World From Hunger", *FFPN*, Dec., 1959, pp.6-9; Sen, B.R., "Free the World From Hunger", *FFPN*, Jan., 1960, pp. 6-7,9
166 *Ibid*
167 Sen, B.R., "Free the World From Hunger", *FFPN*, Dec., 1959, p.9
168 *Ibid*, pp.6,8
169 "At Long Last", *FFPN*, Nov., 1959, p.7
170 Arndt, H. from *Nation* May, 1959, quoted in "Woolly Thinking in High Places on Asian Aid", *FFPN*, Dec., 1959, p.6

was argued, because of technological and historical advantage, was making itself increasingly richer while the "outside societies" fell further and further behind.[171] (The anomaly was becoming literally more visible to less developed nations through cinema and television screens.)[172] Nehru and others attempted to shift the global preoccupation with Cold War imperatives to focus on what in future years would become known as the North/South divide.

President Eisenhower with MacMillan suggested the West's response in a television broadcast. Eisenhower remarked:

> I think the problem of under-developed nations is more important for Western civilisation than this problem of the Soviet-Western difference. There are millions of people living today without sufficient food, clothing and health facilities. They are not going to remain quiescent. They are comparing their lot with ours, with us sitting here this evening. They are just going to have an explosion if we do not help them.[173]

In other words, fear of communism was giving way to fear that the "hungry millions" might start to invade the developed world. In Australia, the Member for Ballarat, George Erwin, in 1959 urged: "... we must refuse to allow our thinking to be conditioned by fear of communism. We must get back to a line of thought directed towards doing the right thing by the hungry people of this world."[174] The 1960s Freedom From Hunger Campaign was one response to this suggested shift in focus.

The Freedom From Hunger Campaign, however, took on wider dimensions than bilateral and multilateral support. It actively sought to reach the broader public by creating an advisory body of voluntary associations - religious, professional, trade, social and charitable.[175] For the first time non-government organisations worldwide were being asked to focus collectively and specifically on the issue of poverty in the developing world. They were also encouraged to bring the problems to the wider public. Such a proposition promised to have repercussions for Australian NGOs. It promised to raise the level of debate and also to encourage the growth of new overseas aid organisations in Australia. Increased NGO activity also raised the hope that NGO assistance might take on a dimension more relevant to the actual needs of the poor in developing countries in the 1960s.

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171 *Ibid*

172 24 nations had television by July 1954, "Television is Spreading Around the Globe", *Brisbane Telegraph*, Thurs., July 1st, 1954, Telegraph Newspaper Co., Brisbane, p.15

173 "At Long Last", *FFPN*, Nov., 1959, p.7

174 *Ibid*

175 "Free the World From Hunger", *op.cit.*

Chapter 3
"Lifting Themselves Up By Their Own Bootstraps"[1]
Asian Responses to Development Issues

Asia is no longer passive... It is no longer a submissive Asia; it has tolerated submissiveness too long... If there is anything that Asia wants to tell the world, it is that there is going to be no dictation in the future..... *J. Nehru, 1955*

Is our goal just so many new industries or factories, new dams or bridges or transportation systems? Or is our goal the betterment and the greater freedom, through these and other things, of the lives of the people?.....*C.P. Romulo, 1956*

In the years following WW II the majority of Asian nations gained their independence from Western colonial rule - the Philippines in 1946, India 1947, Burma and Ceylon 1948, Indonesia 1949, IndoChina 1954 and Malaya 1957. While these nations were keen to assert their independence, economic reality and current international politics placed them in an ambivalent position. The formation of communist governments in China (1949) and in the northern parts of partitioned Korea and Vietnam by 1954, made the Asian region a strong focus of Cold War politics.

These post-war Asian nations typically had large rural communities and high levels of population growth.[2] To varying degrees these populations were commonly very poor. The most disadvantaged communities were frequently illiterate and had access to few resources. Poor housing, lack of education and health care, poor and inadequate food supplies contributed to low life expectancy. Low agricultural yields, illness or ceremonial obligations frequently cast the poor into debt, to pay onerous interest rates, from which some never escaped. Those with small scraps of land which inheritance had continually fragmented, or without land, who were tenant farmers, labourers, or bonded for life[3] were among the poorest. They included many of the most marginalised groups such as India's outcastes (Harijans) and indigenous tribal minorities which lived throughout Asia. Yet in the 1950s many villagers still had access to communal land and to the fruits of the forests which helped to cushion their poverty. And despite the

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1 This was a phrase commonly used by the West with regard to development in developing countries. The World Food Program remarked, "It is in this field - in helping people lift themselves by their own bootstraps - that WFP performs its primary and most imaginative role". "Bold New Concept of Aid", World Food Program, *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News*, Vol 5, No.32, Sept-Oct, 1964, p.8; See also Hasluck, P., "Australia's External Aid 1967-1968, *C.N.*, Vol 38, No.9, Sept, 1967, p.379

2 Population increases for various Asian nations were: Indonesia - 70m (1940), 97m (1961), 120m (1970); India - 318m (1941), 439m (1961), 548m (1971); Thailand - 17m (1947), 26m (1960), 34m (1970); Ceylon - 8m (1953), 10m (1962); Wilson, C.,*Thailand a Handbook of Historical Statistics*, G.K. Hall & Co., Boston, 1983; *India: A Statistical Outline 1984*, Oxford & IBH Publishing Co., New Delhi, 1984; Keyfitz, N., & Flieger, W., *World Population:An Analysis of Vital Data*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968; Steinberg, D., Ed., *In Search of Southeast Asia*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1971, p.382

3 Despite, as in India, it being outlawed in the 1947 constitution

dislocation of social relations frequently caused by colonialism - for example by establishing plantations in Malaya, the Philippines and Vietnam - many villages still had in place social obligations to assist those in great need. Although under colonial rule cities had received more resources than the rural areas, within cities, the unemployed and underemployed were often forced to live in squalid poverty.

All Asian nations experienced considerable constraints to their ability to resolve poverty issues quickly. The social structure of Asian nations was characteristically hierarchical. It was illustrated most dramatically in India's caste system. But it was present in all Asian countries from the ruling, frequently Westernised elites, through to the military and bureaucracy in the cities, to the headmen, moneylenders and peasants at the village level. To the urban-rural divide were added other divisions of class, caste, gender, religion, language and ethnicity. Ongoing communal tensions in the southern islands of the Philippines and in the south of Thailand, were illustrative of religious divisions between Islamic communities and the dominant Catholic and Buddhist cultures. In other cases, particularly in the Philippines in the early 1950s and in Malaya throughout the fifties, ideological divisions between communist and non-communist groups gave rise to government programmes of "counter-insurgency".

All Asian nations had substantial numbers of ethnic minorities. Among them were the Shans, Kachins and Karens in Burma; the Meo, Karen and Akha in Thailand; the Bru and Katu in Vietnam; and the Lambadas and Kondhs in India.[4] Such groups were particularly vulnerable and susceptible to increasing poverty as the dominant culture encroached on their traditional lands. Racism and exploitation unchecked by remote bureaucracies, coupled with fear and ignorance of the law or dominant language by indigenous peoples, compounded their fragile economic position.

Colonialism had also added other divisions to Asian societies by encouraging substantial immigrant labour. Chinese and Indians "invited" into Malaya created the potential for ethnic conflict between the immigrant groups and indigenous Malays. The Westernisation of certain groups within colonial societies also helped to perpetuate divisions. A commentator in the 1920s described the purpose of colonial education as being "to train, from among the labouring masses, elites of collaborators who, as technical assistants, foremen, employees or clerks, will make up for the numerical insufficiency of Europeans and satisfy the growing demands of colonial agricultural, industrial and commercial enterprises."[5] In the Philippines, for example, groups of civil servants became enthusiastic consumers of USA education, culture and consumer goods, and the ready transmitters of American culture within their own communities.

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[4] Action for Awakening in Rural Environment, Diary, 1987 Hyderabad, India; Osborne, M., *Southeast Asia,* Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1979; Mole, R., *The Montagnards of South Vietnam, A Study of Nine Tribes*, Charles Tuttle, Tokyo, 1970

[5] Quoted in Harrison, P., *Inside the Third World: The Anatomy of Poverty*, Penguin, London, 1990, p.323

At the same time many of Asia's pre-independence wealthy classes received their schooling in the cities of France, Britain, Holland and the USA. India's Prime Minister Nehru, for example, was educated as an "English gentleman", through British tutors and attendance at Harrow and Cambridge. While many of those who had received a Western education had subsequently adopted an anti-Western stand joining nationalist movements to gain independence, their children frequently continued to attend Western schools, both overseas and locally, once independence was achieved. The children of the wealthy were therefore taught in the language of the ex-colonial nation from Western text books. However much these groups railed against colonialism, many of them continued - if at times unconsciously - to be informed by Western ways. Other Asian elites uncompromisingly collaborated with the West. Filipino elites, for example, formed strong economic bonds with the USA and shared the sentiments expressed by the former Filipino leader Aguinaldo. He wrote in the mid-1950s:

> From America's work in my country the world at large has also profited. It has rendered colonialism obsolete and substituted international philanthropy as a basis of relationship between advanced and backward countries. Instead of the old evils of imperialism, America offers guidance and assistance.[6]

Many from such groups accommodated to and prospered from Western modernisation policies, accentuating and perpetuating divisions within their nations between the "powerful and the marginalised". Others were more sceptical about the USA's philanthropic intentions through organisations such as the Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie Foundations. Researcher Robert Arnove reported in 1981:

> In one of the transcribed histories of the Ford Foundation, functionary John Howard recalled how Foundation president 'Paul Hoffman decided early on that he wanted to develop the International Programme in the Foundation and he had chosen India as a sort of keystone of that overseas activity.' India 'and in general South and Southeast Asia' were chosen because the area was 'the underbelly of China. It was more [of] the Cold War philosophy.' India was attractive to Ford because it was a 'leading democracy,' and especially 'because it was next to China and China wasn't going down the democratic path and India was.'[7]

Ford subsequently invested US$52m in India between 1951-1961 in the hopes that India would "tilt towards the West."[8] The philanthropic activities of these Foundations had much the same objective as the Colombo Plan and organisations like the Australian-Asian Association.

Besides social divisions and frictions, Asian societies were also experiencing considerable political upheaval during the 1950s, as different political aspirants jostled

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[6] Quoted in Constantino, R., *Neo-Colonial Identity and Counter Consciousness, Essays on Cultural Decolonisation*, Merlin Press, London, 1978, p.272

[7] John B. Howard, Oral History Transcript, Ford Foundation archives, pp.4-5 quoted in Arnove, R., "Foundations and the Transfer of Knowledge:Implications for India", with acknowledgement to Prof Edward Berman, *Social Action*, [*S.A.*], Vol 31, No.2, April-June, 1981, p.150, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi

[8] "Programme for Asia and the Near East", Ford Foundation Archives: Board of Overseas Training and Research, file:Establishment of BOTR, quoted in Arnove *Ibid*, p.151

for power. The Korean war which began in June 1950 seriously undermined the economies of Korea and China.[9] The First Indo-China war, which ended in 1954, partitioned Vietnam and foreshadowed two decades of war and dislocation in that country. Indonesia's attempts at parliamentary democracy witnessed seven different cabinets between 1949 and 1958.[10] In 1959 democracy was abandoned for a more authoritarian system centred around President Sukarno, the army and increasingly the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Thailand also experienced political upheavals. In the 1950s it underwent military rule, two attempts to establish a constitutional democracy through general elections and several coups. Politics strongly influenced by the military, bureaucracy, business and the monarchy triumphed in Thailand over government "by the people".[11]

On the economic front Asian nations had the task of reviving collapsed economies seriously depleted by WW II. The war had destroyed major infrastructure like railways and ports. The responses by Asian governments to these economic circumstances, as well as to the issue of urban and rural poverty, differed from state to state, although all of them relied on significant government planning and intervention. Communist Asian nations sought to establish economic equity through state control and radical land reform programmes, initially by distributing land and eventually by forming co-operatives and then communes. North Vietnam distributed some 800,000 hectares between 1953 and 1957.[12] In China nearly half of its cultivated land was distributed during the first few years of the 1950s.[13] Basic services such as education and health were to be made available to all citizens. Services were to be decentralised to the rural areas to avoid over-crowding and slum conditions in the cities, and the concentration of elite services, which only benefited the few. In neither country were these initiatives carried out without considerable social and economic disruption.

In the non-communist Asian countries nationalist sentiments which drove the independence struggles, as well as Cold War concerns, encouraged the incorporation of economic equity, social-welfare and land reform provisions into the governments' economic plans and statements.[14] Frequently, however, the rhetoric would remain just

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[9] Other nations in the region such as Indonesia and Thailand unexpectedly prospered from the war. They benefitted from an increased demand for commodities such as rice and rubber.

[10] Hall, D., *A History of Southeast Asia,* Macmillan, London, 1970, p.893

[11] For full explanations on post-war conditions in Asia see Meisner, M., *Mao's China: A History of the People's Republic*, Collier Macmillan Pub, Co., London, 1979; Steinberg, D. Ed., *op.cit.*; Osborne, M., *op.cit.* ; Hall, D., *op.cit.* ; Aveling, H., Ed., *The Development of Indonesian Society*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1979

[12] Steinberg, D., *op.cit.*, p.362

[13] Meisner, M., *op.cit.*, p.109

[14] An Indian National Congress Resolution of 1955 declared:"The time has now come for a substantial advance on the economic and social plane with the definite objective of increasing production, greatly raising standards of living, and having progressively fuller employment....Economic policy must, therefore, aim at plenty and at equitable distribution". From Indian National Congress Resolution on

that. Pakistan and India, for example, eliminated the large feudal land holdings but stopped short of more radical land reform. Powerful landlord and business interests would continually frustrate reform in South Asia and also in the Philippines.[15] Japan on the other hand had land reform imposed on it during the USA post-war occupation. Large landowners and absentee landlords were abolished and tenant farmers reduced. While there were many factors involved in Japan's subsequent economic success, land reform initiatives clearly made a major contribution.

Many of Asia's non-communist leaders were often reluctant to give their total support to a free market economy since, under the influence of colonial rule and laissez-faire capitalism, most Asian nations had remained underdeveloped. Many of them supported instead the notion of state planning. State planning carried with it an element of what Myrdal called "new nationalism" or anti-colonialism.[16] It acted as a rallying point to unite disparate populations around the cause of rapid development in order to combat decades of economic stagnation and poverty.

State planning had its roots in the experiences of the Soviet Union in the 1920s, the theory being that rapid and balanced development was only possible with centralised planning and execution.[17] In Asia, a sense of urgency - given the formidable problems of stagnation, poverty and high population forecasts - made the notion of state planning attractive. This was especially as developing nations had economies with weak market structures, scarce finances and limited skilled personnel.[18]

As outlined by Todaro, developing nations typically comprised four areas of individual ownership: a subsistence agricultural and handicraft sector selling to local markets; a small-scale commercial business and service sector; a medium commercial sector in agriculture, industry, trade and transport and large jointly owned or foreign owned manufacturing, mining and plantation companies, often catering to foreign markets and comprised of foreign monies in which profits were shipped off-shore.[19]

Into these mixed economies state planning would inject foreign monies and savings to satisfy the need for and demands of large-scale infrastructure development such as power, ports and communication systems. Such development could be provided more

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"Socialist Pattern of Society", Avadi, Jan., 1955, quoted in *Voluntary Action [VA]*, Vol V1, No.1-2, Jan-April 1964, Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development, New Delhi, p.2

[15] "Land and tenancy reforms, which would cut away the roots of the inegalitarian structure of the Indian villages, have been thwarted by the state legislators, the administrators, and those in power in the villages.... Myrdal, G., *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations, Vol II,* Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1968, p.887

[16] "Beyond doubt, the ideology of planning contained an element of resentment against private, especially foreign business; this resentment was a force for its rapid spread, particularly among the intellectuals". Myrdal, G., *Asian Drama An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, Vol II, Penguin Books, 1968, pp.722,724

[17] Waterston, A., *Development Planning, Lessons of Experience,* The John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1979, p.4

[18] Todaro, M., *Economic Development in the Third World*, Longman, Essex, 1990, pp.506-7

[19] *Ibid*, p.505

easily by government than by a small or inexperienced entrepreneurial private sector,[20] a task which could potentially be facilitated in South Asia by the existence of a strong civil service tradition. The state could also usefully intervene to raise taxes, set interest rates, wages and prices and protect infant industries from overseas competition by imposing import tariffs and quotas.[21]

India (described by one analyst as the "citadel of planning")[22] had expended considerable thought and analyses on planned economies even before it gained independence in 1947.[23] Jawaharlal Nehru visited Moscow in 1927 and was drawn to the idea of "integrated national planning on socialist lines."[24] (Emerging anti-fascism may also have helped crystallise these views.) A National Planning Committee chaired by Nehru was subsequently established in India in 1938. The Committee considered in detail the priciples of state ownership of key industries, public transport and defence as well as the issues of "production, distribution, consumption, trade, social services, incomes and investment" public health and education.[25]

India's First Five-Year Plan (1951-56) was fairly modest. It was described by P.C. Mahalanobis, one of the chief architects of the Second Five-Year Plan, as "...essentially a list of projects without any clear unity of purpose."[26] It did, however, allocate 32% of the Plan's funds to agriculture, community development and irrigation.[27] But by the Second Five-Year Plan (1956-61) longer term objectives were being developed which emphasised the speedy growth of heavy industry - coal, electricity, iron and steel, heavy machinery, heavy chemicals and heavy industries - and also the development of a consumer goods industry in areas such as textiles, electrical goods, sewing machines, bicycles and sugar.[28] The focus in both cases was on public sector planning to guide supply and demand. Demand would also be facilitated by public sector expenditure on education, health, social services and roads.[29]

Among the theories which influenced the Second Five-Year Plan with its strong emphasis on industrialisation was an article by P.N. Rosenstein-Rodan in 1943 titled: "Problems of Industrialisation of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe", and another in

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20 *Ibid*, p.717

21 *Ibid*, pp.505-6,717

22 Waterston, *op.cit*, p.4

23 Mahalanobis, P.C., "Heralding a New Epoch", p.4, *Talks on Planning*, Statistical Publishing Company, Calcutta, 1961

24 *Ibid*, p.1

25 *Ibid*, p.3

26 "Next Steps in Planning", in Mahalanobis, P.C., *op.cit.*, p.93; Pakistan's first Six Year Development Plan for 1951-57 similarly comprised a list of public sector projects already underway. Waterston, A., *op.cit.*, p.62

27 Balasubramanyam, V.N., *The Economy of India,* Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1984, p.79

28 "Approach to Planning in India", in Mahalanobis, *op.cit.*, p.52; "Targets for Production for the Second Five Year Plan", in Mahalanobis, P. C., *The Approach of Operational Research to Planning in India,* Statistical Publishing Society, Calcutta, 1965, p.104

29 "Recommendation for the Formulation of the Second Five Year Plan", Mahalanobis, *op.cit.*, pp.22-23

1944 titled:"The International Development of Economically Backward Areas".[30] Arndt attributes Rosenstein-Roden with having established the intellectual foundations for development-planning literature in the West which was later developed by other economists such as H.W. Singer, R. Nurkse and G. Myrdal. Rosenstein-Rodan focused on balanced growth which he described as "investment in a broad front of industries which would put the 'agrarian excess population' to work through a massive inflow of foreign capital."[31] Nurske reiterated the notion of balanced growth as well as the "saving potential concealed in rural unemployment."[32]

Mahalanobis' description of India's approach to planning on All-India Radio in September 1955 echoed the theory. He said:

> The basic strategy is now clear. We can create demand by a planned expansion of the basic industries and of the social sector, that is, health, education, etc.. We meet the demand by a planned increase in the production of consumer goods as much as possible in the small and household industries, and the rest in factories. As both production and income increase, we divert a proportion of the increase in income for new investments gained in a planned manner to balance new demand by new production....[33]

Heavy industry required a comparatively small labour-force and therefore did not deal with the critical issue of unemployment experienced by most developing nations. In India, the response was to emphasise the importance of small-scale and household production, incuding handcrafts. These areas were typically labour intensive, low-cost and widespread throughout the nation. Their growth would therefore be encouraged with the assistance of the fruits of industrialisation such as cheap electricity and suitable tools and machinery developed by the manufacturing sector. The government sought to protect small-scale producers by imposing quotas on factories which were in direct competition.[34] The government also focused on rural community development programmes to assist agriculture - an issue which is discussed in detail below.

Both of India's Second and Third Five-Year Plans were committed to "development along socialist lines."[35] (Indonesia also adopted similar rhetoric in its plans.) India did not, however, nationalise all its production or collectivise its workers. Indeed India's experience with cooperative farming was a far cry from collectivisation. Each of the First to Third Five-Year Plans supported the formation of cooperative farming societies and recommended generous government financial and other assistance.[36] In the event, in the relatively few cases where individual owners pooled their land, surpluses

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[30] Arndt, H.W., *Economic Development, The History of an Idea*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1987, pp.47, 50, 187
[31] *Ibid,* p.58
[32] *Ibid,* p.59
[33] "Approach to Planning in India", in Mahalanobis, *op.cit.*, p.52
[34] *Ibid,* pp.50-52
[35] Faber, M., & Seers, D., Eds., *The Crisis in Planning Vol 2 The Experience*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1972, p.21
[36] Myrdal, *op.cit.*, vol 2, p.1353

frequently accrued to the owners while labourers and share-croppers from a different caste worked the land at normal or below normal rates.[37] While landowners - frequently absentee - enjoyed the subsidies, grants and loans afforded cooperative schemes India's hierarchical social system remained intact.

Myrdal in fact argues that in South Asia "the idea of planning ... tended to become more of an operational principle than a deeply felt social and economic urge".[38] The ideology of state planning within mixed economies was therefore quite distinct from Communist economies. And while all Western economies practised government intervention to some degree the impulse for developing nations to create development through state planning was unparalleled - the West having industrialised through entrepreneurial individualism and laissez-faire capitalism.[39]

It was one thing to develop economic plans and quite another to implement them. Development plans emphasised the necessity for high capital inflows and a highly skilled labour-force.[40] To facilitate this process the non-communist Asian states sought Western economic assistance partially through development aid. Hence state planning and aid became inextricably linked.

At the meeting of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers in Colombo in January 1950, Ceylon's Minister of Finance focused on the economic problems of Asia arguing that Asia's poverty and want should be tackled boldly. He submitted a resolution calling for assistance from the developed Commonwealth countries for both Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth Asian countries - by way of money, guaranteed prices, technical skill and machinery.[41] The proposal was considered along with the lengthier Australian memorandum, "*Economic Policy in South and South-East Asia*",[42] which with input from New Zealand, formed the genesis of the Colombo Plan.

The Colombo Plan Bureau acknowledged that: "Economic growth through comprehensive national planning [was] the generally accepted policy of Colombo Plan countries."[43] Far from opposing such strategies Western aid donors strongly approved the concept of detailed development projects formulated within broader Five or Ten-Year plans and they frequently supplied personnel to assist Planning Commissions. In India, aid as a percentage of total plan outlays comprised some 28, 27 and 33 per cent of

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37 *Ibid*, p.1354
38 *Ibid*, 725
39 *Ibid*, 712-3
40 "The Need of Scientific and Technical Man-Power for Economic Development", in Mahalanobis, *op.cit.*, p.144
41 "Talks Open in Colombo", *Sydney Morning Herald*, [*SMH*] 10/1/50, p.1; "Resolution Submitted by the Ceylon Minister of Finance", *Annexure 11*, of "Meeting of British Foreign Ministers, Colombo, January, 1950", Depart. of External Affairs, A1838, Item 540/2, Pt.1, AA
42 *Annexure 4*, of "Meeting of British Foreign Ministers, Colombo, January, 1950", Depart. of External Affairs, A1838, Item 540/2, Pt.1, AA
43 "Program of National Plans", Colombo Plan, quoted in Waterson, *op.cit.*, p.66

its 2nd, 3rd and 4th Five-Year Plans respectively.[44] By the mid-1960s almost all Asian nations had formulated some kind of development plan, if only, in some cases, to satisfy the prerequisites of Western aid donors and hence to qualify for aid.[45]

Some Colombo Plan recipients, nevertheless, shared reservations about receiving foreign aid. They debated in the Colombo Plan meetings and in their respective parliaments the issues of charity and possible loss of independence.[46] President Sukarno of Indonesia and Nehru were fiercely opposed to inflicting new forms of dependency on their nations. They nevertheless regarded economic assistance as their rightful due after years of colonial economic exploitation.[47] They also required resources to deal with the issues of internal unrest, economic reconstruction and rural and urban poverty. Pragmatism, therefore, persuaded them to co-operate.

Other nations accepted assistance more readily - especially those in proximity to communist countries. Aid to Laos, Thailand and the Republics of Korea and Vietnam particularly emphasised the military and political agenda behind US aid.[48] The bulk of American aid to Laos in the 1950s - higher per capita than anywhere else in the world - was directed to military and police activities.[49] Similarly USA aid to Thailand (by 1955 some US$64m), was channelled either directly for military use or to the large infrastructure projects - roads and ports which supported political initiatives.[50]

Despite the widespread acceptance of Western military and economic assistance by non-communist Asian nations, Asian leaders were keen to affirm their independence from the West and to demonstrate Asian solidarity. Indonesia's President Sukarno, for example, warned that donor nations must not hope to make Colombo Plan recipients in their own image.[51]

A Fragile Alliance

Many newly independent nations shared this aversion to being swamped by Western systems whether economic, scientific or cultural. Opposition displayed itself most prominently in the 1950s in rhetoric, and also in a brief display of collective strength of Afro-Asian nations at a meeting held in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955. Sukarno and Nehru, particularly, used the art of rhetoric with skill. They attempted to make clear to

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[44] Balasubramanyam, V., *op.cit.*, p.176

[45] Waterston, *op.cit.*, p.34

[46] *The Colombo Plan Story, 10 Years of Progress, 1951-1961*, Colombo Plan Bureau, Colombo, nd, c 1961, p.4; *Lok Sabha Debates,* Part 2, Vol 2, No. 1, col 1629-30, 12/6/52

[47] Clump, C., "Economic Collaboration", *SA*, Vol 1, No.4, July, 1951

[48] In the 1950s "38% of net cumulative capital and official donations to Asian cultures went to ...the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Vietnam, although their proportion of population was only 4%", UN Economic Bulletin for Asia and the Far East, Vol XIII, No.3, Dec., 1962, Table 3, p.54, quoted in Shannon, I., *Australian Outlook,* Vol 17, No.3, 1963, p.335

[49] Hall, D., *op.cit.*, p.883

[50] Clump, C., "Economic Collaboration", *op.cit.*, p.907

[51] "The Colombo Plan to Continue", *FFPN,* Nov., 1959, p.6

the West that Asian independence in its fullest meaning should be recognised and respected, and that the relationship between the West and Asia had now changed. It was an issue which clearly frustrated Nehru. He argued that there was "a lack of realisation in European countries or in America that Asian problems cannot be decided without Asia; without Asian opinion or without Asian co-operation," ..."they will continue that attempt to decide the problems of Asia somewhere in London, in New York or in Paris...".[52] He added "... the fact that Asia has changed and is changing has not wholly been grasped by many people in other countries."[53]

Asian nations did not form a particularly cohesive group, as their varying responses to Western political and economic activities in the Asian region attested. However, there were certain issues with which most developing countries sympathised. These included an opposition to colonialism, imperialism and racism as experienced under colonial rule. At the opening session of the first Commonwealth meeting to be held on Asian soil the Prime Minister of Ceylon affirmed that the Colombo venue, "was practical proof that all members of the Commonwealth were now equal, irrespective of size, race or creed".[54]

It was partly a concern to assert their independence which brought together Asian and African nations in April 1955. The Asian-African Conference hosted representatives from 29 countries, among whom were leaders of great stature: Prime Minister Nasser of Egypt, Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia, Prime Minister Chou En-Lai of China, Prime Minister Nehru of India and Prime Minister Pham Van Dong of North Vietnam.[55] The diverse political mix, as well as the seniority of the delegates, was a measure of the importance with which Asian and African countries viewed the occasion. That they could to some extent lay aside political and ideological differences in order to come together in a semblance of solidarity was not lost on the West. Neither was the fact that delegates were drawn exclusively from non-white Asia and Africa. That "coming together" despite political differences was a measure of the frustration with which non-white, non-Western countries, viewed their position vis-à-vis the West. It was also an early recognition on the part of developing nations of the importance of solidarity if they were to gain some parity with the West. Nehru reported later that the conference

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[52] Mende, T., *Conversations With Mr Nehru* , London, 1956, p.6, quoted in Nasemko, Yuri, *Jawaharal Nehru and India's Foreign Policy*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1977, p.204

[53] "An Independent Approach", pp.280-287, Lok Sabha Debate on President's address Feb. 25, 1955, *J Nehru's Speeches, Vol 3, op. cit.*

[54] "Talks Open in Colombo", *SMH*, 10/1/50, p.1

[55] Romulo, Carlos P., "The Roster of the Conference", p.62, *The Meaning of Bandung*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1956. The participating countries were: Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, the Peoples Republic of China, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gold Coast, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam, the State of Vietnam and Yemen

had helped to some extent to create this sense of solidarity in Asia as well as unease in Europe and America.[56]

Delegates to the conference identified key areas which needed to be addressed if developing nations were to start to gain some economic parity with the West. Many of their concerns related to changes to the structure of international trade and finance. They adopted a two-prong approach, attempting to influence existing global trading arrangements while encouraging more self-reliance and independence from the West by trading with each other. The conference supported the arguments for increased inter-regional economic and technical co-operation and trade. Because most of the participating nations were heavily reliant on commodities, they recommended the stabilisation of commodity prices through bilateral and multilateral arrangements. As well they recognised the necessity to diversify their export trade especially by processing their raw materials.[57]

Shipping and freight was one problem which revealed the weak position of developing nations vis à vis the West. All shipping procedures, including insurance, were monopolised by the West. The group determined to make a study of shipping and railway freight practices and recommended establishing national and regional banks and insurance companies in an attempt to off-set some of its disadvantages. The conference also recommended broadening multilateral institutions to benefit the Afro-Asian region. This included greater financial help from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the establishment of a special United Nations fund for economic development and an international finance corporation to promote equity investment and joint ventures among Afro-Asian countries. Delegates supported the idea of prior consultation in international forums on issues of mutual economic interest, but they did not seek to form an Afro-Asian bloc.[58]

While the group came to a semblance of agreement on economic issues, political differences suggested that attempts by the developing nations to sustain a united front would always be difficult. The conference was represented by a wide spectrum of interests, described by the Chairman of the Philippine delegation to Bandung as including: Communist states such as China and North Vietnam; allies of the West such as Turkey in NATO and Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines in SEATO; states "more or less" friendly to the West such as Ethiopia, Iraq, Lebanon, Iran and Ceylon and "aggressively neutralist" countries such as India, Indonesia, Burma and Egypt.[59] Within Asia alone there existed considerable tensions between nations which were often a legacy of the colonial period. Tensions existed, for example, between India and Pakistan

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[56] Nasemko, Yuri, *op.cit., p.* 204
[57] "Full Text of Final Communique of the Conference", Appendix, Romulo, C., *op.cit.*, pp.92-95
[58] *Ibid*
[59] Romulo, C., *op.cit.*, pp.3-4

and Malaya and Singapore, besides the communist/non-communist divisions and a general nervousness in the region about what Japan's future role would be.

Given these differences, rhetoric extolling the values, qualities and traditions of Asia's cultures represented one of the few unifying forces. At the second round of Colombo Plan meetings held in Sydney, in May 1950, each of the Asian Commonwealth delegates had stressed the unique characteristics of their respective cultures. The Ceylonese Minister of Finance, Mr Jayawardene remarked:

> In this area [of South and Southeast Asia] live peoples with ancient cultures and histories dating back to periods before the beginning of the Christian era. My own country has a recorded continuous and unbroken history dating from 500 B.C.. These peoples live in rich and fertile lands which unfortunately they have not been able to develop for several centuries. While the nations of the West and the British Dominions beyond the seas were able to take full advantage of the modern industrial inventions and develop economically and socially, circumstances forced us to be mere spectators. He continued, ...I wish to add that there is no question whatsoever of interference with the independence and the internal affairs of those who seek and obtain aid.[60]

The Indian and Pakistan delegations expressed similar sentiments.[61] The final communique at Bandung also reiterated the uniqueness of Asian and African cultures describing them as the "cradle of great religions and civilizations,"..."based on spiritual and universal foundations", in contrast to the West's more materialistic and individualistic culture.[62] This was a theme to which many Asians would return in their attempts to shield their cultures from Westernisation.[63]

Bandung and its aftermath identified a block of nations, mostly from the newly independent nations of Africa and Asia, which to a lesser or greater degree sat outside the bipolar international system. These nations represented a somewhat disparate group linked by a common bond of under-development, poverty, anti-colonialism and a resolve to gain parity in the world's economic system. But Bandung had also revealed the potential difficulty in developing and sustaining an effective opposition to the West and the Soviet Bloc. Tensions within the developing world, as well as different alliances with First or Second world nations, tended to work against Third World cohesion.[64]

Nehru held that the Bandung conference had at least started to undermine the region's over dependence on the West. As one of the most outspoken leaders in the region Nehru

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[60] Statement by the Hon. J.R. Jayawardene, Minister of Finance and Leader of the Ceylon Delegation, Statements by Leaders of Delegations at Opening Session of Commonwealth Consultative Committee, 15th May, 1950, *C.N.*, Vol 21, No.5, May, 1950, pp.344-45

[61] Statement by Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, Leader of the Indian Delegation, Statements by Leaders of Delegations at the Opening Session of Commonwealth Consultative Committee, *Ibid.*, pp.345-6; Statement by the Hon. Chaudhri Nazir Ahmad Khan, Leader of the Pakistan Delegation, *Ibid.*, pp.347-8

[62] Romulo, C., Appendix *op.cit.*, pp.95-96

[63] Manglapus, R., "The Spiritual Character of Asia", Speech to Australian Asian Association, 20/2/58, reported in *Australian-Asian Association of Victoria Bulletin,* No. 6, April 1958, pp.2-8

[64] The First, Second and Third Worlds referred to the West, the Soviet Bloc and Developing Nations respectively.

persistently challenged Asian nations to assert their "Asian-ness", to adopt "an Asian way of looking at the world", though he conceded that this would encompass many Asian viewpoints.[65] Nehru's support for independent action was illustrated most clearly in his strongly neutralist, non-partisan foreign policy. Burma and Indonesia also endorsed this stance.

During the 1950s India promoted five principles of *Panchsheel*, signing Joint Statements with some eighteen countries. The principles stated: Mutual respect with each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence.[66] Seeking to diffuse tensions between the West and the Soviet Union, India lobbied persistently in the UN for disarmament. India also helped to promote the idea that the divide between the developed and developing world was more critical than the East/West divide, a notion which we have seen was taken up by Eisenhower and MacMillan to promote the FAO's Freedom from Hunger Campaign at the end of the 1950s.

Nehru's non-partisan approach struck a chord with some leaders elsewhere. Tito in Yugoslavia urged peaceful co-existence with the Soviet Union. Nasser in Egypt attempted to break from Western domination without being subsumed by the Soviet Union, from which he had accepted military and economic aid. These three leaders, Nehru, Tito and Nasser were in frequent contact throughout the second part of the 1950s and supported a position of "non-alignment". By 1960 many events converged to persuade the three, strongly supported by Ghana's Nkrumah and Indonesia's Sukarno, to support a non-aligned summit meeting. Cold War tensions had continued and proliferated. As well, Africa, which had sixteen newly independent states in that year, was extremely unsettled.[67] Confrontation in the Congo, in Sharpeville in South Africa, in Algeria, and between the French Brazzaville group and Nkrumah's campaign for Pan-Africanism might it was feared, invite Cold War intervention.[68] The Non-Aligned movement which subsequently evolved from the Belgrade Non-Aligned Summit

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[65] Nehru replying to debate on the President's Address in Lok Sabha on February, 18. 1958, in *Jawaharlal Nehru India's Foreign Policy, Selected Speeches, September 1946-April 1961*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, August 1961, Delhi; Nehru, J, "Report on Bandung" Statement in Lok Sabha, April 30th 1955, in *J Nehru's Speeches*, Vol 3, March 1953-August 1957, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1958, Delhi, p.294; "The Basic Approach", Note published in *A.I.C.C. Economic Review*, New Delhi, Aug., 15, 1958, pp.114-123, in *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches Vol. 4, Sept 1957 - April 1963*, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, August 1964, Delhi, p.121

[66] *Foreign Policy of India:Texts of Documents, 1947-59*, New Delhi, Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1959

[67] Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia and Ghana became independent in 1957, Guinea in 1958 and eighteen former French, Belgium, Italian and British territories in 1960. Anell, L., Nygren, B., *The Developing Countries and the World Economic Order*, Frances Pinter, London, 1980

[68] Arnove argues: "Following the independence of Ghana in 1958, the [Ford] Foundation turned its attention to Africa...", Arnove, *op.cit.*, p.151; Willetts, P., *The Non-Aligned Movement:The Origins of a Third World Alliance*, Francis Pinter Ltd., London, 1978

conference in 1961 represented one of the two major Third World responses to global bipolarism represented by the communist and capitalist blocs. The second Third World response was the Group of 77 which was formed in 1964. These contacts marked the beginnings of what would in later decades be called the "South alliance", an international Third World grouping with a major emphasis on promoting economic development in the developing nations.

Programmes for Economic Growth

As many developing nations suspected in the wake of pursuing economic development they became acutely vulnerable to being caught in positions of increasing dependency on the West. These positions were demonstrated graphically in the large infrastructure projects and educational scholarships which formed the basis of Western economic aid. The transference of Western methods and techniques was fundamental to such schemes. As such, many aid programmes added to the Westernising influences which had been imposed under colonial rule.

There was a deal of contradiction in the views and interests of different sectors in the newly independent states vis-à-vis Western assistance. Some expressed doubts about the relevance of Western education and methods to Asia, while continuing to attach their Five or Six Year Plans to the economic growth model. Nehru remarked at a 1959 conference of the State Social Welfare Advisory Board: "We have got into the habit of copying Western models. I have yet failed to understand what good it does to send people to be trained in Western countries to do social welfare work in India. There is no such thing as an Indian village in America or England....The approach has to suit the conditions in India".[69] Professor Ungku Aziz from the Department of Economics at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, was another who believed it was necessary to deal with development problems discretely.[70]

> Many of our visiting experts come from "the West". Their advice is sincere but there is a real problem involved in the giving of that advice. Though they may hold degrees of M.Sc. or Ph.D., their experience is generally limited to their own kind of environment....The problems of people from the under-developed countries like Malaya, Ghana, Peru, India were in a sense utterly different from the problems of the people from Finland, from West Germany, from France or from Britain. These differences exist inspite of the sympathy and goodwill between [us]. ...In all advanced countries...includ[ing] Australia, the problems...are in most cases problems of adjusting an existing machine.... This is a great defect about all people from the West who have come to help us and it is found even amongst our own people who have been educated in the West.... Our environment calls for tool-makers, not tool adjusters. It is the people who can make new kinds of tools or who can help us to build a machine to suit our particular conditions whom we really need. These are the people who can make the biggest contribution towards our political, economic and social development, whereas adjusters merely give us a lot of trouble.[71]

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[69] Nehru, J., Inauguration of the 5th Annual Conference on State Social Welfare Advisory Boards, New Delhi, March 18, 1959, in *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, Vol 4, op. cit.*, p.431

[70] Wilkes J., Ed., *Asia and Australia*, The Australian Institute of Political Science, Angus and Robertson, Sydney 1961, p.viii

[71] Aziz, U., "Prospects for Economic Growth in Asia", in Wilkes John Ed., *Ibid*

Occasionally concerns were raised by local commentators about the introduction of Western techniques and methods, such as chemical fertiliser and mechanised farming, while ignoring traditional methods. One critic suggested that mechanisation would foster dependency on foreign countries and increase unemployment in India.[72] He asked: "Is it prudent ...to rely unnecessarily on foreign countries and let our precious man-power and cattle-power decay?" "...chemical fertilisers are proved through scientific investigation to be harmful to the soil in the long run", [and] "... the grain is poorer in its nutritive value..".[73] He urged for the continued use of "cattle power" and compost manure, for machinery "adapted to the needs and conditions in India" and for relevant education aimed at "fitting the educated for a life well adapted to his own environment."[74]

Despite such criticisms the fifties nevertheless formalised the educational arrangements of developing countries with Western institutions, through schemes such as the Colombo Plan and SEATO. Given Australia's preference for Western ways and methods and ignorance about the Asian environment the chances of students receiving an education sensitive to Asian conditions were remote in the 1950s. Indeed if films made by Colombo Plan students learning the techniques of film-making with the Australian Commonwealth Film Unit were any yardstick, students were strongly encouraged to copy and not to question the West. The Ceylonese government reinforced this tendency by expressly discouraging Colombo Plan students from criticising the donor country. Those guilty of "making statements critical of the country in which they are guests" were to be immediately recalled.[75] (Asian students studying in Australia in 1988 felt less constrained. They complained to the visiting Buddhist Thai development activist and social critic, Sulak Sivaraksa, that Western values were still being imposed on them - that they were still being told how their nations should develop.[76])

The films, *Our Neighbour Australia* and *Australian Scene,* affected the same authoritative and unimaginative style of the average 1950s Australian classroom, which required an absorption of accepted facts and presented little room for dialogue and critique. The film *Our Neighbour Australia*, presented by students from Pakistan outlined Australia's great resources and triumphs: "In the past 150 years you have achieved a great deal of which you can be proud - an untamed continent, turned into a

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[72] Manipadum, A., *SA,* Vol 4, No.4, April 1954, pp.145-147
[73] *Ibid*
[74] *Ibid*
[75] "Colombo Plan Scholars Cautioned", *Ceylon Newsletter,* Colombo, 6/6/53, CRS A1838, Item 160/11/1/1, Pt.2, AA
[76] "Third World Issues and Development Education", seminar August 26, 1988, presented by Sulak Sivaraksa, Teacher's Federation, Sussex Street, Sydney

well organised modern society, enriched with the fruits of civilisation".[77] By dwelling on technical triumph, communications, improved stock and milk supplies and breeding "better and improved" seed varieties, these students were being invited to focus on a very limited definition of "civilisation".

Governments which received Colombo Plan aid generally directed their criticisms of the Plan at administrative details or the smug attitude of donors. Rarely were specific projects or the scheme itself questioned, (although mention was made at the 1954 Consultative Committee meeting by the Indian delegate, "... it sometimes happens that the goods offered by donor countries disturbed the traditional trade and commercial distribution patterns of the receiving countries".)[78]

Annual Colombo Plan Consultative Committee meetings revealed problems which would become perennial to both government and non-government agencies. These included administrative delays and expiry deadlines placed on allocated funds, which meant that the funds were lost unless utilised by a certain date.[79] The Regional Director of the World Health Organisation in Southeast Asia in 1958 criticised the "outside" expert and the prima donna experts who too frequently thought they had all the answers and tried to go too far and too fast in applying them:

> Doctors, nurses, sanitarians, must not only possess a thorough knowledge of their own specialities. They must also be endowed with the capacity to get along with people of cultural, social and economic backgrounds that are very different from their own. If they cannot make the necessary personal adjustment to these conditions, they are often worse than useless in our work. The kind of "expert" who arrives in a country with his mind culturally sealed is, happily, getting rarer. But there are still occasions when the work of our staff is gravely hampered because they fail to appreciate the reasons behind the difficulties they and their national colleagues encounter. Some "experts" still act like prima donnas and will accept nothing but the best from the local administrations, failing to realise that if all the fine things were available they would never have been asked to come in and help.[80]

These sentiments were shared by another observer writing for the Indian journal *Social Action* in the early 1950s. He had clearly had enough of the entire gamut of "experts" who presumed to counsel India about its "problems":

> In the bad old days, which Indians graciously try to forget..., the country was plagued with batches of foreign experts, commissions and committees, who deplored the defects, and deficiencies of the country's banking, currency, agriculture, trade, industry, education and all the rest; decade after decade.... With independence, the tune has changed, there are still many visitors, tourists and experts, economists, politicians, social workers, who go round cities and towns...; they talk and discourse, as fluently as ever, expatiating on the qualities and qualifications, virtues and merits of the Indian people.... people listen with patience but they are

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[77] *Our Neighbour Australia*, 1952, made by Agha Bashir Ahmad and Rashid Khan students from Pakistan, as part of their training under the Colombo Plan with assistance from the Film Division of the Dept of Interior, Australian Film and Sound Archives

[78] Indian delegate at Consultative Committee on Co-operative Economic Development in South and South-East Asia, in "Minutes of Preliminary Meeting of Officials, Ottawa, 21/9/54", CRS A3102, Item 112/2/1/2, p.3, AA

[79] *Ibid*

[80] Mani, Rr. C., Regional Director WHO in SEA, "Obstacle Race for Health", *FFPN*, April, 1958, p.7-8

> getting bored. They know well enough what they are and what they want. They have battalions of planners on the front line and full regiments in reserve. They have their fate in their own hands and they mean to win the battle of life. When they want the advice of others, they know where to get it.[81]

Recipient governments expressed some doubts about the negative aspects of assistance in the context of neo-colonialism, cultural imperialism or dependency. However, neither Western nations nor developing nations anticipated that the massive infrastructure projects undertaken in the 1950s could be socially and environmentally harmful to local communities. In that respect developing nations were every bit as keen as the West to "progress". Many welcomed the completion of the large schemes with as much enthusiasm and chauvinism as evidenced in Western documentaries:

> The opening of the Tilaya Dam and the Bokaro Thermal Plant marked a great date in India's industrialisation, and showed that the Damodar Valley Corporation at least will be able to achieve its set objectives within the first Five Year Plan. These projects dwarf what Red China has accomplished in that line and should confirm India in her method of progress.[82]

The Colombo Plan did afford opportunities for Asian nations to rebuild those inter-Asia links which had existed (as many Asians argued) before being destroyed by colonialism.[83] Nehru believed the isolation of Asian nations from each other had been one of the most notable results of colonialism.[84] The artificial trade links which connected colonised to coloniser, rather than allowing free expression of trade between Asian nations, was an obvious constraint imposed by colonialism. Inter-Asia forums would become increasingly important over the next three decades initially at the government to government level, but increasingly also among NGOs.[85]

Representatives of the plan gathered yearly for a three week Consultative Meeting. Through the 1950s these meetings were held in Karachi, Singapore, Japan, Delhi and Kuala Lumpur. The Diplomatic missions in Ceylon represented the Colombo Plan Council and met there several times a year.[86] The point was frequently made that such contacts were invaluable professionally. The Director of the Colombo Plan Bureau in Colombo reported in 1954 : "...the very existence of the plan has drawn the member countries closer together.... Continuous exchanges of views among Ministers and

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[81] A.L. "Here and There", *SA*, Vol. 3, No.1, April, 1953, p.2

[82] *SA*, Vol. 3, No.1, Ap., 1954

[83] Nehru's speech at concluding session of the Asian-African Conference at Bandung, Indonesia, April 24, 1955, in *Nehru, J., India's Foreign Policy, Selected Speeches, September, 1946-April 1961*, *Ibid*, p.271

[84] Nehru, J, "Call to Asians", Nehru's inauguration speech of the Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, March 23, 1947, in Bose, D.R. Ed., *New India Speaks*, A. Mukherjee & Co., Calcutta, nd, p.138

[85] Some South Asian NGOs for example made special efforts to forge links feeling that outside influences had worked hard to keep Pakistan, India and Bangledesh at loggerheads. Interview with Kamla Bhasin, FAO, New Delhi, 28/1/91

[86] *The Colombo Story, op.cit.*, p.7

officials have fostered precious habits of co-operation, while periodical conferences have spread knowledge of the techniques of economic organisation at first hand."[87]

As well as formal meetings Asian nations increasingly provided technical training and experts to each other. This practice was potentially more relevant and also more cost effective than training Asians in the West. It was a little known facet of the Colombo Plan scheme that the Asian recipients of aid were also aid donors. India's Minister of Finance in reply to a question on aid in the Indian parliament in 1955, explained that India was supplying technical aid to Nepal, the Philippines, Ceylon, Indonesia, Burma, Pakistan, Malaya and Vietnam.[88] "Technically advanced countries give help to technically backward countries. India is receiving aid from other technically advanced countries like the USA and the U.K.. India occupies a middle position. It receives aid and also gives aid to less technically advanced countries".[89] India provided aid in civil, mechanical and electrical engineering, textile technology, income tax and statistics, broadcasting and customs administration.[90] In 1952 Pakistan supplied 30 head of cattle to the Australian Northern Territory for breeding, and training in dam construction to Ceylon.[91] And in 1955 Singapore provided training in customs and excise, labour administration, public administration and timber grading, and Malaya in road construction and rubber research. Ceylon provided training in anti-tuberculosis nursing and rural development work.[92] Schemes such as the Colombo Plan afforded in a small way opportunities for the participating Asian nations to forge the links which had been recognised at Bandung as an essential pre-requisite to changing their status as marginalised states.

Many Asian states also adopted a second economic focus which was directed at the village level. The scheme was known as the Community Development Programme (CDP), and was introduced in one form or another throughout much of non-communist Asia during the 1950s.[93]

Community Development Programmes

India, a major focus of Australian Government and non-Government aid in that period, made a particularly rigorous attempt to incorporate the Community

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87 Curtin, P., "Commonwealth's Economic Aid to Southeast Asia", *SMH*, 18/8/54, p.2

88 "Colombo Plan", *Lok Sabha Debates,* Vol V11, Part 1, 21/11/55-23/12/55, p.1160-1161

89 *Ibid*

90 *Ibid.*; "Report of the Council for Technical Co-operation in South and South-East Asia for 1952", *C.N.*, Vol 24, No.3, Mar., 1953, p.148

91 *Ibid*

92 *The Task Ahead, Progress of The Colombo Plan For Co-operative Economic Development in South and South-East Asia,* Colombo Plan Information Unit, Colombo, 1956, pp.27-29

93 The CDP scheme was introduced in Pakistan, Korea, India, Ceylon, the Philippines and Indonesia., *SA,* Vol 15, No.3, 1965, p.761

Development Programme (CDP) into its development plans. It launched the scheme in 1952. The fact that the government of India chose to follow an American model for its official village development programme, albeit one trialed and adapted in India, reflected the lack of unanimity among India's leaders on how village development should be pursued. For India was one country which already possessed indigenous models of village development which were being utilised by several voluntary NGO groups. The idea of self-supporting, self-reliant community development at the village level, had its antecedents in India in the ideas of individuals such as Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and others who had attempted to develop specific rural communities.[94]

On the face of it, the CDP promised radical and progressive changes. It aimed to permeate the whole of village life, raising levels of productivity, improving sanitation, health and education. Furthermore, the sheer scope of the plan, which was to involve some 55 projects each covering around 500 sq miles, promised a concerted attack on rural poverty, at a level never previously attempted.[95] Planning Commissioner Krishnamachari emphasised: "It is only by every family in the country, organised in Village institutions, working together for fighting poverty and improving levels of life, that there can be social and moral cohesion in villages".[96]

The scheme was much like a mini-Colombo Plan, providing infrastructure to the rural areas such as roads, schools and wells. In the mid-fifties it was broadened in an effort to raise food production to concentrate on the provision of agricultural facilities such as seeds, fertiliser, improved farming implements, tube wells, easier access to credit, improved marketing, breeding centres for animal husbandry, soil research and forestry planting.[97]

The CDP was scrutinised and analysed minutely by the Indian government, UN agencies and large overseas non-government agencies like the Ford Foundation (all of which supplied funding and expert advice to the scheme). Indian and overseas welfare workers, voluntary personnel and academics also commented.[98] Although the scheme generated considerable rhetoric along the lines that it would ignite the latent energy of the villagers to create their own development, it also attracted major criticisms. In fact it appeared to attract more criticism than the Colombo Plan, perhaps because it was more pervasive than the large one-off infrastructure projects.

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[94] *SA*, Vol 13, Nos. 5 & 6, May-June, 1963, p.251-255
[95] "Community Development", *SA*, Vol 13, Nos.5&6, May & June, 1963, p.251
[96] V.T. Krishnamachari, *Planning in India*, Orient Longmans, Bombay, 1961, p.264 quoted in Myrdal, G., *Asian Drama* , Vol 2, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1968, p.870
[97] *SA*, Vol 4, No.4, April 1954, p.142-3
[98] *SA*, Vol 10, No.8, Aug, 1960, p.314; *SA*, Vol 2, No.11, Feb, 1953, p.347; *SA*, Vol 4, No.4, April, 1954, p.141

There were allegations that the CDP initiatives tended to benefit the better off in the community - those who had land to irrigate and produce to take to market, even though some landless labourers were marginally assisted by providing their labour for the new facilities. "Experts" who extended their knowledge about seeds, fertiliser or irrigation to the rural areas moreover tended to gravitate to the groups with which they could most easily communicate and with whom they felt more at ease. Other complaints found the scheme too "target oriented", reflecting more the administration's desire to achieve certain targets - numbers of roads completed or wells dug - than an attempt to involve the community in the process of development and to reflect its needs. The quality of social workers was also criticised. And the administration of the scheme was charged with being large, unwieldy, top-down and bureaucratic, again favouring the more privileged sectors of society.[99]

Myrdal catalogued numerous comments from observers of the CDP which illustrated the enormous gulf between administrators and villagers. A Ford Foundation spokesperson observed of India, "...all too frequently the village worker is looked upon, and treated, as a low grade peon, not as a co-worker". V Krishnamachari, the vice-chairman of the Indian Planning Commission cautioned recruits to the Indian administrative service:"The greatest obstacle to development in India, in my view, has always been the mental distance between those who are 'educated' and those who are not 'educated'". His views were shared by an observer of Indonesian development who noted in 1955:

> The most important gap that must be jumped by an extension program is the gap between the lowest civil service level (often the subdistrict) and the village level. This is the gap most likely to separate more or less educated, modern, Westernized, professionalized Indonesians from more or less uneducated, traditional local people.[100]

There were also frequent accusations that the scheme was used for political gain, with groups of people being used as "vote banks", or block votes in exchange for assistance.[101] In an effort to alleviate some of the problems and to encourage full community involvement, the administration of the CDP was decentralised to the panchayat or village council level at the end of the 1950s. But since these were also run by the elite very little substantially changed.

The Ceylon government launched a programme similar to the CDP based on self-help village level groups assisted by rural development officers. The stated objective "to create a rural society based on self-help, mutual aid and service was to supersede "the

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[99] *SA*, Vol 10, No. 8, Aug., 1960, p.313
[100] Myrdal, *op.cit.*, pp.888-889
[101] *SA*, Vol 3, No.1, April, 1953, p.3; *SA*, Vol 10, No.8, Aug, 1960, p.317-8

present individualism and attendant ills...".[102] The same attitude and language that were used about the Indian rural societies were used in Ceylon. The energy and enthusiasm of the peasants were to be harnessed so that they could help themselves. In reality, the results mirrored the Indian experience. Participation by poor communities did not take place. Partisan politics intervened. The better-off, not the poor, tended to benefit and there was an over concentration on infrastructure rather than on development efforts which might have more directly benefited the poor.[103]

Both Western and Asian commentators about peasant communities demonstrated how difficult it was for "outsiders", whether indigenous or foreign, to fully comprehend the village situation. In fact many of the indigenous workers were as distant from the real needs of the community as Western donors were. While one observer remarked that "the felt or the basic or the fundamental needs of the community have first to be considered", he conceded that this might not be easily attained because "the mentality and relative values of the people might be quite contrary of that of the development officer".[104] Indeed the attempts to bridge the distance between the middle class indigenous urban-based social worker and the villagers, were frequently reminiscent of the self-conscious attempts being made by the Australian Government at the time to understand its migrants and Asian neighbours. One Indian journal article in 1958 (highly influenced by the USA) offered the following suggestions to social workers on how best to develop personal contacts in the villages:

> Social workers must visit their 'pet villages' as often as they can, spend, if possible, some days in those villages and when they are amidst the villagers, dress like the villagers and eat the food of the villagers. ... A good way of winning the confidence of the villager is to mix up with the village children. Through active participation in village sports and games, the social worker will in no time become a hero of the village urchins. Soon he will find it easy to divert their energies for constructive work, say, the construction of school-premises or the repair of the village bridge or removing pests from the tank.[105]

The above response, which had all the hall-marks of aliens meeting aliens, was illustrative of what the Americans called "the dirty hands method".[106] "Getting his hands dirty is an important part of the social worker's job. He must not only know how to make a compost-pit, he must make or help to make one, to show the villagers how it should be done. He must know and do well every job a villager does".[107]

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[102] *Ceylon Year Book, 1949*, p.119, quoted in Tilakaratna, *NGO Involvement in Rural Development*, p.15, Paper given at National NGO Workshop for the Joint CIRDAP/ANGOC Programme on Rural Community Participation

[103] Tilakaratna, *Ibid,* p.15

[104] Lallemand, A., *SA,* Vol 5, No.12, Dec. 1955, pp.532-3

[105] Ryan, F.A., "The Approach to Village Uplift", *SA*, Vol 8, No.7, July, 1958, pp.273-279, The Indian Institute of Social Order, Poona, India

[106] "Community Development Projects", *SA*, Vol 4, No. 4, April, 1954, p.144; "Community Development", *SA*, Vol 5, No.12, Dec., 1955, p.532

[107] *SA,* Vol 8, No.7, July 1958, p.280

Despite appeals for village participation, the bulk of Asian literature did not encourage Asia's poor to be looked upon as knowledgeable individuals. Village knowledge was highly under-valued. As in Western media images, the poor were frequently treated as an undifferentiated amorphous group, often described as "the downtrodden masses", "the teeming millions", or as "passive", too reliant on government and outside agencies, who needed to realise "that they can do a good deal [to help] themselves".[108] Asian bureaucratic solutions to village poverty appeared to fall between two stools. They promoted a watered-down "go to the peasants" theory, with hints of Maoism, or Ho Chi Minh or Gandhi, without the accompanying commitment to thorough social and economic change. At the same time they adopted a censorious attitude of disapproval which suggested that the poor should do a lot more to help themselves by "lifting themselves up by their own bootstraps".[109]

In 1957 the Indian Conference of Social Work concluded that the CDP had achieved only "the first and lowest step of development" through material benefits such as roads, schools and wells in some villages. "Very little, it argued, "has been achieved in improving or calling to life the spirit of the community itself." It described the villages as apathetic and unprogressive which would soon fall back on their old "evils", once the CDP administration was withdrawn - "no leadership, self-reliance, initiative or desire for self-improvement has been permanently established as a result of the CDP activities."[110]

The common solution offered by what one critic called "the Westernised and scientifically trained social workers, living mainly in the bigger cities of India", was to apply longer training, more thorough training and more "scientific" training. The conference strongly recommended such training for all social workers, researchers, and labour welfare officers. Community development work also required proper surveying, scientific research, thoughtful planning and continual assessment programmes.[111] A social worker had to study the community and survey the external forces and influences acting upon it before attempting to raise the social and economic standard of the community.[112] The methods being suggested were clearly reminiscent of the Colombo Plan and other agencies which observed, catalogued, studied and reported the developing world, and then dictated the direction it should take, rather than consulting with those it studied.

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108 *SA*, Vol 5, No.12, Dec. 1955, p.525; *SA*, Vol 8, No.7, July 1958, p. 276; A.F., "Social Trends", *SA*, Vol 7, No.12, Dec., 1957, p.536

109 "Bold New Concept..."*op.cit.;* "Australia's External Aid 1967-1968", *op.cit.*

110 Bogaert, M. Van den, *SA*, Vol 7, No. 2, Feb., 1957, p.73

111 *Ibid*, p.74

112 *SA*, Vol 8, No. 7, July, 1958 pp.273

The Non-Government Sector

Besides the formal bilateral response to poverty by Western donors and Asian recipient nations, we have seen that there was an active informal response to Asian poverty from Western voluntary organisations. They supplied funds, materials and people to assist Asian communities. Some were small and autonomous like the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria and were located in the West. Others were located in Asia representing Western missions or were off-shoots of Western organisations such as the Red Cross, the YMCA and YWCA.

But there were also countless indigenous religious and secular organisations throughout Asia with long traditions of social service. Pakistan, India, Ceylon, the Philippines, Malaya, Indonesia, and Thailand all had no shortage of these charity-based organisations, many of which were run by the churches. Whether the Catholic church in the Philippines, the Islamic community in Pakistan, the Ramakrishna Mission in India or the Buddhist temple in Thailand or Ceylon, many were engaged in work with the handicapped, the orphaned, the elderly, the infirm, the destitute.[113] Ceylon had organisations dating from the 1910s and 1920s, such as the Ceylon Social League, the School for the Deaf and Blind and the Jayasekara Home for Women and Children.[114]

Like their Western counterparts the majority of these welfare/philanthropic societies supported traditional conservative welfare or relief programmes. They were frequently patronised by the elite and often developed strong links with similar Western voluntary organisations. In Thailand the royal family and other wealthy families had long been patrons of charitable organisations.[115] These were analogous to groups like the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria. Indeed, AAAV's president, Sir Charles Lowe, presented a cheque for £1,450 to the Queen of Thailand for aid purposes and requested that some of it be spent on "a very poor village [known to one of AAAV's members]... where the people had to buy every drop of water they used." The royal family reassured that they would specifically ask the Red Cross to channel some of the money to the village.[116] While much of this work was genuinely altruistic, membership nevertheless also provided access to influential internal and overseas networks as well as honours and prestige for such philanthropy and service.

In the Cold War atmosphere of the 1950s the West encouraged such links even more firmly. In Nepal a spate of Western style welfare organisations emerged in the 1950s: the Nepal Welfare Centre in 1951, the Nepal T.B. Eradication Association in 1953 and

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113 *Status Papers on NGO Involvement in Rural Development: A Perspective of Ten Countries in Asia*, Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Makati, Metro Manila, Philippines, 1984, pp.21-9, 61-70, 71-83, 103-112

114 *Ibid*, p.52; Tilakaratna, *op.cit.*, p.10

115 *Status Papers ..., op.cit.*

116 Minutes of the AAAV, Women's Group, Melbourne, 28/8/62; 25/9/62

the Nepal Family Planning Association and Rotary Club in 1959.[117] In South Korea where American experts and technicians brought in after the Korean war promoted the CDP with rigour, the South Korean government was also influenced to promote the "Head, Heart, Hand, and Health (4-H) Club".[118] The basis of much of the voluntary assistance involved the provision of medicine, clothing, food or shelter and sometimes, in the case of missionary work, to educational facilities.

The Executive Secretary of a large inter-Asian umbrella NGO located in the Philippines in 1989 remarked on the deficiency of voluntary overseas aid during the 1950s. His comments applied equally to much of the local assistance:

> The types of assistance that came in was short term, charity, dole-out, very basic stuff. In the 1950s up to the mid 1960s that first wave was really using us as a dumping ground of assistance. ... I guess they were conditioned by good motives. I think either those were the surpluses available or no-one really had a systematic view about what aid assistance should be..... But most fizzled out, you will not see any tangible outputs of that type of development. It's difficult to see motives but what we are saying is that it had no impact on recipients.[119]

To the extent that such assistance rarely decreased the numbers of poor and dependent people these were fair comments. While individuals who received life-saving or life-enhancing surgery, or schooling or who underwent religious conversion, might fairly be said to have felt the impact of conservative charity, the broader community dimensions of poverty remained unaddressed. Of the Western-style aid organisations which set up in Asia, Valenzuela continued:

> They were really trying to mould the Asian counterpart in their own image and likeness, it was a cloning, a cloning. The Boy Scout movement just wanted to plant their flag there, no-one knew any better...The elites in these countries like the National Council of Women in Thailand, whoever, whatever, you name an agency in the West, they have a clone, a national chapter here. You will see the most prominent people in the society as the office bearers or who control the power. You can see that remnant today.[120]

While most voluntary organisations in Asia engaged in this traditional assistance, some like the Food for Peace Campaign in Australia, began in the 1950s to question the "hand-out" approach and to evolve more sustainable methods. But they did so with some difficulty. Although governments accepted the work of the voluntary sector, support tended to be confined to its welfare role. More developmental forms of assistance were deemed to be the task of governments. In fact Asian governments administering the CDP frequently discouraged the growth of grassroots development

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117 *Status Papers..., op.cit.*, p.52

118 *Ibid*, p.88; The 4-H Club originated in Illinois in 1900 as a rural youth movement, Andrews, W., Ed., *Concise Dictionary of American History*, Charles Scribner's Sons, NY, 1962, p.375

119 Interview with Edgardo Valenzuela, Executive Secretary, Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, 15/2/89, Secretariat, Manila, Philippines

120 *Ibid.*; The YWCA and the YMCA were established in Ceylon in the 1880s, the St. John's Ambulance Brigade in 1905, the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides in 1917, the Red Cross in 1936. Tilakarantna, *op. cit.*, p.11

work by indigenous NGOs. The South Korean government (with USA backing), heavily promoted the CDP leaving no room for the involvement of development NGOs. One NGO reported in later years: "With the US government actively supporting development programs between 1953 and 1959 by sending experts and providing long-term technical assistance, the grassroots participation in development was neglected".[121] In India the CDP administration decided that voluntary organisations impeded its operations and actively discouraged development NGOs from engaging in rural development work.

That attempt to control development at the grassroots level with government-sponsored CDPs reflected in part the preoccupation with communism promoted by the USA. "The masses" had to be developed in an orderly "top-down" manner to avoid them being stirred by "undesirable elements" to support communism. In that respect the growth of communism world-wide rendered the poor in non-communist nations a disservice. Fear of communism diverted the attention of Western nations like Australia away from poverty issues to focus on a political agenda. And within developing nations it encouraged a cautious, conservative, "top down" approach to poverty, suspicious of groups like the activist NGOs wishing to work directly with the poor. (To again quote Archbishop Camara: "If I feed the hungry, they call me a saint, if I ask why they are hungry, they call me a communist.")

In India, however, despite attempts to dissipate the effectiveness of NGOs, the government's attitude proved a catalyst which brought them together. It encouraged a number of NGOs to organise a seminar in 1956 with the theme: "The Role of Voluntary Organisations in the Field of Rural Development".[122] The seminar included participants from the Indian Co-operative Union, the Delhi School of Social Work, the All-India Women's Conference, the All-India Khadi and Village Industries Board and the YMCA Rural Demonstration Centre.[123] The umbrella organisation - the Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development, or AVARD - which grew out of the conference, was one of the earliest of its kind to be formed in Asia. The Association was registered in 1958 with a dozen founding members and produced a bi-monthly publication - *AVARD Newsletter* - from 1958 which was renamed *Voluntary Action* in 1966.[124] It too, was one of the first of its kind in Asia.

The AVARD members originally hoped to complement and supplement the government's work, working with it in co-operation in order to provide continuity once the government programme withdrew. However, the administrator of the CDP, Shri S.K. Dey, who had been persuaded to address the seminar, not only felt otherwise he

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121 *Status Papers on NGO Involvement ..., op. cit.*, p.88
122 Sen, A.C., "Two Decades of AVARD 1958-78", *V.A.*, Vol XX1, No. 7-8, July-Aug. 1979, p.11
123 *Ibid*
124 *Ibid*, p.12

utterly shocked the NGOs by denouncing them. Reminiscing about the meeting L.C. Jain explained:

> Briefly he argued that India's rural development programme had to be vast and only a large machinery like the CD administration could handle it. There was no sense in small voluntary organisations tinkering with it. They only created additional hurdles for the project staff. In any case, he said, there were hardly any voluntary organisations worth the name and such as were there were of doubtful reputation. He challenged the conference to name one dedicated and honest organisation. Having said his piece, he left. ...It took the delegates a little time to recover from the shock. But before the day was over AVARD was born. It was born out of challenge.[125]

The seminar participants decided to form AVARD because they firmly believed that voluntary organisations had a positive role to play in rural development which the government CDP was not fulfilling. In particular they believed the government programme was too remote from the people to reflect their aspirations.[126] By maintaining direct contact with the people the group argued that NGOs could bring special qualities to the development process. They could discover the community's "un-met needs", research their problems and pioneer ways of working with them from a non-political, non-sectarian base.[127]

Between 1958-1966 AVARD's role was frequently limited to giving its member agencies moral support and also, in the face of government opposition, as AVARD said "... to shield its member organisations from being harassed and pushed around".[128] There was a discernible tension developing in India between those who supported the CDP and those in the voluntary sector, who were also engaged in development work. Despite these obstacles, NGOs interested in village development continued to form during the fifties in India, if at a slow rate. This was possibly because of India's sheer size, which made it impossible for the CDP to permeate everywhere; because of India's democratic political base which meant groups might be stood over but not banned; and because of India's tradition of social action.

Despite government concern, these Indian and other Asian development NGOs from the 1950s to the mid 1960s could hardly be called radical organisations. This was even though there was a perceptible shift (as in government assistance) away from providing food and clothing or vitamins for individuals, towards providing *services* for whole communities. Services included education, better nutrition, better sanitation, improved health-care - in the form of women's welfare centres and medical dispensaries and clean drinking water. Assistance from some NGOs gradually took on a much broader

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125 Jain, L.C., "A New Era", *V.A.*, Vol 21, No. 7-8, July-Aug., 1979

126 *Ibid*, p.11

127 *Seminar on the Role of Voluntary Organisations in The Second Five Year Plan, Held at Anandagiri, Ootacamund, May 16-20, 1957*, Synopsis of talk on Role of Voluntary Organisations in National Development, [No page no]

128 "Agenda for AVARD", *V.A.*, Vol 27, No. 1 & 2, July-Aug., 1984, p.1

dimension and affected whole communities. Yet just as the provision of food relief and clothing by the traditional welfare sector gave only immediate help and improvement, so improved social services to communities were unsustainable without either an indefinite input from NGOs or an improvement in a community's productive base. A few NGOs therefore went further. They provided activities which would increase production by teaching income generating skills, or providing irrigation and agricultural inputs.

In India some of this activity centred around Gandhian organisations called the Sarvodaya movement[129] which applied Gandhian ideology of "integrated and comprehensive rural development".[130] Other organisations followed Vinoba Bhave's "bhoodan and gramdan" movement which sought donations of land to distribute to landless communities.[131] These voluntary organisations[132] had spread to various parts of India after independence when large numbers of individuals went to the villages to carrying out social and economic activities. Frequently the organisations revolved around the charismatic leadership of a single person - usually a man - tending to proliferate the top-down approach even though assistance was carried out at the micro-level with the willing involvement of the participants. Communities were invariably organised as self-supporting ashrams. Members developed cottage industries engaged in spinning khadi (cotton), soap making, bee keeping, leather work, pottery, match making and hand-made paper making.[133] Self-discipline, self-reliance, prohibition of liquor and equality for marginalised groups such as women, harijans and tribal communities were key concepts of the ashrams.[134]

There were other NGOs in Asia which had moved beyond the traditional means of supporting the poor, like the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement started by Dr James Yen in 1952. It aimed at tackling "illiteracy, disease, poverty and civic inertia" through four programmes of health, education, livelihood and self-government at the barrio or local level.[135] And in Ceylon one of the first NGOs to be involved in rural development work was a women's organisation. The Lanka Mahila Samithi, established

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129 "The Welfare of All", Brown, D., *The Nationalist Movement: Indian Political Thought from Ranade to Bhave*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1970, p.186

130 "Voluntary Organisations and Rural Development", K.C. Karunakaran, *V.A.*, Vol 5, No. 6, Jan, 1983, p.89

131 A.L., "Life Dedication", *SA*, Vol 4, No.9, Sept., 1954, pp.350-358

132 India tends to use the term voluntary organisations rather than NGOs, whether or not the personnel are paid workers.

133 The Gandhi Niketan Ashram founded in 1940 established many cottage industries during the 1950s. Sen, A., *Introducing Voluntary Agencies in India*, pp.64-68, Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development, New Delhi, nd c 1970

134 The untouchables or out-castes - or as Gandhi renamed them - Harijans or Son's of God - were considered outside the Hindu caste system. They were afforded the lowest status expected to perform tasks of pollution. In India the indigenous or aboriginal population are referred to as tribals.

135 Flavier, J., *Doctor to the Barrios, Experiences with the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement*, New Day Publishers, Quezon City, 1970, p.4

in 1930, had a network of 1400 societies by 1960.[136] By then it engaged in pre-school education, home science, health and nutrition. It was also involved in economic programmes to create employment for rural women: agriculture, animal husbandry and handicrafts. It was this sector of the NGO community which the Australian Food for Peace Campaign began to fund towards the end of the 1950s when Pierre Oppliger became familiar with the work of individuals, such as Amte's work with lepers and with various Gandhi-style ashrams.[137]

A nascent development critique began to emerge among activist social workers, academics, and indigenous NGOs, which was more sensitive to village problems. It was informed by the CDPs, the rapid increase in the number of social work courses in Asia, the discourse emerging in the West on development issues and the beginnings of more pioneering community work by indigenous NGOs.[138] Qualities such as the value of village knowledge and skills and the generations of stored information held within families and rural communities began to be recognised.[139] Strikingly, unlike the central tenets of the Colombo Plan which tended to be disdainful of village structures, these debates emphasised the need to work with village people, to solve local problems together, even to learn from the people rather than patronising them.[140] More contentiously, some argued that land reform and the reform of social relationships, for example, "the social up-lift of women, Harijan and tribal people", had to be an integral part of the development process.[141]

These observations were not new to the 1950s. Individuals such as Gandhi and Nehru had raised them before Independence. But by the late 1950s some were recognising the injustice of continuing to ignore them. The ability of the economic growth/CDP paradigms to rigorously tackle poverty issues was also beginning to be questioned. Rises in GNP in particular were tending to be confined to the modern sector at the expense of the poor. The Indian Planning Minister stated in the early 1960s, "... so far as the mass of the people in the country are concerned, there are no visible signs of any

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136 Tilakarantna, S., *op.cit.,* p.11

137 "These Children are of Very Special Interest, Let Us Help Them All We Can", *FFPN*, Dec.,1959, p.7

138 The Institute of Social Work was established in Ceylon in 1951. The Delhi School of Social Work was founded under the YWCA auspices in 1946 and the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Baroda in 1950. There were 7 post-graduate courses in social work in train in India by 1958. The Philippines Association of Social Workers was founded in 1948 and social work was recognised as a profession in the Philippines in 1952-53. It subsequently became a separate course of study in institutions such as the Philippine Women's University, the University of the Philippines and the Centro Escolar University. Tilakaratna, *op cit*, p. 12; Sen, A.C., Ed., *Introducing Voluntary Agencies in India, op.cit.*, pp.17, 20; *SA*, Vol 8, No.2, Feb 1958, p.58; Lallemand, A. *SA,* Vol 5, No.12, Dec.1955, pp.532-3; Jocano, F., *Social Work in the Philippines: A Historical Overview*, p.148, New Day Publishers, Quezon City, 1980

139 Thapar, R., *Seminar* ,Vol 4 nd, late 1950s, New Delhi, p.11

140 "The Problem", *Seminar,* Vol 4, n.d., late 1950s; *SA*, Vol 4, No.4, April 1954, p.149

141 Manipadum, A., *SA*, Vol 4, No. 4, April 1954, pp.145-147

marked improvement, and of rise in their standard of living."[142] Benjamin Higgins made similar observations about the Philippines. He wrote in 1959, "...the standard of living of the masses of the Philippines people has improved but little over prewar levels, despite the continuous rise in national income. Post-war increases in income, even more than wealth, have been concentrated in the hands of the upper-income groups."[143]

Already by the late 1950s a duality was therefore evident. While Asian nations felt marginalised internationally in relation to the more powerful Western and Soviet states, nationally the poorest urban and rural populations were marginalised in relation to powerful indigenous elites. Many nations felt the sting of the West's patronising attitude while patronising their own villages, sustained by urban ignorance of the village situation and influenced by the West's propensity to promote science and technology and to look insensitively at Asia's village traditions and methods. Elite responses to urban and rural poverty were also frequently conditioned by self-interest. There was then a measure of contradiction between the rhetoric of those Asian leaders who espoused the notion of political, economic and cultural independence from the West and solidarity with Asian and other developing countries, while their national elites continued to build links with the West in countless ways, not the least through economic opportunities created by development aid.

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[142] The Planning Minister, "Realisations of Objectives", in *Problems in the Third Plan - A Critical Miscellany*, p. 53, quoted in Myrdal, *op.cit.*, p.758

[143] Higgins, B., *Economic Development: Principles, Problems and Policies*, Central Book Depot, Allahabad, India, 1973, p.65, copy of W.W. Norton Co., New York, 1959, 1st Edition

Chapter 4
"A Hungry Stomach Has No Ears"[1]
UNCTAD, Modernisation and the Freedom From Hunger Campaign

"Nearly 500 million people live below the breadline, and 1,000 million people go without adequate sustenance.... This is a situation which is morally and socially indefensible and endangers world peace and stability". ..... *B.R. Sen, Director General FFHC, 1963*

"... Let me plead that the Development Decade be conceived not too much in terms of statistics and percentages, but in terms of human needs - food, shelter and clothing for all everywhere in the world." ..... *B.R. Sen, 1962*

The United Nations Development Decade

By the early 1960s many of the hopes previously entertained by the North and South that developing nations would make rapid economic advancement were beginning to evaporate. The average annual economic growth rate for developing countries for 1959-1960 was 4.6%. That figure, however, masked the wide discrepancy which already existed between individual developing nations. Divided roughly into three groups, the first (which included South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong) had a growth rate of 7%, the second 4.9% and the third 2.7%.[2] Given the high levels of poverty which persisted in most developing nations, targets set by the United Nations in 1961 for a minimum 5% growth rate in the decade of the 1960s, were considered highly inadequate by developing countries,[3] especially given the continuing rapid rise in population growth.[4]

In comparison the West was enjoying a period of unprecedented growth causing the gap between rich and poor nations to widen inexorably. Per capita income and world trade figures illustrated the divide. In the first half of the 1960s the per capita income of the developed nations rose by US$60. The rate for developing nations was US$2. In the area of commodity exports, the developing nations' share in world exports declined from 40% in 1953-55 to 33% in 1963-64. Even in the area of manufacture exports,

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[1] An Austrian proverb quoted by Dr Adolf Scharf, President of the Federal Republic of Austria when launching the Austrian National Freedom from Hunger Campaign, in "FFHC's 'Role in Preserving World Peace'", *Freedom From Hunger Campaign News, (FFHC News),* Vol 2, No.11, Feb., 1962, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, Rome, p.10

[2] The three groups represented respectively 18, 20 and 16 developing countries. Statement by Dr Raul Prebisch, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, at the Fourth Plenary Session, Algiers, 13 Oct., 1967, in Sauvant, K., Ed., *The Collected Documents of the Group of 77, Vol 1*, Oceana Publications, New York, 1981, p.194

[3] Reference Document of the Co-ordinating Committee on Items 11 and 14 of the Provisional Agenda of the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77, Algiers, Oct. 10, 1967, in Sauvant, *op.cit.*, p.104

[4] See, "Statement by Sir Arthur Tange", at Colombo Plan Consultative Committee for Co-operative Economic Development in South and South East Asia, Kuala Lumpur, 13-17, Nov., 1961, *C.N.*, Vol 32, No.11, Nov., 1961, p.50

which Third World countries were trying to develop, there was a decline from 5.4% in 1961 to 5.2% in 1965.[5]

Recognising the necessity to address Third World development needs more closely, the UN voted in 1961 to designate the decade of the 1960s the "United Nations Development Decade". Members were encouraged to focus on appropriate measures to deal with Third World poverty, especially by encouraging sustainable economic growth.

The World Council of Churches responded by lobbying UN delegates to support a resolution for developed nations to contribute 1% of their GNP to the least developed countries. FAO supported an international effort to tackle world hunger, to be promoted through a Freedom From Hunger Campaign.[6] The UN published an increasing number of publications to explain the efforts that its various agencies were making on behalf of developing nations in support of the modernisation paradigm.[7] Developing nations continued to support the modernisation process while focusing their attention on the vexed issue of world trade - an area in which they believed there existed a gross imbalance in favour of the developed nations.

This debate on development was set against considerable rhetoric along the lines that the West would be under threat if the world's hungry were not fed. Many supported the moral arguments for an urgent need to fight world hunger.[8] But, whether from developed or developing countries, they also warned almost unanimously that the failure to address the problem would both threaten world peace and the West's resources.

As the process of de-colonisation swelled the numbers of developing countries in the United Nations, they increasingly used it to exploit the issues of hunger, population and their attendant fears.[9] When successive Third World delegates took the rostrum at the Sixteenth Session of the UN Assembly in 1961, for example, they echoed similar sentiments: that poverty created despair and resentment and as such was a palpable

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[5] *Ibid*

[6] Copy of letter G/161 sent to Ministers of Agriculture from Director General of FAO, B.R. Sen regarding the launch of the Freedom From Hunger Campaign, nd about 1959

[7] For example, "Decade of Development: Proposals for Action", UN Special Report; Hoffman, P., "World Without Want", looked at the economic principles being followed during the Decade of Development; Calder, R., "World of Opportunity", discussed how science and technology could achieve the "revolution of rising expectations", Reported in *NOW!, op.cit.*, Feb., 1964, p.4

[8] For example, The Acting Supreme Patriarch of Thai Buddhism lent his support and a Special Assembly "Man's Right to Freedom From Hunger", brought together Nobel Prize winners and other eminent persons in government, science, education which issued a manifesto to encourage governments to do more for the world's hungry. They included Aldous Huxley, Andre Maurois, Arnold Toynbee, C.P. Snow and from Australia, Sir Mark Oliphant. *FFHC News*, Vol 4, No. 23, April-May, 1963

[9] They gained dominance in the United Nation Assembly in 1963. Membership rose from 51 states in 1945 to 100 by 1960 and 150 by 1979. Anell, L., & Nygren, B., *The Developing Countries and the World Economic Order*, Frances Pinter, London, 1980; Jones, C., *The North-South Dialogue: A Brief History*, p.15, Frances Pinter, London, 1983

threat both to world peace and to the prosperity of richer nations.[10] The threats and subsequent calls for action, born of frustration that attempts to advance were being constantly undermined by the West, saw the Indonesian delegate urge action rather than any more "interminable studies",[11] and the Nepalese delegate support the idea of the UN Development Decade only if it wasn't a "mere slogan".[12]

An increasing number of prominent Third World spokespeople supported this theme from positions of authority: Indian B.R.Sen, Director General of FAO; Argentinian Raul Prebisch, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and Chairman of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964; and Tanganyikan President, Julius Nyerere. Their combined messages stressed that to ignore the pressure for change emanating from the "masses" was to invite chaos and increase world-tension. Further, there was an urgent need to act immediately.[13] A statement on behalf of all the Asian nations at the UNCTAD I conference reiterated that unless political emancipation was coupled with social-economic progress, the peace of the world would be in danger. The world could not be left divided between poor and rich, between healthy and sick, between "have" and "have-not" nations.[14]

The West ostensibly supported this line of argument responding with its own rhetoric, mainly through the auspices of The Freedom From Hunger Campaign. Though the lines came from poets or proverbs, or from the hearts of passionate people, they all carried the same message - the world was doomed unless nations acted to feed the hungry. The President of the Austrian Republic alluded to an Austrian proverb: "A Hungry stomach has no ears."[15] British Prime Minister Macmillan, launching the campaign in Britain, resorted to W.H. Auden: "Hunger allows no choice... We must

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[10] Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixteenth Session, Second Committee, Economic and Finance Questions, Summary Records of Meetings, 20 Sept. - 18 Dec., 1961, United Nations, New York, 1962, A/C.2/SR.715-793

[11] United Nations General Assembly, 16th session, Official Records, Second Committee, 722nd Meeting, Fri., 13 Oct., 1961, pp.33-34

[12] United Nations General Assembly, 16th session, Official Records, Second Committee, 726th Meeting, 19 Oct., 1961 pp.63-64

[13] "Statement by B.R. Sen, Director General of Food and Agricultural Organization, 26/3/64", in *UNCTAD I Vol II* , Geneva 23/3/64 - 16/6/64, Policy Statements, United Nations, New York, 1964, p.423. Sen alluded to "...the awakening of the vast masses from a fatalistic attitude to poverty..."; In a Freedom From Hunger Campaign forum he declared: "The need is urgent. The results may decide whether the future will be marked by chaos or welfare," *FFHC News*, June 1961, p.1; "Towards a New Trade Policy For Development", Prebisch, R., in *UNCTAD I Vol II... op.cit.,* p.6; Nyerere, J., McDougall Memorial Lecture to Food and Agricultural Organization of UN in Rome, November 1963, quoted by " H.E. C.E. Kahama, Minister for Commerce and Industry of Republic of Tanganyika, 1/4/64", in *UNCTAD I,Vol II... op.cit.,* p.363

[14] "Statement by H.E. Mr. A.H. Tabibi, Republic of Afghanistan, on behalf of the Asian countries participating in the conference, 16/6/64", *UNCTAD I Vol II ...op.cit*., p.467

[15] President of Federal Republic of Austria, Dr Adolf Scharf, *op.cit.*; The Prime Minister of Iran quoted the Iranian poet Saadi,"A hungry man cannot be honest; poverty disarms virtue", Dr Ali Amini at meeting of FFHC, *FFHC News*, Dec., 1961, p.7

love one another or die."[16] And the Sydney Freedom From Hunger Campaign chose the words of Albert Einstein: "An empty stomach is not a good political adviser."[17]

The West's concerns continued to evolve around political and economic considerations. Cold War fears that the poor might throw its support behind communism and thus strengthen communism world-wide, or that the poor might destabilise Third World economies by civil unrest, were still current in the 1960s. Developing nations themselves pointed out the advantages of a stable economic environment, arguing that an increase in production and purchasing power in the developing nations would contribute to the economic growth of industrialised nations and hence help prosperity world-wide.[18] The point was not lost on the West which required stable overseas economies to provide investment and market opportunities. The West also continued to entertain fears, fuelled by increasing world population growth, that the poor might simply decide to descend on developed nations to demand a share of its riches.[19] Such fears led many commentators to warn that the affluent could not "wall itself off" from the poor, but should rather seek to "build bridges" to the developing world.[20] Opposing images of building walls around the richer countries, versus bridges of conciliation to the developing nations, would constantly re-emerge over the next thirty years.

Developing nations encouraged the notion of equity by promoting a "Global" view of the world - a concept which gained in currency when satellites brought the first images of earth into wealthy people's homes via television. Third World nations readily supported the concept of "One World" and world citizenship in an effort to alter their peripheral and marginalised global positions.[21] They hoped that if the concept of One World was widely accepted the West would be forced to take responsibility for the

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16 "Duke of Edinburgh Launches Campaign in Britain", *FFHC News*, Vol 3, No.17, Aug., 1962, p.4

17 Quoted in *Speaker's Handbook*, FFHC, 1965, Sydney Executive Committee, p.13

18 Joint Declaration of the Developing Countries Made at the Eighteenth Session of the General Assembly, New York, Nov. 11, 1963

19 See, "Statement by Sir Arthur Tange",13-17, Nov.,1961, *op.cit.*; The Duke of Edinburgh spoke of the desperately close race between population growth and the provision of adequate food resources, *FFHC News,* June 1961, p.6; Dr. Cardon former Dir. Gen. of FAO referred to the alarming population growth and the inequity of world food distribution, *FFHC News,* Aug., 1962, p.8

20 A French representative of the FFHC said that the West was " '...an island of well-being in an undernourished world' and that its security was illusory - The poorer peoples... were aware of the comparative opulence of the West and felt this situation was unjust."; Mr Bourgoin, "FAO Called 'Principal Instrument' of Aid to Developing Countries", *FFHC News*, Mar., 1962, Vol 3, No.12, p.8; FAO's Dr Sen declared "In the last analysis, have the developed countries any real choice in the matter? ... No country can insulate its economic progress against the rest of the world.", "Food Symposium Hears Distinguished Speakers", *FFHC News*, Aug., 1962, Vol 3, No.17, p.8

21 Sen, B.R., Director-General of FAO, "We have come at last to a real awareness that we live not in a series of worlds but one world.", "For 18 Years FAO Has Sought to Develop the Knowledge the Will and the Ability to Abolish Hunger - Can This Evil Be Conquered", *FFHC News*, June, 1963, Vol 4, No.24, p.2; Nyerere, J, McDougall Memorial Lecture ... *op.cit.*; Sec. Canadian FFHC stated: "... we are engaged in a sober and logical extension of national citizenship into world citizenship..." Editorial, *FFHC News*, Vol 4, No. 26, Oct., 1963

unequal practices in trade and finance. The thrust behind the call for developed nations to provide 1% of their GNP for Third World development was an attempt to actively create both the vehicles and the international acceptance for global responsibility and good citizenship. Arguments to increase multilateral aid over bilateral aid in order to remove narrow, national interest priorities from assistance, had a similar rationale. A commitment to the 1% initiative - a form of international taxation to redistribute wealth from the better off nations to the Third World at an international level - and its distribution through multilateral channels, were considered by many to be critical, necessary steps to assist Third World economic development. But if the One World concept was rejected, then the Third World argued, it had to protect itself against Western economic domination.[22]

UNCTAD I and II

By the 1960s developing nations recognised their need for viable pressure groups and effective international forums to enable them to point up and address the issue of Western domination. There was a need to progress from the general rhetoric of solidarity of the 1950s towards establishing policies which would end the Third World's comparative disadvantage in global economic affairs.[23] Though diverse by any criteria - culturally, geographically, economically, and by size - Third World nations found consensus centred around this issue. Following on from Bandung they had come together at a non-aligned summit in Belgrade in 1961 and at a conference of developing countries focusing on problems of economic development, in Cairo in 1962.[24] Through the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee, Asian delegates had also frequently raised the question of liberal access to world trade and stable commodity prices.[25] Becoming more confident in international forums, developing countries used the UN General Assembly to press for a conference to specifically examine trade and development issues. Through the United Nations Conferences on Trade and Development (UNCTAD I & II), which were subsequently established in 1964 and 1968, the developing nations helped to bring the issue of world trade to centre stage. It was an issue with which the

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[22] President Julius Nyerere, said: "The choice is clear. Either we really have become One world, with the problem of poverty in certain areas being attacked scientifically on a world scale; or, alternatively, we recognise there are two worlds - the rich world and the poor world - and the latter gets down to the problem of protecting itself against the dominance of the other". Nyerere, J., McDougall Memorial Lecture... *op.cit.*

[23] The declaration of 75 countries signed in New York in 1963 and the principles enshrined in Alta Gracia at Cairo and Teheran, emphasized "the common needs of all the developing nations", Statement by H.E. Mr A.H. Tabibi, *op.cit.*, p.468

[24] "...The spirit of solidarity shown by the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America resulted in the decisions of the Conferences of Bandung in 1955, Belgrade in 1961 and Cairo in July 1962.", "Statement by H.E. Mr Bachir Boumaza, ...*op.cit.*, p.95

[25] "Communique", The Colombo Plan Consultative Committee for Co-operative Economic Development in South and South East Asia, 13-17 Nov., 1961, *op.cit.*, pp.48-9

UN became increasingly preoccupied throughout the 1960s,[26] influenced by developing country concerns as well as the formation of the European Economic Community.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and the Group of 77[27] which evolved into a permanent body after the first UNCTAD conference, became the chief vehicles for the Third World to display its solidarity and to lobby for its interests. The various conferences and meetings brought to the fore individuals who would contribute significant intellectual input to the ongoing development debate such as the Chairman of UNCTAD, Raul Prebisch.[28] At the beginning of the decade confidence remained high among these groups that together they could effect substantial change, a confidence exemplified by Prebisch's statement that:

> This was not... a temporary or chance association of countries seeking... to achieve transient objectives. It would be a great error to think that it was. This is an enormous force which is rising up and trying to articulate itself. It is arising at a point in history at which men, whatever the social system under which they live, are learning to control, consciously and deliberately, the course of their social and economic development....[29]

Throughout the decade, these groups with the aid of regional groups including the Organisation of African Unity, the Latin American Council of the Latin American Economic System and the Asian Group of the Group of 77, elaborated on and accentuated the fundamental causes of under-development, and adopted recommendations to devise a more rational organisation of world trade.[30] Recommendations covered the issues of multilaterialism, regionalism, trade and aid, and embraced the whole spectrum of finance, maritime issues, import restrictions, pricing policies, the proliferation of synthetics and the non-attainment of the 1% target of GNP.[31] The charges made by developing nations that the West dominated in the economic field were obviously not unfounded. Historical circumstances had given the West distinct advantages, including, as we have seen, establishing the World Bank, GATT and other institutions with little or no input from developing nations. Developed nations had also established mature and sophisticated industrial complexes while the

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[26] De Seynes, Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations General Assembly, 16th Session, Second Committee, 739th meeting, 1 Nov., 1961, p.151

[27] A group of 75 developing countries had come together to lobby for UNCTAD I. Joined by an additional 2, the group there-after became known as the Group of 77, even though it comprised more than 100 members by 1990.

[28] Raghavan, C., "Third World Comes of Age and Faces New Challenges", *IFDA Dossier,* 43, Sept/Oct 1984, p.27

[29] *UNCTAD I Vol II... op.cit,* p. 554.

[30] Reference Document of the Co-ordinating Committee on Items 11 and 14 of the Provisional Agenda of the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77, Algiers, 10 Oct., 1967, in The Collected Documents of the Group of 77, *op.cit.*, p.106

[31] *Charter of Algiers,* Adopted at Ministerial Meeting of Group of 77 on 24/10/67; Annex IX of UNCTAD II, Second Session New Delhi, Vol I Report and Annexes, U.N., N.Y., 1968, pp.431-441

economies of developing nations were commonly centred around raw materials supply - a position which made them extremely vulnerable.

The majority of Asian nations in the 1950s and 1960s had a critically high dependence on the export of commodities. Commodities or primary produce constituted 90% of their export earnings and almost half of the developing nations derived the highest percentage of their exports from a single commodity.[32] In 1956-58, jute and cotton constituted 53.7% and 20.2% respectively of Pakistan's total export earnings. Similarly the export earnings from commodities of other Asian nations were: in India - tea 22.9%, jute yarn and fabrics 12.6%, raw cotton 10%; Indonesia - rubber 36.8%, petroleum 30.5%; Burma - rice and rice products 73.7%; South Vietnam - rubber 68.4%, rice 19.7%; Philippines - coconut and products 38.3%, sugar and products 22.6%, logs and timber 11.7%, minerals and metals 10.4%; Thailand - rice 45.2%, rubber 20.4%, Ceylon - tea 62.4%, rubber 16.7%, coconuts 10.6%; Federation of Malaya - rubber 61.3%, tin 14.2%.[33]

Some commodities such as tea, coffee, sugar, cocoa or bananas were particularly vulnerable due to their relatively low income elasticity of demand. As incomes increased in richer nations, for example, the demand for such commodities rose relatively slowly compared with the demand for fuels and manufactures - the production of the latter being dominated by the developed nations.[34] Increased production, without a corresponding increased demand for commodities, created a surfeit of goods which further depressed market prices. A delegate from the Ivory Coast to an FAO conference in 1966 confirmed that his country had increased production only to be faced by a serious decline in the prices of coffee and cocoa. He complained: "So, for working harder - all praise to them - our peasants will earn less money."[35] A study published in the UN *Economic Bulletin for Asia and the Far East* in 1963 which projected South Asian exports to 1980, suggested that this deterioration in terms of trade was likely to continue. It said: "...the outlook is positively gloomy for such commodities as tea, sugar, cotton and jute".[36]

Commodities such as rubber, flax, jute and cotton also faced quite different problems, namely the evolution of synthetic substitutes. The uncertainty of raw material supply during WW II had encouraged the West to devise synthetic substitutes. Nylon, plastic and synthetic rubbers were promoted in the 1950s by the rapidly evolving advertising industry, as the new wonder materials. The production of rayon and other "man-made"

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32 *Partners in Development:Report of the Commission on International Development*, Chairman L. Pearson, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1969, p.81. Hereafter called, *The Pearson Report*

33 UN Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East, 1959, quoted in Myrdal, G., *Asian Drama*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1968, p.587

34 Todaro, M., *Economic Development in the Third World*, Longman, London, 1990, p.375

35 "New Directions for FAO", *FFHC News*, Mar-Apr., 1966, Vol 17, No.41, p.20

36 UN *Economic Bulletin for Asia and the Far East*, Dec., 1963, p.15, in Myrdal, *op.cit.*, p.597

fibres increased from 1.7 million metric tons in 1952 to more than 3.9 million metric tons in 1962. Its share in the textile market increased from 15% in 1952 to over 24% in 1962.[37] Natural commodities - such as wool, cotton, linen and rubber - were the losers. The Ceylonese delegate to UNCTAD I confirmed the negative impact that synthetics were having on rubber production in his country.[38] Between 1952 and 1962 the share of natural rubber consumption in total world rubber consumption fell from 62% to 50%.[39] This fall in the Third World's market share of natural products was the beginning of a trend which was accentuated in future decades. The figures for rubber continued to fall to 28% by 1980, while"... cotton's share of total fibre consumption dropped from 41% to 29%" between 1950 and 1980.[40]

The demand for commodities was affected in other ways: from competition from the West which expanded its production in such commodities as beet sugar and soy beans; from the production of liquid sweeteners from maize in the USA and from the more efficient use of raw materials with the use of new technologies.[41] It was also strongly affected by the manipulation of the market by Western governments - an issue which will be discussed below. Such volatility and uncertainty in the commodity market suggested that developing nations would be wiser to diversify their exports into other areas.

The most obvious form of diversification was to add value to raw materials by exporting them in a semi-processed or processed state and/or to develop industry, especially where a developing nation had a comparative advantage - such as an abundant labour force or raw materials' supply. Import substitution seemed a practical alternative. Rather than importing costly manufactured goods, fledgeling industries would be established to supply the domestic market. Such products would be protected from foreign competition with a system of quotas or import taxes, and once established, ideally would be exported to gain valuable currency exchange. In the field of manufacturing the West, of course, had an enormous competitive edge, in technical expertise, advanced skills, experience, research expenditure, technology, marketing infrastructure and banking and credit facilities. It was an area which was very difficult for developing countries to compete in. Developing nations, for example, owned only 6% of the world's maritime tonnage, and had therefore to endure excessive shipping costs.[42] And it was an area which was also likely to drag them into new forms of

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37 *Synthetics and Their Effects on Agricultural Trade*, UNCTAD, E/Conf. 46/59, March 6, 1964, p.51, in Myrdal, *op.cit.*, p.596

38 *UNCTAD I Vol II ... op.cit.*, p.142; Prebisch, R., "Towards a New Trade Policy For Development", in *UNCTAD Vol II, Trade and Development Policy Statements*, pp.5-64

39 *Synthetics and their Effects on Agricultural Trade*, quoted in Myrdal, *op.cit.* p.597

40 Todaro, *op.cit.*, p.389

41 Coote, B., *The Hunger Crop:Poverty and the Sugar Industry*, OXFAM, Oxford, 1987

42 Prebisch, R., "Towards a New Trade Policy ..", *op.cit*

dependency because of their reliance on imported spare parts, knowledge or finance. As well, when the developing countries sought to export their goods, they ran into significant trade restrictions from the developed countries.[43]

In both the areas of manufacturing and commodity exports Western domination showed itself explicitly. In theory the developed nations supported the notion of free trade. UNCTAD delegates recalled that the post-war economic initiatives established at conferences like Bretton Woods in 1944 had been honed from ideology which considered interference with free internal market forces immoral.[44] The issue was a particularly pertinent one since it was commonly accepted by Western governments that the interference with a system of free trade had created the tensions which led to WW II. However, while the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) had established limits on international trade barriers, these applied only to manufactures. Agriculture and textiles, the areas which most affected the developing nations, were excluded from GATT jurisdiction. This exclusion was mainly brought about by USA pressure in the 1950s - a pressure designed to protect its farmers.[45] The result was a system of tariffs, quotas and subsidies applied by the West to protect its domestic agricultural markets.[46]

Western government intervention to the workings of free trade took many forms. The USA government, for example, manipulated the tin price by alternatively stockpiling and releasing tin supplies.[47] It also dumped large amounts of grain surpluses on the world market by subsidising its farmers. By the early 1960s as the world's largest supplier of cereals, about a third of its cereals' exports were subsidised.[48] The European Community also elected to protect its farmers with a system of quotas and other devices and by a programme of food self-sufficiency. By the early 1970s it too had accumulated surpluses which it dispensed on the world market with the aid of government subsidies, and it too was emerging as a major force in the global agricultural market.[49] Protectionist policies to aid textile industries in the West also placed constraints on the exports of developing nations.

The Chairman of UNCTAD, Raul Prebisch, argued emphatically in 1964 that GATT had not served the developing countries well. The present trend of agricultural protectionism in Europe and North America through a tariff system as well as

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43 *Partners in Development, op.cit.*, pp.82-3

44 "Mr Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Commerce and Industries of Ceylon, Head of Delegation, 1/4/64", in *UNCTAD I Vol II ..., op.cit*, p.140

45 Watkins, K., *Fixing the Rules, North-South Issues in International Trade and the GATT Uruquay Round*, Catholic Institute for International Relations, London, 1992, pp.21-22

46 Tariffs imposed a tax on imports to favour the domestic product. Quotas imposed a limit on the amount of foreign goods whch could be imported and subsidies were government allowances paid to producers to grant their product a competitive edge on the world market. Bennet J, with George, S., *The Hunger Machine,* Polity Press, London, 1987, p.133

47 Myrdal, *op.cit.*, p.597

48 Watkins, K., *op.cit.*, p.21

49 *Ibid*, p.22

restrictions on imports, worked heavily against the Third World.[50] The Minister for Agriculture for Tanzania reported in 1966 that:

> ...his country expected to produce 100,000 more bales of cotton in 1965 than in 1963. But the average price per ton had dropped by about $31 between 1963 and 1965. This meant ...that despite higher production Tanzania was going to lose some $1.85 million in one crop alone. The loss in earnings from sisal were expected to fall by $24 million. 'Are we and the other developing countries... going to continue to struggle against these seemingly overriding odds merely to survive? We cannot and will not continue indefinitely to suffer quota restrictions, tariffs, taxes, give-away programs and other barriers to normal trade. Nor can we continue to suffer at the hands of vested interests, to have the price of our primary produce fixed arbitrarily by some nebulous body over whom we have no control whatsoever.'[51]

The developing nations' situation vis-à-vis the West clearly demanded that the former should receive preferential treatment in order that they could expand their export trade and expand indigenous industries. This required, at the very least, that the developed countries carefully review global trade relations and act in favour of the developing nations. Critically, this would have to include the stabilisation of commodity prices and the end of certain import and tariff controls. Developing nations held strong opinions on this question, arguing that the First World should be prepared to forego some economic growth to assist them.[52] Prebisch went further calling for a new economic order - a new international division of labour oriented towards accelerating industrialisation in the developing world.[53]

There was also a critical need for the liberalisation of international financial institutions such as the IMF.[54] The lack of truly international and independent financial institutions, free of political pressure and bias, compounded the Third World's comparative economic disadvantage.[55] Developing nations favoured a Special United Nations Fund for Development (SUNFED) to manage assistance. The West, however, side-stepped the issue. It dwelt on the Cold War bogey and avoided a commitment to the fund by arguing that until military spending could be reduced such a fund was not affordable. Instead the West supported the establishment of the International Development Association (IDA). IDA was established as an affiliate of the World Bank

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50 Prebisch, R., "Towards a New Trade Policy...", *op.cit.*

51 "New Directions for FAO", *op.cit.*, p.20

52 "Statement by H.E. Mr A.H. Tabibi ..., *op.cit.*; "Statement by H.E. Mr Bachir Boumaza ...*op.cit.*; See "H.E. Mr Cornelio Balmaceda, Secretary of Commerce and Industry, Philippines, 7/4/64", in *UNCTAD I Vol II...* , p.312-315 and "H.E. Adam Malik, Minister of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia, Head of the Delegation, 6/4/64", in *UNCTAD I., Vol. II....*, p.227

53 "Joint Declaration of 77 Developing Countries made at conclusion of UNCTAD", in *UNCTAD, Vol I Final Act and Report,* p.66-67, United Nations, New York, 1964; Prebisch, R., "Towards a New Trade Policy ..." *op.cit.*, p.5

54 "Statement by H.E. Mr Bachir Boumaza, *op.cit.*

55 Mr Thajeb, Indonesia, United Nations General Assembly, 16th Session, Second Committee, 722nd Meeting, 13 Oct., 1961, pp.33-35

under the West's control, rather than as an agency of the UN.[56] Similarly the West retained controlling interests in the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The establishment of these organisations merely compounded the claims of developing countries that the West had a predilection to protect itself against Third World interests.

Intra-regional co-operation was another means by which developing countries could lessen their dependence on the West. The theme of regionalism surfaced frequently but was not particularly easy to implement as the colonial infrastructure had been organised to focus on the colonial country, rather than on intra-regional activity. It was simpler and required less risk for developing countries to continue to follow the old colonial trade pattern. It was also the case with respect to manufactures that developing nations often preferred to buy "foreign", that is, "Western" products, perceiving both their own and other developing nations' products as inferior.[57] In addition, many Asian countries frequently exported the same commodities - such as rice or rubber - and were therefore in competition with each other. In consequence, Asian exports in the 1950s and 1960s were heavily centred on Western Europe, the USA and Japan, rather than on each other.

Australian Responses

Australia found itself a not disinterested party in this debate because of its heavy dependence on commodity exports. In Colombo Plan meetings the government had made frequent references to the issue. Tange stated candidly in 1961 that since Australia was largely dependent on relatively few primary products for its export earnings, self interest, no less than concern for its neighbours, led it to support stability in commodity prices.[58] Tange also called for a greater liberalisation of world trade, ostensibly to support greater access to markets for developing countries, but this view was not unrelated to Australia's nervousness about England's application to join the EEC.[59] Faced with the potential loss of its major market and with the need to find new ones - despite Tange's hope that the EEC would not raise barriers to imports from those outside the group - Australia found that some of the problems faced by developing countries were similar to its own. As host to the 14th meeting of the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee in Melbourne in 1962, Prime Minister Menzies predicted that the issue of tariff barriers and fluctuating prices would be at the heart of development problems for

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56 Bello, W., *Dark Victory:The United States, Structural Adjustment and Global Poverty*, Food First Freedom From Debt Coalition, Quezon City, 1994, p.11

57 "Trade among Developing Countries", *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol 1, No.11, Oct. 9, 1966, p.433

58 "Statement by Sir Arthur Tange", 13-17 Nov., 1961, *op.cit.*

59 *Ibid*, p.51

the next fifty years. He warned that if the issue was not resolved hostilities would be inevitable.[60]

Australia's spokesperson to the UN Assembly, T. K. Critchley, supported many of the issues raised by the Asian delegates.[61] Critchley argued forthrightly for the stabilisation of commodity prices and for the end of protectionist policies.[62] One of his major arguments stressed that whereas exports of manufactured goods had increased considerably both in volume and in value over the past few years, primary commodities had increased in volume but not in aggregate value.

In public forums Australia consistently presented itself during the 1950s and into the 1960s as a middle power, situated between the developing countries and the developed. Typical were statements such as "Australia ... is in a midway position, less-developed than some countries and more developed than others...."; or "Australia...can be regarded for certain purposes as developed and for others as underdeveloped..." [63] On numerous occasions it justified its aid contribution based on that status and its reliance on the wheat yield or wool clip, or lack thereof, through drought or world price slumps. In the 1959 Annual Colombo Plan Report the Australian delegation had reported:

> Our agricultural production had been cut back by drought and, in common with many of you, our export prices were down. In particular, the wool market had sagged further and, with little sign of substantial economic recovery abroad, the indications were for a weak market in the next season. Indeed, Mr Chairman, we can find very close parallels between our own economic fortunes ... and those of the Colombo Plan region... ..the point is that stable commodity markets are necessary for countries giving aid as well as those receiving aid.[64]

The rationale for Australia's adoption of a mid-way position straddling the developing and developed countries reflected both its heavy dependence on commodities - for which it required high prices and new markets - and a desire to protect its fledgeling industries. Australia acknowledged its affluence compared with developing countries, but argued that "by no stretch of the imagination" did Australia have the distinguishing characteristics of highly industrialised developed countries.[65]

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60 "Inaugural Address by the Prime Minister, Mr Menzies, 12, Nov., Colombo Plan Consultative Committee Meeting, 12-16 Sept., 1962, *C.N.*,Vol 7, No.11, 1962, p.6

61 A point which gained them a verbal bouquet from the Burmese delagation, U Htin Aung, Burma, United Nations General Assembly, 16th Session, Second Committee, 727th Meeting -20th Oct., 1961, p.71

62 T.K.Critchley, Australian delegate, United Nations General Assembly, 16 Session, Second Committee, 719th Meeting, 10 Oct., 1961, p.15; Statement by H.E. Mr Bachir Boumaza... *op.cit.*

63 Statement by Paul Hasluck at the Colombo Plan Conference -Rangoon, 18th Meeting of the Colombo Plan's Consultative Committee, 5-8 Dec., *C.N.*, Vol 38, No.12, Dec., 1967, p.539; Statement Hasluck, UN General Assembly, 9th Oct., 1968, in *External Affairs Bulletin*, No.14, Nov., 1968, Depart. of External Affairs, 1968

64 "Annual Report on the Colombo Plan, Statement by the Australian Delegate, the Hon. G. Freeth, M.P.", *C.N.*, Vol 30, No.11, 1959, p.640

65 Statement by Head of Australian Delegation, A Flemings at 31st Plenary Meeting of UNCTAD on 10 June, 1964, Geneva, in Crawford, J., *Australian Trade Policy, 1942-1968*, ANU, Canberra, 1968, pp.201-3

Australia protected many of its agricultural export industries - including sugar, butter, eggs, cotton and tobacco - with a system of subsidies, taxation concessions and quotas. It also initiated a highly protective industry policy.[66] By arguing this "special position" Australia sought to justify these policies. But while Australia had found some sympathy for this position in GATT, UNCTAD was less receptive. It was inclined to recognise only two categories of countries - developed and developing.[67]

This ambiguous posture, which led Australia to take sides with developing nations on the issue of commodity prices while retaining strong loyalties to the developed nations,[68] was not lost on some Asian observers who viewed it with some bemusement. Dr Chirapurath Itty who had worked for many years in both the World Council of Churches and the UN system, had observed the duality of Australia's role at the UN.[69] The duality extended, as in the 1950s, to Australia's relationship with Asia. Australia made repeated efforts to present itself as the equal friend of the Asia-Pacific region and of Western Europe and North America. External Affairs Minister Gordon Freeth reiterated in 1969: "... we see our regional and global relationships as not being mutually exclusive, but rather as supporting and reinforcing each other in a complementary fashion. Neither groups of relationships can be ignored...."[70]

Certainly in terms of trade Australia understood the growing significance of the Asia-Pacific region, especially with the growth of the EEC. Australia's changing trading pattern attested to this. By 1966, 33% of Australia's exports were going to the Asian region. Japan, considered by many an arch enemy a decade before, was poised to take over from Britain as Australia's foremost trading partner.[71]

On the issue of increased regionalism, which was being promoted in the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) and the Colombo Plan, prior to UNCTAD I, Australia displayed interest in co-operating, but clearly on its own terms.[72] Australia supported increased intra-regional training programmes and the development of regional institutions.[73] A foundation member of ECAFE, Australia became a member of the Inter-Governmental Group on Aid to Indonesia (IGGI) and a member of the

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66 Snape, R., *International Trade and the Australian Economy*, Longmans, Victoria, 1969, p.37

67 *Ibid*

68 See Holt and his tribute to Britain and the US for providing "stability" and "freedom" in the Asian region, "Australia and Asia", Speech to Moral Rearmament Association Conference, 6 Jan., 1967, *C.N.*, Vol 38, No.1, Jan., 1967

69 Conversation with Dr Chirapurath Itty at Chiangmai Workshop on Middle-level Leadership in Asian NGOs, Chiangmai, Thailand, 28 Mar., 1989

70 Gordon Freeth, Minister for External Affairs, "Australia and its Relations with Asia", *C.N.*, Vol 40, No.10, Oct., 1969, p.572, reprinted from *Pacific Community*, Vol 1, No.1, Oct., 1969

71 Harold Holt, Prime Minister, to the Editor in Chief of the *Straits Times*, reprinted as "Australia and Asia", *C.N.*, Vol 37, No.11, Nov., 1966, p.678

72 Statement Sir Arthur Tange 15th Nov., 1963, *op.cit.*, p.31; Statement by Minister of External Affairs, 7th Nov., 1963, *C.N.*, Vol 34, No.11, Nov., 1963, p.3

73 "Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfied Barwick, 12th Nov., 1962, *C.N.*, Vol 7, No.11, 1962, p.9

Asian and Pacific Council and the Asian Development Bank.[74] Not that Australia was an international trail-blazer in these developments. It had shown an initial reluctance to join the Asian Development Bank.[75] The Departments of Treasury and Trade, and in Cabinet, both Menzies and John McEwen, opposed membership of the OECD in the early 1960s. This was in part because of fear of interference in Australian trade policy.[76] And Australia was last of the developed nations to contribute to the Special Fund.[77]

This early dialogue on regionalism foreshadowed the development of the Pacific Rim strategy which evolved in later decades. Even in this early stage issues which would remain contentious among potential members of an Asia-Pacific grouping, were apparent. They involved the extent to which such a grouping would become a trading bloc, and the question of balance of power (that is the extent to which the West, which included developed Japan, would participate in what was essentially a region dominated by developing nations.) On the economic front, the Australian government made it clear that it did not support any such regionalism developing into an inward-looking trading block, as it clearly believed was happening in the EEC and the USA.[78] Rather Australia viewed regionalism as an opportunity to integrate the region into the world economy while strengthening its collective voice on issues of common interest.[79] But politically, Australia displayed little evidence that it viewed the Asian nations as equals, compared with its relationship with the USA, Japan or even itself. An address by Treasurer William McMahon to the Far East America Council in 1968 indicated this. He said:

> In the United States we have the greatest trading country on earth. In Japan and Australia we have two of the most rapidly advancing countries. Together we three countries can do a great deal to help the advance of the South-East Asian countries by trading with one another and by trading with them. Together the countries around the Pacific have virtually every resource that man could need. We have the basis for a fruitful economic co-operation, we have the basis for a peaceful political co-operation, and what is more we have the basis for human relationships and understanding of a high order. We could ask for no more.[80]

This alliance with the USA and Japan was not unrelated to Australia's involvement with America in the Vietnam war and with Australia's rapidly changing trading pattern with Japan. Such predatory rhetoric, however, did little to promote the basis for an equal relationship with nations of the Asian region.

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[74] Freeth, G., "Australia and its Relations with Asia", *op.cit.*, p.575

[75] Wilkinson, A., *The Politics of Australian Foreign Aid Policy, 1950-1972*, PhD Thesis, Dept., of International Relations, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, June 1976, pp.222-227

[76] Ibid, p.227

[77] Taylor, K., "Towards a New Foreign Aid Policy", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 19, No.2, 1965, p.141

[78] Tange did not mention them by name but referred to them as "the world's great commodity consumers".

[79] Statement Sir Arthur Tange 15th Nov., 1963, *op.cit.*, p.31

[80] McMahon,W., Speech to the Far East America Council, New York, *CN*, Vol 39, No.10, Oct., 1968

The issues of protectionism and preferential treatment as they affected developing nations were taken up by sections of the Australian public, including NGOs, in response to arguments raised at UNCTAD I. The Food for Peace Campaign (renamed Community Aid Abroad (CAA) in 1962), argued from first-hand experience, having witnessed the sort of tariffs that South Asia had to absorb when exporting its handcrafts to Australia. When CAA imported a small selection of handcrafts from India, to assist some of the millions of small cottage industries in Pakistan and India, intending to return the profits from sales to CAA projects in the field, it discovered that goods such as jewelry, wooden toys, linen and greetings cards carried a duty of between 35% and 45%.[81] This prompted CAA to argue to the government that the reduction or waiving of this tax would greatly help Indian small-scale cottage industry, without seriously affecting Australia.[82] Otherwise, it argued, "Colombo Plan aid is offset by the barriers we impose against imports".[83] CAA pointed out that the effect of increasing the tariffs on sheeting entering Australia from 3% to 33%, had prompted 4,000 men to be sacked at a mill in Bombay because their product was effectively denied access to Australia.[84]

The Australian government eventually responded to this issue in 1965 when External Affairs Minister Paul Hasluck announced the elimination of tariff duties on a wide range of handcrafts from under-developed countries. CAA welcomed the decision as most valuable for its indications of good will to the developing countries, as well as its example to other developed countries.[85] This was not the first time that CAA had emphasised the opportunity for Australia to take a lead, to be visionary in world affairs. By any measure Australian aid was small, but CAA continued to suggest that Australia could play a useful role beyond its actual aid capacity by taking a unilateral stand, whether by actively embracing the 1% goal, or in matters of tariffs and trade, or indeed by being more innovative with its aid assistance. It could, by way of example, help to modernise and establish woollen mills in India to both Australia's and India's mutual advantage.[86]

As a further step, the Minister for Trade and Industry McEwen, announced that Australia was to lead the way by initiating preferential tariff treatment, intended to give developing countries "equality of opportunity". He added, pragmatically, though candidly, that "satisfactory commercial relationships were liable to lead to satisfactory

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81 "Tariffs and Handcrafts", *NOW!*, July, 1963, p.2

82 *Ibid*

83 *Ibid*

84 "It Can Be Done, But Will It?", *NOW!*, Oct., 1969, p.7

85 "Commonwealth Aid to Trade", *NOW!*, Nov. 1965, p.1; They included metal work, pottery, carved and inlaid wood work, stoneware, ivory-ware, shell-ware, horn-ware, lacquer-ware, decorated leather work and papier-mache, Freeth, G., "Australia and its Relations with Asia", *op.cit.*, p.577

86 Clunies-Ross, A., with Downing, R., *et al, One per Cent:The Case for Greater Australian Foreign Aid*, Melbourne University Press, Box Hill, Victoria, 1963

political relationships".[87] Almost a quarter of India's £2 million annual exports to Australia would be affected, and the moves were described as "bold and imaginative" by the Indian government.[88]

Australia's initiative was in response to a new article of GATT which required members to reduce tariff barriers on imports of interest to developing countries. Australia had refused to approve the initiative on the basis that Australia would also be required to remove duties on the same goods imported from industrialised countries. Such a position would not assist developing countries and would, in the opinion of the Minister of Trade and Industries: " ... mean sacrificing much of what we have already achieved in the way of industrial development."[89] Instead, the government offered tariff preferences of between 7.5% and 20% to specific exports from developing countries. It also offered advise on ways for developing nations to improve their export marketing techniques.[90] The list comprised soaps, leather, carpets, coir goods, sewing machines, furniture and sports goods. Their condition of entry into Australia was criticised by the Indian journal *Economic Weekly*. The objections surrounded Australia's "fall-back" provisions which enabled it to withdraw the preferential tariff if it considered goods were too "competitive". Australia had also established quotas on the amount of goods allowed into the country, some of which were very restrictive to developing countries. However, the *Economic Weekly* conceded that the reforms were a step in the right direction, and stated, "Australia deserves to be congratulated for taking the initiative in offering such preference".[91]

Despite these concessions, as the Pearson Report [92] observed in 1969, 30% of manufactured goods from developing countries were restricted by quotas from entering developed countries, especially textiles, clothing and processed foods, leather goods, footwear, dyestuffs and glassware.[93] Many of these goods represented products where the developing nations had a comparative or potential comparative advantage which was being frustrated by trade barriers .[94] Australia was a case in point. It protected a wide range of manufacturing goods by tariff assistance, including sheet manufacture and the clothing and footwear industries. Although such assistance might legitimately protect new industries as they became established, it equally ran the risk of protecting

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87 "Australian lead in trade promotion", *NOW!*, July, 1965 p.5

88 A.K. Sen, New Delhi, "Australia praised", *NOW!*, July, 1965, p.5

89 Statement by the Minister for Trade and Industry (J McEwen) in the House of Representatives on 19 May 1965, in Crawford, *op.cit.*, p.195

90 "Australia and its Relations with Asia", *op.cit.*, p.577

91 "Trade and Aid: India Welcomes tariffs cuts", *NOW!*, Aug, p.3

92 Established in 1968 to "Study the consequencies of forty years of development assistance, assess the results, clarify the errors and propose the policies which will work better in the future."p.vii, *Partners in Development.., op.cit.*, p.81

93 *Ibid*, p.87

94 *Ibid*

inefficient and non-competitive industries. While Australian clothing manufacturers pressured for higher tariffs on clothing from Asian markets, groups like CAA argued that because it was labour intensive, clothing manufacture was ideal for developing countries. Rather than protect such industries Australia should rationalise its manufacturing in that area, and with the help of government assistance stimulate and seek alternative industries.[95] Those were difficult decisions for any Australian government to make faced with obvious pressures from the domestic sector. Yet CAA's arguments foreshadowed events in the Asian region which in succeeding decades would make structural changes to the Australian clothing industry imperative.

Meanwhile the developing nation's share of total world exports had declined from 27% in 1963 to 19.3% in 1966, while the purchasing power of exports had also been slowly declining.[96] In the area of commodities attempts had been made by commodity producers to establish international agreements on a commodity by commodity bases. The rationale was to create some stability in world prices and to establish a "floor" price for goods. Although an agreement on tin had been negotiated in the 1960s, agreements on other commodities especially on sugar and cocoa were at a standstill.[97]

The Algiers Charter [98] concluded in 1966 that: "The lot of more than a billion people of the developing world continues to deteriorate as a result of the trends in international economic relations. ... The promise held out by the Final Act [of UNCTAD I] has not been realised".[99] Clearly, tariff initiatives such as those introduced by Australia, were not sufficient to make a significant impact on developing country trade.

The unfavourable terms of trade for the Third World contributed to many non-Communist nations gradually falling into debt to the West. Having accepted that they would follow a Western economic growth model such nations required foreign exchange receipts to build up their infrastructure and industry. With little or no domestic savings governments had no option but to gain overseas receipts from exports, private investment or aid. With exports blocked by protectionist policies and volatile, frequently declining, commodity prices, developing nations borrowed or entered into aid agreements in order to import necessary capital goods. However, unlike Australia which continued to give its aid as direct grants, the majority of Western nations negotiated their aid agreements as repayable loans. Loans, or the interest on loans, were repayable whatever the state of the commodity market, and low commodity returns meant renegotiating loans.

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95 Scott, D., "Exports Vital to Development", *NOW!*, Nov., 1968, p.2

96 *Charter of Algiers, ... op.cit.*

97 Reference Document of the Co-ordinating Committee on Items 11 and 14 of the Provisional Agenda of the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77, Algiers, 10 Oct., 1967, *op.cit.*, p.105

98 Established by the Group of 77 at a meeting in Algiers in October 1967 prior to the second UNCTAD conference

99 *Charter of Algiers, op.cit.*, pp.431- 432

While trade and aid had tended to be treated as separate issues by Western governments[100] the increasing indebtedness of developing nations demonstrated that the two were inextricably linked. The UN Assembly and UNCTAD I had served to highlight the gross anomalies which were emerging in both areas of trade and aid. Moreover they provided a platform for the finer details of development to be discussed rather than leaving aid issues specifically to aid instruments like the Colombo Plan, or trade issues to market forces.[101] The point was made in 1961, for example, that the fall in the price of raw prices over the past few years had actually been greater than the bilateral aid developing countries had received.[102] A Colombo Plan Consultative Committee Communique in 1962 warned that the cost of servicing debt could become so large as to severely limit further borrowing.[103] Under those inequitable conditions developing countries would find difficulty in either "trading" or "aiding" themselves out of under-development.

Trade NOT Aid or Trade AND Aid?

When the two issues - aid and trade - were linked it encouraged Western governments to debate whether they should support a "Trade NOT Aid" policy or a Trade AND Aid" policy. The tack that the Australian government took was to suggest that aid could not be dispensed indefinitely. "No healthy life can be sustained indefinitely by transfusions alone", claimed External Affairs Minister Garfield Barwick in 1963.[104] He invited the Colombo Plan to be viewed as a more substantial instrumentality than simply handing out assistance. He stated:

> I think that it is important that we move away from any tendency to see the Colombo Plan simply as a dispensary of aid, important and vital as that aid may prove. The Colombo Plan was and is a much more dynamic concept than this. The aim of the Plan is... not only to alleviate problems but to move towards their remedy and to do so jointly. The very essence of the Colombo Plan is its explicitly co-operative nature.[105]

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[100] External Affairs Minister, Sir Garfield Barwick commented in 1963: "It is not so very long since aid and trade were regarded as two separate facets of economic life." "Colombo Plan Consultative Committee," Statement by Minister of External Affairs, 7th Nov., 1963, *C.N.*, Vol 34, No.11, Nov., 1963, p.3

[101] Chakravarthi, R., *op.cit.*

[102] Strasser Mr, Austrian delegate, United Nations General Assembly, 16th Session, Second Committee, 723rd Meeting, 16 Oct., 1961, pp.39-41; as well see Adam Malik's comments at UNCTAD I, "H.E. Adam Malik, Minister of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia, Head of the Delegation, 6/4/64", in *UNCTAD I, Vol. I...*, p.227

[103] "Communique",16th Nov., Fourteenth Colombo Plan Consultative Committee Meeting, 12-16 Sept., 1962, *C.N.,* Vol 33, No.11, 1962, p.11

[104] Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, 15 Nov., 1963, *C.N.*, Vol 34, No.11, Nov., 1963, p.31; Hasluck, P. External Affairs Minister from an article in the *SMH*, "Australia Unlimited", July, 1964, reprinted in *C.N.*, Vol 35, No.8, 1964, p.42

[105] Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfied Barwick, 12th Nov., 1962, *C.N.*, Vol.7, No.11, 1962, p.9

Barwick's successor, Hasluck, was more inclined to get to the heart of the matter when he noted: "...it is better to give any needy country a chance to earn its own living than to let it depend on aid from other countries, ... a convenient slogan to express this view... is "Trade instead of Aid."[106] In his opinion it was inevitable that in the long run there would be less emphasis on aid programmes and more on the flow of capital and access to trade.[107] While defence matters remained the top priority there was a subtle shift in focus which broadened Australian aid policy to embrace trade interests.[108] Hasluck noted pragmatically, "The trend towards increased trade with Asia means that Australia has both a practical and a humanitarian concern in raising standards of living and in the economic progress of all countries of Asia."[109]

Many Western nations lent increasingly towards a policy of Trade NOT Aid, a position which was supported by a decline in total official development assistance (ODA) after 1968.[110] Disappointment was being expressed in the West that aid to developing nations was not having the same impact as Marshall Plan aid to Europe. It was only now being more generally recognised that the conditions of Europe and developing nations were very different. Substantially more aid within a substantially longer time-frame would be necessary to make a significant impact on developing countries. Several negative reports on aid,[111] backed by many generalised and anecdotal criticisms beginning to circulate about aid, encouraged an increasing "donor fatigue" by the late 1960s. As the largest and most vocal aid donor disillusion expressed itself most strongly in the USA, where it was felt by many citizens that US generosity was unappreciated. But it was also evident in other Western countries such as France and Germany. Critics claimed that large parts of technical assistance had been wasted, and cited "spectacular failures " like the "grain silos donated complete with electric motors and switch gear but no electricity ...in the Middle East, or the road rollers and aerodromes in Central Asia with no civil engineers or aeroplane services...".[112]

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106 Statement by Hasluck, P. at the Colombo Plan Conference -Rangoon, 18th Meeting of the Colombo Plan's Consultative Committee, 5-8 Dec., *op.cit.*, p.541

107 Hasluck, P., "Australia's Part in the Colombo Plan", *op.cit.*

108 Reports carried headings such as "Economic Growth and the Relation Between Trade and Aid", or "Trade and Aid." See statement by the Minister of External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, 7th Nov., 1963, Colombo Plan Consultative Committee, *op.cit.*, p.31; McMahon,W., Treasurer, speech to Far East America Council, New York, *op.cit*, p.451

109 "Australia and South-East Asia", *C.N.*, Vol 35, No.10, Oct., 1964, p.11

110 *Ibid*

111 For example the Clay Report, quoted in Shannon, I., *"Economic Aid", Australian Outlook,* Vol 17, No.3, 1963, p.329

112 Arndt, H., *Australian Foreign Aid Policy*, The Thirty-First Joseph Fisher Lecture in Commerce, Adelaide, Sept., 9, 1964, The Griffen Press, Adelaide, 1964, p.9; Purnell,W., "United Nations Specialized Agencies", *Australian Outlook,* Vol 15, No.3, 1961, pp.310-311

Various reports commissioned to examine the issue of aid and debt[113] acknowledged that in some cases there had been economic mismanagement of aid in the recipient country. There was, therefore, a groundswell of opinion from some critics which favoured placing conditions on the receipt of aid. The concept of aid as a reward for putting in place measures which the West considered appropriate to increase economic growth stimulated a number of suggestions - that aid should only be channelled to countries which effectively controlled their population growth, or that aid should be awarded to nations which put in place appropriate taxation policies or were considered administratively competent to utilise aid. While the concept of conditionality might in certain cases have had some merit - especially if applied against governments suspected of co-opting aid to serve corrupt regimes - it tended to avoid the broader issues such as the problem of the uneven distribution of food world-wide, world trade inequalities, the question of major internal structural reform in developing countries and the problem of growing Third World indebtedness.

The debt problem was attributed in part to inappropriate aid terms. High interest rates and stringent terms of lending resulted in repayment obligations building up faster than the developing nations' capacity to build foreign exchange. As well, tying aid to goods from donor countries reduced the recipients' choice of the most suitable and least costly materials. When loans were required to be repaid in convertible currency they often exceeded the value of the goods received. Since developing countries were so vulnerable to fluctuations in world commodity prices, these nations had to set aside an increasing amount of their budget to service their debts.[114] The Pearson report recommended in 1969 that in the future all aid should carry interest of no more than 2%, have a maturity of between 25 and 40 years and a grace period of 7 to 10 years.[115] Otherwise, it warned, in the not-too-distant future there would be a large net transfer of resources from the developing nations to the developed.[116] The warning proved to be correct.

An Australian report revealed the extent to which debt-service was restricting the growth of developing nations in 1969. It reported that debt to developing countries had more than doubled during the 1960s, totalling $US47,500 million in 1968.[117] The net effect was that more than half of the gross official aid flow, was flowing back to

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113 "In recent years the return of interest and amortization on past lending has come to absorb an increasing proportion of gross aid flows to developing countries","Problems and Policies of Financing", *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Second Session*, New Delhi, Vol IV, U.N. N.Y., 1968, p.4

114 *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Second Session*, New Delhi, Vol IV, U.N. N.Y., 1968, pp.1-8

115 *Pearson Report, op.cit.*, p.167

116 *Ibid*, pp.74-75

117 "International Aid - Australia's Role as a Donor", *C.N.*, Vol 40, No.11, Nov., 1969, p.622

developed countries in debt repayment.[118] By the end of the sixties, on top of having to deal with unequal international trading, aid was becoming a mill-stone around the developing countries' necks.

Not unreasonably, developing nations felt more than a little frustrated by this situation. The inaugural UNCTAD II speech delivered by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi reflected this frustration:

> Those who look upon development assistance as repayable charity will inevitably miss the expected gratitude from its beneficiaries. Those who view it as investment to earn political support, or to collect dividends, or to promote trade will be disappointed with the meagre returns. At the same time, growing numbers in the developing countries are beginning to look upon external capital and know-how, not as aids to their own strength and achievement of economic freedom, but as bonds which increase their dependence on dominant economies.[119]

The euphoria apparent at UNCTAD I had dissipated by UNCTAD II in 1968, where Indira Gandhi's stinging invective seemed only to echo the concerns of her father, Nehru, in the 1950s, and the warnings delivered by Third World delegates at the start of the UN Development Decade. A less ebullient Raul Prebisch than in 1964 displayed his disappointment in a statement during the conference which argued that the conference was on the verge of failure because no concrete solutions had been found.[120] As he went through the list of issues he made comments such as: "no positive answer", "not encouraging", "distressing", "reaching a deadlock".[121]

In terms of influencing world trade policy the sixties had clearly failed to live up to the South's expectations. Prebisch reflected at UNCTAD II on his experience at the World Economic Conference thirty-five years previously. He had been shocked to find that "peripheral countries" were assigned to the role of "Greek chorus" which could follow and comment on the main characters but could not participate in the drama. Thirty-five years later little had changed. While developing nations could discuss trade, aid and development issues *ad nauseam*, it remained as an Indonesian delegate pointed out, "practically impossible for the developing countries to resist the impact of decisions taken by the developed countries."[122]

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118 *Ibid*

119 "Address by Mrs Indira Gandhi, P.M. of India, Inaugural Ceremony, 1/2/68", Annex IX, in *UNCTAD Second Session, New Delhi, Vol I, Report and Annexes*, United Nations, New York, 1968, pp.410-411; The Indonesian Minister of Trade stated at UNCTAD II that the developing countries were often discouraged by the lack of commitment of Governments and peoples to development aid. "Summary of the Statement made at the 4th plenary meeting, 7 Feb., 1968, by Mr Mohamed Jusuf, Minister of Trade of Indonesia", Annex V, Summaries of Statements Made in Plenary Meetings, *UNCTAD Second Session, New Delhi, op.cit.*, p.122

120 "Statement by Mr Raul Prebisch, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, 1/3/68", in *UNCTAD Second Session, New Delhi, Vol I, Report and Annexes*, *op.cit.*, pp.420-423

121 *Ibid*, pp.421-422

122 "Summary of Statement made at the 47th plenary meeting, 7/2/68, by Mr Mohamed Jusuf, Minister of Trade of Indonesia", ... *op.cit.*

If the West was intransigent over trade issues it fully supported the Food and Agricultural Organisation's Freedom From Hunger Campaign (FFHC) which was launched in 1960. The global debate on hunger and subsequent wide support for the FFHC in this first Development Decade, ostensibly presented an opportunity for both developed and developing nations to specifically focus on the needs of the poor. The campaign was the first attempt to initiate a concerted world-wide effort to focus on the issue of world hunger and malnutrition using multilateral, bilateral and non-government channels.

The Freedom From Hunger Campaign

The campaign's stated objective was to attempt to narrow the income gap between the developed and developing world by breaking the cycle of hunger, poverty and low productivity.[123] Three areas were identified for major emphasis: education and information, to educate the public about the issues of hunger; research, relevant to increased and improved food production; and action, by initiating projects in developing countries.[124] Initially to run for five years, the campaign was extended in November 1965 to proceed for the duration of the United Nations Development Decade. By March 1963, 104 nations were taking part, of which 49 had FFHC committees.[125] The committees were headed by eminent persons. They included President J. F. Kennedy, President Charles De Gaulle, the Duke of Edinburgh and in Australia, Lord Casey.[126]

This display of political bipartisanship suggested that Western governments shared some or all of the mixed motives - anti-communism, self-interest, guilt and humanitarianism - for supporting the FFHC. But support for the FFHC was also a far softer option for the West than instituting meaningful trade reform. Some critics indeed viewed the campaign as a useful means for Western governments to deflect attention from the trade issue.

But similarly, the Indian government's support for the campaign - it positively urged the Indian voluntary sector to become involved - highlighted the essentially non-radical character of the campaign. (It will be recalled that the Indian government had previously discouraged NGO grassroots involvement in anything but a welfare capacity.) In other words support for the FFHC was also a far softer option for "South" governments than addressing internal structural and institutional reforms. Taxation and land reform legislation which might impose upper limits on land ownership, the implementation of minimum wages, capped rents and security of land tenure would all have helped

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123 "Co-ordinator's Report, by Charles H. Weitz", *FFHC News,* May, 1961, p.10

124 *FFHC News,* March,1962

125 "World Freedom From Hunger Week", *FFHC News*, Mar. 1963, Vol 4., No 22, p.3

126 "De Gaulle Sponsors French Committee", *FFHC News*, April 1961, p.3; *FFHC News*, Dec. 1961, p.1; *FFHC News,* April, 1961, p.3; *FFHC News,* June 1961, p.4; Patil, K., "Patil Sees FFHC Key to Development", *FFHC News*, April 1961, p.9

redistribute wealth. Most Third World governments, however, proved extremely reluctant to take these measures. Those that did attempt reforms were frequently opposed by, or gave into, wealthy interest groups. The Indian Government's budget legislation designed to place a wealth tax on agricultural property, for example, was challenged by the Punjab Government and private landowners. The Punjab and Haryana High Court subsequently found against the central Parliament in 1970.[127] The majority who lived in poverty had little power to challenge the situation. The Development Decade, of which the UNCTAD conferences and the Freedom From Hunger Campaign were a notable part, significantly broadened the development debate to reveal the diversity and complexity of the numerous causes which combined to maintain economic inequalities. It also revealed many contradictions, especially the reluctance on the part of both the developed and developing nations to effect structural and institutional changes.

In the absence of such reform both Western and non-Communist developing nations continued to view the economic growth model and modernisation paradigms as the key to Third World progress. The FFHC was viewed as a means to support this effort. The USA was promoted as the great modernisation success story, especially as an emphasis on agricultural production as a means to feed the world's hungry people increased. A break-through in agriculture was deemed to be necessary, to release labour for the industrial sector (despite the developing countries enormous surfeit of labour) and to provide revenue for foreign exchange and capital to finance capital investment.[128] A rapid increase in agricultural production, it was believed, was essential for that "... 'take-off' of less-developed countries into economic growth and modernization."[129]

If the 1950s was the decade of statistics and percentages, and in the field of the engineer who supervised the large infrastructure projects, the 1960s would belong increasingly to the scientist. This applied particularly to agricultural scientists who were encouraged to expand the territory of their laboratories to apply their learning in the fields of the developing countries. FAO declared in 1962 that it was "... now moving out of its statistical phase, which was necessary to lay the foundation for a worldwide effort, into an action phase".[130] It added: "We have faced up to and solved many particular problems in our research institutes, laboratories and workshops, but there are still plenty more on the doorstep. We need to act, but in a framework of expanding understanding

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127 Frankel, F., *op.cit.*, pp.205-6. Attempts in 1990 by the V.P. Singh National Front government to set aside a percentage of public service positions for Harijans, brought down the government.

128 "This we know, was the role which agriculture played in the economic development of the most advanced industrial country in the world, namely the United States, in the 19th century." Sen, "Development Decade", *FFHC News*, Aug., 1962, Vol 3, No.17, p.2

129 "Action Projects", *FFHC News*, Vol 3, No.12, Mar. 1962, p.6

130 *FFHC News*, Vol 2, No.11, Feb., 1962

and exploration." [131] At the World Food Congress in 1963, Economics Professor, Gabriel Ardant confirmed the growth in this area when he summarised the proceedings of the congress as a dialogue between two types of men: the technicians and the economists. [132] He listed the technicians as the scientists, chemists, biologists, geneticists, agronomists and a "new category of nutrition specialists", who had unfolded the "paraphernalia of their science and techniques", to advise that they had the technical means to overcome hunger. [133] The Freedom From Hunger Campaign would provide some of the funds to carry the experiments into the field. These actions gained legitimacy for what the West portrayed as a rational, non-emotional, measured, scientific, Western approach which was in search of a "blueprint" and a methodology to deal with world hunger. [134] Others more colloquially referred to it as the "know-how-show-how" approach. [135]

Exploitation of the world's natural resources to assist its scientific, technological and economic strategies, was encouraged at the highest levels. U Thant, acting Secretary-General of the United Nations, stated in 1962: "Endowed as our planet is and able to take advantage of its riches as we have become, it is no longer resources that limit decisions. It is decisions that make resources...". [136] Perhaps more pertinently, given his wider authority, Pope John XXIII also firmly sanctioned "dominion" over the world's resources to deal with world hunger. He spoke of the super abundant gifts placed at the disposal of humanity, [137] and encouraged the belief, in his encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, that the problem of world hunger was not one of burgeoning population growth, but was rather a problem of man's insufficient manipulation of nature. His position was strongly influenced by the ideological stand of the Catholic church which condemned abortion and artificial means of birth control. In his Encyclical he stated:

> God in His goodness and wisdom has diffused in nature inexhaustible resources and has given to man the intelligence and genius to create fit instruments to master it and to turn it to satisfy the needs and demands of life. Hence, the real solution of the problem is not to be found in expedients that offend the moral order established by God and which injure the very origin of human life, but in a renewed scientific and technical effort on the part of man to deepen and extend his dominion over nature. The progress of science and technology, already realized, opens up in this direction limitless horizons. [138]

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131 "Action Projects", *op.cit.*, p.1

132 Ardant, G., "Some Reaction to the World Food Congress", *FFHC News*, Vol 4, No. 26, Oct. 1963, p.16

133 *Ibid*

134 "World Freedom From Hunger Week", *op.cit.*, p.3

135 "The World Food Problem", *NOW!*, Oct., 1968, p.3

136 U Thant quoted in "Development Decade", *FFHC News*, Aug., 1962, Vol 3, No.17, p.1

137 Editorial, *FFHC News*,Vol 4, No.3, April-May, 1963; Colombo Plan delegates also subscribed to "... the introduction of modern techniques, including facilities for greater control over the vagaries of nature". "Colombo Plan Communique", *C.N.*, Vol 32, No.11, Nov., 1961

138 *Mater et Magistra, Encyclical Letter of Pope John XXIII,* The Australian Catholic Truth Society, Melbourne, August, 1961, p.36

Other religious leaders gave similar support. The Islamic Congress declared:

> Our Islamic countries in Asia and Africa do not achieve in agricultural production a...sufficient level to secure healthy nourishment for their peoples...agricultural methods used are old and inefficient, having undergone almost no change since ancient times.... As it is ordained by God Almighty that He 'changes not the conditions of people until they change themselves,' the Islamic Convention [supports the FFHC] with an appeal to urge your peoples to apply all the discoveries of modern science in...food production.[139]

While a few voices continued to question the wisdom of ignoring local knowledge and conditions in the developing countries,[140] for the most part the concept of modernisation was embraced even more enthusiastically in the 1960s than in the previous decade. Such support assumed the destruction of "pre-modern", traditional ways, and almost by definition, was therefore disinterested in the contribution that "pre-modern" societies might make to the modernisation process. Rather, it emphasised the application of scientific knowledge over "simple" traditional techniques; of commercial, cash crop agriculture over subsistence farming; of industrialisation and mechanisation over human and animal power and of urbanisation over the farm and village.[141] It also assumed high levels of education and institutional specialisation of government, business and commerce in such areas as marketing, banking and taxation.[142] Moreover, while modernisation theory assumed that there would be a transitional period between the pre-modern stage and modernisation, it was largely disinterested in the process. It tended rather to focus on conditions before and after modernisation, stressing that the latter would be accomplished by the transfer of Western knowledge, technology and financial resources.[143]

In the 1950s Colombo Plan documentation had supported that stance and much of the sixties Freedom From Hunger Campaign material adopted the same focus. Australian government literature on aid also continued to support the introduction of "better" knowledge, "better" engineering and scientific installations, "better" techniques and "better" tools and implements.[144] Both the UN and Colombo Plan Scheme recruited large numbers of Australian experts - the one hundredth recruited by the UN for a three year FAO project in Argentina, being duly hailed in the External Affairs *External Aid*

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139 "Freedom From Hunger Week Around the World", *FFHC News*, Vol 4, No.22, Mar.- Apr., 1963

140 Among them notably G. Myrdal, Barbara Ward and E Schumacher. See Myrdal, G, McDougall Memorial Lecture, "Famine on the Doorstep", *FFHC News*, Mar-Aprl, 1966, Vol 17, No.41, pp.25-26; Ward, B., "Rich and Poor Nations", 4th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Sweden, 1968; Schumacher, E., "Economic Development and Poverty", Address to the African Bureau, Mar 3, 1966

141 Appelbaum, R., *Theories of Social Change*, Markham Pubishing Co., Chicago, 1970, p.37

142 *Ibid.*, pp.46-50

143 *op.cit.*, p.36

144 "The Agricultural Bureau Oration" by the Minister for External Affairs, Mr Paul Hasluck, in Adelaide, 31st Aug., 1965, reported in *C.N.*, Vol 36, No.8, Aug.1965, p.486

Bulletin in 1968.[145] And the men of the Snowy Mountains Authority were promoted as invincibly moving mountains and building bridges in Thailand - "men from the Snowy... fiercely proud of the Snowy Mountains Authority contribution to development..."[146] Hasluck at the UN General Assembly reiterated in 1968, "... the time is overdue to show greater international imagination in using the newly developed scientific and technological skills [such as]... Mexican Wheat, which has resulted in a spectacular increase of production in several Asian countries...".[147]

In the 1950s, the linear view of growth which focused on eliminating obstacles to development, identified capital and the lack of savings as major constraints to the development process. In the 1960s, the people's "ignorance" became identified as the major blockage preventing the benefits of economic growth from "trickling down". Westerners spoke of the "barriers of ignorance", the "development barrier" and the necessity for a concerted attack on "social and human barriers to change".[148] The Canadian Minister of Forestry stated: " ... scientifically, technologically we know we have the answers. We have also identified the chief remaining barrier ... the problem of effectively communicating to developing nations the technology and economic conditions that will permit increased agricultural productivity... it is essentially not a technical problem but a social one."[149] With metaphors borrowed from combat the West attempted to break through the "development barrier" with a battering ram of experts and Western knowledge to allow the trickle-down to take effect.[150]

A 1962 Australian FFHC Speakers' Handbook promised - "plenty, prosperity and hope" - if underdeveloped countries shook off the shackles of superstition, prejudice and primitiveness to learn from modern science and modern industrial and agricultural methods.[151] And it added:

> But these developing countries cannot do this without the assistance and guidance given them by experts from the advanced countries of the world. Many of the inhabitants of these developing

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145 "International Aid - Australia's Role as a Donor", *C.N.*, Vol 40, No.11, Nov., 1969; *External Aid Bulletin,* No.9, Feb., 1968

146 *External Aid Bulletin*, No.10, June, 1968; "Australian Aid to Indonesia", *External Aid Bulletin*, No.19, Nov., 1971

147 Statement by Paul Hasluck at UN General Assembly, 9 Oct., 1968, *External Aid Bulletin,* No. 14, Nov., 1968, Dept. of External Affairs, Canberra

148 Freeman, O.,"The Barrier of Ignorance", *FFHC News*, Vol 4, No.24, June, 1963, pp.35-36; "New Directions for FAO", *op.cit.*, pp.18-21

149 "New Directions for FAO", *Ibid.*, p.21

150 Hunger was described as "this most aggressive human enemy"; they were "engaged in a battle with little cause for victory"; and FAO had " secured a firm beach head" but had to now "press on to victory." "New Directions for FAO", *Ibid.*, p.21; *FFHC News,* June 1961, p.3; "Hunger -The Enemy to Peace", p.11, Report to the President and Members of the National Executive of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign by the Executive Officer, 31st December, 1963, York Street, Sydney; "International Aid-Australia's Role as a Donor", *C.N.,* Vol 40, No.11, Nov., 1969, p.622

151 *Speakers Compendium*, Freedom From Hunger Campaign, Issued by the Australian National Committee, p.35, Oct., 1962; See also *Speakers' Handbook*, FFHC, 1965, Sydney Executive Committee, Sydney, 1965, p. 9; "Hunger -The Enemy to Peace", *op. cit.*

> countries are children in their outlook; children to a degree where a scythe is looked upon as a tremendous forward step against generations of use of a hand sickle; where a plough is something to wonder at and be talked of in the villages as something miraculous, and where an outboard motor to replace their old-fashioned oar and sail propelled boats is almost an invention of the devil.
> ... It is at this point that the advanced countries play so important a part. ... by education in the supply of technicians, scientists, agriculturalists, teachers and so on....[152]

Counter images, were also numerous, of the responsible Western expert portrayed as "serious, capable and experienced", studying every problem in his search for practical and inexpensive solutions, who knew well when it was better "to send a stack of single-furrow steel ploughs rather than a tractor." [153] Ill-informed and patronising though such statements frequently were, Western theory, practice and rhetoric continued to reinforce each other.

FAO's focus was predominantly a scientific and technological one - viewed in terms of soil conditions, climate, pest control, irrigation, drainage, chemical fertilisers, better seeds and agricultural techniques.[154] It placed much less emphasis on social, structural and political change. Among its initiatives the FFHC supported a Fertiliser Programme, a Barley and Wheat Programme, the World Seed Programme and the World Food Programme.[155]

The "showpiece" for this sixties development ideology was the so-called "Green Revolution", which appeared to justify the years of laboratory research particularly associated with new hybrid, high-yielding seed varieties of rice and wheat. These high-yielding varieties (HYVs) were pioneered in institutes in Mexico and the Philippines[156] and funded substantially by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. Eager to test the results of this research, enormous energy was spent by the Foundations on promoting the HYVs and the conditions required for their success. This included the package of HYVs, chemical fertiliser, pesticide and water as well as access to technical advice, credit, tractors and marketing facilities.[157]

The high expectations for the new HYVs were being mooted at a time, around 1960-64, when in India there was general disappointment with the results of the Community Development Programme and concern over the relatively stagnant levels of agricultural production. As a consequence the Indian Planning Commission switched its emphasis

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152 *Ibid*

153 *The World is Hungry and We Must Help*, Notes for teachers prepared by R.D.Walshe for FFHC issued by the Australian National Committee, Sydney, nd, c 1965

154 "Duke of Edinburgh Launches Campaign in U.K.", *FFHC News*, Vol 3, No.17, Aug., 1962, p.4; "Action Projects", *op.cit.*, pp.6-7; Moody, J.,"Volunteers Who Live and Work with People Struggling Out of Poverty", *FFHC News*, Vol 5, No. 30, Mar-Apr., 1964; "New Directions for FAO", *op.cit.*, p.18; "FFHC's ' Role in Preserving World Peace'", *op.cit.*, p.10

155 "Freedom From Hunger Week", *FFHC News*, Vol 4, No.22, 1963, p.3

156 The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)

157 Frankel, F., *India's Green Revolution: Economic Gains and Political Costs*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1971, pp.3-6

from assisting a myriad small cultivators in the CDP to an Intensive Agricultural Areas Programme, in areas where the prospects for success were high.[158] India subsequently became one of the showcases for the Green Revolution, with considerable success in selected areas, especially in the Punjab. Other Asian countries such as the Philippines, Ceylon and Indonesia were also being pressed to adopt high-yielding rice varieties.

The introduction of high-yielding wheat varieties in India resulted in production rising to 16.6 million tons in 1967-68, a third higher than the previous peak of 12.3 million tons achieved as the result of good weather conditions in 1964-5.[159] Together with other hybrid varieties devised in Indian research institutes - maize, bajra and jowar - the Ministry of Food in 1969 embraced the extension of the programme as "a spearhead of the total agricultural modernisation program for the country as a whole."[160] The Green Revolution package contained many aspects of what the development theorists argued were the requirements for the economies of Third World nations to "take-off". Rostow, Millikan, Chenery and Strout emphasised the need for the transfer of capital, knowledge, skills and technology as well as changes in the conditions of output and employment.[161] In the most successful application of Green Revolution principles such transfers took place. The Punjab area was fertile, it had adequate water supplies and numbers of large landowners able to afford the necessary package of seeds, fertilisers and pesticides. Moreover the area's success attracted substantial World Bank and other loan assistance for further capital inputs, such as tractors to develop its mechanisation programme.[162] Enthusiasm for the Green Revolution ran high and support for the modernisation process appeared vindicated. Yet this was a highly selective process favouring richer farmers with large land holdings and assets to accumulate the necessary inputs. The Indian government and other Asian governments clearly placed their faith in the belief that on "taking off" the "trickle down" effect would eventually absorb small farmers into the modernisation process.

However, studies on the effects of the Green Revolution began to challenge those expectations by the end of the 1960s. While F. Frankel's study, for example, suggested that most Indian cultivators had benefited from Green Revolution inputs, however marginally, the study also revealed growing inequalities occurring between the few (less than 5%) who owned large tracts of land (over 20 acres - and who controlled over 35% of land), and the majority who were either landless or who owned less than an acre.[163]

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158 *Ibid*

159 *Ibid*, pp.6-7

160 *Ibid*

161 Millikan, M., Rostow, W., *A Proposal: Key to an Effective Foreign Policy*, Harper, New York, 1957, pp.49-50,65; Chenery, H., Strout, A., "Foreign Assistance and Economic Development", *The American Economic Review,* Vol LVI, Sept., 1966, p.680

162 Frankel, F., *op.cit.*, pp.205-6

163 Frankel, F., *op.cit.*, p.204

Indian censuses also revealed that the commercialisation of the agricultural sector had had a strong, frequently negative, social impact on women. In the decade 1961 to 1971, two-thirds of all women cultivators ceased activity while female agricultural labour increased by fifty per cent.[164]

By the end of the 1960s then, a further significant problem had started to manifest besides Western intransigence regarding global economic reform, or the lack of action by Asian governments to redistribute wealth. The problem involved the prospect of development methods which might increase the divisions between rich and poor and/or dislocate poor communities. This applied equally to the development practices of the non-government sector (if on a smaller scale) as to those of the multilateral and bilateral sectors. For the Freedom From Hunger Campaign was also applying Green Revolution and modernisation principles, with all their attendant Western assumptions, to development activities at the grassroots level.

The FFHC and Non Government Organisations

A salient aspect of the Freedom From Hunger Campaign was its extensive involvement of international non-government organisations, a group estimated to expend at least A$700 million a year by mid decade.[165] FAO developed a working relationship with that sector bringing it together to discuss ways of co-operation and a means to involve private citizens. Non-government organisations collectively had contact with millions of supporters all over the globe through radio, film, print media, personal contact and mailing campaigns.[166]

The organisations involved in the FFHC internationally represented the full spectrum of the voluntary sector - churches, such as the International Conference of Catholic Charities, the Commission of the Churches for International Affairs and the Islamic Congress; youth groups, such as the World Assembly of Youth and the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts Associations; women's groups, such as the Associated Country Women of the World; and Rotary and Lions' clubs, the League of Red Cross Societies, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the World Federation of Trade Unions and the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession.[167] It also included NGOs which were exclusively engaged in overseas assistance.

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164 George, S., *Ill Fares the Land*, p.148, Penguin Books, London, 1990

165 "Private Aid Estimate at $700 Million", *NOW!*, Aug., 1967, p.7

166 Weitz,"New Spirit Abroad, Dr Sen Tells Rome Meeting", Dec 1961; The Advisory Committee of International Non-Government Organizations met in Paris in February 1961. "NGOs Seek Closer Practical Ties with Campaign", *FFHC News*, May, 1961, p.4; "Workshop Studies Campaign Information Targets", *FFHC News*, April, 1961, p.11; "Radio, TV, public meetings, school programs, newspaper articles and municipal and church ceremonies all publicized the FFHC", *FFHC News*, Feb., 1962

167 *FFHC News*, April 1961, p.11; *FFHC News*, May, 1961 p.4; *FFHC News*, Dec.,1962

Through the FFHC these groups were encouraged to focus on the issues of hunger, undernourishment, and protein and vitamin deficiency.[168] By the campaign's midpoint in March 1963, commemorative stamps had been struck and millions of words and thousands of pictures had been published around the world about the campaign, in a wide range of publications.[169] The *UNESCO Courier*, the *Migration News*, the *Irish Catholic Newspaper* of Dublin, *The WAY Review* of the World Assembly of Youth, the *Congressional Record*, the *WCC Newsletter* and *Dairy Engineering*, represented just a few publications which covered aspects of the campaign.[170] And with the use of television, film and radio (the BBC's Overseas Service aired eight programmes titled, "The War Against Hunger"),[171] issues were discussed among religious associations, schools, universities, trade unions, and business and political groups.

Like a large number of countries Australia also swung its support behind the FFHC. National and State committees were convened to manage the drive for funds and education, with Casey as President of the Appeal Committee and the Reverend W. J. Hobbin as Chairman of the Australian committee. In Australia, the campaign began on 1st January, 1961 and although originally scheduled to terminate on the 30th June, 1964, was extended until the end of the first Development Decade. The Campaign then continued to gradually evolve into a development NGO in its own right.[172] The Campaign aimed:

> To bring to the notice of the nation through an Australia-wide education campaign the desperate situation faced by two-thirds of mankind; convey to the people of Australia what [could] be done at the international, national and individual level to alleviate this situation; [and to] conduct an appeal for funds to help in this work.[173]

Funds collected by the FFHC were disseminated to projects undertaken by the Australian Council of Churches' Inter-Church Aid, the Catholic Bishops, UNICEF and FAO.[174] The committee acknowledged the importance of the church groups as well as groups such as the Country Women's Association and the National Farmers' Union to the campaign's success, which contributed US$17,868 by the end of January 1961.[175]

Australia's involvement in the campaign was highly influenced by the international campaign. But it was also overlaid with some distinctly Australian assumptions and concerns. The Australian campaign took for its focus, for example, the Southeast and

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168 *FFHC News*, Feb. 1962
169 *FFHC News*, Dec. 1962
170 *FFHC News*, Aug. 1962, p.9; *FFHC News*, Dec. 1962
171 *FFHC News*, April, 1961, p.3
172 "Hunger -The Enemy to Peace ...", *op.cit.*
173 *Ibid*, p.5
174 "Report on the Allocation of Funds from the First Australian National Appeal", Freedom From Hunger Campaign, nd
175 "Hunger -The Enemy to Peace...", *op.cit.* p.9; "Contributions Received by 31 January 1961", *FFHC News*, Apr., 1961

South Asian region, which linked the issue of population growth to communist expansionism more acutely than did the global campaign.[176] Even as the campaign focused on the issue of world hunger as a moral concern the old fears tied to Australia's geography also surfaced.[177] The Chairman of the NSW FFHC warned:

> Unless the people in these countries get enough food in their own countries they will look elsewhere. They will soon become organised and will go looking for food and Australia will be a very good place to come. If this happens there will be much suffering and it will be our children and grandchildren who will be the sufferers.[178]

Political events in Asia during the 1960s helped to keep those fears alive. These included the China/India border war (1962), the Indonesian/Malay Confrontation (1963-66), the Indian/Pakistan war (1965) and the Vietnam war. Continued support for the economic growth and modernisation paradigms in Australia also kept the negative images of Asia paramount. Arguably, given the high profile and wide reach of the Freedom From Hunger campaign,[179] which involved large sectors of the public through non-government organisations, negative messages about Asia and the Third World generally were even more strongly reinforced in the 1960s than in the previous decade.

The N.S.W. State Committee of the FFHC, for example, arranged for Gwen Meredith to give information about the campaign in the highly popular radio serial Blue Hills.[180] An Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) television programme, *Four Corners*, which produced a documentary about the Freedom From Hunger Campaign in May 1963, showed clearly the continued propensity to use Western frames of reference when discussing Asian cultures. On more than one occasion images of a neat house and garden with "proper" plumbing, and neatly clothed children, were held up as the model to which developing countries should aspire. Freedom From Hunger Campaign literature remarked: "... we will have to go among the people, talk to them and try to get them to grasp the idea that each could have a garden, so that all the housewife needs to do is walk out her door and pick fresh vegetables".[181]

That the reality was somewhat different and unacceptable to the Western mind was made clear from the ABC footage which described an Indian village scene in 1963. The

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176 A campaign report stated "... it is now, more than ever, urgent that living within the Asian geographical sphere our consciousness of the need to overcome this third [demographic] revolution must never be slakened", especially as populations were growing at a "terrifying pace". Hunger- The Enemy of Peace... *op.cit.*, pp.11,14

177 McMillan, J. in his capacity as Chairman of the NSW FFHC Committee listed religious principles, humane reasons, self-preservation and self interest as the reasons for supporting the Campaign. Address to the Rotary Club of Sydney, July, 24, 1962, "The Population Explosion and World Food Supplies."

178 *Ibid*, p.12

179 In Australia in 1969 the FFHC remitted by far the largest donations overseas: A$1.2 million, compared to some A$700,000 - ACC, and A$S500,000 ACR and Austcare, *Not Yet Enough,* Australian Council for Overseas Aid, nd

180 McMillan, J., *Report by the Chairman to Second Annual Meeting of N.S.W. State Committee, held in the A.M.P. Society Conference Room, on Thurs., 19 Mar., 1964,* Freedom From Hunger Campaign

181 Terra, Prof., "'Operation Ten Times Ten' Is Highlight of Dutch Drive", *FFHC News*, Vol 2, No.11, Feb., 1962, p.3

commentary reiterated the familiar traditional versus modern themes, justifying the West's actions as urgent, important and enlightened, and then catalogued what India lacked compared with what the West possessed. The Indian village was portrayed as a dirt-stained, mud-walled world lacking in "shops, cinemas, bathrooms, sewerage, classrooms or desks", while the West had "towels, taps, telephones and tooth brushes."[182] Moreover, villagers lacked education and were marked by sickness and disease and an explosive birthrate.[183] Generations of their bare feet had pounded paths to fine dust; their wrists lacked watches since "time was unimportant"; and they were content to starve while cows "ate their heads off in bovine slums".[184] The commentary ended:

> At the village well by the water's edge of the village pond and in the low walled fields beyond, is the listless enervated pace of life of so much of rural India, a life steeped in the traditions and methods of the past, a life for millions at the weary threshold of starvation and malnutrition.[185]

The programme said as much about the West as it did about India, particularly, of course, the West's propensity to equate well-being with consumption, and its obsession with cleanliness and "tidying up" the Third World. Indeed, one of the enduring images in aid literature was the eagerness of aid agencies to take lavatories into Asia's villages.[186] In the Western mind learning had to be institutionalised in school buildings. And there was an assumption that bare feet and mud brick housing were deficient. But there were two images which perhaps most confounded and irritated Westerners. The first was time. Time, to the hurried Westerner (epitomised by the "development tourist" who dropped into projects for a few hours' appraisal) was assumed to be unimportant to Asians. Yet Asian farmers were acutely aware of seasons and weather patterns and the cycle of life and death to an extent long forgotten by most Westerners. The second was India's refusal to eat its cows which Hindus considered holy.

While the Australian FFHC committee claimed to publicise the Campaign devoid of "histrionics" and "based entirely on factual and authentic information....",[187] like the international campaign "information" was based on the broad assumption that the problems of developing countries resided firmly in the "backward" methods, and "outdated" traditions and people themselves. Therefore, although there was a growing

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182 "Freedom From Hunger", Four Corners Programme, screened 25/5/63, working title India, PNF 225, 18 mins, ABC Gore Hill Archives, Sydney

183 *Ibid*

184 *Ibid*

185 *Ibid*

186 A WHO official stated:"Our target is to install 5,000,000 village latrines in the United Provinces.... We don't bother to persuade people about hygiene or the control of cholera. It's much simpler and they respond more if we show them how convenient it is to have such a clean unit in their homes." Scarfe, A. & W., *A Mouthful of Petals*, Gold Star Publications, Melbourne, 1972, pp.36-37

187 It had agreed that the public "would not be impressed by any semblence of aggressive or blatant publicity nor by indulging in anything that would offend good taste and behaviour....", "Contributions Received by 31 January 1961", *FFHC News, op.cit,* p.9

acceptance by NGOs in the 1960s that projects should move away from welfare handouts to embrace longer-term initiatives, those activities, of course, closely mirrored the current practices and assumptions of multilateral and bilateral aid.

Typically, Australian projects funded village communal gardens to encourage the production of vegetable produce and poultry breeding programmes in Madras, fertiliser projects to assist rice growing in Ceylon, and a fishing co-operative in the Philippines (the latter in conjunction with the Philippines Rural Reconstruction Movement which had been started by Dr James Yen in the 1950s).[188] The Australian Commission for Inter-Church Aid and the Roman Catholic Bishops adopted village rehabilitation projects in East Pakistan, rice cultivation in India, a wells, fertiliser and improved seeds project in the Punjab (a model example of Green Revolution assistance), and they also supplied ocean-going fishing craft to Vietnam.[189] Given the "know how show how" quality of such assistance it was vulnerable to duplicating the problems associated with projects like the Community Development Programmes. These might include a lack of community involvement, "top-down" administration and a tendency for those with assets to benefit from assistance while poorer groups were disadvantaged.

However, the FFHC was important for a number of reasons. The Campaign helped to differentiate the NGO sector (those organisations specifically focused on assisting poor communities in developing nations) from the broader non-government sector and to highlight some of the potential qualities which NGOs could bring to assistance compared with the bilateral and multilateral sectors. The British *Observer* noted that one of the positive outcomes of the World Food Congress was likely to be "a greatly increased interest in smaller, cheaper, more local attempts to bring the world's unused resources of food and manpower together in the fight against starvation."[190] Other observers paid direct tribute to the work of NGOs urging FAO to continue to "... sustain and encourage the freedom, flexibility and new initiatives which voluntary aid agencies offer[ed]."[191] It was argued essentially that NGOs were invaluable for the new strength which they brought to assistance, which complemented government aid, and that they should be respected for their difference rather than being pushed into the same mould as government and international agencies.[192]

Further, the Campaign increased the public profile of NGOs which encouraged the numerical expansion of the NGO community and a significant rise in its income. The

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188 "Success in Madras", p.5, *National Newsletter*, Freedom From Hunger Campaign, Issue No.3, Aug.-July, 1967, Sydney; *National Newsletter*, *op.cit.*, June, 1967, pp.1& 3

189 "Official List of Projects Adopted by the Australian National Committee, together with projects adopted by the Australian Commission for Inter-Church Aid and the Catholic Bishops", McMillan, J. Report by Chairman...., *op.cit.*

190 "Food Congress", *FFHC News*, Vol 4, No.26, Oct, 1963

191 Weitz, C., *FFHC News*, Vol 17, No.41, Mar.-Apr.,1966

192 *Ibid*

Australian figure in 1969 was around A$13,818,489.[193] Along with the establishment of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)[194] (a body which superseded three co-ordinating organisations in the areas of refugee aid, migrants and development assistance in 1962), the Campaign gave the NGO community an international focus and opportunities to network with like minded organisations. Seven NGOs (with Western off-shoots) came together in India in 1966 under the name of Action for Food Production (AFPRO).[195] In Australia, CAA formed links with the British Oxford Committee Against Hunger (OXFAM), which had originally been concerned with emergency relief but, like CAA, was changing its focus to adopt a longer term developmental approach. CAA co-funded projects with OXFAM, a practice adopted by CAA when other organisations had stronger links in a particular geographic area. CAA also supported other Australian NGOs with funding. It gave grants to the Overseas Service Board, For Those Who Have Less and to C.S.I.R.O. to trial a high protein milk biscuit.[196]

Many of the European NGOs which would become well known for their outspoken advocacy work were all active in the campaign.[197] They included the German Catholic organisation Campaign against Hunger and Disease in the World (MISEREOR) the German Protestant NGO, Bread for the World, and the Netherlands Organisation for International Development (NOVIB). Some, like OXFAM in England, were already becoming involved in campaigns to support the independence claims of European colonies, or to lobby for increased government aid.[198] FAO acknowledged that the work of these NGOs had predated the FFHC and would continue beyond it, and allowed projects not originally conceived under the campaign to be funded.[199]

Fundamentally, also, the Campaign provided a focal point which helped foster acceptance and legitimise the arguments being advocated by activist social workers and NGOs to abandon charity handouts in favour of more "developmental" assistance.

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193 The world figure was estimated by the OECD and ICVA, "Private Aid Estimate at $700 million", *NOW!*, Aug., 1967, p.7; *Not Yet Enough, op.cit.*

194 ICVA was mainly represented by Western European and North American voluntary interests. "NGOs Seek Closer Practical Ties with Campaign", *op.cit.*; Lissner, J., *The Politics of Altruism: A Study of the Political Behaviour of Voluntary Development Agencies*, Lutheran World Federation, Dept. of Studies, Geneva, 1977, p.65; *National Newsletter*, *op.cit.*, Feb.1962, p.10

195 These were OXFAM, Catholic Relief Service, Catholic Charities-India, Economic Life Committee NCCI, Indo-German Social Service Society, Committee on Relief and Gift Supplies and the Indian Social Institute. "Aid Agencies Accept Challenge", *NOW!*, Dec., 1966, p.6

196 *Annual Report*, 1969, Community Aid Abroad; "Australian Volunteers Abroad, Editorial, *NOW!*, Aug., 1965, No.139, p.1; CAA gave a £3,300 grant to OSB in 1965 to assist with administration and to send three volunteers overseas, *CAA Annual Report,* 1965, and CAA groups provided funds for dairy cattle sent to Pakistan by For Those Who Have Less which specialised in that form of assistance; *NOW!*, Feb., 1965, p.3

197 "Visits Show Campaign Gathers Momentum in European Countries", *FFHC News*, May, 1961, p.5

198 Snith, B., *More Than Altruism: The Politics of Private Foreign Aid,* Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1990, p.79

199 *FFHC News*, Oct. 1963

However flawed such assistance may have been initially, in the long term, the change from charity based assistance to development assistance would be highly significant. It would be left to those NGOs most inclined towards activism to develop and evolve the concept of "development assistance" so that it more readily reflected the needs of the poor. It was in carrying that process out, in the 1970s and 1980s, that the full potential and significance of the activist NGO sector, from both developed and developing nations, would lie. The following chapter will explore in more detail Australian development methods and practices put in place by different sectors of the aid community in response to UN Development Decade activity.

Chapter 5
Crises Versus Development Aid
Further Australian Responses to the UN Development Decade

"Perhaps it is a matter for the historians to record that at this time in the history of human affairs there is possibly a greater measure than ever before of the will to relieve the distresses of the poorer nations and a better standard of actual performance in this effort by the richer nations." ..... *P. Hasluck, 1967*

Australian Government Aid Policy in the 1960s

Despite Hasluck's pronouncements and the undoubted increased global emphasis on poverty and development objectives during the United Nations Development Decade, Australian government aid policy continued to be dominated by political rather than developmental concerns. The Chinese-Indian border war, the Vietnam war, the Malay/Indonesia Confrontation, the Indonesian coup and Britain's planned withdrawal from Singapore by the early 1970s, kept the fear of communism alive in Australia, and encouraged the dominance of diplomatic, defence and strategic concerns in aid matters.[1]

The Sino-Soviet split may have helped diminish the more florid anti-Communist rhetoric of the 1950s, but the domino theory continued to be very much alive in Australia. In 1964 External Affairs Minister Hasluck spoke of the need to halt the southward march of China. He warned that if aggression succeeded in South Vietnam, "... resistance throughout southern Asia would crumble and many countries, including Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Burma, could come under the dominance of China."[2] His claims were based on the same assumptions and fears that were in place in the 1950s, but were now reinforced by Australia's closer alliance with the USA. External Affairs Minister Barwick's tour of Asia in 1962, the first by an External Affairs Minister in four years, rang with fearful references, images and assessment of communist activities in Asia.[3] His descriptions assumed the simplistic black and white view of Asian issues which a fear of communism had encouraged. Throughout his journey, in an area where he believed, "international communism was actively seeking to advance its influence by one means or another," he claimed to be continually conscious of skirting the "formidable periphery of Communist China".[4] In Vietnam the enemy, the "Viet Cong", was described as exercising control through "terrorism, brutality and other instruments of fear," whereas "strategic hamlets" - supposedly safe settlement areas for

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[1] "Australia and its Relations with Asia", *C.N.*, Vol 40, No.10, Oct., 1969; Macmahon Ball, W., Prof., Political Science, University of Melbourne, "Australia's Role in Asia", 18th Roy Milne Memorial Lecture, Melbourne, 1 Nov., 1967, The Institute of International Affairs, nd, p.15

[2] "Australia and South-East Asia", External Affairs Minister P. Hasluck, *C.N.*, Vol 35, No.10, Oct., 1964

[3] "Australia and Asia", *C.N.*, Vol 33, No. 7, July, 1962, pp.53-63

[4] *Ibid*, p.61

relocated villagers to stop them coming under the influence of the Viet Cong - were depicted as vehicles of enlightened social progress receiving health, education and other facilities.[5]

This is not the place to debate the relative merits or otherwise of the tactics used by the opposing forces in Vietnam's civil war.[6] It is sufficient to say that Australia's unsophisticated analyses of the war encouraged it to commit not only military assistance in the fight against communism but also to continue to attribute its aid to that purpose. Barwick confirmed: "Our economic and technical assistance to Asian countries ... makes a direct contribution to the struggle against international Communism in this vital region."[7] He added that since the struggle would be long and hard it must be tackled by encouraging more visits to Australia of Asian officials; by increasing aid under the Colombo Plan, SEATO aid and other aid avenues; and by stimulating both Australian trade and investment in the Asian region. By such means, he argued, Australia would be both consolidating its friendships in the region and contributing significantly towards the struggle against "Communist pressure and encroachment throughout the area."[8]

Australian-Asian Relations

This approach to the region did not demonstrably strengthen Australia's links in Asia. On the contrary it tended to continue to frustrate any chance for creative, independent Australian foreign policy. A foreign policy, that is, based on regional initiatives which sought to accommodate, rather than divide the various groupings and most pertinently which sought to identify more strongly with the region than with Australia's old Western allies.

Certainly Australia's interaction and activity in the region increased dramatically in the 1960s. Unlike Menzies who was inclined to view Asia as a land mass to fly over on his way to Europe,[9] Prime Minister Harold Holt took a far more active interest in Asian Pacific affairs. He visited Cambodia, Laos, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, South Korea and Singapore in 1967.[10] However the visits seemed designed more to affirm support for Australia's presence in Vietnam than to review or to look afresh at Australia's commitment to the region. In consequence Australia's increased contact with Asia was centred heavily on military issues, a position bolstered by the declining

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[5] *Ibid*, p.55; Strategic Hamlets were adapted from a technique used in Malaya. Relocation in Vietnam was frequently carried out insensitively creating more hostility towards the South Vietnamese Army than the National Liberation Front or "Viet Cong".

[6] There is a large literature describing the techniques and strategies used by opposing sides to win the people over. See, for example, Truong Nhu Tang, *Journal of a Vietcong*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1986; FitzGerald, F., *Fire in the Lake*, Vintage Books, New York, 1973

[7] "Australia and Asia", *C.N.*, *op.cit.*, p.62

[8] *Ibid*, p.63

[9] Reid, A., *The Bulletin*, July 16, 1966, p.15

[10] Gelber, H., "Problems of Australian Foreign Policy January-June 1967", Vol XIII, No 3, Dec. 1967, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, pp.314-5

interest in Asia of its old allies in Europe and Britain. On more than one occasion Prime Ministers Holt and Gorton, referred to this waning interest,[11] and the Minister for Defence A. Fairhall lamented in 1969: "Europe these days seems strangely detached from the dangers in South-East Asia."[12]

Britain's military withdrawal from the region prompted Australia to commit Australian forces - forty-two aircraft, one ship and 1200 troops - to Malaysia and Singapore for an indefinite period.[13] While some argued that the relatively small size of the contingent made it more a political move than a defence issue, the stated rationale for deploying the force was based on government advice "... that externally promoted communist infiltration and subversion constituted the most likely threat to states in the region."[14] That the "government advice" might be too closely influenced by US intelligence, concerned some critics of Australian foreign policy.[15] For if Australia's assessment of Asia and its place in it was filtered through American eyes, these did not necessarily coincide with the best interests of Australia.

Australian government spokesmen certainly affected some of the American war rhetoric in relation to Vietnam, when they argued that the physical defence of the villages should march hand in hand with economic and social development "to win the battle for hearts and minds."[16] And Vice-President Hubert Humphrey positively encouraged Australian leadership in the region in 1966 when he urged: "...your leadership in the Pacific, your leadership in the Indian Ocean area, and your leadership in Asia, is vital ...".[17] Humphrey's portrayal of the region as the "under belly of Asia" (where India had tasted communist aggression from China; where Thailand was tasting infiltration and subversion as he spoke; where Laos was being plagued by the Pathet Lao; and where Vietnam was going through fire and devastation[18]), hardly encouraged an independent response by Australia which needed to understand Asia from a variety of Asian perspectives. On the contrary the "all the way with LBJ" policy adopted by the Australian government led it to increase its troops to Vietnam when the USA increased its, and to continue to adhere to the domino theory as late as 1969 even as Western

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11 *C.N.*, Vol 37, No.7, July, 1966, p.453

12 *C.N.*, Vol 40, No.4, April, 1969, p.129

13 Hudson, W., "Problems in Australian Foreign Policy January-June 1969", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol XV, No.3, Dec.,1969, pp. 3-4

14 *Ibid*, p.4

15 MacMahon Ball, *op.cit.*, pp.7-8, and see Harold Holt's remarks on the "... close relations now existing between Australia and Japan.", "Australia and Asia", Moral Rearmament Assoc. Conference, 6 Jan., 1967, *C.N.*, Vol 38, No.1, Jan., 1967

16 "Australia and Asia", Report tabled in House of Representatives by External Affairs Minister, Sir Garfield Barwick, *C.N.*, Vol 33, No.8, Aug., 1962, p.62

17 "Interest in Asia of the United States and Australia", Address by the Vice-President of the United States, Hubert Humphrey at the Prime Minister's luncheon in Canberra, 19 Feb., 1966, *C.N.*, Vol 37, No. 2, Feb., 1966, pp.55-64

18 *Ibid*, p.63

public opinion was seeking US disengagement. In Ottowa, in April 1969, Prime Minister John Gorton declared: "... I, like most people who live in that area ... don't dismiss the domino theory as being sheer nonsense."[19] From the beginning to end of the decade adherence to the domino theory clouded all foreign policy issues including economic assistance.

Australia's scramble to "discover Asia" because of East-West tensions and the likely losses of European markets, though legitimate concerns, were not by themselves a sufficient basis on which to build genuine friendship.[20] Indeed trade, which motivated Australia's other increasing interest in the region, particularly with Japan, highlighted the government's capacity for pragmatism, opportunism and contradiction in the region. The Holt government, for example, drew a distinction between Chinese communism (which his government vehemently opposed on the grounds of its expansionist designs throughout Asia) and communist China (which his government did not regard as an enemy) based on Australia's commercial interest to sell wheat to China![21]

Australia's continued proclivity to ally closely with the West on a variety of sensitive international issues further weakened its chances for mutual understanding in the region. The close reliance on USA analysis most obviously precluded Australia from an independent assessment of the region. Macmahon Ball observed in 1967 that Australia's analyses of China, East Asia and Southeast Asia while coinciding closely with that of the USA, differed from the analyses of the Governments of India, Japan and most Western European countries.[22] Further, India, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia and Japan were unwilling to contribute to the USA's military efforts in Vietnam.[23] But there were other issues which worked against Australia's close acceptance in the region. Professor K.G.Tregonning, an Australian employed in the University of Malaya in Singapore, pointed to Australia's unsympathetic attitude on West Irian - where Australia was seen to support the Dutch - and confirmed that SEATO (of which Australia was a member) was disapproved of by India, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Ceylon and Indonesia.[24] SEATO tended to create yet another divide splitting its Asian members - Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines - from the non-aligned countries as well as communist. Moreover SEATO provided economic and technical assistance to its members which

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19 *C.N.,* Vol 40, No.4, April, 1969, p.138

20 Scott, D., "Role of Individuals in Foreign Aid Projects", *NOW!,* Nov. 1962; Clunies Ross, A., with R.I. Downing and others, *One per Cent: The Case for Greater Australian Foreign Aid,* Melbourne University Press, Box Hill, Victoria, 1963, p.27

21 CPD, H of R Oct. 28, p.2378, quoted in Hudson, W., "Problems of Australian Foreign Policy July-December 1966", *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* Vol XIII, No.1, May 1967, Dept. of History, University of Queensland

22 Macmahon Ball, *op.cit.*, pp.7-8

23 *Ibid,* pp.10-11

24 An Australian, he was Raffles Professor of History at the University of Malaya in Singapore. Tregonning, K., "Australia's Imperialist Image in South-East Asia", *Australian Quarterly,* Vol 33, No.3, Sept., 1961, pp.43-48

non-SEATO Asian countries resented. Such actions highlighted the Cold-War agenda of economic aid rather than one of economic progress and social welfare.[25]

Australia's policy towards South Africa was another which accentuated the divide between the Western white members of the British Commonwealth and the African-Asian members as well as the non-aligned countries. Tregonning remarked that Australia's continued White Australia Policy and its support for South Africa identified Australia with the "tragic whites-only wagon lumbering across the veldt...."[26] Australia consistently took a line in the United Nations which was opposed to the polices of the non-aligned nations (which included Asian members of the British Commonwealth.)[27] In 1967, for example, Australia abstained from voting on a resolution which condemned South Africa's racial policies, sought a military embargo against the republic and urged limited commercial sanctions.[28]

Against this background the claims by Australian External Affairs Ministers to be fostering Australian/Asian relations appeared more optimistic than accurate. In 1964 it was claimed for example, "Friendship with Asia, reciprocal trade, closer cultural relations and a clearer understanding of Asia and its peoples are in the forefront of Australian policy."[29] Other ministers betrayed, in their not-so-subtle choice of words, an embarrassed discomfort with the "relationship". Treasurer William McMahon declared in 1968, "I do not myself presume to be able to resolve the riddles of the inscrutable East", while reporting that, "... our Universities and other teaching institutions are teeming with Asian students."[30]

By 1967 Professor Macmahon Ball was questioning, in the context of the Vietnam war, exactly how many Asian allies Australia could count among its friends. India, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia and Japan were all opposed to the war.[31] Macmahon Ball stated: "When you come to think of it, the roll-call of our Asian allies is a short one. There's Thailand ... there's the Philippines ... then there is South Korea"[32] (all of which were highly dependent on the USA).

The continued prime emphasis of Australian aid on the preservation of Australian political and economic life rather than on alleviating poverty in Asia - had a direct influence on Australian aid policy. Beyond responding to the slight shifts of emphasis

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25 Macmahon Ball, W., "Australia's Political Relations with Asia Since 1945", *Asia and Australia*, Australian Institute of Political Science, Angus and Robertson, 1961, p.74

26 *Tregonning, op.cit.,* p.45

27 Macmahon Ball, W., "Australia's Political...", *op.cit.*, p.75

28 UN Monthly Chronicle, Jan. 1967, p.60, quoted in Hudson, W., "Problems of Australian Foreign Policy July-December, 1966, *op.cit.*

29 "Australia and Southeast Asia", *op.cit.*

30 McMahon,W., Treasurer, *C.N.*, Vol 39, No.10, Oct., 1968

31 Macmahon Ball, W., "Australia's Role..." *op.cit.,* pp.10-11

32 *Ibid*, pp.12-13

which occurred within the orthodox economic growth paradigm - from large infrastructure projects to a growing focus on education, and then to a greater emphasis on agriculture - the specifics of poverty were ignored. Australia's increasing commitment to the Vietnam war during the 1960s confirmed that stance. The timing of an inter-departmental review in 1964/65, instigated to gauge "the nature, extent and estimated effectiveness" of Australian aid, just as Australia was becoming embroiled in the Vietnam war, guaranteed that Australia's aid programme continued to be "primarily directed" towards enhancing "diplomatic, defence, and strategic considerations."[33] Hence the concentration of Australian bilateral aid to Malaysia, Thailand, South Vietnam, India, Pakistan and later Indonesia, was justified as being of the greatest strategic importance to Australia rather than on particular developmental needs of the respective countries.[34] Hence, also, the type of project undertaken was viewed more in terms of its ability to maximise diplomatic and trade objectives than development criteria.[35] In fact, the review did not address the impact of Australia's aid on economic development in those countries.[36]

Colombo Plan and SEATO aid to South Vietnam was called "Civil Aid", to differentiate it from military assistance. By June 1968 this totalled some $14.6 million since its initiation in the mid to late 1950s.[37] Such assistance ranged over a variety of areas: railway carriages, buses, vaccine production equipment, road and bridge maintenance equipment, prefabricated huts for refugee centres and hospital use, textbooks, tents, iron sheeting, blankets and radio equipment.[38] Three Australian hospital teams were supported, along with numerous other experts in the fields of agriculture, transport, communications and education. Several large water and sewerage projects were also being funded and in December 1968, 139 Vietnamese students were studying in Australia under the Colombo Plan.[39] Australian aid also supported the work of a special army unit which ran the Australian Force Civic Action Programme. Funds provided materials for schools, markets, dispensaries and housing for the strategic hamlet programme.[40]

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[33] The review was undertaken from September 1964 to March 1965, Wilkinson, A., *The Politics of Australian Foreign Aid Policy, 1950-1972*, PhD Thesis, Dept. of International Relations, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, June 1976, pp.105, 214, 217

[34] *Ibid*

[35] *Ibid*, p.218; Boxer, A., *Experts in Asia:An Inquiry into Australian Technical Assistance*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1969, p.171

[36] *Ibid*

[37] *External Aid Bulletin*, No.15, Dec., 1968, Department of External Affairs, Canberra, pp.3-8

[38] *Ibid*

[39] *Ibid*

[40] *Ibid*

The Projects' Section of the External Aid Branch of External Affairs, attempted an appraisal of the unit's success in the strategic hamlet areas in Vietnam in 1969 reporting simplistically:

> The inconvenience caused by our troops at present is of course insignificant compared with the demands and harassing tactics previously imposed on the population by the Viet Cong. The people are generally appreciative of the presence of the Australian Force as being in their own best interests and therefore accept such things as the noise and dust made by guns and vehicles and the rigid control of movement of people and livestock in certain areas of tactical significance to our positions.[41]

The Aid Branch reported that a strategic hamlet relocation, "Operation Ainslie", co-ordinated by the 1st Australian Civil Affairs, had been "completely successful" in freeing the people from taxes imposed by the Viet Cong, in allotting them very rich virgin land, and in upgrading their housing.[42] Such "optimistic" reporting heavily influenced by US analyses, adopted the familiar Western position of assuming to know what was best for the local population. This use of the Australian External Affairs' Aid *Bulletin* to analyse the Vietnamese situation directly identified the aid branch with defence activities.

While the Australian Government did not involve its civilian population in the Vietnam war to the extent that the US involved its citizens, various Australian groups rallied to donate canned food, toys, clothing and money for medical equipment.[43] The NGO community responded through the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) - the umbrella organisation established in 1965 to represent Australian NGOs involved in overseas assistance. Representatives of the Australian Council of Churches, CAA and the Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies, made an extensive visit to Vietnam in 1966-67 and produced an in depth report on the opportunities for NGO assistance in Vietnam.[44] ACFOA elected to consolidate the various Australian groups seeking to assist the country and to provide "guidance for the responsible development of voluntary endeavours" there.[45] It maintained a "watching brief" on the civil aid programme, published a leaflet titled "Aid to Vietnam" to advise the public on ways to assist Vietnam, advised organisations collecting large sums, such as the Jaycees, and agreed to disburse funds collected from an *Age* newspaper appeal.[46] The Australian Government provided an annual grant to ACFOA, for which it was clearly expected that ACFOA's Executive Director would spend at least 25% of his time

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41 *External Aid Bulletin*, *op.cit.*, No.16, Jan., 1969, pp.3-4

42 *Ibid*, pp.4-5

43 They included the Defend Australia Committee in Victoria, the Australian-Vietnam Civic Action Project in Queensland, the Universities Appeal for Civil Aid to Vietnam in Sydney, the Returned Services League and the Jaycees. Source: *External Aid Bulletins*, Nos.15 & 16, Dec., 1968 & Jan.1969

44 Australian Council For Overseas Aid (ACFOA), Report on Vietnam, by S. Einfeld, D. Scott and H. Perkins, 1968

45 Hinton, V., "Honorary Secretary's Report" p.2, ACFOA, Melbourne, Victoria, 29 Mar., 1968

46 *Ibid*; *Minutes of Council Meeting*, ACFOA, 25-26 Mar., 1968

improving and co-ordinating the voluntary effort in Vietnam, and would liaise closely with the government. Not all of ACFOA's members were at ease with that arrangement.[47]

The commitment of Australian aid for strategic purposes was also reflected in another area of Southeast Asia, following the 1965 Indonesian coup. Having been previously alarmed at Sukarno's independent and anti-Western style, and his public support for the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), Australia showed its approval for his successor by granting Indonesia major infusions of aid. After 1966, outside of Papua New Guinea, Indonesia became the largest recipient of Australian aid. Australia's nervousness about Indonesia, because of its geographic proximity, and its large population (ranking fifth in the world), again contrived to link aid to defence initiatives rather than with the alleviation of poverty. Australian aid to Indonesia increased from $5.9 million in 1967/68 to $15.5 million in 1970/71.[48] Some of the major projects undertaken involved an aeronautical telecommunications project, an international and domestic telecommunications project, the rehabilitation of Indonesian State railways, water supply projects and port development.[49] Veterinary, medical, educational and vocational assistance was also given.[50]

In the rest of Asia, Australian aid remained fairly consistent with its 1950s activities now focusing on the three areas indentified as vital to the modernisation process - agriculture, education and infrastructure. Typically it provided experts and equipment for the sugar industries in Ceylon and Pakistan, rice irrigation research in Thailand, sheep breeding projects in Burma and in India, and an afforestation project in Nepal.[51] It also supplied rail wagons to Burma, designed and provided equipment for a series of bakeries in India and with Britain and New Zealand established the Rangoon Technical High School in Burma.[52] The heavy infrastructure projects - roads and bridges, railways and communication projects - continued to be a strong focus of the aid programme.[53]

The welfare of overseas students studying in Australia began to be attended to more formally with the instigation of an annual conference in 1965 convened by External Affairs. Some 12,500 overseas students were studying in Australia in 1967/68, 2,500 of them sponsored by the government. Hospitality pamphlets and orientation tours to familiarise students with Australian customs were arranged with the continued assistance of the voluntary sector: Rotary, Apex, YMCA, AAAV etc.[54] In addition

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47 Hinton, V., *op.cit.*; *External Aid Bulletin*, *op.cit.*, No.9, Feb., 1968, p.2
48 *External Aid Bulletin*, *op.cit.*, No.19, Nov., 1971, p.2
49 *Ibid*, pp.3-5
50 *Ibid*, pp.6-8
51 *External Aid Bulletin*, *op.cit.*, No. 8, Dec., 1967 & No.10, June, 1968
52 *External Aid Bulletin*, *op.cit.*, No., 8, Dec., 1967
53 "Australian Civil Aid to Malaysia", *External Aid Bulletin*, *op.cit.*, No.17, Aug., 1969
54 "The Welfare of Overseas Students in Australia", *C.N.*, Vol 39, No.11, Nov., 1968, pp.491-492; *External Aid Bulletin*, No.5, *op.cit.*

External Affairs arranged short international training courses on storing and preserving grain and seeds, ports and harbour administration, export promotion, public administration, foreign service training and customs administration.[55] The 4000th Colombo Plan student (from Thailand) in 1962, and the 8000th student (from Singapore) in 1968, both received a "kangaroo hide briefcase to mark the occasion".[56]

The spread of Australian aid increased throughout the 1960s to include large food aid assistance to India in 1965/66; assistance to the Indus Basin [water] Scheme; the economic stabilisation scheme in Laos; a Commonwealth Co-operation in Education Scheme; a Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan; a South Pacific Aid Programme; and defence aid to Malaysia, Singapore and India. As well, assistance was continued to various multilateral organisations and an inter-university aid scheme to facilitate cooperation between Australian and Asian universities.[57]

By the end of the decade Australian bilateral aid had increased from $10.6 million in 1959/60 to $40.9 million in 1968/69. Including Papua New Guinea, the total aid budget in 1968/69 was $155.0 million.

Government Aid Administration

Despite these activities and although the Colombo Plan had begun to be regarded as a permanent fixture, only one of Australia's five External Affairs Ministers in the 1960s, (Hasluck)[58] made any effort to revitalise Australia's aid administration or policy. The numerous changes of Ministers may have contributed to the lack of action. It in any case resulted in aid matters continuing to be accorded a low priority, with changes to the aid branch taking place only in the last few years of the decade.[59]

Observers at the time confirmed Australia's ailing aid administration. One critic believed Australia's aid was administered by amateurs. Another, K.W. Taylor,[60] writing in 1965 suggested:

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55 *Ibid*

56 "Shorter Notes", *C.N.,* Vol 33, No.4, April, 1962, p.32; "The Eight Thousandth Colombo Plan Student", *C.N.*, Vol 39, No.7, July, 1968, p.298

57 *Australia's International Aid,* Dept. of External Affairs, Canberra, Jan., 1969, pp.9-14; *External Aid Bulletin*, *op.cit.*, No.18, Sept., 1969

58 R.G. Casey until Feb.1960; R.G. Menzies Feb.1960-Dec 1961; Sir Garfield Barwick Dec 1961-April 1964; P. Hasluck April 1964-Feb.,1969, and G. Freeth from Feb. 1969; Millar, T.B., *Australia's Foreign Policy*, Angus and Robertson, 1968, Sydney and Hudson, W., "Problems in Australian Foreign Policy, January - June 1969", *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* Vol XV, No.3, Dec., 1969. pp.2-3

59 An External Affairs' official of the period confirmed this in an interview with Wilkinson, A., *The Politics of Australian Foreign Aid Policy, 1950-1972*, *op.cit.*, p. 215

60 A former member of the United Nations Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs, Director of the Committee for Economic Development of Australia and later with the United Nations Special Fund in New York

> The present arrangement is essentially *ad hoc* in character and contains few of the necessary elements for building up a body of professional experience and competence in the implementation of Australian foreign aid programme or of continuity and depth in the formulation of policy.[61]

As it existed in the mid 1960s, administration of Australia's aid programme was still spread over several departments, and within External Affairs it was further spread between a number of sections such as the United Nations, the Economic and Technical Assistance Branch, the Economic Relations Branch and the Colombo Plan Section. The latter section, according to Taylor, carried the major administrative burden with over 70 officials and four career diplomats, none of whom was necessarily familiar with economic development issues, or experienced in administering foreign aid.[62] As well, the tensions between External Affairs and other departments involving aid issues remained. The Department of Trade was showing more interest in the issue of aid since the Aid/Trade debate had been aired at UNCTAD 1, while the tensions between External Affairs and Treasury which had been evident in the 1950s continued. According to Wilkinson, they revolved in the early 1960s around the need to commit funds for projects extending over more than one year - as was the case with road construction projects in Thailand.[63]

The review of aid instigated by External Affairs Minister Hasluck in April 1964 was the first undertaken by the Australian government, but it was never made public. However, one researcher who interviewed the public servants involved in the review, suggested there were mixed motives for initiating it which included - Hasluck's "meticulous ministerial style..." which demanded rigorous and efficient administrative procedures; Australia's increasing aid commitment to Vietnam and the higher profile internationally of aid and development issues.[64]

From interviews with public servants closely involved in the review and aid practices, Wilkinson ascertained that the perceived benefits of aid at the time included goodwill, which enhanced diplomatic and trade relations, the establishment of personal contacts at all levels of government, public service, armed services, industry and returning students; a demonstrated measure of independence from the USA and Britain; and the counter-action of a reputation for racism.[65] The last two issues demonstrated the continuing damaging effects of Australia's 1950's policy of slavishly hanging on to the coat-tails of Britain and the USA, and of its support for the White Australia policy. Noticeably lacking in this assessment was any focus on the perceived benefits of aid to the recipients in developmental terms.

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61 Taylor, K.W., "Towards a New Foreign Aid policy", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 19, No. 2, 1965, pp.129,144
62 Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.144
63 Wilkinson, *op.cit.*, p.216
64 *Ibid*, pp.214-217
65 *Ibid*, p.219

The renewed emphasis on the usefulness of Australia's aid to Australian diplomatic and strategic priorities lent weight to Australian aid administration being upgraded and rationalised. Consequently, and following recommendations from the review, closer co-ordination between departments was facilitated through an inter-departmental committee, although External Affairs held the chair and retained control over the majority of aid policy.[66] As well, accordingly to Wilkinson, a handful of individuals helped to evolve a more professional aid department between 1966 and the end of the decade.[67] K.C. Shann who returned to Canberra in 1966 (after serving as Australian Ambassador to Indonesia) took charge of Division III, which included the Economic and Technical Assistance Branch.[68] With the general support of the Minister and James Plimsoll[69] he reorganised the Division and created the External Aid Branch. This included the Procurement and Liaison Offices, a Project and International Training Section, and an Aid Policy section.[70] The reorganisation facilitated an increase in aid administrators in overseas missions, for example, in Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok. It also created a greater continuity of staff engaged in aid matters who started to accumulate aid expertise and professionalism.[71] Shann was assisted by a supportive Assistant Secretary to the Aid Branch, L.W. Engledow, who among other initiatives encouraged long-term planning for aid projects. P.J. Flood, who had worked full-time on the review, was appointed as Australia's representative on the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 1966.[72] Through that connection, Australian officials began to receive tuition in aid theory and to accumulate some experience in development economics.[73] DAC reviewed donor resources to developing countries and identified world problems and trends to help donors formulate their aid policy.[74]

Besides its membership in DAC, the Australian government also participated in the yearly Colombo Plan Consultative Committee Meeting; the yearly Ministerial Meeting of ECAFE and UN forums such as UNCTAD and SEATO meetings.[75] Since all of these forums raised the level of debate about aid and development, the issues were difficult for Ministers or senior public servants to completely ignore. The Freedom From Hunger Campaign, for example, focused on hunger, population and agriculture.

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66 *Ibid*, p.220
67 *Ibid*
68 *Ibid*, p.237
69 He had acted as Secretary to External Affairs and was receptive to departmental reorganisation, see *Ibid*, pp.237-238
70 *Ibid*, p.240
71 *Ibid*, p.241; Boxer, *op.cit.*, pp.169-70
72 *Wilkinson, Ibid*, p.237-244. Flood would eventually become Director General of the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau in 1993.
73 *Ibid*, p.237; "Shorter Notes" DAC, *C.N.*, Vol 39, No.11, Nov., 1968, p.437
74 *Australia's International Aid*, Dept. of External Affairs, Canberra, 1969, p.15
75 *C.N.*, Vol 39, No.10, Oct., 1968, p.437; *Australia's International Aid*, *op.cit.*, pp.18-19

The Colombo Plan Consultative Committee meetings examined topics on population, economic development and export promotion techniques.[76]

Certainly, public speeches given by Australian External Affairs Ministers in the 1960s more frequently addressed some aspects of aid and development issues. These were usually connected with the current international debate on trade matters being prominently aired by the developing countries. Hasluck slightly broadened the debate declaring in 1967 that:

> Development economics are not yet fully understood. It is rapidly becoming a discipline in its own right. But just as recipients are learning how to apply many new techniques, donors are still in the process of learning how best to provide aid whereby those techniques are transmitted. As the understanding of the economics of development broadens, it is hoped that the technique of development assistance will improve and so lend to increasing the volume of aid.[77]

Only occasionally did Hasluck broach the question of poverty and aid. However, he did so in the House of Representatives in 1967 and again in the United Nations General Assembly in 1968. In Parliament he compared an un-named African country with the State of New South Wales which were of comparable population and land size. Noting that the trade of NSW was one hundred times greater than that of the African country, he said: "I quote that example to show that there is in this world an enormous gap between the affluent countries, among which we can count ourselves, and the poor countries."[78] In the UN he pleaded that those engaged in the field also engage in plain speech, arguing that the jargon entering the development world was tending "to mask the basic fact of poverty and I fear it often gives a grand but false sense of achievement to those who use the long words while it does nothing to lessen the pain that gnaws at the bellies of those who want something to eat."[79] These were fighting words and had they been more positively directed the Australian aid programme might have begun to change its focus to address the issue of poverty directly.[80] Hasluck asked rhetorically at one stage: "Are the receiving countries applying the best techniques and policies in making requests and in carrying out their projects? Are the donor countries making available the right sort of assistance, and are they following appropriate economic policies to complement the aid?"[81] He did not, however, set in place practices to pursue the rhetoric.

There were few public signs that any insights gained in international forums made a significant impact on the Aid Branch. Aid policy continued to be determined by the

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76 The aid sector in 1964; population and economic development in 1966; export promotion techniques in 1968

77 "Colombo Plan Conference Rangoon", *C.N.,* Vol 38, No.12, Dec., 1967, p.542

78 Hasluck, P., "Australia's External Aid 1967-1968", *C.N.,* Vol 38, No.9, Sept., 1967, pp.378-379

79 *External Aid Bulletin*, No.14, Nov., 1968, Dept. of External Affairs, Canberra, ACT

80 "Colombo Plan Conference Rangoon", *op.cit.*

81 *External Aid Bulletin*, No.14, *op.cit.*, p.3

same criteria as the previous decade and evaluation was conspicuously lacking.[82] Taylor in fact argued in 1965 that the Colombo Plan bureau (the administrative core of the Plan) lacked the power or means to establish whether a project was basically sound, whether it was properly integrated into the overall development programme of a country and whether the assistance would have the maximum development impact.[83] Many projects were minor, scattered, unrelated and short-term rather than emphasising thorough project planning - points which A. Boxer confirmed.[84]

In the absence of independent evaluation, Australian statements on the quality of its aid consisted mainly of unsubstantiated remarks, such as "Australian aid programmes have in general been highly successful," (1964) or "...Australian aid performances compare very favourably with that of all the other aid donor countries of the world." (1969).[85] Otherwise the quality of aid continued to be linked solely to Australia's practice of giving its aid in grants rather than loans.[86] Occasionally problems could be gleaned from a passing remark such as one mentioning the difficulties in processing agricultural aid and acknowledging that some of Australia's agricultural aid projects had failed through lack of preliminary investigation.[87] Some returned experts expressed concerns about the adequacy of maintenance and back-up once project funds were withdrawn - a few alluded to the prevalence of local corruption and nepotism.[88] One report raised the question of waste and of insufficient finances, experts and student places to expand the programme.[89] But in general there was no systematic process of evaluation in place. In fact Boxer's study suggested that little interest was shown by Canberra in the work of experts in the field. And little use was made of their terminal reports to build a store of knowledge for future aid policy. More commonly, the reports were "filed away" somewhere and forgotten. As well, debriefing sessions for experts were rare.[90]

Publications, too, continued to lack sophisticated analyses either of development issues or of Australian assistance. They consisted generally of an inventory of Australia's projects in Asia, along with the statistical compilations common to the

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82 Aid was given in response to requests from recipients after detailed discussions, sometimes after a feasibility study, and with consideration of Australia's capacity to meet the demands for materials and expertise.

83 Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.133

84 *Ibid*, p.136; Boxer, pp.39-41

85 "Australia's Part in the Colombo Plan", *C.N.*, Vol 35, No.7, July, 1964; *Australia's International Aid, op.cit.*, p.17

86 *Ibid*, p.1

87 *External Aid Bulletin*, *op.cit.*, No.18, Sept., 1969

88 Boxer, *op.cit*, pp.104, 151-2; Landy, G., "Australian Government Aid to Indonesia", pp.45-54, in *Indonesia:Australia's Involvement*, International Development Action, North Fitzroy, nd, c. 1972

89 *Australia's International Aid, op.cit.* p.17

90 Boxer, *op.cit.*, pp.119, 149, 160-61

1950s.[91] The *External Aid Bulletin* initiated in March 1967, slightly broadened aid coverage by focusing on specific countries, and by introducing information on Australian NGOs and on students training in Australia.[92] One edition attempted to depict a more human side of Australian aid by showing the faces behind Australian projects - a Western Australian sheep expert "battling with a Burmese disease which has killed off Australian Corriedales...", and a South Australian forester working in Nepal attempting to raise 1 million seedlings (mostly eucalypts) to reforest areas in the Kathmandu valley.

While the impact of Australian projects during this period is difficult to assess, the prevailing Western "know-how-show-how"[93] attitude which ruled bilateral aid policy, as well as studies undertaken in subsequent decades,[94] at least affirmed the long-standing proclivity to ignore local knowledge and custom. Although the Australian Nepalese forestry project, for example, was considered a success by impartial critics in the 1980s, that was only after the Australian project leaders conceded, from around the mid-1970s, the importance of overcoming their ignorance of local language, conditions and customs.[95] It was later acknowledged that while the project had allowed Australian foresters to become familiar with Nepalese forestry conditions, only the very modest size of the project had precluded it from causing damage through ignorance of local conditions during the period prior to the mid 1970s. Professor Griffin, who directed operations after 1977, believed that the unintentional low-key approach in the earlier period had been very fortuitous. While agricultural research carried out in Australian universities in the 1960s may have given donors experience of various indigenous biological and geographic conditions, the historical, social and cultural dimensions of adjacent communities were rarely countenanced. As well, Australian experts received little or no orientation from the government on such matters prior to taking up their positions. Only 4% of Australian experts surveyed in the mid-1960s considered they had a good understanding of the recipient nation's society and culture. 68% reported a poor knowledge, 28% a fair knowledge.[96] Lack of local knowledge, as a review of the government Magarini Settlement Project in Kenya in the late 1980s subsequently

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91 *Australia's Aid to Developing Countries*, Information Handbook No. 2, Dept., of External Affairs, Canberra, Oct., 1964; *Australia's International Aid*, *op.cit.*

92 *External Aid Bulletin*, *op.cit.*, Nos 6-18, 1967-1969

93 "The World Food Problem", *NOW!*, Oct., 1968, p.3

94 See Porter, D., Allen, B & Thompson, G., *Development in Practice:Paved with Good Intentions*, Routledge, London, 1991 with details of a major Australian government project in Kenya - the Magarini Settlement Project

95 Pye-Smith, C., *Travels in Nepal*, pp.157-162, Penguin, London, 1988

96 Boxer, A., *Experts in Asia:An Inquiry into Australian Technical Assistance,* ANU Press, Canberra, 1969, p.67

demonstrated, could have very costly, negative consequences for the supposed beneficiaries of the project.[97]

Changes to Australian aid administration from the mid-1960s were generally confined to the reorganisation initiatives outlined or in bringing Australia's statistical record in line with DAC. However, Boxer, who conducted an independent enquiry into Australian Technical Assistance in the mid-1960s, believed the changes were insufficient. He considered the measures were inadequate to meet the almost "crisis proportions" of staff shortages at a time when duties had increased to include DAC and SEATO affairs and the administration of an increasing number of overseas experts. Further, staff increases were concentrated at the lower levels, which over-loaded senior officials and prevented them from focusing on measures to improve aid administration. Boxer also suggested that there were insufficient non-diplomats dealing with aid issues which subjected aid policy to "the diplomat's view". This focused on establishing links between aid and the "national interest" rather than on humanitarian and development issues.[98] And in the field the prevalence of career diplomats administering aid issues was also judged inappropriate by a number of Australian experts and Asian officials.[99] Diplomats were criticised for their disinterest and aloofness in aid matters. (Boxer in fact gained the impression that Colombo Plan duties were considered "something of a chore" by diplomats.[100]) Such attitudes at times created "serious obstacles" to the success of projects (such as delays in delivering equipment), and also placed Australian experts at a disadvantage in terms of their perceived status by local officials.[101]

Numerous Asian officials reported to Boxer that, compared with many other donors, Australian experts were expected to "fend for themselves". They lacked the backing of an organisation (such as government, a Foundation like Ford or the UN) to enhance their status and influence in the recipient nation[102] - often an important consideration in highly stratified societies.

Australia's initiative to join DAC in 1966 was described as part of government policy to develop closer relations with other Western donors in order to share and experience ideas about aid and development problems.[103] This was not before time since Australian aid policy was lagging behind many donor nations. The Netherlands, Canada and Denmark, for example, had all responded vigorously to the Development Decade and many Western governments had already established autonomous or semi-autonomous government departments to administer their aid programmes.

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97 Porter, D., Allen, B & Thompson, G., *op.cit.*
98 Boxer, *op.cit.*, p.171
99 *Ibid*, pp.110-111
100 *Ibid, p.110*
101 *Ibid*, pp.38,109-110, 112, 114, 120-21
102 *Ibid*, p.114
103 *C.N.*, Vol 39, No.10, Oct., 1968, p.437; *Australia's International Aid*, *op.cit.*, p.15

Australia and the International Aid Community

Canada's External Aid Office established in 1960, was expanded into an autonomous government department, named the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), in 1968. In Sweden, an Agency in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established in 1962 to administer the bilateral programme, was expanded into a semi autonomous department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1965 and named the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA).[104] The Federal Republic of Germany, established the Ministry for Economic Co-operation in 1962, separate from Foreign Affairs, to administer its bilateral aid and Holland, in 1964 created a Directorate General for International Cooperation, headed by a Secretary of State for Development, within its Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[105] Though these departments differed in the degree of autonomy they enjoyed, most European governments had afforded the issue of aid and development a higher profile and degree of professionalism than Australia sought to grant its aid interests. The new institutions, for example, were frequently staffed by development specialists.[106]

International comparisons were interesting in another context, namely in the degree and type of co-operation and liaison which existed between governments and the non-government sector. While the US government established AID in 1961 as the administrating arm of its foreign assistance, its aid focus continued to be driven by Cold War imperatives. The US government therefore continued to openly co-opt NGOs to export the American way of life and beliefs overseas. It gave grants to NGOs working in countries targeted by the USA as security priorities; it assisted volunteers to work in developing countries in technical assistance capacities; it transported NGO material donations during the Korean war and frequently distributed surplus food to developing countries through NGOs.[107] The bulk of American assistance in the 1950s and 1960s was directly targeted to diffuse communism, and was most dramatically demonstrated during the Korean and Vietnam wars. In the mid 1960s, for example, the US government worked closely with NGOs in Vietnam, mainly in the field of relief, with organisations such as World Vision, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, UNICEF, Foster Parents Plan, International Voluntary Services and the American Red Cross.[108] By 1973, 27.5% of the USA's NGOs' US$2.3 billion income was provided by the government.[109]

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104 *Smith, op. cit.,* p.88
105 *Ibid*, pp.88-91
106 Taylor *Ibid*, p.144
107 A practice intended to keep domestic prices from dropping, *Ibid*, pp.48-52
108 *Ibid*, p.64; Report of David Scott, Harvey Perkins and Sydney Einfeld on Vietnam, 1967
109 Smith, *op.cit,* p. 64

Unlike the USA the Canadian and European governments were not as preoccupied with the question of communist expansionism. Other issues held their attention depending on the country's previous colonial history, its form of government, its access to raw materials and its trade requirements. The Swedish, Netherlands and Canadian governments increased their interest in developing countries, motivated by trade and raw material concerns as well as the more humanitarian concerns of peace and justice.[110] They also responded to USA pressure to provide it with more support in the developing countries now that post-war European recovery was well advanced. DAC was one channel initiated to help facilitate that process.[111]

The Canadian and some European governments responded by increasing their contact with the NGO community. Having been substantially funded by the private sector in the 1950s many NGOs were granted various forms of government assistance, including matching grants and subsidies for development projects.[112]

The Australian government meanwhile gave only small support to NGOs. It provided transport to despatch powdered milk to India, it continued assistance to the Australian Volunteer's Abroad scheme, it supplied a grant to ACFOA, and encouraged the Australian NGO community to become involved in the FFHC to which it provided temporary tax concessions.[113] Otherwise the Australian government remained largely aloof from NGO affairs.

The Australian NGO Community in the 1960s

In contrast to the relatively static and conservative state of Australia's official development aid programme in the 1960s, the Australian NGO community was undergoing considerable change. New agencies joined CAA and the several church-based agencies,[114] which had already been providing overseas assistance in the 1950s. Among them were For Those Who Have Less (1962); the Overseas Service Bureau (1963) (an extension of the Australian Volunteers Abroad agency); Australian Catholic Relief (1964); World Vision Australia (1966); AUSTCARE (1967) (an organisation to assist refugees); and an NGO co-ordinating agency, the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (1965), as well as the Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign established in 1961.

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110 *Ibid*, p.79

111 *Ibid*, p.84

112 *Ibid*, pp.77, 84-92

113 *Australia's International Aid*, 1969, Dept. of External Affairs, Canberra; "Mrs Moira Dynon", *NOW!*, Feb., 1965, p.3; "Notes for Address by Mrs Moira Dynon at Launching of 1970 Milk for India Victorian Campaign", 1/6/70, Aid for India Campaign, ANL

114 Representing Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Lutheran, Baptist and Quaker interests

The stimulus for this expansion, like that of NGOs in other parts of the world, included the 1959 United Nations World Refugee Year;[115] church and UN support for the 1% GNP aid target and the inauguration of the UN Development Decade; the Freedom From Hunger Campaign's focus on the need to banish hunger and its active encouragement to involve the NGO community. For the first time, too, access to television brought images of poverty into people's living rooms. The mid-sixties Indian famine graphically confirmed the extent of suffering experienced by Third World countries. Those images drew swift public support for the Freedom From Hunger campaign and other appeals, like the Milk for India Campaign sponsored by Moira Dynon.[116] Personal contacts and assessment of Third World conditions by CAA and other groups at the village level, also confirmed the necessity for increased assistance.

The lone and scattered voices which had analysed aid issues in the 1950s, gathered strength and were joined by others in the 1960s. Through publications, conferences, reports and seminars, academics, NGOs and their constituents began to put their views.[117] This advocacy role was facilitated in the NGO community by the establishment of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA), an umbrella organisation convened to represent the interests of Australian NGOs involved in assisting developing countries.

John Crawford of the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University initiated, in collaboration with NGOs, a two-day seminar in April 1964 which brought together sixteen NGOs - of which the majority were affiliated to an overseas parent.[118] Crawford was interested in gaining a profile of the growing

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115 Smith, *op.cit,* p.76

116 Press Release Jan., 11, 1968, "21 tons of Powdered Milk for Earthquake Victims", Aid to India Campaign, Ephermera File, ANL; "Milk Your Gift of Life", July, 1968, Statement issued by M Rosel, Milk for India, Victorian Committee "Milk for India Campaign", *St. Joseph's Record*, Vol 2, No.8, July, 1969, p.4; *St Joseph's Record*, Vol 2, No.5, May, 1969

117 See for example, Taylor, *op.cit.*; Arndt, H., "Australian Foreign Aid Policy", The 31st Joseph Fisher Lecture in Commerce, Sept., 9, 1964, The Griffen Press, Adelaide, 1964; "Australian Aid Abroad", *Current Affairs Bulletin*, Vol 40, No.13, Nov., 1967, pp.195-207; Kelly, C., "The Colombo Plan: A Personal Note", *Australian Quarterly,* Vol 33, No.3, 1961, pp.58-62; Anderson, N., "Australia's Voluntary Foreign Aid Activities", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 18, No.2, 1964, pp.127-141; "An Address by Sir John Crawford," Issued by The Australian National Committee of the Freedom From Hunger Campaign, 15, Mar, 1963, Sydney; Macmahon Ball, W., "Australia's Role ..", *op.cit.*; Shannon, I., "Economic Aid", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 17, No.3, 1963, pp.328-338; Purnell, W., "United Nations Specialised Agencies, Effectiveness of Aid to Underdeveloped Countries", *Australian Outlook*, Vol 15, No.3, 1961, pp.307-314; Clunies Ross, A., with R.I. Downing *et al, One per Cent: The Case for Greater Australian Foreign Aid, op.cit.*

118 *NOW!*, Mar.,1964, p.4, Community Aid Abroad, Fitzroy; Some of the proceedings of this seminar were published by Anderson N., "Australia's Voluntary Foreign Aid Activities", *op.cit.*. The organisations represented were the National Missionary Council of Australia; Catholic Bishops' Co-ordinating Committee; Australian Council of Churches; Australian-Asian Association of Victoria; Community Aid Abroad; Friends of Vellore Society; Australian Red Cross; Save the Children Fund, NSW Branch; Association of Apex Clubs; Junior Chamber Australia; Lions International; World University Service; National Union of Australian University Students; Overseas Service Bureau; Freedom From Hunger Campaign. Source: Anderson, *Ibid.*, pp.127-128

Australian NGO community and that meeting revealed the diversity of its interests and activities. Its work included - development projects (CAA, FFHC, Church organisations); relief (AAAV, Red Cross, Save the Children Fund); refugee work (Australian Council of Churches); assistance to overseas students (AAAV, National Union of AUS); personnel service abroad (OSB & the Volunteer Graduates Association of Victoria); and the promotion of Australian/Asian relations (AAAV).[119]

The meeting generated enough interest among the NGOs to initiate an on-going dialogue to consider the establishment of a permanent Council to represent their interests. For a year a core group of 7 NGOs, including David Scott from CAA, and Jim Webb from the OSB, met with the External Affairs Minister, with government departments, and several times on their own to work over a draft constitution.[120] With input from Crawford and the Department of External Affairs, and influenced by overseas' organisations: the American, British and International Councils of Voluntary agencies; as well as arguments from the Australian agencies, the document gradually took shape.[121] At a meeting of 19 voluntary organisations on the 6th and 7th April, 1965, the Council was formally "deemed to have been formed", with seven of the attending organisations signifying their acceptance of the Constitution.[122] Most of the others present required confirmation from their overseas governing bodies before they too could join.[123] The office-bearers, except for the President, Crawford, were drawn from the seven organisations. Scott felt that Crawford's identification with a "lot of do-good organisations...very new, very small,... which didn't have much status in the domestic area, or certainly internationally", was a significant move.[124] Crawford's interest was partly professional. The School of Pacific Studies was engaged in a "major study of Australia's foreign aid programme".[125] But nonetheless, Crawford's identification with the organisation would certainly have helped legitimise it, as well as gaining for it easier access to government.

This was the first time that a joint appraisal of the purpose of voluntary overseas agencies in Australia had been made - how their practices coincided with or varied from government overseas aid, and how voluntary and government agencies might

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119 Anderson, *Ibid*, pp.129-138

120 Letter, W.B. Webb, OSB to Senator Marie Breen, AAAV, "Voluntary Foreign Aid", 12/5/64; and Letter J.B. Webb OSB, to AAAV, "Voluntary Foreign Aid", 8/6/1964

121 *Minutes of Meeting of Voluntary Aid Organisations*, April, 6 & 7, 1965

122 The seven represented the spread of interests, from refugee - the Australian Council of Aid to Refugees, and the Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies; development - CAA; relief - Catholic Overseas Relief; and overseas personnel, OSB

123 *Minutes of Meeting....op.cit.*

124 Besides being the Director of the Research School of Pacific Studies at the ANU Sir John was formerly Secretary and Permanent Head of the Commonwealth Dept. of Trade. Interview with David Scott, 23 August, 1990

125 "Australia Gives £3,000,000 a Year in Voluntary Overseas Aid", Press Release, April 23, 1964 after first seminar of voluntary agencies April, 1964, Canberra; The studies produced were Boxer, A.H., *Experts in Asia*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1969; Keats, D.M. *Back in Asia*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1969

collaborate. The most obvious difference was the government's overriding concern with "the national interest", whereas NGOs were motivated primarily, though not exclusively, by humanitarian concerns. A CAA report at the time suggested that NGO aid was less liable than government aid to be seen as having "political strings" attached; that it could be directed towards local, village projects which government aid rarely touched; that it was more flexible than government aid; that it could provide both strong goodwill value and a citizen participation in Australia and that it could be an adjunct to government aid.[126]

In the event the formation of ACFOA did assist the development of a nascent relationship between the Australian government and the Australian NGO community. Through ACFOA individual government officials in the aid sector came into contact with NGOs at conferences and seminars. Both sectors acknowledged the benefit of such contact, including a greater appreciation of their relative strengths and weaknesses.[127] However, suggestions posited by the non-government sector, to strengthen Australian aid policy and administration, were not taken up by government. Arguments to create an autonomous aid department; to create a private sector panel or board to advise government on foreign aid policy; to encourage a Service Abroad programme similar to the USA's Peace Corp to be developed from the OSB, were ignored.[128] ACFOA's attempts to persuade government to accept the voluntary overseas aid sector as a joint partner in the efforts to alleviate world "... hunger, poverty, [and] disease", were similarly unsuccessful.[129] In many respects the government's response was not surprising, given its own lack-lustre performance in development aid matters. For while ACFOA argued that the Government shared all the major activities of the voluntary agencies, in the areas of relief, development and sending personnel overseas,[130] as we have seen the government's aid agenda was not driven by developmental concerns.

Government contact with the NGO community therefore tended to focus on mechanical, administrative details rather than on how the government and NGO sector might combine their resources to upgrade Australian aid policy. There were indications that the government most welcomed the formation of ACFOA for its administrative advantages. ACFOA, for example, could act as a conduit for queries about emergency aid. In the case of Vietnam, where several NGOs were working, ACFOA was a means of keeping control over the group, in a country with which Australia was at war.

While individual agencies had been given some small assistance periodically by the government the government's relationship with the NGO community appeared generally

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126 "Community Aid Abroad", Report, July, 1964, p.2

127 "A.C.F.O.A. Its Objectives and Relationships with Government", p.4, ACFOA Paper, no date, c 1965-6

128 Taylor, *op.cit.*, pp.144-5; *NOW!*, Dec., 1964, p.2

129 *Ibid*, p.5

130 *Ibid*, p.2

disinterested. CAA encountered such government disinterest in NGO activities on several occasions. Scott's application to Barwick for a £4,250 grant, based on CAA's development work in Asia and its community awareness programmes in Australia, which CAA argued complemented Australia's foreign policy aims, was rejected.[131] Similarly, the numerous attempts by ACFOA's eleven members to gain tax deductions on donations for overseas projects, were also unsuccessful.[132] NGOs were prominent in trying to persuade the government to increase its aid contributions in the 1960s. CAA's David Scott initiated a publication in conjunction with academics from Melbourne and Monash Universities in 1963 titled: *One per Cent: The Case for Greater Australian Foreign Aid.*[133] It supported the argument for an immediate target of 1% of national income, or £71 million, rather than the £41 million currently budgeted.[134] In 1963, this represented 0.6% of national income, three quarters of which was allocated to Papua and New Guinea.[135] The publication enjoyed wide publicity drawing the attention of the internationally known development advocate, Barbara Ward, who wrote congratulating CAA on the work it was doing to "... stir up Australian interest and conscience."[136] However, in the event, the Australian government's decision to increase its aid contributions at a time when many Western governments were beginning to cut theirs probably had more to do with the government's continued preoccupation with the domino theory, than with pressure applied by the non-government sector.

The government's overall response to the NGO community reflected government preoccupation with strategic imperatives, its disinterest in development criteria and the fledgeling nature of the NGO sector which could certainly embarrass and irritate the

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131 *NOW!,* Aug., p.11; Letter to Sir Garfield Barwick, re Application for a Grant to Assist the Extension of Community Aid Abroad Programmes, 28th February, 1964, from David Scott on behalf of the Executive Committee. Scott pointed out that CAA activity was known and looked on favourably by the Australian Embassy in India, Korea and Tanganyika and by leaders at high levels in India. (In 1966, CAA would be granted an audience with Indian Prime Minister Shastri). *Minutes of the Executive Committee,* 14/2/66, p.1; *NOW!,* Apr. 1963, p.1; *NOW!,* Mar.1966, p.3, CAA group met with Vice-President of India, Dr Hussain

132 Federal Treasuer McMahon said in Parliament in May 1967, "The policy of the Government in these matters has been that except in the case of the specialised agency of the United Nations and except in very special circumstances, taxation deductions are permitted only in cases where the organisation concerned carries on its activities in Australia.... we do not wish to extend the formula....", "Federal Treasurer Refuses Tax Concessions", *NOW!*, April, 1967, p.3; "Taxation Concessions", *NOW!,* May, 1963, p.2; "Weakness on Aid", *NOW!,* Dec., 1964, p.2; "Income Tax Concessions", *NOW!,* May, 1965, p.2; "Tax Deductions", *NOW!* , April-May, 1966, p.11; David Scott, interview Melbourne 23/8/90

133 Anthony Clunies Ross, with R.I. Downing and others, *op.cit.*

134 *Ibid*, pp. 9 & 32; *NOW!,* April, 1969, p.2; Incidently by 1990, Australia had never achieved that target, the 1990/91 budget having earmarked just 0.33% of GNP for aid, *ACFOA NEWS*, p.1, No. 7, Sept. 1990

135 Anthony Clunies Ross, *et al*, *op. cit*, Chapter 3, p.9

136 Reported in *NOW!*, April, 1964 p.4. Comment and reviews appeared, for example, in *Nation, Jobson's Investment Digest*, the *Melbourne Herald*, the *Catholic Worker*, *Adelaide News*, *The Financial Review*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney *Daily Mirror,* the *Brisbane Courier Mail*, *Broken Hill Truth*, *Hobart Mercury*, and the Social Questions Committee of the General Synod of the Church of England in Australia supported the proposals in letters to leading Australian newspapers. *NOW!* , Feb., 1964, p.1

government but which as yet lacked the clout to act as an effective lobby group in Canberra . Henry reported government embarrassment on two issues involving NGOs in the 1960s. The first concerned government opposition to Australians sending aid to North Vietnam. The government legislated against it but the Red Cross and ACC (among others) argued strongly the case for responding to suffering "wherever it may occur".[137] The government eventually exempted the Red Cross from the legislation but continued to receive pressure from ACC for exemptions for all members of ACFOA. NGOs were also involved in a protracted, and frequently controversial, campaign to pressure the Australian government to provide wheat to India during its 1964-1967 famine, rather than selling the grain cheaply to China.[138] The activities of NGOs in the 1960s got under the skin of at least one government official. He told Henry he was "personally irritated by the do-gooders and found their nattering and committee meetings (which he attended) annoying."[139] By the end of the decade government literature gave the "Voluntary Aid" sector a somewhat laconic mention towards the back of government aid reports, acknowledging in 1969 that: "The Australian Government appreciates the activities of voluntary aid schemes, which may be regarded as part of the overall flow of Australian aid."[140]

Australian NGO activity in the 1960s underwent considerable changes. Its combined income rose from $6 million in 1964 to $13.8 million in 1969,[141] and the sector increased both in numbers of organisations and in their size. Through ACFOA, NGOs had become more of a community, if one with significant differences. It had become apparent, even at ACFOA's first meeting, that the Australian NGO community was not an homogenous group and that several potential areas of conflict existed, especially in the fields of ideology and funding. All of the organisations competed with each other and with established local charities for public funds.[142] Until that point agencies had generally co-operated in fund-raising matters - an approach which had allowed the FFHC to collect around £1,500,000 in less than two years.[143] But as the NGO community expanded it was felt that some form of co-ordination was essential, if only to avoid scheduling funding campaigns simultaneously.

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137 Henry, R.J., *A Study of the Voluntary Foreign Aid Movement in Australia,* M.A. Thesis, La Trobe University, Dept., of Politics, August 1970, pp.98-100

138 *Ibid*, pp.102-105

139 *Ibid*, pp.99-100

140 Australia's International Aid, *op.cit.*, p.14

141 Hayes, B.,"Future Role of ACFOA", mimeo, June 1969; *Not Yet Enough, op.cit.*, pp.30-31

142 Lamidey, N., "Competitive Appeals", Report Executive Officer of the Freedom From Hunger Campaign, 31 Dec., 1963, p.6; "Pioneering a Technique of Partnership and Understanding, " *The New Guardian*, Tues., July 9, 1963, p.4; "For organisations such as Inter-Church Aid and Community Aid Abroad which have been engaged in these activities for many years, there arises the question of relationships between them and the Freedom From Hunger Campaign." "Freedom From Hunger", *NOW!*, May, 1963, p.2; *NOW!*, Ap -May, 1966, Editorial, p.1

143 Anderson, *Ibid*, p.140 - this effort inflated the NGO figures for the period

More pertinently NGOs supported varying types of assistance. Famine, war and natural disasters encouraged some NGOs to focus on one-off relief assistance. Some church groups continued to mix the twin objectives of conversion with economic assistance. Others concentrated on child sponsorship. Some, like CAA, had changed the focus of their assistance from welfare handouts to adopt more sustainable development practices. There was also considerable diversity of opinion about the scale of their work. Some favoured large-scale, others small-scale projects, some a wide geographic spread, others a greater geographic intensity, with a combined agency "attack" on a given area[144] to achieve a catalyst or snowball effect.

The formation of ACFOA highlighted these differences in approach and attitude. But it also gave the more activist NGO community a broader canvas from which to debate the development issues being aired internationally and to discuss these differences. Reports by the OSB's Webb, the ACC's Harvey Perkins and Vaughan Hinton, and by CAA, illustrated well the breadth of knowledge and interest in aid and development issues and of the broader international aid scene which was developing among some of Australia's NGO personnel.[145]

The issues discussed in Chapter Four involving world trade and the focus on hunger substantially challenged NGO activities. The focus on unfair trade practices suggested for the first time some Western culpability in Third World poverty. Rather than focusing continually on communism, the West was being asked to look at its own practices, a process which many in the NGO sector found either profoundly uncomfortable or simply untenable. NGOs were also being encouraged to embrace long-term development practices at the community level which challenged their traditional activities of relief and charity. Both these issues would bring to the fore the essentially political nature of assistance - a fact which some agencies patently preferred to ignore.

An ACFOA seminar titled "Aid for Development" held in 1967, confronted delegates with issues which placed aid in a far different context than one seeking merely to give a "helping hand" or even to provide more sustainable development programmes. The issues of trade liberalisation, population growth, intervention in developing nations' internal reform, appropriate criteria for aid allocation and Western consumption patterns, clearly challenged some ACFOA members. AAAV's notes of the occasion, for example, were heavily annotated in disagreement with suggestions raised in the seminar that the West might in part be responsible for Third World poverty. One of the texts supplied to complement the group discussion read: "... there is glaring us in the face the

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144 Anderson, *Ibid*, p.139

145 David Scott acknowledged a strong debt to Webb for introducing him to the intellectual dimension of development, and stated that both Webb and Perkins shared an international outlook on aid matters. Interview David Scott, Aug.1990, Melbourne

antagonist that calls us to this vocation; it exists in the very poverty which Western civilization has done so much to make intolerable."[146] Clearly, many of the issues raised in the seminar were not only *not* universally shared, they were also considered by some to be radical. At the bottom of AAAV's notes was inscribed: "A.C.F.O.A. is not the body it suggests".[147]

Development economist Professor Arndt from the ANU,[148] with a long involvement in development studies and contact with multilateral organisations, considered that many of ACFOA's activities were initiated by "radical activists." In his mid-1980s memoir, he reflected: ACFOA "was more than once in the 1960s and 1970s captured by radical activists, a not uncommon fate of associations of do-gooders the moderate majority of whom lack the time, interest and perseverance to sustain an effective defence against such takeovers".[149]

To confront the aid community with contentious issues and ideas created the potential for disagreement and splits even as the NGO community was coming together. But individuals within the small group of NGOs which were most involved with establishing ACFOA, saw the resolving of these issues as integral to progressive development practices. It begged the question as to what "development" was and how it could be best carried out. They therefore sought through seminars and publications to discuss these issues with the NGO community and the broader Australian public.

One of ACFOA's briefs "to foster research into the issues of development and of international aid"[150] exposed the considerable range of interests in which NGOs gradually became involved in the 1960s. These included agriculture, nutrition, community development, social welfare, health, education, refugee services and resettlement.[151] Co-ordinated funding campaigns in Australia in the 1960s which separated functions into relief and refugee assistance, or through the FFHC, into agriculture and nutrition assistance, tended to encourage this division into separate unrelated areas.[152] By 1969 some NGOs questioned this approach especially the practice of viewing relief and development projects in isolation from each other. Relief assistance had a specific need to respond quickly to acute conditions, but equally, (echoing Father Tucker's notion that doing "mere ambulance work" was not sufficient to break the cycle of poverty), relief alone was insufficient.

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146 ACFOA Seminar, "Aid for Development", Group Discussion, June 7, 1967
147 *Ibid*
148 The Australian National University
149 H.W. Arndt, *A Course Through Life: Memoirs of an Australian Economist*, History of Development Studies 1, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, 1985, p.80
150 Draft Constitution, ACFOA, Feb.,1965, pp.1-2
151 "Co-ordinated Fund Raising in Australia", ACFOA Paper, nd, c.1969
152 *Ibid*

As more empirical knowledge came to hand NGO activity slowly evolved a theoretical base. It moved along a continuum from welfare handouts of clothes and food, to a more developmental approach which assisted isolated sectors - in areas such as healthcare, agriculture or irrigation. By 1969 balanced economic development was being advocated to encompass all of the sectors as an integrated whole, with increased food production and industrialisation, community development and social welfare programmes in both rural and urban areas.[153]

CAA in Action

One of the NGOs which contributed enthusiastically to debate on innovative development practice and theory was the Food for Peace Campaign, renamed Community Aid Abroad (CAA) in 1962.[154] CAA argued that unless the cycle of poverty was broken with the assistance of more developmental projects the need for aid would be endless. CAA took this path, aware that it had chosen the tough option, and recognised that it would be more difficult to raise funds for development projects than for relief appeals or orphan support which could appeal to strong human emotions.[155]

Having from time to time been in danger of fading out in the previous decade, Community Aid Abroad established itself firmly in the 1960s. By 1969 it had 141 groups supporting 71 projects which covered a geographic spread from India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Vietnam to Tonga, Papua-New Guinea, South Korea, and Africa. Its aid contributions had risen to $244,195.[156] The formation of a National Council, a small increase in staff,[157] and the expansion of its magazine *NOW!* established the organisation on a more professional basis.[158]

This consolidation of the organisation made CAA well placed both professionally and ideologically to take advantage of the more favourable international climate which had begun to encourage NGO activities in the 1960s. Its growing experience in the field, as well as its interest in the global development debate and welfare issues strengthened its position. Scott reflected years later that CAA had a strong interest in influencing the wider public, other agencies and the government. He said: "We saw

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153 *Ibid*

154 The name change to Community Aid Abroad affected because "Food for Peace" no longer accurately reflected either its activities or its ideology, was welcomed by Pierre Oppliger who wrote, "I am glad about the change of name. Food for Peace was misleading here in India". There was a sense that the organisation was seen to be making a bargain with recipients - food in return for peace. *NOW!*, Aug. 1962, p.10; Scott, D., *NOW!,* July 1962, p.1

155 Scott, D., "A Guide For CAA Project Selection", April 21, 1966

156 "C.A.A. Projects", Community Aid Abroad Memo, July 1964; *Annual Report*, 1969, CAA; *NOW!,* June, 1967, pp. 4, 6, 9-10; Scott, D., "Australians in Blinkers", *NOW!* , Jan. 1969, p.3

157 Father Tucker's nephew David Scott moved to the position of Director, Father Tucker became Chairman and another nephew Dr John Tucker, became project officer charged with the responsibility of assessing project proposals.

158 Richard Austin, Deputy Director and Jean Mackenzie secretary and Editor of *NOW!*. The Lieutenant Governor, the Hon Sir Edmund Herring, became Patron in September 1960.

ourselves as an influencing agency. Using the Tucker principle, welfare projects gave you the legitimacy and the experience, from which you could develop theories and arguments for broader change."[159]

The organisation certainly demonstrated a strong capacity and willingness to lobby government on development issues, to become involved in and help create a credible NGO community in Australia and to constantly evolve development methods. For example, while CAA's activities closely mirrored the modernisation ideals of the FFHC, Colombo Plan and Green Revolution, in other important respects the approach it adopted, which nurtured personal contacts and directly sought to understand local conditions and customs, set it apart from those models. In seeking to understand the complex issues which helped sustain rural and urban poverty CAA was continually open to adjusting its development practices. That was an important difference which distinguished activist individuals and groups from others engaged in development assistance. Activist groups brought to their activities more than "good intentions" and humanitarian ideals which were the stamp of many development practitioners. And groups like CAA were certainly not hampered by blatant concerns of self-interest so characteristic of government aid policy. CAA was centrally concerned about poor people and it recognised, unlike the prevailing 1950s and 1960s development ethos, that donors did *not* have all the answers to development issues.

That approach slowly led activist NGOs to a more informed understanding of poor people and of the structures which contained them in their poverty. It would eventually encourage activist NGOs to accommodate to the ideals of poor people as assessed by poor people. Because such activity challenged more conservative groups - both in the West and in the Third World- it was frequently controversial, resisted, criticised and often contained (sometimes violently). Groups pushing forward with controversial and innovative development methods required courage, persistence, and intelligence. Such groups can take large credit for substantially and steadily influencing the many changes that aid policy affected over the decades, especially in so far as they attempted to make policy more accountable to the poor at all levels of assistance - multilateral, bilateral and NGO.

In so far as CAA was involved in this process it contributed substantially to the evolution of the Australian NGO community. The transmission of new ideas was assisted by CAA's general ideology which encouraged a very transparent organisation. Its proclivity to publicly discuss the broad spectrum of development issues made its ideas freely accessible to both its supporters and critics (and not insignificantly also to future researchers).

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[159] Interview David Scott, Melbourne, 1990

One of the catalysts for CAA's change of pace and style in the early 1960s was the separate visits made to Asia by Richard Austin and David Scott.[160] The first personal contact with Pierre Oppliger was made in 1960 when he and Austin breakfasted together in New Delhi.[161] Although Scott (influenced by his experiences with the Brotherhood of St. Laurence), had initially favoured concentrating on problems of poverty in Australia, he changed his mind when he visited South Asia. He commented:

> My own 'conversion' took place when I visited India and Pakistan in 1962 to attend a social welfare conference and was asked by Father Tucker to visit the new projects that were then supported by the Food for Peace Campaign. I was almost overwhelmed by the evidence of need that I saw, but also encouraged by the effective work that was being done by committed and able leaders of projects.... When I returned I wanted to get more involved....[162]

From then on the advantages of personal connections and first-hand observation came through strongly in the reports sent back to Melbourne and in the articles and meetings which Scott and Austin conducted on their return.[163] CAA enhanced its capacity to understand the communities it assisted when it employed an Indian social worker and ex-school teacher (Roshan Lal Agarwal). His brief was to keep in close-touch with CAA projects in India, to suggest new projects and to generally liaise between activities in the two countries.[164] He remained connected with CAA for the next twenty-five years. The choice of an Indian liaison officer was an innovation by CAA since it was more usual for Western organisations to import ex-patriot (frequently ex-service) personnel to developing countries.[165]

CAA staff travelled thousands of miles in India in the early 1960s to closely investigate "... Government-run projects and hospitals, agricultural schools, high schools, schools for outcast children, water projects for slum areas, medical services, radio services, leprosy rehabilitation centres and many small factories".[166] Scott reported:

> The needs of Asian countries seem so vast and complex, but total progress comes from a multiplication of hostels and classrooms to expand education; wells, and pumps to irrigate parched land; tractors and agricultural equipment to increase production; radio receivers to introduce new ideas and methods to villages; improved stock to increase meat, milk and wool production; hospital beds and medical equipment to extend health services.[167]

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160 "David Scott's Diary, Seven Countries Discuss Community Development", & "David Scott Reports to Groups on Indian Trip", *NOW!*, July, 1962, pp.7-9

161 "An Auspicious Breakfast", *NOW!,* Oct., 1960, p.5

162 Scott, D., "C.A.A. Past and Present", *NOW!*, Aug.,1973, p.1

163 Austin, R., *NOW!*, Dec. 1961, p.1; Scott, D, *NOW!*, Ap.1962, pp.4,5. Scott, D., *NOW!,* May 1962, p. 1; Scott. D., *NOW!*, July 1962, p.1

164 *NOW!*, April 1963, p.1

165 Interview David Scott, *op.cit.* After nine years with CAA Oppliger reluctantly resigned as liaison officer because of the considerable expansion of both CAA and Swiss Aid Abroad.

166 Roberts, I., *NOW!*, Ap. 1963, p.1; Miles, J., "NEWS" Adelaide, South Australia, 4/6/64, CAA Press Clipping File

167 Scott, D., *NOW!*, Ap.1963, p.1

By the mid-1960s CAA consolidated its efforts to support a limited number of projects. It hoped such projects would provide a "demonstration effect" and allow a closer and more personal contact with the organisation.[168] CAA was receptive to funding what it called "pioneering projects". The idea was for voluntary agencies to provide the money to get the project off the ground. They hoped to create a "catalytic effect" whereby others, mainly government, seeing the energy and intention behind the project, would provide further funds. CAA considered assistance to health clinics, village hospitals, nutrition centres, and rural schools in this category.[169]

CAA for example lent its support to several schools. These were established by young teachers who had been inspired by Gandhi's teachings.[170] Two such graduates, Bhikkubhai Vyas and Babubhai Shah, founded a high school for Adivasi boys in 1960. With an acre of land donated by the Adivasi they held classes under a tree.[171] CAA provided money for a hostel to accommodate those who lived too far for daily travel. The project was adopted by the Ballarat group which raised funds to develop agricultural land so that the school could provide an agricultural education to its students.[172]

Bhikku Vyas was interviewed by the Rural Department of the ABC which visited a number of CAA projects in 1967. He stressed that the students were boarders so that they could be taught "from when they wake up to when they go to bed." Since most of them would return to an agricultural life the objective was to teach them "advanced agriculture... in the scientific way of cultivation ...." Of CAA assistance Vyas remarked, "I must say from my heart it is extremely valuable; not only the money but the emotional integration, a sense of participation, from such a far off land is an extremely good idea, and we feel as if we are one community". Vyas explained that because CAA provided money for the school building the government had given a matching grant which the school would have otherwise lost.[173] By 1968 Gram Bharati had grown enormously as a demonstration centre for agricultural techniques as well as on the academic side. CAA had provided a mobile rig to drill a tube well to 540 feet to support the increased agricultural activity.[174] The concept of the "catalytic" effect was to become an important one for voluntary organisations, both in the context just described,

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168 *Ibid*, p.4

169 *Ibid*, p.3

170 Oppliger, P., "Students Dedicate Lives to Helping Rural Folk", *NOW!*, Feb.1963, p.3. As such they were following in the tradition of many such youth who had "gone to the countryside" to help the less fortunate since the 1920s and 1930s movement for Independence.

171 *Ibid*

172 "Dick Austin Reports from India", *NOW!*, Dec. 1963, p.2; "CAA Now Aids 45 Self-help Projects", *NOW!*, Mar. 1964, p.1

173 Interview between Mr R.G. Thompson and Bhikku Vyas, "Calling Gram Bharati Kalamkui", *NOW!*, Oct/Nov 1967, p.5

174 "Report from Gram Bharati Kalamkui", *NOW!*, June 1968, p.2

and in terms of encouraging surrounding communities by demonstration to seek involvement in their own projects.

Greater familiarity in the field made CAA aware that there were many problems associated with project work. They included practical considerations like physically getting around to visit projects, to understanding the complexity of local conditions and cultures. More than one report touched on the problems of negotiating such a large country as India. Harris wrote, "...we may have tried to cover too much ground and thus not have sufficient time at some of the projects...", and Scott remarked, "I am very fit but there is so much travelling involved in merely spending a few hours in 8 or 9 different places. I will be glad when we reach Madras".[175]

In subsequent decades it became common for recipients to criticise Western "development tourists" who dropped into projects for short periods, usually during the most favourable season - ie avoiding the rainy season or the hottest season. There were, however, advantages in donors gaining the broad picture - in witnessing the vast differences in conditions, physical and social, which affected the various development opportunities of different communities. And the tough conditions (relative to Western experiences) imposed by climate, distance and often transportation, were real, demanding high levels of fitness and stamina from visiting Westerners. For that reason the arguments for longer and more frequent visits by Western donors, while working in close conjunction with permanent, resident, local NGO personnel were compelling.

CAA also began to recognise the importance of working with good local leaders, "... able people of high integrity who have a realistic appreciation of local needs and the ability to direct effective projects".[176] The question of leadership would continue to be a central concern since it affected all aspects of a project - effective use of funds, the ethical use of funds and the relationship between the leader and the project community. Generally, CAA reports were unstinting in their admiration for local project workers, for their drive, dedication and enthusiasm.[177] One CAA visitor said of Amte, "It takes courage to leave a good law practice and start a rehabilitation centre for hundreds of lepers without capital and to live amongst them. It takes brains and a great deal of drive to make it successful and practically self-supporting...". And of another project leader, "It requires real sacrifice to give up a career of Government service to struggle against almost overwhelming odds in founding a high school for Indian aborigines in a remote area".[178]

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175 Harris, A., "Report on Indian Tour", Sept-Nov., 1968; David Scott, "News from Mr David Scott in India", 11/3/63 Poona, 1963, p.3

176 D. Scott, "A Guide for...", *op. cit.*, p.2

177 Harris, A., "Report on Indian Tour", *op.cit.*, p.1

178 Roberts, I.,"More Australian Help For Asia Is Urged", *NOW!*, Apr. 1963, p.1; *The New Guardian*, July 9th, 1963, "On a remote area on the west coast of India, Mr Scott explained how four young Indian teachers with practically no resources had pioneered a venture in secondary education for aboriginal people - whose conditions were perhaps the most depressed in the whole of India."

Not all leaders, however, adhered to CAA's ideals. Among the Western religious leaders, through which some early CAA projects had been funded, not all accepted that "...the foreign missionaries' day [was] drawing to an end."[179] Accusations were made that projects were being used to further religious ends, to which CAA as a non-secular agency and with its policy of "no strings attached", was opposed.[180] Of another leader it was felt that he ran "a one man show", who neither delegated power to his young off-siders, nor was very good at supplying a "consolidated statement of his accounts." It has to be said that a large number of NGOs over the years were frequently more preoccupied with their work with communities than with accounts.[181] But the special concern here was that some of CAA's funds might be being used for the gentleman's considerable anti-Congress political activities, or even to pay his children's school fees.[182] And in another case, funding for a farming project was refused because the organisation had seen fit to build "... a rather magnificent grandstand and dressing room on their oval which seems a rather odd priority for such an institution".[183]

More significant than these concerns were the major structural and social conditions which contributed to Third World poverty and which were real barriers to NGO effectiveness. CAA's close involvement with project work at the community level gradually exposed it to many of the major problems affecting poor people. Throughout non-communist Asia most poor people were either landless or owned less than 5 acres. They had little access to irrigation and if the rains failed so did their crops. Most poor people were illiterate and often in debt to moneylenders who charged up to 150% interest.

CAA frequently worked with communities established along Gandhian lines which were attempting to address such issues. Anand Niketan Trust in the Baroda district of Gujarat was established in 1949 by Hari Vallabh Parikh. Parikh had worked for several years with Mahatma Gandhi.[184] Anand Niketan followed Gandhian principles in the area of prohibition, and the Bhoodan and Gramdan movement, and self help and mutual aid. It encouraged the production of Khadi and other village industries and engaged in agricultural work. It also supplied medical aid, nurseries and adult education in order to promote confidence and a non-violent, self-governing village society.[185]

Of the project and Parikh, Harris commented:

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179 *Ibid.*, p.3

180 *Ibid.*

181 Tardiness in the accounting area contributed to the Canadian Agency CIDA reassessing a large number of Thai NGO projects in 1989

182 Roberts, I.,"More Australian..., *op.cit.*, p.7

183 *Ibid.*, p.1

184 "Achievement at Jitnagar", *NOW!*, Mar., 1967, p.7; "Interview with Hari Parikh", Mr Sid Fish, NSW, CAA Committee member, *NOW!*, Dec.1967, p.3

185 Sen, A.C., Ed., *Introducing Voluntary Agencies in India*, p.61, Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development, New Delhi, 1971

> A wonderful place and man! He has been working hard to assist villages in his area and many have become Gram Dam (basically, a scheme whereby a village pools its land for co-operative development for the benefit of the entire community). For the first time I have seen villages where Gram Dam means something and progress is being made! Hari Parikh's water schemes are excellent and well worth supporting. [186]

The villages being assisted comprised mainly Adivasi who were among the poorest communities in India. In Rangapur village after 1958 Parikh introduced a co-operative society enabling its 68 families to buy and sell their goods at regular and controlled prices. Land was re-distributed and all shared in farming it. A primary school had been opened and an open court settled disputes without cost. CAA provided funds in 1967 for pumps and piping for wells to improve irrigation. The goal was a higher crop production and increased food and incomes.[187] One well had to be dug 50 feet deep and the engine and pump which CAA provided transported 25 miles by bullock cart over narrow rutted tracks.[188] However, all was completed to timetable enabling Scott later in the year to turn the starting handle with due ceremony:

> A daub of red powder and some grains of rice were placed on my forehead and on the top of the 10 h.p. engine. A garland of flowers was lying over my head and another over the engine. Then the village crowded around to see me swing the starting handle. On the first turn the engine roared... and in a few seconds water gushed from the four-inch pipe into earthen channels and on to a crop of vegetables. Twenty-five acres of land will grow two or three crops as a result of this well and pump.[189]

This scene, which allowed CAA members to get involved in local custom and ceremony, was vastly different from the formal, distanced, official handing-over ceremonies initiated at the government to government level through the Colombo Plan. (An AIDAB official admitted even in the late 1980s that government contact with community level projects usually continued to be from a "red-carpet" perspective.)[190] Such NGO interaction gave the lie to the recipient as victim image. Interaction accompanied by an attitude of tolerance and equality and a genuine desire to understand was also vital to awaken such NGOs to the *process* and therefore to the consequences of modernisation which many multilateral, bilateral and NGO groups ignored.

In 1964 CAA launched its largest overseas project supporting the Balarampur social reconstruction programme. The Ashram had been in existence since 1954 and had already established an education centre up to secondary level, with training in agricultural techniques, handcrafts, health and hygiene.[191] Twenty-five Gram Dans had been established in the Balarampur district. They had village parliaments with a representative from each family. Land was possessed by the people but utilised by the

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186 Harris, A.,"C.A.A. Tour Group in India", *NOW!*, Feb., 1967, p.2
187 "Achievement at Jitnagar", *NOW!*, Mar., 1967, p.7
188 "Jitnagar Water Project", David Scott, *NOW!*, Dec., 1967, p.3
189 *Ibid*
190 AIDAB representative Australian Embassy, Manila, Philippines, 23/1/89
191 "Big New Project Launched: CAA plans model villages in India", *NOW!*, July 1964, p.8

parliament and five percent of land was given to the landless and a proportion of returns put into a village Capital development fund. CAA supported the project to improve agricultural techniques, aiming to provide better farming equipment, improve fertilisers and irrigation, with the goal (true to modernisation theory) of becoming "a model and shining example of progress".[192]

After discussion with leader Choudhari and representatives of 70 villages, Austin and Argarwal decided to fund a survey to gauge population, land and water resources, the extent of indebtedness, and educational, health and medical information. Austin reported: "Both Roshan Lal and I agreed that our two days spent here have been of the greatest value. If we can make a break through in this very small and concentrated area its accumulative effect could be of real significance".[193] Austin suggested they would need approximately £13,800 for the survey; to fund families to replace the moneylenders through the next crop based on 3-5% interest; and to help with mechanising water. The object was to get the villagers self-sufficient and out of the grips of moneylenders and landlords.

Austin and Argarwal also requested an Australian farmer to help in fertiliser and seed extension and in poultry raising.[194] Consequently CAA provided a travel grant for Peter Cawthorn to visit for 12 months. Cawthorn, a science and agricultural graduate, had previously taken part in a CAA assisted Civil Service International work camp and was keen to give practical help. In preparation he visited the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Scheme to learn about recent developments in irrigation in Australia.[195] Cawthorn's reports back to CAA indicated that there were plenty of problems involved in establishing agricultural projects. In a 1966 report he said that a large proportion of the tomato crop was attacked with a virus disease, the potato crop was poor since nearly 30% did not germinate due to bad seed and egg production had fallen off because of poor quality feed.[196] However, CAA was well pleased with the project a year later, which it assessed as an outstanding success, having supplied wells, a road and given guidance to the ashram on the use of seed, fertiliser and capital equipment. It also reported that the farmers now had access to low interest credit and that all were free of debts to the local money lenders.[197]

CAA funded many other similar projects.[198] But through its direct experience at the grassroots level and as it gradually became more familiar with the various social and

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192 *Ibid*; "Dick Austin Reports from India", *NOW!*, Feb., 1964, p.2
193 *Ibid*
194 *Ibid*
195 "Aid Abroad, CAA farmer for India", *NOW!.*, Sept. 1964
196 *NOW!* , Mar., 1966, p.11
197 *NOW!*, Mar., 1968, p.5; *NOW!*, May, 1967, p. 5
198 Gram Bharati project at Mehsana, for example, was started among the Thakor community in 1959 by a group of enthusiastic young Congress Youth Organisation members, led by Motibhai Chaudhari. "CAA

structural issues which helped sustain poverty in developing countries, it supported other initiatives besides helping to facilitate greater access to resources. These involved access to equitable credit and to equitable legal services. If such initiatives did, as donors hoped, have a catalytic effect, then social relations between traditional local power-holders, such as landowners and moneylenders and the poor, were likely to be fundamentally affected. As yet, in the 1960s, such initiatives were not wide-spread, tending to be confined within communities like the Gandhian ashrams or Amte's leprosy community. But they foreshadowed a backlash in subsequent decades from groups threatened by this challenge to the status quo.

In the 1960s NGO development rhetoric continued to centre on the issue of "self-help". Even in this formative stage of the NGO donor/recipient relationship while projects were changing from a charity to a development focus, recipients felt pressured to use "appropriate" terminology when seeking funds. One observer from the Indian Social Institute in Bangalore commented in 1965:

> Almost every would-be organiser of a social action project feels obliged to describe his scheme as a 'self-help project' or as one designed 'to help people help themselves'. This is particularly true if the organiser is seeking funds...from some donor agency abroad since it is well known that such agencies give high priority to projects which include genuine elements of self-help.[199]

As a consequence much debate ensued, particularly in the developing countries, as to what indeed constituted "self-help". The majority of Western donors continued to assume that if people were enabled to help themselves, after being given access to certain resources, that constituted self-help. But as the evidence emerging about the Green Revolution indicated that approach frequently assisted the "better-off" who were able to take quick advantage of resources. This in turn widened the gap between those groups and the poorest groups. Others therefore argued that self-help could only be meaningful if the recipients of assistance had a substantial input into the initiating stages of a project. While few poor and marginalised groups were likely to do this without some "outside" help, once approached, it was argued, the whole community should be involved as much as possible. Significantly "the whole community" in the 1960s frequently referred only to the male occupants.[200]

Self-help according to this definition required substantial community input to determine what the community saw as its most important needs. The internal dynamics of a community needed to be recognised and all groups included rather than the most

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Helps in Village Development Project", Feb., 1963, p.4; "Villages Hold the Key to Prosperity in India", *NOW!*, Aug., 1962, p.3

[199] Berna, J., "What is 'Self-Help'"?, *SA*, Vol 15, Nos.9 & 10, Sept. - Oct., 1965, pp.1061-1068

[200] Berna, J., Director of Indian Social Institute Extension Service. "Theory to Practice, Organizing for Community Action", *SA*, Vol 13, Nos. 5 & 6, May & June, 1963, p.309, "As soon as possible participation in the meetings should be broadened to include all adult members of the community, (or at least the men, taking into account...local customs and conditions.)"

prominent families, leaders or land-owners. The poorest groups had to be included and made to feel at ease and able to speak up. Growing dissatisfaction with the government-backed CDP which had tended to accentuate the top-down approach encouraged discussion along these lines.

As has been demonstrated, it was very common for assistance to be imposed by leaders of authority, who as one critic argued, prepared a plan, prescribed a treatment or solution, and carried it out with no input from the community and - because of deference - no challenge either.[201] Many Western projects in the 1960s followed this narrow definition of "self-help". CAA supported several women's projects which though well-meaning showed little evidence of the broader self-help definition.[202] Even Amte's Anandwan Leprosy Colony, which CAA had started assisting at the end of the 1950s, lacked that broader definition - although Amte remained one of the most effective and influential leaders which CAA supported in the 1960s. He was described by an Indian visitor as a man:

> ... dressed simply in a khaddar shirt, a coarse pyjama, a pair of dried up chappals... a man imbued with a volcanic energy... who has so much to tell you of his life work within so short a time. Here is a lawyer turned doctor... organiser, executive, administrator, farmer, small-scale industrialist, businessman.[203]

By mid 1962 the Victorian Lara group had supplied £2000 to Anandwan and was planning to support a young Indian from the project to undertake a course in bee-keeping and poultry farming at Dookie College in Victoria.[204] Anandwan was progressing from very small beginnings in 1951 to a successful rehabilitation and agricultural demonstration centre. Austin reported of his visit in November 1963 "... we were met by Amte, the "Human Dynamo", who is in top gear and bubbling over with enthusiasm."[205] Austin continued,

> Back to Anandwan after three years, and what a change. The place progresses to the hum of electric motors on some of the 50 wells. The crops are double and treble the district average. Where 10 years ago the people of the area shunned and feared the colony, last year some 40-50,000 people visited it, not to see what leprosy treatment was going on, but to inspect crops, wells, and pumps, to get cart wheels mended, to buy working bullocks, to ask questions and seek advice on all sorts of problems. There is no doubt Anandwan has been an example and a success.[206]

The project engaged in spinning, weaving and dyeing, small tin industries which made hurricane lamps, primus stoves and tin boxes, poultry farming, dairying and acres of

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201 Gangrade, K., "Cultural Factors in Community Organization", *SA*, Vol 11, No.2, Feb., 1961, p.67

202 "Co-operative Helps the Women of Kotagiri", *NOW!*, April, 1963, p.3; "Providing Employment for Women", *NOW!*, Feb., 1968, p.14

203 "An Indian Founded Colony For Lepers With Only 28 Shillings", *NOW!*, Feb., 1963, p.6

204 "David Scott reports to Groups on Indian Trip", *NOW!*, July, 1962, p.9

205 "Dick Austin reports from India", *NOW!*, Feb., 1964, p.2

206 "Dick Austin At Anandwan", *NOW!*, Dec., 1963, p.4

farming - cotton, chillies, wheat, oil seeds, paddy, sorghum and a large variety of vegetables.[207]

An Australian volunteer student who visited Anandwan and who also worked in a work-camp in another leprosy project, Anandgram, in 1965 drew attention to the issue when he witnessed different styles of leadership and administration first-hand. He described Amte as a very inspiring gentleman, who had achieved self-sufficiency, employment and rehabilitation but who was "... running the colony more or less as a benevolent dictator, ...there is no village council and all work is directed by him."[208] On the other hand the student's experience with a self-governing body on the Anandgram project with an elected panchayat responsible for decision-making, proved frustrating in the extreme when he was part of a local team deputed to build a store.

> Unfortunately they found it very hard to make decisions, always wanting to defer or pass on the matter... this procrastination and indecisiveness meant that we would dig an 18 inch trench one day and fill it in the next. ... It meant that until the last day or two that the actual decision as to whether the building should be eight or ten feet high was taken.[209]

The student remarked: "Here then, is India's dilemma in miniature. On the one hand, Anandgram, with delegation of responsibility and indecisiveness; on the other, Amte, with centralised complete control, and obvious progress. Which is the solution to India's development problem?"[210]

To ask such questions was to begin to suggest there might be alternatives to the top down approach. Yet neither current social structures in the West or the developing countries, nor the dominant 1960s development credo encouraged marginalised groups to take control of their lives. In the 1960s, while many donors and social workers had made the leap from welfare assistance to development assistance, little of the new development "self-help" aid, however benevolently delivered, challenged the propensity for Western donors, in collaboration with indigenous leaders, to make the decisions for the communities they assisted. Decisions, resources, ideas, funds were still essentially being imposed from outside onto project beneficiaries.

Development projects in this category covered a wide spectrum of activities and had varying degrees of success. Most of them attempted to tackle the more obvious signs of poverty in potentially more sustainable ways than merely handing out food and clothing. However, many projects failed after the initial funding period (generally of three years) was over. A nutrition garden, so popular with the Freedom From Hunger Campaign and UNICEF, could fail for the want of a small part to pump ground-water,

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207 "An Indian Founded Colony ...", *op.cit.*; "Dick Austin reports from India", *op.cit.*
208 Morawetz, D., "10 Australians Work at Leprosy Centre", *NOW!*, Feb. 1965, p.10
209 *Ibid*
210 Morawetz, D., *op.cit*.

or because it had been injudiciously placed.[211] Failure to assess maintenance and backup costs of projects such as roads and irrigation was a common cause of project failure.[212] And despite an emerging rhetoric, especially in the recipient country, supporting a more participatory relationship between donor and recipient, in reality this was not generally the case. Likewise the attempts to address structural issues by tackling the exploitative powers of the moneylender or the landlord were in their infancy in non-communist Asian countries.

Most NGOs in Australia had little experience with such issues. Some clearly preferred to avoid them and to concentrate on different agendas. World Vision, the American NGO with its roots in evangelism which was established in Australia in 1966, was a case in point. World Vision was not a member of ACFOA in the 1960s and did not participate in ACFOA's discussions on development issues. Rather World Vision set its sights on building support, through Australia's church-going community, for its relief and evangelical activities.

World Vision in Action: "Where there is no vision, the people perish."[213]

World Vision was practically unknown in Australia when Bernard Barron set up office in the Cobb and Co. building in Melbourne, in August 1966.[214] World Vision's first Australian employee, Jean Philip, joined in November 1966 when the organisation had 68 Australian sponsors. She recalled how World Vision immediately began to establish itself as a Christian organisation, seeking support through the local churches.[215] Barron gave talks to church groups, screened films and placed advertisements in church newspapers.[216] For the first several years Australians learnt about World Vision's work largely through American eyes via World Vision magazine *Scope*, films and World Vision USA advertisements.

The founder of WV, Bob Pierce, was a committed evangelical Christian who worked with a group of young evangelists (among them Billy Graham) for Youth for Christ in the mid 1940s. The group promoted large public evangelical rallies to raise money for global evangelism.[217] The rallies, named "World Vision Rallies" swept the imagination

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[211] Field visit Faye Sutherland with R.L. Agarwal, Gujarat. A nutrition garden established by UNICEF experienced both these problems; "World Freedom From Hunger Week", *FFHC News*, Vol 4, No.22, Mar., 1963, p.4

[212] Berna, J., "Theory to Pratice..." *op.cit.*, p.313

[213] Proverbs 29:18, inscribed over the entrance to the World Vision International Center, Monrovia, California

[214] Barron had previously established the Canadian World Vision and prior to that had worked with World Vision in California. World Vision Newsview, *WV Scope*, Vol 3, No. 9, September, 1966, p.14

[215] Interview Mrs Jean Philip, Melbourne, May 1991

[216] Philip, Jean, "A Link of Love", *World Vision Heartline,* Feb., 1972, p.5; Interview Mrs Jean Philip, Melbourne, May 1991

[217] Rohrer, N., *Open Arms*, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1987, p.37

of much of America's youth.[218] Pierce played his part in this success by introducing "nationally known singers, athletic heroes, prominent businessmen, and actors to say a good word for the Lord",[219] an entrepreneurial flare which would leave its imprint on World Vision in the future. In 1947 as Vice-President at Large of Youth For Christ, Pierce responded to an invitation from Chiang Kai-Shek to conduct youth rallies in China as a counter to communism.[220] In between these rallies Pierce trekked the Chinese countryside visiting missionaries in the field who had dedicated their lives to society's outcasts: lepers, war orphans, widows and the handicapped. It was this experience which changed Pierce's focus from a ministry concentrating on conversion to a ministry which also incorporated social action.[221] Pierce explained: "And that basically was what and why World Vision was created: *To meet emergency needs in crisis areas through existing evangelical agencies and individuals.*"[222]

During this visit Pierce was confronted with a child who had been beaten and turned out of her home after announcing to her family that she had become a Christian as a consequence of attending a Bob Pierce evangelical rally. The child was being sheltered by a Dutch Reform Church missionary who didn't spare Pierce: "*You* told this poor little girl to do that, ...Now *you* take care of her. She listened to *you*, she believed what *you* told her. Now look at what it's costing her". Pierce reflected:

> I stood there with that child in my arms. Tears were running down her cheeks.... I was shaken to the core. I had never had such an experience. Nobody had ever challenged the practicality of what I preached! I had never been held accountable for any *consequences* of my message. Now here I was faced with, 'Is what I say *true*? Is there any responsibility involved?'[223]

The missionary extracted the only money Pierce had, a five dollar note with a promise to send $5 a month for her upkeep. "I opened my Bible and took out my pen and wrote her name in my Bible ... there it was, an indelible record that I had made a commitment to God to care for one child".[224] The incident was in effect World Vision's first child sponsorship, the method of fund-raising most associated with World Vision's growth over the next decades. This type of assistance became a contentious issue among NGOs in later years as did the question and ethics of conversion.

Pierce's calls to respond to Asian poverty fed into a major evangelical debate of the period about the place of social action and evangelism. The climate was therefore ripe

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218 *Ibid*, p.38
219 *Ibid*
220 *Ibid*, p.38-39. Other agencies such as the China Inland Mission and the Oriental Missionary Society were already working in China in the same capacity.
221 Pierce held a fervent belief that: "The poorest of us have so much to give, and the world is full of men with worries deeper than yours and mine". *World Vision Scope*, Vol 4, No.5, "Enroute with Bob Pierce", May 1967, p.11
222 *Ibid*, p.77, emphasis in original
223 Graham, F. and Lockerbee, J., *Bob Pierce This One Thing I Do*, World Books Publisher, Waco, Texas, 1983, p.74
224 *Ibid*, p.75

for people to respond positively to WV's work. Returning to address a Billy Graham crusade in America, having also conducted a series of crusades in Korea in 1950 shortly before war broke out, Pierce spoke of the great human need which war was already producing. Many responded to Pierce's words with prayer and with money. The director of Billy Graham's crusade responded with practical help, lending him a desk, a phone, a receipt system and use of Youth For Christ's printing facilities.[225] World Vision was born, its name suggested by the Youth for Christ "World Vision Rallies", and Pierce's Sunday school teacher's advise to "Keep a world vision."[226]

Pierce had no difficulty in becoming an accredited war correspondent to enable him to work in Korea. With camera under arm he made numerous films to raise money for World Vision's welfare work while taking the gospel to the front line. Four star Korean General Sun Yup Paik, wanted "everyone of [his] soldiers to know about Jesus Christ".[227] Sun Yup Paik was rewarded with a World Vision orphanage named in his honour; Pierce with the Medal of Public Welfare Services "in recognition of his exceptionally praiseworthy service to the Republic of Korea".[228]

Though World Vision (much like the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria) professed itself apolitical, its support for South Korea, South Vietnam and Taiwan, where it worked with Asian heads of state and with elite and influential nationals, such as the army or local governments, or mayors, belied the claim. It was neither neutral, nor pro-communist, by nature a conservative organisation which shared the proclivity of the West in that period to practice Eurocentricism.

Coming new and late to the missionary/aid field and focusing as much on combating communism and saving souls as on welfare assistance and relief, World Vision tended to model its welfare work along very traditional lines, just as some religious organisations were beginning to question them. Although it was increasingly more active and innovative in its fund-raising and relief work than many NGOs, it lagged well behind in analysing and participating in development assistance issues - its considerable research interests tending to be focused largely on theological concerns rather than on development issues. It is with that background and that focus that it would be introduced to the Australian public in the mid 1960s.

World Vision's aid and evangelical activities already covered some 19 countries, though its central focus was in Asia, including Korea, Taiwan, Macau, Vietnam, the Philippines, India and Indonesia. World Vision described itself as "...a missionary service agency meeting emergency needs in crisis areas of the world through existing evangelical agencies."[229] Relief work and the message of Christ were inextricably

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[225] Rohrer, N., *Open Arms*, *op.cit*, pp.54-55
[226] *Ibid*, p.56
[227] Rohrer, N., *op.cit*, pp. 68-69
[228] *Ibid*, p.69
[229] *World Vision Scope*, [*WV Scope*], Vol 2, No. 7, Sept., 1965, Monrovia, California, p.1

bound, to be realised through five major areas of activity: evangelism, leadership development, missionary challenge, social welfare and emergency aid.

World Vision's 1965 half-yearly report illustrated how the organisation had combined these activities in its first 15 years. Its social welfare programme supported some 20,000 orphans in 269 orphanages, as well as "vocational schools and specialised schools for the deaf, dumb, crippled and beggar boys".[230] It also supported widows, a children's hospital wing and two clinics, and assisted doctors and nurses treating lepers and amputees. Under its provision for emergency aid in 1965, it had shipped over 240,000 pounds of relief goods to fund relief programmes in Macau, to fight famine in Kerala and to support a feeding programme in Korea. It had also provided support to wounded soldiers in Vietnam and built a school in an Argentine shanty town.[231] Such activities mirrored the non-developmental activities of organisations like the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria, albeit on a much larger scale.

As an evangelical organisation World Vision also supported indigenous evangelism by assisting national evangelists, radio evangelists (including underwriting a radio programme in Indonesia), Christians working among Japanese university students, and missionaries. To develop Christian leadership it assisted missionary internships and training, held pastors' conferences and assisted indigenous institutions such as the Indian Union Biblical Seminary and the Bishop Moore College. Its programmes aimed at the young included bible memory and study courses in orphanages, a bible correspondence course in Korea which had 27,000 graduates and 700 bible clubs supporting 50,000 students.[232] World Vision made no secret of its religious intentions and ideals, but it raised questions about the groups that it targeted in providing its aid. They were the vulnerable - who were the main recipients of non-government aid everywhere. In the main, they were young orphans, insecure widows, soldiers at the front line, or lying injured in hospital,[233] in other words the powerless. These people were not in the strongest position to weigh the pros and cons of evangelical theology: a theology characterised by sophisticated administration, efficiency and energy.

From its inception World Vision developed a sophisticated evangelical administration launching in 1967, MARC: Missions Advanced Research and Communications Center, which it described as harnessing "computers to the task of world evangelism".[234] The project compiled files on people, missions and projects in some 156 countries gathering and analysing data from the field to assist the churches

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230 "World Outreach: A Semi-Annual Report", *WV Scope*, Vol 2, No. 7, Sept 1965, pp.3-4

231 *Ibid*

232 *Ibid*

233 Pierce, B., "When You Pray for Vietnam", *WV Scope*, Vol 2, No. 7, Sept. 1965, pp.1,4

234 Pierce, B., "World Vision Launches New Program Aimed At Global Evangelism", *WV Scope*, Oct 1967, Vol 4, No. 10, pp. 6 - 7; Engstrom T., W.V. Exec. V. Pres., "Monthly Memo", *WV Scope*, Vol 3, No.5, May 1966,

and missions to more effectively , "... [fulfil] Jesus' command to give the gospel to all the world".[235] In presenting the concept of MARC to World Vision supporters, emphasis was laid on the superior management and scientific skills, as well as the clear vision of Christian world outreach, of those managing the project.[236] Clearly great things were expected of the project which it was hoped would become "an effective nerve center for the Church worldwide", and perhaps "one of the most significant additions to the work of the Church in modern times."[237] In much the same way that UN bodies were carrying out a minute examination of many aspects of the Third World economy, World Vision was involved in a task of data collection, in order that non-Western cultures could be more effectively shaped to its beliefs.

There were several implications for World Vision's aid activities arising from its evangelical interests. The methods used by the evangelical "crusaders" tended to be flamboyant, emotive and requiring a broad and public canvas. World Vision America made extensive use of the United States' media through regular broadcasting, motion pictures and rallies. It also founded the World Vision Korean Orphan Choir which toured the globe.[238] Many of the methods used in evangelism were absorbed into World Vision Australia's aid activities: a high level of administrative professionalism;[239] a high level of enthusiasm, a propensity to use the full spectrum of available media to reach large audiences; the tendency to use emotional image and language to extract a response.

As well as affecting the way that World Vision sought its support, the emphasis on evangelism obviously also affected the type of activities that it supported. Many Australians were first made aware of World Vision when it placed advertisements in newspapers inviting donations to sponsor a child in the developing world. The organisation claimed to provide for the children's physical and spiritual care with food, clothing, health-care, education and Bible classes.[240] World Vision had taken as its base the findings of a United Nations' survey of children's needs, which emphasised a decent place to live, pure water, health care, nourishing food, an education, and the protection of children at work.[241] Current Western models on institutional child care

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235 *Ibid,* MARC was to address such questions as: "How many missionaries will be needed in Brazil in 1970? What kind of missionaries? What evangelistic approach is apt to be the most effective in Nigeria? Or how could Christian churches best use their resources to present the gospel in the Middle East?"

236 *Ibid*

237 *Ibid.* By the 1990s supporters of evangelical Christianity in Latin America were fast out weighing supporters of Catholicism. The extent to which the activities of this particular organisation contributed to these events is beyond the scope of this thesis

238 "Korean Songbirds Charm U.S. Audiences", *WV Scope,* Vol 2, No. 7, Sept., 1965

239 Interview Jean Philip, Melbourne, May, 1991

240 "15 Years of Helping, World Vision Ministry Changes Lives in Korea", *WV Scope,* Vol 3, No. 5, May 1966; "Korea Hospital Comforts Little Children", *WV Scope*, Vol 3 No. 3, Mar 1966, "Ministering to the Children", *WV Scope,* Vol 3, No.3, Mar. 1966, pp.8-9

241 *Ibid.* While this attitude was common during the 1950s and 60s it was still in evidence in India in 1991. A French social worker observing two European agency slum projects in India noted the emphasis

tended to support a quasi-scientific approach, emphasising discipline, order, uniformity, inflexibility and cleanliness. Certainly, photographs of Pierce and other World Vision visitors at various children's homes looked congenial, as did those showing deliveries of Christmas or Birthday presents.[242] But the quality of care beyond the basics, to promote self-esteem, self-reliance and work skills rested on the calibre of the individual institutions. And since care ranged over a very large number of institutions and countries the standard of care delivered was likely to have differed widely. That pointed up a potential problem for NGOs which expanded beyond the capacity to closely monitor their projects.

World Vision also focused sharply on schooling and bible classes. The two were closely linked since literacy was essential to an organisation which placed strong emphasis on living by the Bible. World Vision fully expected to convert a substantial number of children in its care, and also to create numerous pastors from their midst. Doug Cozart, World Vision's director in Vietnam in 1967 commented, "Child Care Centers in Vietnam can produce Christian leaders who will influence all areas of society in one or two generations".[243] World Vision Vice President Larry Ward, shared this vision when he said of the more than 30,000 children being sponsored in August 1969, "Think of what these 30,000 lives can mean in years to come: lights for God, to glow in the darkness of their world. An army, trained for years in a Christian setting, then turned loose as a mighty force for Christian witness in their own lands."[244] Such Western assumptions and interventions at a cultural level mirrored the imposition of Western economic and modernisation models with all the overtones of dependency and possibilities for indigenous cultural disintegration. They were also closely reminiscent of nineteenth century colonialism, except in the neo-colonial model, "commerce" and "the cross" tended to follow economic growth, modernisation and aid rather than the sword.

In Australia, "sponsored children" became virtually synonymous with World Vision activities. Concern and compassion for the individual were integral to World Vision practice complementing the organisation's theology which strongly emphasised the salvation of the individual. Pierce once remarked: "God has gone out of his way to

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on nail inspection, punishment, and a prize-giving ceremony where the "best children" were rewarded for clean clothes, punctuality and properly completed homework. Interview, Brigitte Bleuzen, New Delhi, February, 1991. There were surely more useful priorities to dwell on for slum children, than to virtually penalise some children who were unable to match up to the project's questionable "standards", through no fault of their own.

242 Various smiling pictures of children holding presents captioned: "A sponsor's love, expressed in the gift of a doll, brings delight to a Balinese girl", *WV Scope*, Vol 6, No.8, Aug 1969, p.13; "This girl cannot see the present she receives from her sponsor, but she understands the love that sent it", *WV Scope*, Vol 4, No. 3 Mar., 1967

243 "A Shared Vision: Evangelization of a Country at War", *WV Scope,* Vol 4, No. 3, Mar., 1967, p.1

244 Ward, L., *WV Scope*, Vol 6, Aug., 1969, No. 8, p.1

teach me it is never trivial to minister to one".[245] World Vision justified its approach as an attempt to reduce the "teeming millions image", which encouraged a sense of impotence and quick dismissal, to a relationship between individuals. It was World Vision's way of bridging the gap, an attempt to convince individual donors that by getting involved they really could make a difference. Individuals, families or groups supplied monthly donations to provide care for a specific child. In return they received a photograph and brief history of their child, a yearly progress report and could enter into occasional rudimentary correspondence with the child.

The substantial use of children to raise funds had obvious advantages for World Vision. These became immediately obvious when Australian families, couples who had lost a child, businesses, schools, Sunday school groups, young and old responded to World Vision advertisements, providing testimonials about the personal joy the scheme brought them. That was another issue which critics in later years would take up vigorously, arguing, along with the questionable value of focusing on assisting individuals, that Western self-gratification was a poor excuse for giving aid.[246]

World Vision frequently displayed the same ambivalence which characterised other conservative organisations like the AAAV. It was absolutely sincere in its social and emergency aid work, and in its interaction with Asian nationals it displayed its compassion in a thousand ways. It supplied wheelchairs for amputees, braces for polio victims, food and medicines at the height of war or natural disasters. Certainly in the case of helping individuals and "first-stop" aid, which matched World Vision's brief to meet emergency needs in crisis areas of the world, Word Vision became extremely proficient. But in other respects, in terms of evolving a longer term, developmental focus, or educating itself or the broader public in the ways being taken up by more activist NGOs, World Vision failed.

Adherence to a theology with strong messianic convictions - about which Pierce said, "I have had driven into my heart again and again the realization that it costs something to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ into an unfriendly world",[247] which was backed by equally strong conservative, Western beliefs, necessarily worked against it discovering the complexities and worth of the traditions it sought to assist. In the mid to late 1960s, therefore, World Vision's appearance in Australia had added another conservative voice - with plenty of zeal, but little sophistication in the current evolving development theory and practice - to an already fairly conservative aid community. World Vision's focus on delivering welfare services, its concentration on the individual, its emphasis on evangelism and its tendency to portray non-Christian Asian cultures negatively,

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245 "En Route With Bob Pierce", *WV Scope*, Vol 4, No.8, Aug. 1967

246 Vasey, D., Manager World Vision Sponsor Dept., "This is the 'Why' of Orphan Scholarships", *WV Scope*, Vol 3, No. 5, May 1966, p.6

247 "Enroute with Bob Pierce", *op.cit.*

compounded the negative stereotypes about Asia which continued to linger in Australia in the 1960s.

Perceptions of Asia Through the Aid Community's Eyes

Many of the images of Asia projected by the Australian aid community in the 1960s continued to centre on emergencies whether they expressed fears about over-population and hunger, emphasised in the Freedom From Hunger Campaign; whether from the gaunt images portrayed on television during the Indian famine, and advertised by the Milk for India campaign and Australian government food aid donations;[248] or whether from the Australian government's activities in the Vietnam war or its vastly increased aid to Indonesia after the coup. All of these activities sustained an image of Asia in a chaotic, dependent state.

As the material on the Australian FFHC has illustrated acceptance of the modernisation process, which was to be assisted in part by the proceeds from aid, almost by definition set up assumptions of Western superiority. Very few aid groups sought to consciously counter that view. As a result images of Asia projected by the aid community covered the full spectrum from the tactless and thoughtless to the grotesque. The government's *External Aid Bulletin*, for example, reinforced the "unclean, disease-ridden" Asia stereotype, as well as that of the "Western expert possessor-of-all-knowledge". The *Bulletin* reported that an Australian forestry worker - after avoiding hepatitis, malaria, tuberculosis and "many forms of stomach upsets", had to be a "patient" teacher and "induce" villagers to accept forestry conservation.[249] That Asians were unsophisticated and lacking in skills before their contact with Westerners was implied in the comments that Thais working on a road project with the Australians, "... who now pilot huge pieces of road building equipment could not even ride a motor bike or drive a car" before the Australian road makers moved in.[250] The Milk for India Campaign which campaigned vigorously to send assistance to the Indian famine, used shocking "grim reaper" images to solicit funds.

World Vision's commitment to evangelical Christianity strongly biased the way in which it projected Asian countries mainly by means of its church-based publications. While obviously anti-Communist and showing little sympathy for countries such as China, North Korea or North Vietnam, Hindu India and Hindu Bali and tribal animism, from a range of countries, were also portrayed highly negatively. There were many examples representing this view. In 1969 World Vision described Bali as a "dark and

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[248] 150,000 tons of wheat in 1964, "The Place of Agriculture in Australian External Aid Planning", The Agricultural Bureau Oration, Minister for External Affairs, Mr Paul Hasluck, Adelaide, 31 Aug, 1965, *C.N.*, Vol 36, No.6, Aug., 1965, p.485; *Australia's International Aid, op. cit.*, p.9 speaks of the "economic recovery programme" to Indonesia and the "special emergency assistance" to India

[249] *External Aid Bulletin*, *op.cit.*, No.10, 1968, p.4

[250] *Ibid*, p.5

pagan land where Hinduism is the predominant religion", an island which "lies in spiritual darkness, unaware of the need of the Savior."[251] A photograph of Balinese children was captioned, "Unlike the children in the [World Vision] childcare program in Bali, many of the Balinese children are in the darkness of paganism".[252] Among these it included the child dancers of Bali, children:

> ...trained from babyhood in the art of Balinese dances, beautiful and graceful to look at, but a close look at them reveals a complete absence of spiritual awareness - only a stoic determination to master their crafts, and unless God intervenes, they become the servants of dark powers. Like the beach shells, to suffer, to become blighted, and destroyed.[253]

Another photograph of the Indian God Ganeesh, was captioned: "Worship of idols and gods without number is still a part of life of millions of Asia's people. Here one of the idols of Java, grotesque and repulsive, is pictured from [the World Vision film], "A Cry in the Night".[254]

A World Vision staff writer reacted similarly to a Hindu temple in Calcutta in 1968:

> At the Kali temple in Calcutta the priest wore a white *dhoti*. Bare from the waist up, he had a sacred thread over his shoulder and white, vermilion and red stripes across his forehead. The idol is a black stone shaped like a milestone, with three eyes (the usual plus one in the center of the forehead) and four hands. In front of it are oil lamps, flower petals, portions of fruit offerings and bits of incense. The thin worshippers seemed fanatic. I shuddered as I stepped outside. But shocked as I was, my guide,... was moved more deeply. 'But for the grace of God', she said, 'I would be one of the worshippers'. I studied the pleasant girl in her colorful sari and tried to realize what it must mean to be free of the superstition of Hinduism.[255]

World Vision clearly viewed Hinduism with abhorrence, and was only slightly more tolerant towards Islam and Buddhism. While working with Tibetan refugees in the Himalayas, despite acknowledging that the majority were Buddhist and a large proportion Buddhist priests, World Vision still set out to convert.[256]

The criticisms aimed at cultures such as Bali and Hindu India, of sinfulness, wickedness and ignorance stemmed from a conviction which formed part of a statement of faith adopted at World Vision's inauguration.[257] World Vision had a compelling desire that non-believers be at least confronted with "the Word", so that they could choose whether or not to be released from "...battling the demons of sin, wickedness,

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251 "A Place Where World Vision Serves", *WV Scope*, Vol 5, No. 3, Mar 1968, p.11

252 "Pentecost on Bali," *WV Scope*, Vol 6, No. 8, Aug. 1969, pp.12-13

253 The Rev Heini Germann-Edey, Director WV Canada, "A Place Where World Vision Serves," *WV Scope,* Vol 5, No. 3, March 1968, p.11

254 "A Cry in the Night", was one of Bob Pierce's films, *WV Scope*, Vol 2, No. 9, Nov. 1965, No page no, World Vision Inc., Huntington, California

255 Haskin, Dorothy, "Girl Who Did That Thing - Persevere", *WV Scope*, Vol 5, No. 8, Aug. 1968, p.11

256 World Vision reported of its assistance: "This hospital will provide another opportunity to present the life-changing message of the Gospel to these people who come from a land where Buddhism has been the prevailing religion and where between a seventh and a fourth of the people are estimated to be Buddhist priests". "EMM Helps Build Clinic For Tibetan Refugees", *WV Scope*, Vol 2, No.12, Feb., 1966

257 The statement read: "For the salvation of lost and sinful man regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential", otherwise the lost..."...are lost unto the resurrection of damnation". Rohrer, N., *Open Arms*, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1987, pp.57-58

illiteracy, ignorance, sickness and poverty".[258] World Vision could also call on precedents to illustrate that Asians were not necessarily hostile to the idea of conversion. In India, for example, many Harijans had embraced Christianity enthusiastically. But there was a significant difference between World Vision's attitude to the West and to Asia. In the West, it was the individual that was confronted not the whole of Western culture, whereas in Asia, there was a strong suggestion that whole cultures were being dismissed and diminished, when they were written off as pagan, since their literature, art, food and customs were inextricably bound-up with religion.

World Vision literature in the 1960s added to the common portrayal of India as the "Land of Tragic Masses", where Moslems and Hindus went on "killing sprees".[259] Without analysis to explain the reasons for such religious tensions, notably the imposition of partition on India by the British, such articles contributed to a picture of illogical, lawless countries. Too often the general picture was of a "needy", hungry Asia a recipient of Western objects and spiritually moribund. WV sustained the image of the active white Westerner and the passive non-white recipient. Typical was the image of the outstretched hand and the outstretched empty bowl, filled by a towering, stetson-hatted, well-fed white man or a white missionary woman who controlled the pot of food while the recipients stood in line.[260] This perspective rarely embraced a more tolerant and positive stance to depict Asians sympathetically within their own cultural norms. More typically Asian recipients of aid were shown copying Western activities and methods - judged successful if they conformed to Western standards of normality.

World Vision predominantly used photographic image, both still and movie, and persuasive captions, rather than analysis, to garner support. In subsequent decades it would advertise extensively and consistently, promoting the message that by sponsoring a child the problems of developing countries could be substantially tackled. In the 1960s images were rarely gaunt, unlike those used by the Milk for India Campaign. They were inclined rather to be appealing, cute, or playful, though World Vision did on occasions produce a gallery of "mug shots". These were captioned "...father a laborer; mother died of illness 1967. First grade; personal characteristics, sad"; or "..father a laborer; mother died of illness in 1962. First grade: personal characteristics, good natured".[261] World Vision was also expert at shots which depicted children's eyes

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258 Cherian K.V., "Hundreds of Indian Villages Receive Light", *WV Scope*, Vol 3, No.5, May, 1966, p.4

259 "India: Land of Tragic Masses", *WV Scope*, Vol 3, No. 6, June 1966, California; "Walter Corlett, WV's 'Right Man' in the Right Place", *WV Scope,* Vol 3, No.3, Mar, 1966

260 In Vietnam: Captioned: "Eager hands of Dong Xoai refugees reach out for World Vision relief packets.", *World Vision Scope*, Vol 2, No. 7, Sept. 1965, In India: *World Vision Scope*, *Ibid*, p.4, In Hong Kong, *World Vision Scope*, July,1966

261 "1135 Vietnamese Children Wait for Sponsors", *WV Scope*, Vol 5, No. 2, Feb. 1968, p.5-6; "7000 Children in Vietnam Wait for a Sponsor", *WV Scope*, Vol 6, No.11, Nov., 1969

looking soulfully into the camera.[262] Using such images the organisation challenged people to help, to give, to get involved. It did so with varying degrees of sentimentality or realism. When asking people to donate beds for a Korean children's hospital, for example it wrote, "Think of a little child in your bed, growing stronger each day! Think of little fingers touching with gratitude your name plate on the bed!"[263]

Typically invitations to pledge support for World Vision children ran along the following lines:

> This is a child without blankets. Without security, love or tender care. See the garbage cans where she gets her food. See the cold windy building where she sleeps on the floor. Would you like to surround a child like this with the warmth of your love? Would you like to comfort and care for some little one and help teach him about Jesus?[264]

World Vision became increasingly more sophisticated in using image but the message that it conveyed - of individuals without agency, awaiting Western generosity and intervention to save them - was as unsophisticated as the welfare images of the 1950s. Many Australian church organisations - to which a high proportion of Australian NGO aid was donated - continued to present the region with much the same simplicity. This was in a period when there was very little counter analysis presenting the complexity and dynamism of Asian societies. While World Vision's portrayal of Asia was not unique during this period, the organisation's significance lies in its phenomenal growth in subsequent decades. World Vision's support was frequently gained at the expense of the issues which concerned activist groups and was therefore guaranteed to set-up tension between the two.

In the 1960s CAA was one of the few NGOs which consciously set out to present with dignity the communities it assisted. In 1962 it had set as its goals: "No patronage", "No strings to gifts", "Be mindful of Asian sensitivity", and "Avoid mere handouts".[265] It wanted to avoid the impression that foreigners sought control. Scott projected a very generous attitude about the communities which CAA supported. He said:

> I tried to convey to our friends in India that the benefit is mutual, that they have widened our horizons, given us an opportunity to participate in the international task of overcoming poverty, unemployment and disease and also enabled us to learn more of their country, people and culture as well as their economic problems and the means they are using to overcome them.[266]

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262 "7000 Children... "*op.cit*; "Joining Forces to Reach Refugee Children", *WV Scope*, Vol 4, No. 5, May 1967; *WV Scope,* Vol 6, No. 8, August 1969, p.4

263 "A Sick Child First Needs a Bed", *WV Scope,* July 1966, Vol 3, No. 7, World Vision of Canada, Toronto, Ontario, p.6

264 "This Christmas Color Her Warm", *WV Scope*, Vol 3, No. 12, Feb. 1966

265 *NOW!*, June 1962. p.3; Scott, D., "C.A.A. Visit by David Scott", Report, 1967

266 *NOW!*, April 1963, p.1; Interview David Scott, Melbourne, August 1990

CAA urged Australians to make stop-overs in Asia on their way to Europe, [267] but "not an organised tour - rather an off the beat journey to the villages". In this way CAA believed Westerners could more fully understand the problems which faced developing countries.

Because Asian cultures and conditions were so different from Australia's, Father Tucker strongly supported the need for what he called "educational publicity" to pass on the knowledge gained from personal visits in an informed and intelligent way.[268] In particular, Tucker was eager to educate the young.[269] CAA helped facilitate this educative process by funding young people to work in volunteer camps in India, in a period when the focus on volunteers abroad was high after Kennedy had launched the US Peace Corps in 1961.[270] Tucker was before his time in promoting the need to educate the Western public about conditions in the developing countries. His support for "educational publicity" was the fore-runner of "Development Education" which was taken up by the UN, governments and NGOs in the 1970s. Tucker believed that the education of the Australian public about Asian countries to break down the barriers of racism and ignorance, was even more important than supplying aid. Without that knowledge, understanding and goodwill, development assistance was unlikely to progress since it would continue to be delivered within the context of old stereotypes. In 1960 Tucker suggested:

> The greatest need today is that every nation of the western world should re-orientate its thinking; but more especially Australia, because we have the greatest stake in the development of a peaceful and contented world - particularly of that portion of it of which we are apart - South East Asia.... *Valuable as are the funds C.A.A. provides for campaigns against poverty, our most important task is to re-orientate the thinking of Australia.* [271]

Such comments confirmed that the issue of poverty was much broader than giving a helping hand here and there. Its successful resolution involved confronting the amalgam of attitudes and assumptions entrenched in Western political, economic and social life (which were discussed in Chapter One). Tucker was tireless in accepting speaking engagements, in lobbying the government, in writing articles, even going on a caravan tour to stress that message.[272]

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267 Like homing pigeons Australians historically turned to England

268 *Ibid*, p.11

269 "Education on World Affairs: This Great Need Streesed [sic] by Father Tucker at Colac", *NOW!*, Sept. 1960, p.5

270 "Big Growth in Voluntary Service Movements", *NOW!*, June, 1963, p.6

271 Tucker, G. K, "Letter from Father Tucker", *NOW!* , March, 1968, p.7, Emphasis added

272 Tucker letter to the *Age*, *NOW!*, May 1960, p.7; Tucker speech to Rotary Club, *NOW!*, June 1960, p.6; Tucker address to Geelong Grammar, *NOW!*, June 1960, p.8; Australian-Asian Fellowship Club founded by Hermitage School under Father Tucker's encouragement *NOW!* , Jan 1962. See CAA newsclippings file for Father Tucker's caravan tour; Press clippings *AGE* 23/4/64 Tucker - and Anzac day letter; press clippings Father Tucker 21/7/64, The Prophets on our Security Age; Father Tucker's Christmas Message, *NOW!*, Dec 1965, p.2

CAA group members took up the challenge to more fully understand Asia and reported to *NOW!* with photographs, letters and personal stories of visits to projects.[273] In its typically innovative fashion CAA conceived the idea of taking groups of people to visit CAA projects - its first tour setting off in 1966. Ted Howard's [274] report placed CAA apart from the more common Australian visits to developing countries by illustrating the organisation's commitment to understanding the cultures it assisted.[275] Howard urged future tour participants to "... prepare now! Do this by reading, studying, talking and also earn the right to a welcome by your work in C.A.A.. When you go, don't go to judge, go prepared to see, to listen, to like, to learn, and above all to understand."[276] The advice was well chosen since there were definite hazards involved in making quick, under prepared visits to a new culture. Occasionally, reports from young volunteers illustrated this when they made assumptions about Asia which were not culturally sustainable. Solutions to famine, for example, continued to be readily forthcoming from Western visitors predicated on utilising India's cows for food.

The images that CAA supporters brought back to Australia were altogether different from the familiar depiction of an Asia paralysed in its poverty. Their observations rather caught the atmosphere and vitality of village life. John Mellor spent five months in India working on CAA projects and described the India he experienced in August 1965:

> We alighted in the confusion of the bazaar, the towns commercial centre....The bazaar was crowded, men in the clothes of all castes women in flowing saris and bicycle vendors selling anything from toys to padlocks, watermelon to bananas, ice-cream to tea, but mainly snacks and spices. An engineering shop lacking space did most of its work in the street. One area rang with the sound of hammer on metal. Here pots, dishes and cups were beaten into shape.
>
> ...We made our way to a hostel passing an ancient archway built in the 11th century. It was high and beautifully carved. A man slept in the shade on the stone base. A woman spread grain out to dry in the late afternoon sun. Odd birds flitted from the monument to steal seed and return to the refuge of the carvings.[277]

While the dynamics and hardships of street-vendor trading were not yet clearly understood in the 1960s by donor agencies, at least the energy and ingenuity of street life which went on with or without aid, was a much more realistic depiction of Asian life than the "outstretched hand" image.

Many such reports, written from different perspectives and levels of understanding, combined to represent a rich mosaic of Asian life. Some dwelt on scenes of domesticity stressing the preciousness of water which might be carried two miles on the heads of

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273 "Indian Village Life: Young Melbourne Woman Sees for Herself", *NOW!*, July, 1960, p 6; "A Melbourne Woman Amid Indian Floods", *NOW!*, Nov.,1961, p. 6; Erle Coffey, "Small Sums Do a Lot in India", *NOW!*, Feb., 1962, p.2; Margot Talbot, "A Personal Impression", *NOW!*, March, 1967 p.3; Jim Ryan, "A School Teacher's Impression of C.A.A. in India", *NOW!*, March, 1967, pp.4-5

274 CAA's South Australia representative

275 "Highlights of 1966", *NOW!*, June, 1967, p.4

276 Howard, T., "India Impresses C.A.A. Visitors", *NOW!*, March, 1966, p.4

277 *NOW!*, Aug. 1965, p.9

village women.[278] Others focussed on the tough working environment, describing scenes of women cracking stones with 4lb hammers in 100 degree heat for 2/- a day; or hospitals where operations were delayed because instruments had to be shared.[279] Another gave recognition to India's major religions, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism, when it reported on individuals working with poor communities:

> One of the things that amazed me in travelling in India...was the fact that I met many men who made me feel ashamed of my outlook and contribution to my fellow men. Further, these people are not Christians in our sense of the word, they are Hindus, Moslems and Buddhists. They have all put their eggs in one basket and have gambled all their chance of security, personal promotion and comfort, on their profound faith that by giving to the full all they have for their fellows, they are best serving the Lord as they see him. This makes one wonder if perhaps India should not send some missionaries to Australia. [280]

Such reports vindicated Scott's belief in the value of these tours, for critics suggested that the tour cost might have been better spent if directed straight to projects. But Scott supported CAA's aim to promote international understanding unequivocally, explaining: "Experience has shown that money spent on travel is well spent. People who go to India learn much and return keen, and better equipped, to interest others in aiding and understanding the under-developed countries".[281]

For those who could not travel to Asia CAA's journal *NOW!* continued to inform its supporters. It provided reading lists and book reviews on aid-related subjects - such as world food problems, technical assistance and population issues. It published the major speeches delivered in national and international forums concerned with aid.[282] It also broadened the sweep of its articles to analyse issues on debt, dirty water supply, alcoholism, smoking, early marriage, poor housing, lack of electricity and the lack of link roads.[283] It acted as a bulletin board advertising meetings, films, broadcasts, conferences and seminars dealing with aid issues and on fundraising events. References to communism and the starving millions had all but disappeared.

Significantly too, *NOW!* started to give Asians a voice with regular copy from Indian contributors. These included articles on India's social and economic conditions,[284] on Calcutta and on the All-India Congress Party, and on India's parliamentary system.[285] Letters from project leaders, describing their problems and successes, were also regularly published, as were the Indian field officer's reports. And the organisation initiated its first visits of Asians to Australia, organising a highly successful tour by its

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278 "Adventuring in India with CAA", Barwick, B., *NOW!* , April-May, 1966, p.5
279 Roberts, I., "More Australian Help for Asia is Urged", *NOW!*, 1963, p.1
280 *Ibid*
281 *NOW!,* Aug. 1965, p.2
282 "Food For Peace Campaign Publishes a Reading List", *NOW!*, May 1961, p.6
283 *NOW!,* Mar. 1965, p.5 & p.21
284 "Faces of an Indian Housewife...", *NOW!*, June 1965, p.6
285 *NOW!,* Ap. 1965, p.4 and May-June 1965, p.5; *NOW!,* Sept.1965, p.4

new Indian field officer.[286] The overwhelming impression that CAA literature projected was of many dedicated local people working in developing countries committed to alleviating poverty.[287]

In the broad sweep of literature which appeared about Asia - CAA's approach was rare.[288] Yet towards the end of the 1960s, there were signs that the social milieu and assumptions which had helped drive government foreign policy and aid policy was starting to be challenged. The days of sea travel, with the stop-over in Ceylon and the prestigious presentation in court in England, were fast fading. Post-war prosperity, increasing informality and the flexibility of air travel all combined to bring a broader section of Australians into contact with Asia. In the 1960s there was an expansion of Asian language and cultural courses in schools and universities. Melbourne university encouraged students to visit Asia during their long vacations. The Colombo Plan and SEATO educational assistance schemes, as well as the continuing practice of private students studying in Australia, increased the interaction between Australian and Asian students in universities and schools.[289] Australian businessmen, journalists and tourists began to visit Asia in unprecedented numbers.[290] Whereas in "other days" Australians headed for London and New York, statistics now confirmed that by 1968, they were just as likely to fly to Singapore, Hong Kong or Tokyo.[291]

Certainly, towards the decade's end, there was a perceptible change in the popular outlook towards Asia, at least among the young. This interest was frequently kindled by the "discovery" of Asia - especially India - by Western popular culture. The Beatles adopted an Indian guru and introduced Indian sounds and instruments to their music.[292] The young travelled the overland route between Australia and Europe in great numbers. CAA reaped some of the benefits - supplying most of Australia's pop groups with sitars. Having expanded its handcraft marketing interests in the 1960s it opened several Handicrafts of Asia shops to sell Indian clothes and Asian artefacts. The shops were phenomenally successful having tapped into this popular culture fad. While popular culture's "adoption" of India dwelt on the exotic, others explored its spiritual and philosophical traditions which offered a refreshing alternative to Cold War bipolarism or Western consumerism. Such familiarisation also suggested that there was more to India than poverty and famine.

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286 "David Scott reports to Groups on Indian Trip", *NOW!*, July, 1962, p.9; *NOW!*, "Agarwal makes great impression", June 1967, p.2

287 *NOW!*, May 1968, pp.9-10

288 "India's Big Achievements" Scott's responce to letter in the *AGE* 27/1/64 from Tom Stacey commenting on India and its PM; *AGE*, 17/2/64 Letter David Scott "India Poverty and Progress".

289 Macmahon Ball, W., "Australia's Role ...", *op.cit.*; Plimsoll, Sir J., "Asian Issues in the Australian Press", *op.cit.*

290 Freeth, G., Minister for External Affairs, "Australia and its Relations with Asia", *op.cit.*

291 McMahon, W., Treasurer, *C.N.*, Vol 39, No.10, Oct., 1968

292 "Range of Handcrafts is extending", *NOW!*, June, 1968, p.3

At the same time the Vietnam anti-war movement was gaining momentum particularly among the Australian student population (as in the USA, Britain and France). This was the post WW II generation not quite so heavily influenced by the racist White Australia or "Reds under the Bed", "Yellow Peril" phobias of many of its parents. The images of indiscriminate bombing of Vietnamese civilians, the use of napalm and other atrocities, delivered to Australian living rooms each night by television, lent weight to ALP[293] arguments that the Vietnam war was a civil war in which Australia had no part. Deeper issues involving peasant nationalist aspirations as part of a decolonisation process began to be recognised. For young people in particular (including many young males with a vital interest in the war since they could be conscripted to serve in it) simplistic political analysis - which merely juxtaposed right with wrong, Christian with non-Christian, democratic with non-democratic - was no longer appropriate.

The image of monolithic communism, for example, which successive Australian governments had long exploited, no longer stood up by 1968. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania had all made attempts to break from Moscow. Yugoslavia had broken from the Soviet Union, while the acrimonious Sino-Soviet split challenged any proclivity to view communist ideology in one dimension. The Liberal Party in Australia showed little recognition that there was a need to update its policies to adjust to changes in public attitudes by the end of the 1960s. Its foreign policy remained closely allied to the USA, its major preoccupation remained centred on defence matters. That stance led it to support anti-communist Asian regimes regardless of how unpopular, authoritarian, unrepresentative or corrupt they were.

Nevertheless, the attitudinal changes which were being expressed by some NGOs - as illustrated by CAA's approach to Asian societies, the concerns expressed by ACFOA about issues of trade liberalisation and Western consumption patterns, the incorporation of "Social Justice" issues into the WCC's definition of development - were symptomatic of broader attitudinal changes which were being addressed by the wider non-government community, especially issues of racism and sexism. Together, this ongoing activity of the non-government sector foreshadowed considerable challenges to the status quo in the 1970s.

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[293] Australian Labor Party

PART II

BREAKING BARRIERS/MAINTAINING FENCES

Chapter 6
Ideologies Opposed
A New Order for Australian ODA?

"The Government believes that improvements can and must be effected in almost all aspects of our aid endeavours." ..... *Press release Prime Minister Whitlam's office 1973*

"... it appears that the dead hand of the past still controls Australian aid...." ..... *Nancy Viviani, 1983 of the Fraser government period 1976-80*

Economic Growth Under Scrutiny

Although in the 1960s Third World nations realised an average 5% annual increase of GNP the numbers of people living in poverty in the under-developed nations rose sharply. It was therefore fairly obvious by the beginning of the 1970s that the "trickle down" expected of the economic growth model had not occurred, even in the more "successful" economies of Latin America, like Brazil and Mexico. To continue to confine the measurement of development to GNP per capita was therefore no longer appropriate.

This realisation gathered momentum as the UN Second Development Decade got under way. It was operating in a quite different environment from the post-war period which had initiated the programme of assistance to developing nations. By 1970 Europe had been substantially reconstructed and the West generally had enjoyed a period of full employment, greater affluence and greater mobility. While East/West tensions remained they were less virulent than they had been twenty years before. The civil rights movement and the anti-Vietnam war and anti-nuclear movements had helped politicise many of the West's youth. In Europe particularly, left-wing student protest movements frequently moved beyond those issues to criticise domestic social and economic inequalities and what they perceived as the growing capitalist imperialism of developed nations against the developing world, as spearheaded by the United States. In such an environment it became commonplace, especially among the youth in the West, to scrutinise and challenge the status quo. In Australia this activity was given voice in Vietnam moratorium marches in 1970 but it gathered momentum and was taken up by many other interest groups.[1] In the universities, curricula and methods of assessment were subjected to strong criticism and review. And in the aid and development arena NGOs became more strident and more specific in their criticism of Western culpability in Third World poverty.

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[1] Martin, K., "Moratorium March", in Inglis, K., Ed., *Nation: The Life of an Independent Journal of Opinion, 1958-1972*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1989

Much of this protest was reflected at the ballot box in Western countries. A variety of left-wing parties - Socialist, Social Democrat, Labor - held or gained power in the 1970s in several European countries and in Canada and Australia.[2] Not the least of their collective concerns was to counter-balance US hegemony. This was becoming increasingly more obvious through US multi-national ownership, a concern in Australia which found popular support in the Labor Government's determination to "buy back the farm".[3] USA funds accounted for more than half of the foreign investment entering Australia in the early 1970s.[4] 63% of Australia's chemical, coal, rubber, petroleum and plastic industry and 55% of its mining was under foreign control by 1978. In Canada 90% of its chemical, coal, rubber, petroleum and plastic was under foreign control.[5] While transnational corporations might create jobs and infrastructure in "second" countries they could also repatriate profits off-shore, create dependence and manipulate tastes, prices and supply. Given their frequent monopolistic or oligarchic structure and their immense wealth, they had considerable influence over the world market economy.

Many of the leaders and ministers in these governments in the 1970s, among them Willy Brandt, Harold Wilson, Olaf Palme, Jan Pronk, Pierre Trudeau[6] and in Australia Gough Whitlam, made strong public commitments to increasing aid and justice to developing countries. In Europe, particularly, such leaders helped facilitate a process of exchange and discussion on development ideas and issues. They encouraged leftist Third World leaders and intellectuals to be actively involved in conferences, seminars and other forums on aid and development matters. There was in the 1970s an unprecedented number of such international meetings scrutinising the issues of poverty and economic policy covering the whole gamut of development - trade, employment, tariffs, population, water resources, food, desertification, energy, oceans and sea-bed management, the environment, technology transfer and the position of women.[7]

For twenty years the economic growth paradigm had ruled development theory and practice,[8] but in the 1970s it too came under close scrutiny. The possibility that the economic growth model, which had proved so successful for industrialised capitalist societies, might not so easily favour other economies had been raised in the 1960s by

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[2] Belgium 1969-1974; the Netherlands 1972-1978; the FRG 1969-1982; Austria 1970-1986; Sweden 1932-1976; Denmark 1971-1973, 1975-; Great Britain 1974-1979; Portugal 1974-1976; Canada 1968-1979; [Australia 1972-1975.] Smith, B., *More Than Altruism, op.cit.*, p.95

[3] Crean F., "Economic Policy in Australia", in McLaren, J., Ed., *Towards a New Australia Under a Labor Government,* Cheshire Publishing, Melbourne, 1972, p.78

[4] Bell, P., Bell, R., *Implicated:The United States in Australia,* Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1993, p.118

[5] Wheelwright, T., "The Age of the Transnational Corporations", in Crough, G., Wheelwright, T., Wilshire, T., *Australia and World Capitalism*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1980, pp.122-134

[6] Smith, B., *op.cit,* p.95

[7] Langmore, J., Peetz, D., *Wealth Poverty and Survival*, George Allen & Unwin in Association with the Australian Labor Party, Sydney, 1983, p.26

[8] Although within the economic growth model there had been various changing emphases favouring, for example, capital accumulation, industrialisation and human resource development.

observers such as Schumacher, Ward and Myrdal, particularly with regard to the more equal distribution of world assets.[9] It had been pointed out that 20% of the world commanded 80% of the world's wealth - the trade, the investment, the income.

Critics had also begun to question the credentials of the West to assist poor Third World communities.[10] The need to reconsider the basic philosophy of aid, to focus more on poverty issues and on understanding poor societies, gradually gained currency among those dealing closely with development issues. The World Council of Churches Assembly had supported this stance in 1968 when it broadened its definition of development to embrace "social development" and "social justice" issues.[11] By the early 1970s the Western "what is best for us must be best for them" attitude, and the "know-how-show-how" optimism, was fast losing credibility.[12]

Edwin Martin, Chairman of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee, commented in 1972, "...many of us in the developed countries thought from our high vantage point that we had found all the answers; it was the job of developing countries - and a very simple job at that - only to copy us. In some ways this was the most fundamental illusion...". [13] Martin cited three areas where he believed this "wholesale copying" had exacerbated the problems of developing countries. These involved Western education, medical science and technology. He said, "In a fundamental sense it has been a great loss to them to have to use our system of education which is ...far less relevant to [them], or to the background from which their student comes and the milieu into which he can be expected to go." Western medical science, Martin added, had encouraged an unprecedented population growth in the Third World, while Western technology had contributed to unemployment.[14]

Critics in Australia had also begun to question the suitability of Western education to developing country needs and conditions. Arndt asked: "Is the student training programme as useful to the students and their countries, and as productive of goodwill for Australia, as is commonly assumed?" Did they find jobs for which they were

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[9] Ward, B., "Rich and Poor Nations", 4th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Upsalla, Sweden, 1968, Issued by Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service, Australian Council of Churches, Sydney, p.4

[10] Schumacher, E., "Economic Development and Poverty", Address to the Africa Bureau, Mar. 3, 1966, p.1

[11] *Ibid*, p.8; Johnson, D. Ed., *Uppsala to Nairobi, 1968-1975*, World Council of Churches and Friendship Press, New York, 1975, pp.139-140

[12] *Ibid*, p.3; "The World Food Problem", From the report of the US President's Science Advisory Committee, *NOW!*, Oct., 1968, p.3

[13] "'Public Opinion and Support For Development Assistance', Edwin M.Martin, Chairman of OECD's Development Assistance Committee, answers some questions about aid", OECD Observer No. 57, April 1972, quoted in *ACFOA Research and Information Service*, 1972 (date obscured), p.2

[14] *Ibid*, pp.1-3. Martin's second point about population growth on which he did not elaborate, moved into the murky area of population and resources. It was frequently argued that developing countries should decrease their populations because of their large consumption rate. The counter argument stressed the West's inordinately high consumption of world resources and its moral duty to distribute these more equitably to the developing countries.

trained? Or were they dissatisfied, and "Nostalgic for western fleshpots", on their return?[15] Taylor also queried the value of "training such vast numbers of individuals out of context, overseas, irrespective of the different educational and vocational levels, backgrounds and objectives involved."[16] He suggested an alarming number of students did not gain satisfactory training, and either could not fit it into context when returning home or did not return home.[17]

All of these questions raised deeper issues. They concerned the problem of the reacculturation of returning students. For there was a strong possibility that Western education increased the top-down development approach, by broadening the divide between decision-makers and village communities. Western education after all was little concerned with Third World conditions especially at the community level.

The continued heavy reliance on Western experts - particularly economists - was also under attack. The world co-ordinator of the Freedom From Hunger Campaign argued in 1970 for more human development encouraged by the involvement of sociologists and NGOs in the development process. One could argue, however, that he was merely advocating the exchange of one type of expert for another when he said:

> I believe that the decade has seen the end of the hitherto dominant role of the economists and the 'expert' in development action.... ...they have their continuing important roles but this should no longer be the determining and decisive factors in action. As the final World Food Congress says, 'Food and Development are too important to be left to the expert'. Too long also have we been slaves to the concept that economic growth, sheer increase in numbers on an economic scoreboard, were the decisive things. We treated achieving the 5% increase in GNP in D.D.1 as if that magic number spelled health and a good life for all men. Recognition of this is now leading us to make room for the more human approaches of the sociologists, and the new missionaries among the voluntary organizations....[18]

The call for a more human approach to development was informed by United Nations research seeking to provide social indicators or indices to offset the economic measurement of development. These social indicators such as housing, health, education, social mobility and crime, together with broader economic indicators of income distribution and employment ratios,[19] sought to create a more accurate and sophisticated measure of the quality of life than had the per capita GNP index. This broader definition of development was elaborated in a wide variety of forums,[20] and

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[15] Arndt, H., "Australian Foreign Aid Policy", *op.cit.*, p.17

[16] Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.135

[17] *Ibid*

[18] "People are Human Beings Not Statistics - Weitz", Charles Weitz opening the FFHC Third Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East, Canberra, August 24-6, 1970, reported in *Hungerscope*, *op.cit.*, Sept., 1970, p.4

[19] Henriot, P., *op.cit,* p.30

[20] *The Columbia Declaration* 1970; *The Belmont Statement:Self-Reliance and International Reform,* 1974; *The Cocoyoc Declaration*, 1974; *Communique of the Third World Forum Conference* in Karachi, 1975; *What's Now - Another Development*, 1975, Dag Hammorskjold Foundation; ILO Report 1976 World Employment Conference; *Catastrophe or New Society? A Latin American World Model*, Bariloche Foundation, Argentina; *Reshaping the International Order*, 1976, Club of Rome. See Ward, B., Runnals, J., D'Anjou, L., Eds, *The Widening Gap:Development in the 1970's*, A report on the Columbia

was gradually incorporated into the development lexicon under the general rubric of "Basic Human Needs". The basic needs approach argued for the redistribution of income to those living in poverty, using a variety of direct measures of intervention rather than relying on income distribution through market forces. The ILO World Conference on Employment, Income Distribution and Social Progress suggested that this could be brought about through a combination of initiatives:

> Changing the relative prices of the products and labour services which the poor provide compared with the prices of things they buy; introducing consumptions transfers which benefit the poor; introducing investment transfers to the poor; and redistributing part of the existing stock of capital to the poor, e.g. by such measures as land reform.[21]

The Cocoyoc Declaration initiated by a large number of social scientists, many of them from the Third World, and chaired by Barbara Ward in Mexico in 1974, firmly rejected the old unilinear view of development which supported a notion of "gaps" that had to be filled and the goal of "catching up" with the Western world.[22] Such a concept placed the developing world in a perpetual position of subordination to the West, since it had little chance in the foreseeable future of gaining economic parity with the West. The Declaration stated:

> Human beings have basic needs: food, shelter, clothing, health, education. Any process of growth that does not lead to their fulfilment - or, even worse, disrupts them - is a travesty of the idea of development. We believe that thirty years of experience with the hope that rapid economic growth benefiting the few will 'trickle down' to the mass of the people has proved to be illusory. We therefore reject the idea of 'growth first, justice in the distribution of benefits later.'[23]

The World Bank's new President Robert McNamara, also made a number of public statements addressing the need to establish growth targets based on "essential human needs", arguing that however necessary economic statistics were, they tended to obscure the fact that development was about people.[24] McNamara increasingly recognised and named the poor, conceding that 40% of "entire populations" were being left out of development. He said of that 40%: "Their countries are growing in gross economic terms, but their individual lives are stagnating in human terms." Poor farmers had not participated in the Green Revolution, education, communication or technological progress.[25] To those who continued to advocate the long term solution of rapid

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Conference, Feb., 15-21, 1970, Columbia University Press, New York, 1971; Erb, G., Kallab, V., Eds., *Beyond Dependency: The Developing World Speaks Out*, Overseas Development Council, 1975, Annex A-1-A-3; *The Basic-Needs Approach to Development: Some Issues Regarding Concepts and Methodology*, International Labour Office, Geneva, 1977, pp.5-14

21 *Employment, Growth and Basic Needs: A One-World Problem,* Tripartite World Conference on Employment, Income Distribution and Social Progress and the International Division of Labour, Report of the Director-General of the International Labour Office, Geneva, 1976, p.34

22 The Cocoyoc Declaration, October 1974, reprinted in Erb, G., Kallab,V., Eds., *Beyond Dependency: The Developing World Speaks Out*, Annex A-2, Overseas Development Council, Sept., 1975, pp.170-177

23 *Ibid.*, p.173

24 McNamara, Robert, *One Hundred Countries, Two Billion People, The Dimensions of Development,* Praeger Publishers, New York, 1973, pp.8-9

25 *Ibid*, pp.106-7

economic growth together with redistribution of wealth and institutional change, McNamara argued that immediate relief, concentrating on essential human needs, to ease growing poverty should be the first concern.[26] He stated:

> A decade may be the short term for a development planner, but a decade is the long term for a subsistence tenant farmer whose children are likely to die before the age of five, whose diet is already so inadequate that he cannot stave off chronic ill health, whose illiteracy limits his future ability to learn new skills, and whose perpetual indebtedness to the moneylender and dependence on the landowner leave him neither options nor hope.[27]

McNamara advocated a number of strategies to confront the problem of increasing poverty. These included increased assistance to the developing world; programmes to reduce population growth; the dismantling of discriminatory trade barriers; environmental awareness and a stress on essential human needs.[28] The World Bank increased its lending to developing nations significantly during the 1970s - from US$2.7 billion in the early 1970s to around $8.7 billion in 1978.[29] At the same time World Bank aid targeted small farmers by promoting Integrated Rural Development programmes which incorporated rural road building, credit schemes and Green Revolution inputs.[30] The broadening focus of development issues in the 1970s was an important departure from the "statistics and percentages" approach entrenched in the early Colombo Plan documents or the patronising projects of the 1950s and 1960s.

The Basic Human Needs approach was formalised at the June 1976 World Employment Conference which proclaimed "as a fundamental principle that strategies and national development plans should include explicitly as a priority objective the promotion of employment and the satisfaction of the basic human needs of each country's population."[31] By that time Basic Human Needs (BHN) had assumed a much broader definition than the supply of material needs such as food, shelter, and clothing and the basic essential services of safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport, health care and education.[32] It included also the notions of people's participation in development, basic human rights, self-reliance and social justice.[33] During these debates the cultural validity and diversity of developing countries became more widely

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26 *Ibid*, pp.108
27 *Ibid*, p.109
28 *Ibid*, pp.9-11
29 Bello, W., *Dark Victory:The United States, Structural Adjustment and Global Poverty*, Food First, Freedom from Debt Coalition, 1994, Quezon City, p.13
30 *Ibid*
31 *The Basic-Needs Approach to Development:Some Issues Regarding Concepts and Methodology*, International Labour Organisation, Geneva, 1977, p.ii
32 The Cocoyoc Declaration, *op.cit.*, p.173; *Employment, Growth and Basic Needs: A One-World Problem,* Tripartite World Conference on Employment, Income Distribution and Social Progress and the International Division of Labour, Report of the Director-General of the International Labour Office, Geneva, 1976, p.32
33 *Ibid*, pp.32-33; *The Basic-Needs Approach...*, *op.cit.*, pp.22-26; *The Cocoyoc Declaration.*, *op.cit.*, pp.173-4

recognised and acknowledged, as well as the need for a greater variety of development approaches which incorporated local knowledge.[34] The "Pearson Report" (commissioned towards the end of the 1970s and titled *Partners in Development*), popularised the idea of the North and South working in "partnership".[35]

Not all of the rhetoric was conciliatory as many in both North and South raised the question of structural and distributional changes which needed to occur on both sides.[36] The FFHC's Charles Weitz pointed out that high growth rates could be undermined when external imperialism was replaced by the imperialism of national elites or when lack of structural change led to a widening income gap and increased unemployment.[37] Developing nations continued to present their arguments for major changes in world trade.

The developing nations had also witnessed considerable change in twenty years. More than one hundred nations had gained independence since the Second World War. Through various organisations - the United Nations, UNCTAD, the Group of 77, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organisation of African Unity, the Association of South East Asian Nations and the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries - Third World nations continued to put pressure on the West to change policies and practices which contributed to their poverty, particularly in the area of international trade.

In an attempt to gain some economic parity with the West developing nations supported two major initiatives in the 1970s at the international level. The first was the "oil crisis" of 1973/4, when the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) quadrupled the price of oil. The second was the Declaration and Action Programme on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) made by developing nations at the Sixth Special Session of the UN General Assembly in May 1974. Among other issues the South promoted the notion of "collective self-reliance" in developing and marketing its natural resources. It called for a "just and equitable relationship" between the prices of raw materials, primary products and manufactured and semi-manufactured goods. Encouraged by OPEC's initiatives commodity producers in the developing world hoped to emulate OPEC by grouping together in cartels to force up the price of their products. They also called for full sovereignty over their natural

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[34] Some Third World spokesmen argued that if development meant more than industrialisation, modernisation and urbanisation, were they not more developed "culturally and humanly" than the West?, Goulet, D., "The Shock of Underdevelopment", in Todaro, M., *The Struggle...*, *op.cit.*, p.11

[35] Pearson, L. Chairman, *Partners in Development:Report on the Commission on International Development,* Praeger Publishers, New York, 1969; "Any form of patronage which might still linger on from the old colonial days can no longer be tolerated. The problems of poverty, hunger and malnutrition can only be solved by the developed and developing countries working together in a close and equal partnership",'Equal Partners' Keynote Regional Conference, FFHC Third Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East, Canberra, August 24-6, 1970, reported in *Hungerscope*, Sept., 1970, p.3

[36] Henriot, P., *op.cit.*, p.30

[37] "People are Human Beings Not Statistics - Weitz", *op.cit.*

resources, including the right to nationalize or transfer ownership to their nationals and to regulate and supervise transnational corporations.[38] Such initiatives were obviously contentious but appeared (at least initially) to significantly strengthen the hand of Third World nations.

The Australian Government Response to the Second Development Decade

The Australian government was aware of the international development debate, what the Minister for External Affairs, McMahon called in September 1970, "the spate of international discussion about aid...."[39] Yet the content of that debate, with its focus on the relative failure of past development practices, the necessity to re-evaluate assistance and especially to focus more on poverty and people, initially failed to activate the government beyond the level of rhetoric. Australian Government aid in the early 1970s continued to lack the status and support necessary for the Aid Branch to initiate substantial change. Within Foreign Affairs,[40] according to an independent report on Government aid, personnel frequently entered the Aid Branch under sufferance. The report referred to a former senior officer of Foreign Affairs spending a "period in the purgatory of the aid branch", and of Diplomatic officers of the Department "regarding a posting to the aid branch virtually as a black mark in their careers...".[41]

After twenty years Australian government aid had a distinct air of predictability. The 9,000th Colombo Plan student, a Filipina, was presented with a briefcase and a collection of Australian books in March 1970; some 2,700 students were studying in Australia under the aid programme and nearly 200 Australian experts were working in developing countries.[42] There was a growing trend away from using individual experts towards enrolling teams of specialists drawn from private consultants or government departments such as the Postmaster-General's Department, the Department of Civil Aviation, the State Departments of Agriculture or the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation.[43] The proportion of students studying formal university courses was also in decline in favour of International Training Courses arranged to meet "needs and requests of developing countries."[44] But Australian bilateral aid was still heavily biased towards infrastructure development,[45] and assistance continued to be concentrated in

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38 Introduction to Declaration and Action Programme on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, reprinted in Erb, G., Kallab, V., Eds., *Beyond Dependency: The Developing World Speaks Out*, Annex B-1, Overseas Development Council, Sept., 1975, pp.185-189

39 "Australia's External Aid", Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. William McMahon, House of Representatives, 3 Sept., 1970, *C.N.*, Vol 41, No.9, Sept., 1970, p.490

40 The Department of External Affairs changed its named to Foreign Affairs on Nov. 6, 1970

41 Viviani, N and Wilenski, P, *The Australian Development Assistance Agency, A Post-Mortem Report*, National Monograph Series, No. 3, Royal Institute of Public Administration, Brisbane, 1978, pp.5-6

42 "Colombo Plan - Nine Thousandth Student", *C.N.*, Vol 41, No.3, Mar., 1970

43 Bowen, "Australian Foreign Aid", *op.cit.*

44 *Ibid.*, p.22

45 "Australia's External Aid", *op.cit.*, pp.489-493, 1970

the Asia/Pacific region.[46] Besides the bilateral programme administered through the Colombo Plan, Australia also continued to aid specific programmes and to support the World Bank, the IMF, the ADB, the various United Nations organisations and the Food Aid Convention.[47]

Ministers for External Affairs continued to laud the "high quality" of Australian aid, based largely on concerns which were peripheral to individual aid projects: improved co-operation with other donors, especially in the delivery of crisis aid; Australia's membership of consultative groups which studied development assistance issues, especially the Development Assistance Committee (DAC); the geographic concentration of Australian aid in the Asia Pacific region, rather than dissipating it over a larger area; and by the terms of aid which were given in grant form rather than loans.[48] Government documents also continually referred to the fact that Australia had ranked third or fourth in relative terms in the volume of Official Development Assistance (ODA). By September 1972 assistance had averaged 0.56% of GNP over the last four financial years. That average, however, included a substantial contribution to PNG which considerably biased the figure.[49]

While government aid policy and delivery made few concessions to the international development debate, the government did temper its rhetoric to place more emphasis on humanitarian concerns, while toning-down statements about the benefits of aid to Australia. McMahon stated:

> I believe it is increasingly accepted by Australians that we have an obligation to assist the less developed nations.... Predominantly, Australian aid is given for moral or humanitarian reasons; ... Aid is intended to foster development. I do not believe that aid can 'buy' allies. Nor can we expect aid to guarantee stability; ...We do not want recipients to tell of the everlasting gratitude and friendship for Australia. We do not use aid as a substitute for trade promotion.[50]

This is not to say that Foreign Affairs and trade interests, which were still clearly the major priority, disappeared from the public record. Rather they tended to be packaged with more altruism than previously, for example, "Our aid should always maintain the primary characteristic of being humanitarian and moral. Nonetheless our aid has had the important side effect of facilitating business contacts with our neighbours."[51] Government nervousness about the political make-up and intentions of Australia's neighbours continued to betray itself in comments such as: "... if aid donors do not help, the consequences can and will be the failure of the economic policies of

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46 *Ibid*

47 Bowen, "Australian Foreign Aid", *op.cit.*, pp.14-19

48 *Ibid*, pp.8-10; "Australia's External Aid", *op.cit.*, p.489

49 *Ibid*; Bowen, "Australian Foreign Aid", *op.cit.*, p.v

50 "Australia's External Aid", *op.cit.*, p.490

51 *Ibid*, pp.490-491

governments in the less developed countries and such failure means continuing poverty. It may also lead to political adventurism."[52]

In essence, the Australian government's attitude reflected more the rhetoric than the spirit of the recent discussions. Yet to be effective it was not enough to say that Australian aid was provided out of moral and humanitarian motives, it had to actually *be* equitable, to *be* assisting the poor. At the very least aid should not have exacerbated the poor's condition. Such assessment required a far more sophisticated focus of evaluation than had previously existed, despite McMahon's claims that Australia's aid programme was "sophisticated and multi-featured." There *was* no new vision of Australian aid being proffered by the Liberal/National Country Party in the early 1970s. In fact the core of the new thinking on development issues, which was demanding "partnership" and equality with recipients, seemed to be lost on External Affairs Minister McMahon. He continued to promote the overbearing image of the West solving the problems of developing nations. McMahon said variously: "We have greater and increasing opportunities to influence the course of events in our environment, [South and Southeast Asia] "; "The 1970s - designed by the United Nations as the Second Development Decade - provide the opportunity for the rich countries collectively to do more and provide the imagination on which our future patterns of development and progress can be based. Australia will not stand back from this challenge." The government continued also to tie Australian aid to the notion of combating communism in Asia. It announced increased assistance to Cambodia in 1970-71 in "pursuance of our policy of aiding South-East Asian nations to resist communist aggression".[53]

During this period, in the early 1970s, the rapidly changing international scene called the Liberal/National Country Party's foreign policy into question. In 1971 the United Kingdom withdrew its forces east of Suez and reiterated its intentions to seek a closer alliance with Europe by pursuing EEC entry. Moreover, the USA stated its intention to pursue a more self-interested foreign policy which required its allies to "assume the initial and major burden of their own defence."[54] These events signalled to some in the Australian government that the withdrawal of the US and the UK from the Asia-Pacific could create a dangerous vacuum in the region which the Soviet Union and China might readily fill. Malcolm Fraser particularly supported such a scenario, arguing as Defence Minister, "Australia is likely to be more alone than ever before".[55]

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[52] *Ibid*, p.491
[53] *Ibid*, p.490
[54] Meaney, N., "The United States", in Hudson, W., Ed., *Australia in World Affairs 1971-1975*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney and the Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1980, p.163
[55] *Ibid*, p.164

The McMahon government responded to these changing global events by attempting to continue US support in the region, particularly through ANZUS, and by increasing its aid and defence commitment to Indonesia. The US assessment, which downgraded the threat of communism in the region, clearly did not convince the Australian government. The increasing voice of Third World nations insisting on a more equal relationship with the First world - through the UN, through the development debate, and in the region through ASEAN - also did not persuade the Liberal/National Country Party to reassess its position by fostering regional co-operation in the Asia-Pacific. As well, the government's intensified preoccupation with defence matters again conspired against any re-evaluation of the Australian aid programme until 1972.

Despite government intransigence on aid, pressure to change aid policy continued to be applied by the non-government sector. ACFOA adopted a fourteen point policy statement during its 1971 Council Meeting aimed at improving government aid. Its recommendations included the creation of a statutory corporation to administer foreign aid; increased overseas aid to reach a minimum target of 1% of GNP no later than 1974/5; the creation of an Institute of Development Studies to investigate and advise on all aspects of overseas aid and a review of trade and tariff polices to developing countries especially in the textile industry.[56] It also requested a programme of government matching grants for selected ACFOA member projects.[57]

Although the government had shown little interest in upgrading aid policy, it did eventually agree to establish a Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs on Australia's Foreign Aid in April 1972. The Committee received 39 submissions from individuals and organisations and heard evidence from 34 witnesses from Commonwealth Government Departments, academics and NGOs.[58] The knowledge and views of sections of the NGO sector, such as Australian Catholic Relief, ACFOA, Action for World Development, Australian Freedom From Hunger and Community Aid Abroad,[59] were evident in the recommendations handed-down by the committee. These included a greater emphasis on aid projects in agricultural, social and educational fields, on the social aspects of development and on the evaluation of aid projects. The committee also recommended that either the Aid Branch be strengthened to administer all aid or a separate authority be established. It also supported a policy of government grants to NGOs for their overseas projects and argued that NGOs were disadvantaged in relation to domestic charities because they were not allowed tax deductions on contributions.

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56 Australian Council for Overseas Aid, *Minutes of Council Meeting, Burton Hall, ANU, August 13th-15th,* 1971, pp.9-10

57 *Ibid*

58 The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1973, Parliamentary Paper No. 3, *Report from the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs on Australia's Foreign Aid*, p.v, March, 6, 1973

59 Action for World Development was established by the Australian Council of Churches and the Australian Episcopal Conference in 1970 to examine development issues. *Ibid*, March, 6, 1973, p.64

Significantly, the committee felt unable to make any judgements on the effectiveness of project aid; on Australian experts in developing countries; or on the contributions made by returning students to their country's development, because of "the absence of any systematic *post hoc* evaluation..." process.[60] The committee acknowledged many shortcomings of the official development programme, concluding that: "... the organisational structure of Australian aid administration has developed in a largely *ad hoc* fashion over the last quarter of a century," and that there was a need for organisational change in order to meet the "... increased complexities and sophistication of development assistance ...".[61]

That change to Australian ODA was long over due was obvious. How the Liberal/National Country Party would respond to the Report, however, remained untested since the Australian Labor Party came to power in December 1972, after more than twenty years in opposition. That event promised sweeping changes to government aid policy and created a strong feeling of expectation among those actively involved in aid and development issues.

Aid Policy and Practice Under the Labor Government, 1972-1975

The Australian Labor Party victory lent an exceptionally lively focus to Australian political life during the first part of the 1970s. Gough Whitlam's rise to the Prime Ministership and his heady and swift programme of 100 days reform,[62] encouraged sections of the aid lobby to engage in intense debate and activities connected to development issues.

The proceedings of the 1972 Joint Committee on Australia's Foreign Aid, followed by a task force established by Whitlam to examine a unified aid administration in 1973, as well as a Parliamentary debate to consider the establishment of a separate agency to administer aid - the Australian Development Assistance Agency Bill - in April 1974,[63] all served to air a wide range of aid and development issues.[64] The Labor member for Macarthur, J. Kerin, supported the emerging focus on grassroots and smaller, more appropriate projects, when he suggested: "Donors may need to think less in terms of capital projects, sophisticated equipment and high level training and more in terms of

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60 *Ibid*, p.vii-ix, March, 6, 1973

61 *Ibid*, p.viii

62 It included the recognition of the People's Republic of China, the ending of Australia's military involvement in Vietnam, the granting of independence to New Guinea, a more independent stance for Australian foreign policy and the intention to grant land rights to Aborigines. See Clark, M., *A Short History of Australia*, Mentor, New York, 1987, pp.277-278

63 "Second Reading Speech on the Australian Development Assistance Agency Bill 1974 by the Prime Minister, the Hon. E.G. Whitlam, Q.C. representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs", (mimeo), p.3; Australian Development Assistance Agency Bill 1974, House of Representatives, April, 1974, pp.860-866, 873-891

64 *Report from the Joint Committee...op.cit.*; Australian Development Assistance Agency Bill , *op.cit.*; Viviani, N and Wilenski, P, *op.cit.*

practical assistance in rural development, low cost urban housing and practical training." He also argued that the Agency should undertake a programme of public education in aid and development issues to make Australians more conscious of their obligations to other countries.[65]

The debate went beyond the local issues of aid policy and delivery to analyse the reasons for Third World poverty in its global context, such as the oil crisis; the increasing debt burden carried by developing countries; the problem of tariffs; military expenditures; population pressures; dwindling resources and the mounting distortions of income distribution in developing countries.[66] The outcome of these discussions, as had been the case in other Western forums, inevitably raised doubts about the efficacy of current economic theory, at least from Labor members. Kerin asked: "Do the classical economic models of engines of economic growth still hold?"[67], while Antony Lamb, ALP Member for La Trobe, asserted:

> In the past Australia has been a vigorous exponent of orthodox Western development theory and has designed its aid and trade policies towards poor countries in accordance with such a theory. It will not be sufficient for us merely to increase our aid or toy with alternative bureaucratic alternatives... it is time for a new approach to aid to developing countries. ... There are encouraging signs ... of what amounts to a virtual revolution in thinking on development issues throughout the world. ... The adoption of capitalist oriented, Western sponsored development programs has been a general failure in closing the gap between the rich and the poor countries and the gap between the rich and poor within those countries. That rapid growth in terms of orthodox Western theory does not necessarily produce, and has so far not produced, increased welfare or justice is by now widely recognised. ... it has been the misfortune of poorer countries that the aid policies of developed countries have been shaped in their own image, on the basis of unquestioned faith in the virtue and effectiveness of private capitalism in the promotion of economic growth.[68]

He added: "The reasons [for trade disparities] are not hard to find; the main one being that the rich have simply erected a mammoth financial fence around themselves to keep out the goods of the poor."[69]

The essence of the Labor government's aid policy was outlined in a press statement in September, 1973, to announce Cabinet approval of the establishment of a statutory body to administer Australia's bilateral and multilateral aid. It stated:

> The Government believes that improvements can and must be effected in almost all aspects of our aid endeavours - in the machinery for formulating policy, in assessing particular projects for assistance, *in assuring greater attention to the welfare and distributive effects of our aid, in evaluating the economic and social effectiveness of our various schemes*, in apportioning and seeking approval for funds allocated for the program, in bringing greater conformity and expertise into our staffing arrangements, and *in more directly associating the community with the program....*[70]

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65 Australian Development Assistance Agency Bill, *op.cit.*
66 *Ibid*
67 *Ibid*
68 *Ibid*
69 *Ibid*
70 Press Release, Prime Minister's Office, 18 Sept., 1973, quoted in Viviani, N and Wilenski, P, *op.cit.*, p.12, (emphasis added)

This announcement, together with an address by Foreign Affairs Minister Senator D. Willesee in May 1975, moved away from the "aid as foreign policy" argument so dominant during the 1950s and 1960s, to focus on "aid for people's welfare".[71] The greater emphasis on poverty issues and the need to educate the Australian public about development assistance, for example, appeared to be elevating government aid ideology, policy, administration and practice to a position more in line with current liberal thinking on aid issues. These were being discussed widely by activist NGOs, activist church groups, sections of the UN and by left-wing Western governments. In 1974 Whitlam explained: "Our objective is not only to increase the volume of Australian aid, but to increase the quality of the assistance we are able to provide; to ensure that it has a more direct bearing upon improving the quality of life in developing countries.... Put simply, our aid is oriented to the needs of fellow human beings."[72]

Willesee elaborated on the Government's aid policy in a major address in 1975, when he confirmed the government's intention to increase the volume of aid to reach the UN target of 0.7% by the end of the decade. This, he argued, would give aid a higher priority in Australia's relations with other countries than had hitherto been the case. He also looked forward to a higher profile for Australia on world councils on development assistance because of this.[73] He elaborated:

> Aid is no longer the poor relation in our dealings with other countries, nor primarily the cement for a successful political relationship.... we aim to see our aid contribute to the welfare of people in developing countries by using it to promote self-sustaining economic and social development.
>
> We have an important interest in who benefits from our aid. I believe it is now widely recognised in both developed and developing countries that previous development strategies often failed to lead to an improvement in the incomes and welfare of the poorest groups in developing countries. Our aid will be directed increasingly to assisting in raising the productivity, and hence the living standards of these groups. The logic of this stance requires us to place a far greater emphasis in our aid on rural development and related programs. To carry this through we need first to establish a new focus in our dialogue with developing countries so that we may come to a mutual agreement on this shift in our aid. We need also to take a fresh look at our existing types of aid and to branch out into areas which are new to us as an aid donor.[74]

Willesee explained that whereas previously Australia had provided infrastructure projects because developing countries wanted them, "thinking" had now progressed on these matters. It was no longer sufficient to construct a road without asking who would benefit "... and without looking at other social and economic benefits which can be derived in the area where the road is being built." Willesee assured that the government would in future broaden its perspective to engage in a "co-ordinated approach to development", to encompass agriculture, marketing, health and education in a given

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[71] D.R. Willesee Senator, Address Australian Institute of International Affairs Conference, 9 May, 1975, "New Direction in Australia's Development Assistance", *Australian Foreign Affairs Record (AFAR)* ,Vol. 46, No.5, May, 1975, p.233-241

[72] Prime Minister, Hon. E.G. Whitlam speech to Asian Seminar, University of Adelaide, Mar. 5th 1974, "Australia and Asia, The Challenge of Education", *AFAR,* Vol 45, No.3, Mar, 1974, p.165

[73] Willesee Senator, "New Direction ...", *op.cit.*

[74] *Ibid*

area. The concept that Willesee was proposing to introduce into Australian assistance was known as Integrated Rural Development or Integrated Area Development, which was being developed by the World Bank and other donors in the early 1970s. The idea was to provide an amalgam of resources simultaneously to a specific area - roads, irrigation, improved farming and agricultural methods, health and education - to accelerate the development of rural areas, which were not receiving the benefits of "trickle down" from mainstream investment. Critically, Willesee added: "The main point to be stressed is that aid is for people's welfare. The criteria for its distribution should be principally aid criteria: is it needed? will it be spent on the purposes for which it is intended? who will benefit from it? [75]

Willesee outlined other initiatives to strengthen Australia's aid programme. These included a substantial increase in funds to multilateral channels in support of the major role played by UN bodies. Assistance was also increased to target rural and urban employment, rural development, education and welfare. The government's regional concentration of aid to PNG and the Asia Pacific region (with a moderately expanding programme of assistance to Africa) remained. Willesee fully supported the practice of giving aid in grant form. He argued that the debt burden of developing countries from aid alone now accounted for 37 per cent of all outstanding debt owed by developing countries in 1972.[76] Likewise the government also supported untying aid believing that the practice of tying the procurements of goods and services to donor countries was generally detrimental to recipients. The government untied multilateral aid and considered the progressive untying of bilateral aid.[77] Like previous Australian governments Willesee was critical of the harsh conditions which some donors attached to their aid.[78]

The first *Annual Report* of the newly formed Australian Development Assistance Agency (ADAA) reflected government policy to give increased attention to the poorest groups. It stated:

> Previous approaches to development have largely ignored this aspect and yet one cannot really speak of 'development' if the poor majority are neglected. Accordingly, Australia wishes to channel an increasing proportion of its aid into programs which will assist in raising the productivity and living standards of these people.[79]

While Australia would continue its emphasis on infrastructure projects, the focus would be broadened to investigate the economic and social effects of the project, and

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75 *Ibid*
76 *Ibid*
77 *Ibid*
78 *Ibid*, p.238
79 Australian Development Assistance Agency, *First Annual Report, 1974-75*, Government Printer, Canberra, p.4

associated projects would be aimed at improving agriculture, health, education and employment in the local area.[80]

This new "grassroots" focus of Australian government aid was depicted pictorially in the Annual Review with photographs of Bangladesh farmers bringing their small vessels of milk to be measured in a village co-operative and with women in Bangladesh queuing at a family-planning clinic. The department had, however, not entirely abandoned the "statistics and percentages" focus of previous years. The Review used an amazing array of graphs and tables many of which can only be described as enthusiastic but confusing.[81]

The report also reflected current global development issues in its rhetoric, referring to international "equality and justice", the need for "self-sustaining development", the need for research, development education, a more integrated approach to projects and in an early reference to the issue, the role of women in development in relation to the International Women's Year.[82] All of this was a considerable departure from previous government literature on the aid programme. Yet there was a long way to go before aid delivery reflected all these concerns. Indeed the report acknowledged that this shift in emphasis would require dialogue with the recipient countries and that the new initiatives would take some time to be implemented.[83] Only minor changes in aid delivery were therefore evident. These included Australia's first major participation in a bilateral population programme in Bangladesh and assistance to the International Labour Organisation to encourage employment creation.[84] While there was an increase in aid to agriculture, the policy emphasis on welfare, health and education had yet to make an impact at the project level.

Another innovation was a $50,000 grant to ACFOA's development education unit on top of ACFOA's $40,000 administrative subsidy. This represented the first serious initiative by government to support public education on development issues and world poverty, as had been recommended by the UN. The government also acknowledged the complexity of development assistance issues and was receptive to establishing more equitable and creative aid delivery. It would, for example, focus on Integrated Rural Development projects which embraced agricultural, health and educational initiatives, and exhibit a greater concern for people's welfare and for the effects of Australian aid on aid recipients. The government also promised to explore possible government/NGO co-operation to improve aid delivery. All of these initiatives were necessary steps to

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80 *Ibid*
81 *Ibid*
82 *Ibid*, pp.4-5
83 *Ibid*
84 *Ibid*, pp.37-38

begin the professionalisation of Australia's ODA and especially to align assistance with poverty objectives.

ADAA was to be the main body responsible for innovative reform, but the government also welcomed the input of the non-government sector.[85] Encouraged by the high level of informed debate about aid among non-government agencies, universities and other forum, the government endeavoured "... to make full use of the views of those in the community with an interest and qualifications in aid...."[86] To this end it initiated a committee of non-government personnel with valuable expertise in aid and development matters drawn from members of the public, trade unions, the business community, NGOs and universities. This co-operation was formalised in an Advisory Board under the Chairmanship of Crawford.[87] By August, 1975, the Board had discussed a wide range of subjects including Australia's Aid policies in Relation to the World Food Situation; Development in the World Aid Scene; Australia's Aid Projects; the Future Role of ADAA; Australia's Aid policy Towards Papua New Guinea; The Role of Women in Development and Commodity Prices.[88] A 1975 ADAA report acknowledged that the Government had been greatly assisted by the Board towards developing a comprehensive aid policy, stating: "The Committee, under the leadership of Sir John Crawford, has provided both stimulus and guidance for the Agency as well as making provision for various points of view in the community to be brought to bear on these important questions".[89]

Recognition of NGOs

At a meeting called in December, 1974, between ADAA representatives and ACFOA, and nominees from Austcare, Community Aid Abroad and the Freedom From Hunger Campaign, to discuss financial support to overseas projects of NGOs, ADAA's Director Johnson explained the Government's position on NGOs. Government funds, he said, were being made available:

> ... in recognition of the valuable work being done by NGOs in the development field. NGOs often had the capacity to operate in developing countries where Australia did not have an official bilateral aid program. Also, NGOs could, through contact with people and groups at village level, extend activities to minor projects which could not be easily handled by official aid programs. These

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85 "Second Reading Speech on the Australian Development Assistance Agency Bill 1974 by the Prime Minister, the Hon. E.G. Whitlam, Q.C. representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs", (Mimeo), p.5-7

86 Willesee Senator, "New Direction...", *op.cit.*, p.239

87 *Ibid*

88 Sullivan, Michael, "Australian Development Assistance Agency, Advisory Board, Paper 12a, Aug., 1975; The Board consisted of Sir John Crawford, Chairman, Mr L Johnson Director of ADAA; Mr A Renouf, Sec., Dept of Foreign Affairs; Mr G Beytagh, Man. Dir., Producers Distributors Co-operative; Rev K Dowding, ACC; Mr A Gurnett-Smith, CSIRO; Mr R McMullen Sec ALP, WA; Dr P Wilenski, Sec, Dept of Labor and Immigration; Mr M Sullivan, Exec. Dir., ACFOA; Sen G Davidson, Liberal; Mr J Kerin MLA Labor

89 "Australian Aid to Developing Countries", ADAA, AGPS, Canberra, 1975, p.7

advantages convinced the Government that the work of the NGOs should be encouraged and strengthened.[90]

For the first time Australia's NGO community was being acknowledged in an active way by the Government through its consultative role to ADAA and by its receipt of funds for overseas projects, for the special qualities that it brought to development work. By providing financial assistance to NGO projects overseas the government had begun to actively support grassroots development work. However insignificant initially, this was a useful exercise since it started a process which required government aid administrators to focus on poor communities rather than purely on more nebulous concepts such as "economic growth" which accompanied the rationale for large infrastructure projects.

An officer from ADAA, who visited Australian Overseas Service Bureau projects in Bangladesh in 1977, for example, said of her visit: "The trip changed my views to the extent that I now have more concrete ideas about what development really means ... whereas before I might have thought that development depended on simply teaching skills now I would ask - what about the motivation of the people involved?"[91] The officer had encountered an NGO programme called Proshika. It trained Bengali volunteers to act as "change agents" or motivators to assist the poor to counteract the structures responsible for their poverty.[92]

Consistent with the new directives under Whitlam, the Australian Government scheme to assist Australian NGO projects, which the officer had been inspecting, became known as the Project Subsidy Scheme (PSS). In 1974/75 it funded 67 projects implemented by some 15 agencies at a cost of $232,000.[93] The projects were located in 14 different countries in South and Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Africa. They included small-scale bridges, road and dam building, cattle breeding programmes, vocational training schools, assistance to co-operatives, provision of irrigation and wells, buildings for cottage industries, a model farm and an agricultural service centre. Much of this activity appeared to represent a scaled down version of Australian government aid, though directed at the local level.[94]

An Assessments Committee comprising three ADAA and three NGO representatives subsequently established guidelines for assistance, and by 1977/78 the scheme provided funds of $1,280,000. Amounts received by agencies varied. The Australian Freedom

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90 ADAA, "Financial Support to Overseas Projects of Non-Government Organisations", Assessments Committee, Record of First Meeting held on 17 December, 1974, at ADAA Offices, Derwent House, Canberra City, ADAA, Canberra

91 "Interview", Chris Claasz of ADAB with Gill Whan and Kate Moore, *DND*, 20, June 1977, pp.27-8

92 *Ibid;* Kramsjo, B., Wood, G., *Breaking the Chains,* IT Publications, London, 1992, p.30

93 These had been chosen from 106 proposals. *ADAA, First Annual Report, 1974-75*, Government Printer, Canberra, p.40; "An Historical Outline of Australian Government Assistance to NGOs", nd, c 1977, mimeo

94 ADAA, *First Annual Report, op.cit.*, p.40

From Hunger Campaign received over three years a total of $160,000; Austcare $78,500; Australian Council of Churches $125,254 and Australian Catholic Relief $132,369.[95] CAA received a total of $89,616 over three years. By 1976/77, the amount decreased to $19,216 which reflected CAA's growing uneasiness about receiving government funds. CAA did not want to compromise its autonomy. This issue of government/ NGO relationships would become increasingly contentious and vital for both Western and Third World NGOs, especially from the mid 1980s and into the 1990s. However, at this point in the mid 1970s, the Australian NGO community, in the main, was enjoying the increased government recognition. This was expressed in ADAA's Annual Report and in Parliament:

> More recently, and particularly since ADAA's formation, close consideration has been given to the relationship between the official and voluntary aid sectors. Non-government organisations have the flexibility to respond quickly and achieve results in situations where Government aid cannot operate. They can provide assistance, secure local co-operation and provide some incidental training towards self-reliance at the grass-roots level, where needs are greatest. Their projects, being of smaller scale, can be geared to specific local needs and promote personal involvement in aid efforts. The Government recognises the value of these endeavours and wishes to assist them.[96]

In the Senate, Willeesee elaborated on this theme, saying:

> Their efforts complement our official aid programs and materially improve the effectiveness of Australia's overall aid performance to a degree which, we believe, merits the provision of limited financial assistance from the Government since this represents an efficient use of aid funds.[97]

The government displayed a fairly cautious attitude in collaborating with the NGO community - it referred to "minor projects" and "limited funding". The association nevertheless substantially raised the legitimacy of NGOs by embracing them in Australia's overall aid effort and by acknowledging their assistance in increasing the effectiveness of Australian aid.

Complementary to the implementation of its new aid policies the Labor government enthusiastically promoted its vision of Australia/Asia relations based on partnership and equality, rather than fear and combativeness. The Prime Minister spoke of the "Withering away of xenophobia, isolationism and racism in Australia" and the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, R.A. Woolcott, outlined Labor's "Quiet

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95 "An Historical Outline ... ", *op.cit.*, Attachment A, pp.1-3

96 ADAA, *First Annual Report, op.cit.*, p.39

97 Answers to Questions Senator Wriedt, July 9, 1975, Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates, 1975, Senate, First Session of the 29th Parliament, 11 Feb. to 22nd July, Vol S.64, Government Printer of Australia, Canberra, 1975, pp.2725-6

revolution in its approach to Asia".[98] Woolcott reminded the Australian-Asian Association of past years when he commented:

> For many years many Australians looked on Asia as an ill-defined area populated by 'hordes' who, it was feared, were about to descend on us. Only a few years ago in a cartoon which Bruce Petty drew about the Department of Foreign Affairs, I noticed an official in the Asian Divisions, sitting behind a desk simply marked 'hordes'. Then there was the additional fear of communism. That some of the 'hordes' were, in fact, communist as well, made the situation even more frightening! Mercifully, this outmoded style of thinking is, I trust, behind us now.[99]

In outlining the Australian Government's new focus he went on to explain:

> What is happening is simply that the world around us has changed and we are responding to these changes.... It was one thing for the Australian Government of the day to base a policy in Asia in the fifties on the containment of China and implacable anti-communism, when the United States was so doing, when the Korean War was being fought and when the French were still fighting in Indochina. But two decades later, by 1970, such a basis was completely outmoded. By 1972 we needed a new China policy, a different and more mature relationship with the United States, a new approach to our historic links with the United Kingdom. ... The Government does not now look upon South-East Asia as divided between anti-communist 'goodies' and communist 'baddies'; it does not look upon the countries of South-East Asia as buffer states, as some sort of northern military line where some potential future enemy of Australia should be held. The approach is now less ideological and less militarily oriented. ... The Government has ... shifted the whole emphasis of Australia's continuing involvement in South-East Asia ... to one based increasingly on developing trade with the countries of the region, on promoting progress through constructive aid programs, on encouraging security through regional co-operation rather than through military pacts, on a positive approach to economic assistance to regional projects, and on the development of cultural contacts....[100]

Whitlam affirmed the shift in emphasis when speaking of Australia's relations with Indonesia. He stated:

> What has changed is not the degree of Australian interest in South East Asia, but the nature of that interest. In future, the emphasis will be not so much on ideological factors and military arrangements, but on what I would regard as more enduring aspects of our relations, such as the network of personal contacts and trade and cultural relations.[101]

Such changes were manifest in Whitlam's recognition of China; the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam; his extensive visits to the Asian region;[102] his meeting with the five ASEAN Secretaries-General in Canberra to promote greater economic co-operation with the Association; the numerous agreements negotiated to strengthen trade and cultural ties in the region;[103] and his suggestion prior to gaining office of the possibility of establishing an Asian-Pacific regional consultative forum.[104] The latter suggestion

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98 Prime Minister, Hon. E.G. Whitlam speech to Asian Seminar, University of Adelaide, Mar. 5th 1974, *op.cit.*, p.171; "Australia and Asia in the Seventies", Mr R.A. Woolcott, Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, *AFAR*, Vol 45, No. 5, May, 1974, p.315

99 *Ibid*

100 *Ibid*, pp.314-323

101 Prime Minister Whitlam interview with Michael Richardson, "Australia-Indonesia Relations", *AFAR*, Vol 45, No.9, 1974, p.590

102 Malaysia, Singapore, Laos, Burma, Thailand, the Philippines, India, Japan

103 "Australia and Asia in the Seventies", *op.cit.*, pp.314-323; Prime Minister Whitlam interview with Michael Richardson, *op.cit*; Prime Minister, Hon. E.G. Whitlam speech to Asian Seminar, University of Adelaide, *op.cit.*, pp.164-171

104 Ingleson J., "South-East Asia", p.302, *Australia in World Affairs 1971-1975, op.cit.*

was considered premature by Indonesia's Foreign Minister Adam Malik. Malik commented: "... current suggestions like Mr Whitlam's for larger regional groupings to include China and Japan are too ambitious. The time is not ripe, some countries in the area have not yet really worked out their economic relations with Japan, and some have no political or economic relations with China".[105] Whitlam's ideas were nevertheless indicative of the Labor Government's conviction to build a new and genuine relationship in the region. Australia's ability and willingness to project itself independently in the region, self-reliant from the United Kingdom or the USA, was obviously critically important to achieve this new emphasis.

Many of the Whitlam government's policies and actions demonstrated a resolve to establish greater independence in foreign affairs and defence matters. The Labor government sought to assert Australian control over American bases in Australia by renegotiating their terms and to reform SEATO by reducing its military emphasis. It recalled Australian troops from Singapore but strengthened its commitment to Indonesia. The Australian government intended, through "technical assistance, consultation, training and joint exercises",[106] to strengthen the self-reliance of its neighbours and to obviate the need either for Australian forces to serve in the region or for Large Power intervention. The Whitlam government sought also to dramatically change its relationship with the USA.

Whitlam withdrew all military aid to Vietnam, recognised North Vietnam and vehemently criticised the US bombing of Hanoi in December 1972. The Australian government also opposed the presence of US troops in Thailand and established full diplomatic relations with China and East Germany while supporting the idea of creating "zones of peace" in the Asia-Pacific region.[107] These changed Labor policies predictably created friction between the two administrations, but signalled to the US that Australia no longer cared to play the role of docile ally like successive Liberal/ National Country Party governments.

Under Whitlam the so-called "White Australia" policy was finally abandoned. A Liberal/National Country Party government had relaxed immigration rules in 1966, by raising the possibility for non-European immigrants to permanently settle in Australia. The onerous restrictions, which limited entrance to Australia to people with "high attainments" and specialised skills, however, severely limited "non-white" entry. The Labor Party platform committed it to non-discrimination on the basis of race, colour or nationality in 1971, yet it also remained concerned to restrict entry based on a person's

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105 *Ibid*, p.302
106 O'Neill, R., "Defence Policy", p.21, *Australia in World Affairs 1971-1975*, *op.cit.*
107 Meaney, p.182, *op.cit.*

"integrative capacity".[108] Given the problems encountered by some Asian nations regarding their mixed ethnic populations, the issue of "integrative capacity" was more acceptable to them than the blanket rejection of "non-white" immigrants.

The Whitlam government was not in office long enough to substantially increase the numbers of non-European migrants entering Australia. The government, however, came under strong criticism from the region when it limited the entry of South Vietnamese refugees to around one thousand. The decision confirmed Whitlam's resolve to show some support for the new government in Vietnam, though it would also have appeased Australian critics nervous about integrating a large number of people into the country with different standards of "living, traditions and cultures".[109] While Australia's Asian neighbours clearly believed the number of refugees taken by Australia was too low, given its recent immigration policies, one thousand non-European migrants was significant. More importantly the White Australia barrier had now been removed, creating the potential for increased non-European immigration in the future.

Such responses to the rapidly changing international environment were vital steps towards breaking down barriers of fear, suspicion and ignorance which existed on both sides of the regional relationship. These responses included the curtailment of Cold War rhetoric, especially the rhetoric of "dominoes" to the near-north poised to take Australia over, the assertion of an independent Australian foreign and domestic policy, Australia's anti-apartheid ban on sporting tours from South Africa, and the government's concerted efforts to align more closely with Asian nations.

The change in foreign policy direction was also evident in relation to aid. By instituting a statutory body to administer aid the role of Foreign Affairs was weakened. And by focusing more closely on the social aspects of development in aid policy foreign policy and strategic imperatives promised to be less dominant. The stronger focus on development issues was no more than was being demanded and discussed in development arenas throughout the world, but it had been all but ignored by the out-going government.

A Clash of Ideologies

In the event, the Whitlam Government held office for only three years. It was dismissed by the Governor General, John Kerr on November 11th, 1975, an event engineered by the Opposition's refusal to pass "Supply". When the Liberal/National Country Party resumed office it made a decision as early as February, 1976, to abolish ADAA and to integrate the administration into the Department of Foreign Affairs, a decision which came into effect on July 1, 1977. An Australian Development

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108 Palfreeman, A., "Immigration", pp.99, 102, *Australia in World Affairs 1971-1975*, *op.cit.*
109 *Ibid*, p.99

Assistance Bureau (ADAB) within Foreign Affairs began operating in February, 1977, an event which would have had less significance had Foreign Affairs nurtured the Bureau.

During the years of ADAA's existence the organisation had not been trouble-free. As Viviani and Wilenski have demonstrated the body which emerged was also something less than the Whitlam government had envisaged. When the Agency was established it comprised an amalgam of staff from Foreign Affairs, the former Foreign Affairs Aid Branch, the former Department of External Territories, and from the Departments of Education and Labor and Immigration. Overseas aid personnel formerly employed by Foreign Affairs were also transferred to ADAA. Rather than being able to establish a fresh organisation with a strong interest in development issues, housed under one roof, ADAA staff remained geographically dispersed, continuing their previous functions and by all accounts carrying their previous inter-department rivalries.[110] The most damaging for the prospects of ADAA developing some of the key points raised with the announcement of the Agency was the hostility from other departments especially Foreign Affairs and Treasury. Viviani and Wilenski have demonstrated that the newly formed Agency was a lightweight when it came to wielding power and influence, having to confront Departments unsympathetic to the idea that it should seek to represent developing country interests in policy discussions. It also lacked the strong Ministerial support necessary to place the Agency on equal footing with Foreign Affairs. And it lacked the research funds necessary for it to become engaged in the wide variety of issues involved in the global development debate.[111]

Some major changes in the administration of aid had occurred and various aid functions were separated and upgraded. An increased focus on country assessment, programming and policy development, and a new branch to carry out project appraisal, evaluation, review and co-ordination were important initiatives.[112] Whatever ADAA might have been Labor policy did at least align government thinking on aid more closely with current global development analysis. It also responded to the NGO request for government grants and was exploring the possibility of government assistance to a public participation programme in development education. The act of bringing all the aid functions under one organisation would also in the long term help facilitate a more professional aid programme.

That the Liberal/National Country Party was opposed to much of the Labor Government's foreign policy was clear from its pre-election Foreign Policy statement of October 1975 and from Prime Minister Fraser's policy statement on the World Situation

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[110] Viviani, N. and Wilenski, P., *op.cit.*, p.288; "Foreign Aid by 'super' Agency", *The Age*, 19 Sept., 1973; Dr P. Wilenski was also a member of the ADAA Advisory Board

[111] *Ibid*, p.28

[112] ADAA, *First Annual Report*, *op.cit.*, p.41

in June 1976. Labor policy was described as "naively optimistic", a "promiscuous pursuit" of appearance, image and popularity; one which adopted a "spurious-evenhandedness", proceeding unilaterally with China and Hanoi, encouraging 'national liberation movements', recognising the Baltic States, and floating a "vague 'Asian Forum' proposal, without consultation with neighbours."[113]

With a persistent emphasis on Labor's "unrealistic" foreign policy, Fraser promoted his "realistic assessment" of the world in which Australian foreign policy would perform under his government, in June 1976.[114] While the blatant anti-communist rhetoric of past Liberal governments was missing, Fraser's major concern was with Soviet Union expansionism. Fraser believed "reasonable people" could "reasonably conclude" this from Soviet actions, including its substantial assistance to North Vietnam and its armed forces expansion of a million men over the preceding decade.[115] According to this analyses since *detente* was substantially threatened Australia would again look to the USA to counterbalance the "might of the Soviet Union."[116]

The Fraser government did not fly back to the USA's arms with quite the same unilateral enthusiasm of its Liberal predecessors. As Fraser noted: "The interests of the United States and the interests of Australia are not necessarily identical. In our relations with the United States, as in our relations with other great powers, our first responsibility is independently to assess our own interests."[117] Nevertheless, where Whitlam had endorsed a more independent foreign policy, Fraser sought "close", "warm", co-operative links with the USA. That the Liberal/National Country Party stance on the USA had changed very little was evident in its uncritical defence of that country. The government argued that America's "self confidence and sense of purpose" had been undermined by the Vietnam war, the Watergate affair and undue world criticism - "opposition by people who ought to have been her friends and who ought to have understood America's objectives in the world."[118] That such "people" may have construed and disapproved of the USA's activities in Vietnam as "seeking to expand its influence throughout the world"[119] every bit as much as the Soviet activity in Vietnam, was heretical to the Fraser government.

The attitude which focused foreign policy on Soviet expansionism once again kept the aid programme trained on political rather than poverty or "development" imperatives. The Fraser government particularly focused on insurgency activity in the

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113 *The Liberal and National Country Parties, Foreign Policy: International Development Assistance Policy*, Liberal Party Federal Secretariat, Canberra, ACT, October, 1975
114 "World Situation: Prime Minister's Statement", *AFAR*, Vol 47, No.6, June, 1976, p.300
115 *Ibid*, pp.303-304
116 *Ibid*, pp.304-5
117 *Ibid*, p.305
118 *Ibid*
119 The words it used about the Soviet assistance to the North Vietnamese. *Ibid*, p.304

Southeast Asian region, which it argued was supported by both Soviet and Chinese communists. (Australia's expertise in road building would prove useful in that regard, as will be discussed below.) The Fraser government was also concerned about the strong military strength of Vietnam now that the Vietnam war had ended.[120] These fears were reflected in both the geographic spread of Australia's aid and its increased assistance to the ASEAN countries of Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia. Foreign Affairs Minister A. Peacock acknowledged in 1977: "It is vital to Australia's future that we maintain friendly relations with those countries who are our neighbours."[121] Consequently the bulk of Australia's aid continued to be directed to PNG, followed by Indonesia (a relationship which Peacock described was at the "very centre" of Australian foreign policy), [122] and the other ASEAN countries.[123] From September 1976 Australia also considerably increased its aid to the islands of the Pacific, "recognising the problems facing these small island countries achieving independence."[124] Hunt argues persuasively that increased aid to the Pacific region was used to dissuade the Pacific states from making agreements with the USSR. She quotes an ABC news broadcast of April 1985 in which the then former Prime Minister Fraser admitted "that aid had been the principal diplomatic mechanism used to head off Soviet overtures in the Pacific on a number of occasions during his term of office."[125]

In the late 1970s there was increased pressure within the international and national donor-community to direct aid to the poorest people and the poorest countries. While Peacock accepted that view in principle he added two caveats, one of which virtually negated the necessity for Australia to change the focus of its aid. He said:

> Some of the countries in our neighbourhood may not be the poorest in the world but they are still developing countries with major development problems and therefore still need assistance. Many of them have made some progress by their own well directed efforts. For us it would be quite impossible to deny them further help on that account.[126]

Government policy was therefore to continue the geographic spread of its aid as before, with the proviso that as the need for aid declined in those countries, and as Australia's capacity to give more assistance grew, Australia could direct more aid to the poorer

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120 *Ibid*, p.306

121 "International Development: Looking Towards the 1980s", Address Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock to the World Bank, UN Association of Australia and the Australian Council for Overseas Aid, Joint Seminar, Canberra, 17 Oct., 1977, *AFAR*, Vol 48, No.11, Nov., 1977, p.574

122 Roy Milne Memorial Lecture,"Australia and the Third World", Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock, to Australian Institute of International Affairs, Perth, 15 Sept.,1978, *AFAR*, Vol 49, No.9, Sept., 1978, p.462

123 With the exception of Singapore which received a fairly insignificant amount.

124 "International Development ...", *op.cit.*

125 Hunt, J., *A Critical Assessment of Australian Official Development Assistance: Policy and Practice*, PhD Thesis, School of General Studies, University of New South Wales, 1986, p.55

126 "International Development ...", *op.cit.*

countries in other parts of the world.[127] The government made some concessions to this in 1979, probably because of Prime Minister Fraser's interest in the region, when it gave some modest assistance to African nations.

Most aid given to the ASEAN region was in project aid. Besides assisting telecommunications, port and water facilities and airport facilities, Australia provided major inputs to road and bridge construction to open up the hinterland to areas previously inaccessible in South East Asia. Among them were 22 steel bridges in Sarawak, described as "vital links in the establishment of land communications essential to the development of the hinterland". The Kalibar Indonesian-Australian Roads Project represented a major Australian involvement in the regional development of West Kalimantan, one of Indonesia's least developed provinces. In Thailand, Australia claimed to be "... supporting a program of accelerated rural development by providing access and feeder roads", and in the Philippines, the Zamboanga del Sur development project was to "rehabilitate major main roads and construct feeder roads in rural and urban areas in Southern Mindanao."[128] A handful of these projects, including Zamboanga del Sur, incorporated the Integrated Area Project Development approach, although the earlier phases, from around 1978-79 to 1981-82, tended to concentrate on infrastructure, like roads and irrigation, not on community development.

As in the past, all such aid was accepted as being suitable and benign. There was no sign that the criteria suggested by Labor Senator Willesee was being put in place, namely that the "... main point to be stressed is that aid is for people's welfare. The criteria for its distribution should be principally aid criteria: is it needed? Will it be spent on the purposes for which it is intended? Who will benefit from it?"[129] Indeed, the question of the beneficiaries of these Australian built roads became a focus of strong criticism from various non-government groups (including CAA) in the early 1980s.

Hunt has looked in some detail at these projects, at the allegations and counter-allegations that Australian roads were used by the local military to clear the areas of "rebels", a process which frequently involved the harassment of local communities. Hunt concluded that a mid-term evaluation of the Kalibar Indonesian-Australian Roads Project in 1978 left no doubt that counterinsurgency was a primary motive of the Indonesian government behind road construction in that area.[130] Again, Hunt has argued the difficulty in proving or disproving the influence of security considerations on Australian projects, given the traditional secrecy surrounding aid implementation. There was, however substantial circumstantial evidence supporting that proposition.[131]

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127 *Ibid*

128 Australian Development Assistant Agency, *Annual Report for 1975-76*, AGPS, Canberra, 1977, pp.3,9-12

129 Willesee Senator, "New Directions...", *op.cit.*, pp.233-241

130 Hunt, *op.cit.*, p.60

131 *Ibid.*, p.58

She cites cases in Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines, the most well-known being two projects in Mindanao and Northern Samar, which were evaluated by NGOs in the early 1980s.[132]

In all of these areas Australian-funded road projects were carried out in areas of insurgency. While ADAB staff argued that they had simply, as historically, responded to recipient requests, the Fraser government was clearly not opposed ideologically to providing assistance, knowing the roads could be used by the military for counter-insurgency objectives. Indeed, a subsequent 1991 government evaluation of Australia's Integrated Area Development Projects of that period, noted: "civil and political instability" in the region of its Thai projects; "civil unrest and heavy military presence" in relation to its Philippines projects and "political instability" surrounding its Sri Lankan project. The report confirmed that besides poverty objectives one of the main objectives of the Integrated Area Development projects was to overcome local political instability.[133]

In other cases Australia's actions at the time were less equivocal. The government cut aid to Vietnam as a punitive measure in January 1979 after Vietnam invaded Kampuchea. This was the first time an Australian government had acted from such motives. Viviani draws attention to noticeable shifts in Australian aid between 1976 and 1980 which had political overtones, including an increase in aid to Indonesia following its invasion of East Timor; the decline in aid to India which she links to the signing of the USSR-India friendship treaty; and the increases in aid to Thailand and the Philippines in the troubled insurgency areas of Mindanao and Samar.[134]

The geographical spread of Australia's aid which was concentrated in PNG, Indonesia and other ASEAN countries, its type which was still heavily concentrated in infrastructure aid, especially road building in insurgency areas, and its use as a punitive measure against Vietnam, emphasised the continuing political nature of Australian aid.

The shift in focus of Australia's aid between 1976 and 1980 reflected a different economic and ideological perspective to that supported by the Labor government. ACFOA's *Development News Digest* expressed its concern, in June 1976, that Liberal Government officials were downgrading humanitarian and justice concerns and were again describing aid as a "function" or "instrument" of foreign policy.[135] ADAA's 1975-

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132 *Ibid*, pp.58-72

133 Hewson, R., Chandra, S., Connell, S., *Review of the Integrated Area Development Projects*, AIDAB Evaluation Series, No.10, AGPS, Canberra, 1991, pp.48-50

134 Viviani, N.,"Aid Policies and Programmes", in Boyce, P., Angel, J., Eds., *Independence and Alliance: Australia in World Affairs 1976-80*, George Allen and Unwin and the Institute of International Affairs, Sydney, 1983, p.123

135 *DND*, June 1976, p.2

76 Annual Report made little reference to the basic needs of local communities, even where ADAA was adopting the Integrated Area Development approach.[136]

However, when the Liberals resumed government in November, 1975, there was strong support internationally for the principle of BHN. Moreover, in the process of focusing on basic needs development issues were being redefined. The practice of presenting developing countries as an amorphous group of nations and the majority of their citizens as the undifferentiated "masses", was now recognised as inappropriate. The emphasis therefore changed to focus on individual nations within which various "sectors" were identified such as women, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples or harijans. From these observations the concept of "country programming" to tailor assistance to a country's specific needs was evolved, while the needs of individual groups were to be addressed through micro-projects dealing with such issues as education, healthcare or the special concerns of women. Various sectors of the UN were especially active in focusing on these issues and in placing pressure on governments to respond.

The World Health Organisation (WHO), for example, established the goal of "Health for All by the Year 2000" in 1975. The Director-General of WHO visited Australia in 1977 to familiarise Australians with the work of the organisation. He explained that WHO was changing its focus from large-scale attacks on epidemic diseases and the general improvement of health resources in poorer countries to such issues as the relationship between poverty, malnutrition and infection. WHO was particularly concerned to organise communities at the village level to develop primary health care programmes.[137] Health facilities had tended to concentrate in the urban areas of developing countries providing increasingly more sophisticated and expensive treatment, out of reach and often irrelevant to majority needs. A blue-print for primary health care programmes emerged from a meeting of 134 governments and 67 international organisations at Alma Ata in the USSR in 1978.[138] The blue-print had been strongly influenced by China's primary health care programme with its emphasis on training tens of thousands of paramedics or "barefoot doctors" to engage in preventive medicine and health education.[139] The Alma Ata initiatives would gradually influence Western aid programmes as well as the health programmes of many developing countries.

The Australian Government's response and action on these issues came as the decade was closing. In the foreword to the 1979-80 Budget Paper Peacock stated: "... I have

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136 ADAA, *Annual Report for 1975-76*, *op.cit.*

137 "World Health Organisation Director-General Visits Australia", *AFAR*, Vol 48, No. 7, July, 1977, p.380-381

138 Bloom, A. Ed., *Primary Health Care*, Development Dossier No. 20, Australian Council for Overseas Aid, May 1987, pp.2-3

139 Sutherland, F., *Towards an Understanding of China*, Centre for Continuing Education, University of Sydney, 1987

instructed the Australian Development Assistance Bureau to give special consideration to ways in which Australia could launch a major effort in support of primary health care."[140] In the 1979-80 ADAB *Annual Review* the succeeding Minister for Foreign Affairs, A. Street noted: "... support for primary health care is now getting some emphasis."[141] The same report embraced all the current development "buzz-words". It explained that the concept of primary health care would also focus on "appropriate technology", the provision of assistance at the "grassroots" level, and on the special concerns of women and children.[142]

The reference to the "special concerns of women" stemmed from other pressures current in the 1970s, regarding the position of women in society. The UN recognised the necessity to examine the status of women internationally when it inaugurated the United Nations International Women's Year in 1975 and the Decade for Women from 1976 to 1985. The relevance of those events to the development debate was that it encouraged research on the position of Third World women, particularly poor women. The issue became absorbed into the international development lexicon under the title of "Women in Development" or "WID".

Research gradually revealed the important role that Third World women played as producers in most facets of production and marketing, illustrating how incomplete the stereotype of woman as home-maker had been. Many Western aid programmes had fed into that image, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, satisfying Western concepts of woman as nurturer, by providing lessons in "home economics" and childcare, or knitting and sewing skills.[143] Australian organisations across the spectrum had funded such activities - CAA, AFFHC, and the AAAV. ADAB's early attempts to incorporate WID issues into the government aid programme in the late 1970s also followed the old assumptions, focusing typically on child and primary health care programmes rather than on women's other roles as producers of goods and services.

The issue of women's "liberation" assumed a fairly high profile internationally in the mid-1970s persuading many Western governments to respond. The Labor Government first drew attention to the role of women in development in its 1974-75 ADAA Annual Review. The Fraser Government's 1976-77 Annual Report on aid announced the establishment of a Women's Affairs Committee to ensure a consistent approach to the role of women in development, and the 1978 DAC Memorandum issued a half page

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140 1979-80 Budget Paper No 8, *Australia's Overseas Development Assistance Program 1979-80*, AGPS, Canberra, 1979, p.1

141 *Development Co-operation, Annual Review 1979-80, Australia's Program of Support for Social and Economic Development in the Third World*, ADAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1981, p.iii

142 *Ibid*, pp.16-17; "The Need for Development Assistance", Address by Foreign Affairs Minister Andrew Peacock, to 1978 South Australian Christmas Bowl Appeal, Adelaide 4 Dec., 1978, *AFAR*, Vol 49, No.12, 1978, p.597; "International Development: Looking Towards the 1980s", *op.cit.*, p.575

143 "The One Who Comes Back - an FAO Expert in Africa", *FFHC News*, Vol 22, No.11, Feb., 1962, p.10

statement on "The particular needs of women".[144] Rhetoric demanded that the proportion of female students, trainees and experts sponsored by Australia should increase - in 1977 women represented approximately 18% of students. Women's needs were also to be taken into account in project identification, design, implementation, evaluation and appraisal. An increasing number of bilateral projects were to be directed to the benefit of women.[145] The report admitted it was having difficulty in assessing "the needs of women" at the project level because of lack of suitable material and expertise - both donor and recipient. It noted that studies could be "too academic" to reflect women's roles and needs accurately, and suggested that through ill-informed assumptions projects in the past had completely overlooked the obvious. It stated, by example: "A livestock project appraisal ... has shown how the introduction of a new technology even for the management of animals can be aimed at men, thus displacing women from a traditional role, with potential loss of female authority and income."[146]

In these nominal ways the Fraser government gave some attention to BHNs practices while increasing BHNs rhetoric in government literature and speeches.[147] These followed the standard line to provide food, water, shelter, medical care, employment opportunities and basic education to the poorest.[148] Yet even had ADAB been strongly encouraged to focus on BHNs issues it was inadequately equipped to do so. ADAB, for example, lacked the facilities and methodology to adequately assess recipient country needs to develop the country programming focus introduced under the Labor government.

The Fraser government partly justified its lukewarm response to a BHNs programme by arguing that developing countries "... may regard as 'interference' any attempts to give special emphasis to the needs of the poorest groups of people." It backed these claims by stating that some aid recipients had already expressed suspicion about the intentions behind the basic needs' strategy.[149] The second objection was certainly true. But the concerns of developing nations were frequently based on a suspicion that the West was using the BHN approach as a diversionary tactic from the larger NIEO

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144 ADAA, *Annual Report, 1976-77*, AGPS, Canberra, 1978, p.34; Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock, address to Swinburne College, Melbourne, 8 Nov., 1976, *Development Assistance, Selected Speeches, Sept. to Nov., 1976,* ADAB, Canberra; *Development Assistance Committee, Australian Memorandum 1978*, p.19, ADAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1979

145 *Ibid*

146 *Ibid*

147 *Ibid*, p.2

148 *Australian Development Assistance Annual Review, 1977-78*, ADAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1979, p.iii; "The Need for Development Assistance", *op.cit.*, p.597; "International Development: Looking Towards the 1980s", *op.cit.*; p.572; The 1978-79 Budget Paper statement read: "Australia adheres to the development objective of meeting the basic human needs - for food, shelter, health, education and employment - of the poorest groups in developing countries, while recognising that this should also contribute to promoting economic growth within developing countries." *Australia's Official Development Assistance to Developing Countries, 1978-1979,* Budget Paper No. 8, AGPS, Canberra, 1978, p.3

149 *Development Assistance Committee...(1978), op.cit.*, p.18

demands. (Much as in the 1960s, the West put more energy into the Freedom From Hunger Campaign, than into the demands for the global restructuring of trade and international finance.)

However, ADAB did instruct its missions (embassies) to signal Australia's willingness to examine proposals encompassing basic needs' objectives, to recipient governments.[150] In 1978 ADAB identified several proposals accepted under this BHNs criteria. These were a village water supply project covering 1600 villages in Burma, a supply of grain storage facilities in drought-prone areas of Ethiopia, the provision of materials for village water supply and urban sewerage in Fiji, the construction of a sea-water borne sewerage system in the Gilbert Islands, the provision of ophthalmic services in South Pacific States, equipment to rehabilitate water and drainage supplies in nine Indonesian cities, and gynaecologist services for the Solomon Islands.[151] The exercise, however, represented more a process of fitting the current emphasis on basic needs to those few existing Australian projects which best answered the criteria, rather than responding energetically to a BHNs initiative.

The sectoral distribution of Australian aid, for example, illustrated that it continued to follow its traditional focus. In 1978-79 using the DAC sector indices, Development of Public Utilities accounted for A$43,638 m; Agriculture A$20,907m and Education A$18,709m. Social Infrastructure and Welfare, and Health sectors were allocated A$4,307m and A$2,417m respectively.[152] A 1980 international survey on the quality of aid based on aid directed to the poorest countries and poorest people, placed Australia second-last of 13 OECD countries. Australia and France were shown to be the two most consistent "poor performers" in this regard between 1967 and 1980.[153]

ABAB staff interviewed by Juliet Hunt in the early 1980s confirmed the continuation of the old ways, of meeting recipient "shopping list" requests and matching them to Australia's "tried and true" expertise. Officers said variously: "We still stick religiously to the requests from recipient governments and the things that we're good at;" ... "one ought not to expect ADAB to have ...a [development] philosophy, because 'development' is what is agreed upon, on a case-by-case basis, between Australia and the recipient government;" "... ADAB is willing to write down the rhetoric, but not to work out the 'nuts and bolts'".[154]

Supporting this reluctance to initiate significant change was the Fraser government's increasing preference to again embrace the growth model. The 1976-77 Budget paper stressed government preference for "self-sustaining growth" to promote economic and

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150 *Ibid*
151 *Ibid*, pp.18-19
152 *Bilateral Aid Program 1979-80*, ADAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1979
153 Hunt, J., *op.cit.*, p.104
154 *Ibid.*, pp.124-126

social progress. Foreign Affairs Minister Peacock supported that position continuing to express his caution about the BHN's approach if it was given priority over economic growth concerns. He argued that without growth there was little scope for improving the quality of life of the poorest.

The recommendations of a report on Australia's relations with the Third World (popularly known as the Harries Report) commissioned by the government in 1978 and published in 1979, supported the government's position. Noting that the basic human needs strategy had become an important focus of many Western donors, particularly European countries, the report recommended that:

> Australian interests would not appear to be served by giving our aid programming a basic needs orientation. Apart from the interventionist stance with which such policy would associate us, our aid funds would in general be best employed where they are likely to have maximum effectiveness in terms of promoting overall growth.[155]

While the development debate of the 1970s had been concerned with knocking the economic growth model from its perch - relegating it to what the Harries Report described as a "secondary objective" in favour of a more distributionist policy - the Fraser government had never responded enthusiastically to that view. In fact, arguing frequently that Australia needed to get its own economic house in order before it could assist the developing world, the Fraser government repeatedly began to play down the significance of aid.

The 1977-78 *Annual Assistance Review* stated that aid was "neither the only nor necessarily the most important element in promoting development." On other occasions the government claimed: "It is not simply a question of 'aid'. It is an issue involving the whole fabric of economics - trade access, commodity trade, investment, technology, and so forth." "Aid has never been ... the most important source of capital inflows in most developing countries."[156] These arguments had a growing validity. There *was* an increasing proclivity in the West to diminish the importance of aid. This position reflected the increasingly conservative global environment of the late 1970s.

The West's response was in part associated with the increasing activity and demands of Third World nations, which if met, suggested substantial changes to the global economic balance of power. Concern had particularly centred around the OPEC oil price rises; the Third World's demands for a NIEO, and its increased use of the UN. In the event, like the UNCTAD forum before it, NIEO rhetoric was voluble but policy gains were few. Despite being initially shaken, developed countries were able to weather the oil prices more easily than non-oil producing developing nations. Western

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155 *Australia and the Third World*, p.137, Report of the Committee on Australia's Relations with the Third World, AGPS, Canberra, 1979

156 Peacock, A., Address to the Committee for Economic Development of Australia, Oct., 24, 1977, "Australia in a Changing World Economic Environment', *AFAR*, Vol 48, No.11, Nov., 1977, p.583; "International Development: Looking Towards the 1980s", *op.cit.*, p.571; "The Need for Development Assistance", *op.cit.*, p.595

nations therefore showed little compunction to grant the substantial concessions pressed for in the NIEO declaration. What is more, because the developing nations lacked banking infrastructure and financial experience and expertise, OPEC failed to fully capitalise on the situation, allowing Western financial institutions to make hay with the abundance of petro-dollars. The nations which fared worst were the non-oil producing developing nations. They were forced to raise their level of debt using the freely available, low interest petro-dollars to fund the oil price rises of 1973-4 and of 1979-80.

By the late 1970s conservative reaction was also gathering against what was perceived as the "liberal" excesses of the 1960s and 1970s. Opposition was led by a so-called "New Right" ideology which would manifest politically in the 1980s most prominently under President Ronald Reagan in the USA and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the UK. In that environment the issue of fundamental international economic reform, and the social justice and poverty issues which had emanated from the left side of Western politics during the 1970s tended to lose their momentum.

In Australia, the Fraser government's approach to aid policy reflected its cautious attitude to foreign policy matters generally, as well as its reaction to the pace of change occurring domestically and internationally. The instigation of the Harries report to examine Australia's relations with the Third World and a report on ASEAN published in 1980, confirmed rapid change in the region, especially the growth of ASEAN and the strong growth rates of four newly industrialising Asian countries (NICs), Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Fraser's response to this changing regional dynamic was to an extent to revive Cold War concerns by seeking, through US support, to preserve Western influence in the Asia-Pacific region and to diminish the influence of the USSR. Fraser's attitude towards the region ignored the spirit of Labor Party policy which had emphasised developing equality and partnership, or local agency in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Fraser government sought where possible to tailor regional changes to a Western alliance framework while capitalising on those areas which coincided with Australian self-interest. Given its close interest in commodities, Australia continued, for example, to declare its shared interest with developing countries in seeking fair commodity prices.[157] It also gave some rhetorical support to developing country demands for a NIEO. The government suggested the importance of export earnings, stabilising schemes, debt rescheduling, reduction of tariff barriers and commercial access to investment capital and technology.[158] These issues were raised in various meetings and

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[157] Roy Milne... *op.cit.*, pp.454-464

[158] *Australian Development Assistance Annual Review 1977-78*, p.vii, *op.cit.*; Parliamentary Paper No 178/1976, *Australia's Official Development Assistance To Developing Countries, 1976-77, Budget 1976-77*, Government Printer of Australia, Canberra, 1976

were linked to Australia's continuing support for a policy of liberalised trade to stimulate world economic recovery and growth, since the government roundly condemned any suggestion of inward-looking trading blocs.

But in other instances the government was cautious about Third World NIEO claims which it referred to in 1979 as "the radical and wide-ranging restructuring proposals advanced by developing countries."[159] Pointing to East Asian and ASEAN's positive growth rates the Australian government showed a strong preference for the status quo when it argued: "A trading system which has produced in the last generation the most sustained and widespread economic growth that the world has ever known cannot have been entirely wrong."[160]

The government made frequent reference to the rapidly increasing trade potential of the region, citing the remarkable achievements of the NICs and noting the growing importance of Australia's economic ties in the region.[161] As Australia's largest trading partner, Japan in particular figured in Ministerial statements. Prime Minister Fraser remarked of Australia and Japan in 1976 "our economies are now intertwined."[162] Peacock's statement that Southeast Asia "is now on the move and it is in Australia's interest to play an effective and co-operative role," or that Australia's relationship with the region was increasingly being judged by its capacity to contribute to economic co-operation and development through trade and investment, illustrated the government's interests and focus.[163]

Significantly, trade imperatives now began to feature more prominently in the aid programme. Australian-ASEAN industrial seminars and an ASEAN Trade Fair held in Sydney were funded from the aid budget.[164] Grants to South Pacific governments to encourage commercial joint ventures with Australian firms, and an increased use of private consultants for Australian aid projects,[165] also developed the trade interest in the Australian aid programme. And in 1979 a Special Projects Unit was established within ADAB to "examine the role of the private sector in the aid program and aid/trade issues,

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159 "The North-South Dialogue", *AFAR*, Vol 50, No.9, Sept., 1979, p.528

160 Roy Milne... *op.cit.*, p.459

161 "The Need for Development Assistance", *op.cit.*, pp.594-598

162 "Asia and Our Future", Prime Minister Fraser, *AFAR*, Vol 47, No.7 , July, 1976, p.362. In 1976-77 Japan-Australia trade was some $6105 million. "Australia's Major Trading Relationships", *AFAR*, Vol 48, No.9, Sept., 1977, p.453. Australia's exports were overwhelmingly from the commodity sector - wool, iron ore, beef, alumina, lead, bauxite, zinc, coal, nickel and sugar.

163 Roy Milne..., *op.cit.*, pp.461-462

164 "The Need for Development Assistance", Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock, 1978 South Australian Christmas Bowl, Adelaide, Dec., 4, 1978, *AFAR*, Vol 49, No.12, Dec., 1978, p.596

165 *Australian Development Assistance Annual Review, 1977-1978*, ADAB, Dept. of Foreign Affairs, AGPS, Canberra, 1979; *Australia's Official Development Assistance to Developing Countries, 1978-79*, 1978-79 Budget Paper, No.8, AGPS, Canberra, 1978, p.6

including ... support for host country participation in joint ventures with Australian firms."[166]

As for the focus on BHN which was advocated in a wide variety of international and national forums, Peacock implied that it was a luxury that Australia could not afford. He argued that while the rest of the donor community could take decisions about development assistance in the abstract "...in the light of their ideas and ideals and domestic preoccupations", he said, "We cannot. We live where the action is: our neighbours are developing countries."[167] Geographic imperatives thus continued to be raised to justify conservative ideology more concerned with strategic and commercial issues than with poverty and "development".

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166 Development Assistance Committee, *Memorandum of Australian Development Co-operation in 1979, op.cit.*, p.13

167 "International Development:Looking Towards the 1980s", Address by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock, to the World Bank, UN Association of Australia and the Australian Council for Overseas Aid joint seminar, 17 Oct., 1977, *AFAR*, Vol 48, No.9, Sept., 1977, p.573

Chapter 7
Locking Horns
Development and Public Awareness in Australia

"An informed public in Australia is a prime asset in the struggle for justice and social equity in world development." ..... *Sir John Crawford, 1971*

"How do you mobilise opinion around the idea that a land of opportunities may serve itself and the world best by providing more opportunities for others?" ..... *Sir Paul Hasluck, 1971*

The public commitment made by some Western leaders in the early to mid 1970s to increase aid and justice to developing countries, was also taken-up at the non-government level. Groups eager to inform public opinion on development issues argued that the structural changes being mooted in international forums would only become a reality if sufficient public pressure was placed on governments to effect such change. The United Nations International Development Strategy document drawn up to launch the Second United Nations Development Decade placed a strong emphasis on mobilising public opinion.[1] Section 84 read in part:

> The mobilization of public opinion has to be the responsibility mainly of national bodies. Governments may give consideration to the establishment of new national bodies or to strengthening the existing ones designed to mobilize public opinion, and, as long-term measure, to give increasing development orientation to the education curricula.[2]

Support for what was increasingly being named "development education" came from delegates to the International Council of Voluntary Agencies conference in July 1971.[3] The International Secretary General of the World University Services stated at that meeting: "In the broadest sense of the term education for development will be the long term aim in the battle for Development".[4] Quoting a Freedom from Hunger Campaign stand on the issue, he added:

> The changing attitudes leading to a commitment for development is both a humanistic question as well as one of exposing myths and it is recommended that development education should start with the child at home and should continue through primary, secondary and higher educational levels and including adult education.[5]

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[1] Accepted at the UN General Assembly on 25th October 1970

[2] CAA, Honorary Secretary's Report for Year 1970-71, p.3

[3] They agreed that "development education must become part of the educational process in all countries, including the industrialized nations....", Einfeld, S., ACFOA Chairman, *Key Address Australian Council For Overseas Aid, 1971 Council*, Canberra

[4] Chidambaranathan, S., Address to ICVA New York Conference July 1971, "The Responsibility of Voluntary Agencies in the Second Development Decade", quoted "Report of the Fourth Freedom from Hunger Conference, Rome, November, 1969, p.9

[5] *Ibid*

Myrdal believed development education was critical. He told the magazine *Internationalist* in March 1972:

> ... I have said that the development up till now of trade and aid policies and the possibility of affecting those policies depends on *people's* intellectual and emotional reactions in the developed countries to the realities in the underdeveloped countries - and their perception of their responsibilities for altering those realities.[6]

In some Western countries the role of development education was undertaken by both the government and the NGO sector. Canada was a notable example. In Australia, however, the task was left almost entirely to the NGO community. The Australian NGO, Action for World Development[7], was formed in the early 1970s specifically to promote development education activities. In 1972 a representative listed some of the issues the organisation needed to address as part of its development education programme. They included trade, justice, health, agriculture, cultural and ethnic integrity, industrialisation, unemployment, racism, education, liberation and ecology. The spokesperson added: "The last named late-comer [ecology] we could well have done without because it seems to complicate the issue even more."[8] Looking back rather ruefully at the days of "simple" development the spokesperson commented:

> ... I sometimes long for the simplicity of 10-15 years ago when we could give speeches about refugees - as we did in World Refugee Year; or speeches about the world's hungry people - as we did in the First Freedom From Hunger Campaign from 1960-1965. In those days one could use simple picturesque examples to communicate the pressing needs of the refugees or the hungry, and end one's speech by telling the audience with considerable assurance, that if they took actions a, b, and c, then the problem would be resolved. ... But the simple days are past and we have now to communicate somehow the complexities of the development issue.[9]

Several radical critiques published in the late 1960s and early 1970s had helped reveal the complexities of the "development issue", while offering fresh insights about development methods. They included works on liberation theology, Saul Alinsky's work on building people's organisations and the works of Ivan Illich, Marshall McLuhan, E.F.Schumacher, Neil Postman and Paulo Freire.[10] A most striking feature about many of these critiques was their close scrutiny (what Robert Chambers has

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[6] "Interview With Gunnar Myrdal", ACFOA Research and Information Service [RI], No.104/572

[7] A joint Australian Council of Churches and Australian Catholic Bishops enterprise established in the early 1970s to promote development education issues.

[8] "The Development Debate - Goals and Processes of Development", An Address by Pamela Gruber, National Leader Training Director, Action for World Development, to ACFOA Council, A.N.U., Canberra 12th August 1972, ACFOA RI, ER 109/972, p.3

[9] *Ibid*

[10] Alinsky, S., *Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals*, Vintage Books, New York, 1971; Alinsky, S., *Reveille for Radicals*, Vintage Books, New York, 1969; Illich, I., *Deschooling Society*, Calder & Boyars, London, 1972; McLuhan, L., & Fiore, Q., *The Medium is the Massage*, Touchstone, New York, 1989, originally pub., 1967 Bantam Books; Schumacher, E.F., *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, Perennial Library, New York, 1975, first pub.1972; Postman, N., Weingartner, C., *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, Penguin, Middlesex, 1975, first pub.1969; Freire, F., *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p.77, Continuum, New York, 1984, Ist ed 1970

called the "decolonisation")[11] of institutions, bureaucracy, business and "minds". Such critiques encouraged those who were redefining the meaning, purpose and diversity of development, to adopt a more philosophical approach to their development activities.[12] An emphasis on ethics, wisdom and human potential began to transcend that of quantification and statistical indices. Illich, McLuhan, Freire, Postman and others decoded Western society and its institutions - its schools, media, advertising, law, medicine - and argued that all of them reproduced a consumer society which was essentially oppressive and authoritarian.[13] Such a society was sustained by myths favouring those who were able to "have". And as Freire argued, in a society where "having" expressed a condition of "being", humanity was essentially reduced to a thing. Necessarily, where a society's values centred on "having", it was both disdainful of those who did not have and exploitative of scarce natural resources. It was a wasteful, expendable society centred on products which had short lives and which required continual replacement.[14]

Illich expressed the sentiments of many others at the time when he argued: "the world has lost its humane dimension - man has become the plaything of scientists, engineers and planners."[15] What Illich and others were arguing for was an increase in consciousness, dialogue and critical thinking[16] to induce a life of spontaneous, creative, independent action, rather than one bent on consumption, or indeed one which was heavily dependent on an ever-increasing number of unaccountable experts.[17] As such it was more a critique of the developed world than the developing one, but it also extended the notion of "development" far more broadly than the basic needs approach. According to these more radical critiques, the emphasis of aid projects needed to focus on enhancing human lives and on increasing the freedom and independence of its participants, rather than concentrating on producing elegant models, projections or blue-prints.[18]

Freire's powerful ideas on mobilising people and popular opinion through grassroots literacy programmes, proved extremely influential in many poor communities. Freire sought to raise the consciousness of poor people, what he called "conscientization", to enable them to look critically at the world and to claim their place as subjects in society

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11 Chambers, R., *Normal Professionalism, New Paradigms and Development*, Discussion Paper 227, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, p.24

12 Goulet, D., "That Third World", in Castel, H., Ed., *World Development: An Introductory Reader*, The Macmillan Co, New York, 1971, pp.11-12

13 Freire, F., *op.cit.*, p.77; Illich, I., *op.cit*

14 *Ibid*, p.113; Freire, F., *op.cit.*, pp.44-45

15 *Ibid*, p.111

16 Freire, *op.cit.*, p.77

17 Illich, *op.cit.*, pp.19,52

18 Goulet, *op.cit.*, pp.13-14

rather than acting as objects or things to be manipulated to another's will.[19] Through this process individuals could shed the assumptions and beliefs which restricted them to the position of passive object. The attraction of Freire's ideas to NGOs and to People's Organisations was their emphasis on grassroots communities. Whereas welfare assistance had perpetuated community dependency and traditional hierarchies, Freire invited participants not only to recognise the structures which caused their poverty, but also to do something about it. This was powerful "bottom up", inexpensive activity which did not have to wait for outside projects or "trickle down" to make an impact. As such the ideas were potentially highly political, since their purpose was to challenge the authority of those individuals and groups which had much to gain from the continued passivity of poor people.

Illich, Freire and Postman, in particular, directed their criticisms at the formal Western education system. Schumacher, through his popular publication *Small is Beautiful*, focused on the need for alternative, appropriate technologies.[20] These and other writers drew attention to the wastefulness and destructiveness of current technological and economic practices. They included the product of many aid projects. Large dams, for example, had changed whole river systems and ecologies and disturbed countless communities.[21] Attention was also directed to the darker side of the Green Revolution where an increase in fertilisers, insecticides, water and power could pollute the atmosphere and degrade irreplaceable resources.[22] The effects of radioactivity and pollution on the oceans, polar ecology, health and weather were all beginning to be raised.[23] The sobering point was made that the USA had consumed more resources between 1959-1968 than had ever been consumed in previous world history. That approach was the antithesis of Buddhist economics extolled by Schumacher, which sought to provide maximum well-being with the minimum of consumption.[24]

These were the most radical definitions of development being discussed in the 1970s. They were encouraged by Latin American dependency arguments and also by liberation theology which had emerged following the conference of Latin American bishops at Medellin, Colombia in 1968.[25] They were influenced, too, by the ideas of Gandhi, and

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19 Freire, *op.cit.*, p.78

20 Schumacher, *op.cit.; Small is Beautiful Impressions of Fritz Schumacher,* Canadian National Film Board, 1978, 30 min., 16mm; Schumacher, E.F.,"New Credo for Development, *VA.*, Vol XX, No.4, April, 1978, New Delhi. Schumacher started the Intermediate Technology Group in England and advised Nehru among others.

21 Goulet, *op.cit.*, pp.20; Parmar, S., "Self-Reliant Development in an 'Interdependent' World, p.11, in Erb, G. & Kallab, V. Eds., *Beyond Dependency:The Developing World Speaks Out*, Overseas Development Council, 1975

22 Illich, *op.cit.*, p.110

23 Goulet, *op.cit.*, p.20

24 Birch, C., "Three Facts, Eight Fallacies and Three Axioms about Population and Environment", *Anticipation*, Sept., 1972, p.9, quoted in Parmar, *op.cit.*; Schumacher, *Small is..., op.cit,* p.57; Illich, *op.cit.*, p.110

25 "The Theology of Liberation", *New Internationalist*, No.70, Dec., 1978, Wallingford, Oxford, pp.6-8

the examples of countries such as China and Tanzania which were pursuing isolationist policies directed much more to grassroots needs. These critiques were the natural ally of the more activist NGO community given its special focus on poverty and people. The arguments regarding high levels of consumption, ecological decay and the practices of multinational corporations, broadened the NGO debate beyond debt, trade and commodity issues. At the same time, the emphasis on raising people's consciousness focused attention on "liberation" movements and the liberation of individuals. In the developing world Freire, in particular, inspired NGOs to adopt his methods in their grassroots development activities. And these influences also had a profound effect on the policies and practices of activist Australian NGOs.

Raising Consciousness

The influences of the above critiques on some Australian NGOs struggling to introduce development education programmes were soon obvious. The Associate Secretary of Action for World Development, T. Whelan, for example, gave an address to the Catholic Teachers College in 1972, on "The Teacher as Change Agent in Development".[26] Both Paulo Freire and Julius Nyerere were quoted generously. Whelan urged teachers to teach development studies using the same techniques which more progressive NGOs were adopting in developing countries. He suggested that teachers should prepare their students to "discover" the world rather than to merely "survive" it. In that way, he argued, they would be equipped to challenge assumptions, values and goals prescribed by society, and to ask critical questions about the historic, political, economic, social and cultural reasons for the way things were.[27]

Development education which addressed such issues was, of course, calling into account the whole education system. Teaching methods were being challenged to welcome criticism, change, dissension and uncertainty. To facilitate that process ACFOA's Education Unit examined the school texts used in social studies courses. Its findings were published in ACFOA's *Development News Digest*, and reported in substantial articles in the *Financial Review*, *Nation Review* and the *National Times*. ACFOA found that the texts were condescending towards Australian Aborigines and the peoples of Asia. They contained factual errors, bias and superficial stereotypes. ACFOA concluded that such texts could only nurture racist attitudes in the young

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[26] Whelan, T., Associate Secretary, Action for World Development, "The Teacher as Change Agent in Development", An edited text of an address given to the Catholic Teachers College, Castle Hill, NSW, ACFOA, RI, 12/72

[27] *Ibid*, "Paulo Freire has said that real knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.."; Julius Nyerere wrote the "Men who are now suffering from poverty, whether they are in the Third World or in the developed world, need to be helped to stretch themselves; they need to be given confidence in their own ability to take control over their lives". Poverty of course did not only refer to monetary poverty but included the poverty of oppression experienced by the marginalised.

children exposed to them, since the texts placed very little emphasis on the "values, achievements and human attributes of people of other cultures." Several illustrations of these condescending and simplistic attitudes were provided. For example:

> The aboriginal women are called lubras. Some of them help with the housework on the cattle stations. The babies are called piccaninnies. ... Every year more and more aborigines are learning to live the way we do. They find it easier to live that way. They are being helped by the white people to find good jobs and live in clean homes.[28]

Here again was the familiar "development" image - the clean, ordered house of the Western nuclear family - the image frequently promoted in aid and development literature as a yardstick for "good" development, which disregarded other ways of being. Texts on India, China and Indonesia analysed by ACFOA were equally ill-informed and crass.

Some ACFOA members also began to examine their own institutions recognising that agency staff involved in fund-raising, development education and field-work ought to be made familiar with processes to facilitate change.[29] An ACFOA group meeting to discuss education for voluntary staff, for example, took on the format of the change-agent seminars which were being evolved in developing countries.

> We rejected the conventional, structured course programme of lectures as this approach indicates a misunderstanding of how people learn and grow in awareness. In considering a week long conference/programme for agency staff, we decided that such a conference should have a 'surround' programme.[30]

Participants would be divided into small groups and live in an area such as Fitzroy. This was described as an "underprivileged inner city area with migrants, pensioners [and] deserted wives".[31] For three days ACFOA participants would learn from the people guided by community organisers. ACFOA members would then come together and discuss their experiences in relation to their work overseas with the poor. Both the method of informal group work, rather than a conference format, and field trips where small groups visited projects, interspersed with what the Filipinos called "sharing" time, would be developed and used extensively by CAA and many Asian NGOs.

Others perceived a need to break through the "circle of the initiated",[32] that is, those few individuals at the top of each organisation who had access to the most current development materials, issues and methods. Aid agencies had not escaped the elitism and specialisation encouraged by Western education and like other institutions

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[28] Randall, K., "How We Foster Racist Attitudes", *Nation Review*, Aug., 19-25, Vol 2 , No.44, 1972, p.1273

[29] Notes on Meeting to Discuss ACFOA Education Project for Voluntary Aid Staff, July 5th and 6th 1973, Sydney. Representatives at the meeting were from Action for World Development, the Freedom From Hunger Campaign, ACFOA, the Asian Bureau and a scholar from ANU.

[30] *Ibid*

[31] *Ibid*

[32] A phrase used by the Education Work Group of the World Council of Churches and quoted in Dr Reinhild Traitler's, "Ten Years of Development Educuation", nd, about 1980, CAA archives MUA

employed a majority of males in executive positions. (A substantial number of the agencies were slow to change this and had not made significant strides to employ women in other than backup capacities by the late 1980s.) An ACFOA Education seminar in 1973 acknowledged that there was an increasing gap between the few (mainly those at national level) whose experience and a lengthier period of involvement provided them with opportunities to gain up-to-date "information/ideas/contact/ dialogue/idea forming sessions. An elitism has developed. We have a basic responsibility to share the pool of information/insights into processes of development."[33]

A fair amount of soul-searching and disillusionment existed among sections of the NGO community as it grappled with ways to introduce these new approaches into practice and to assess their effects. In particular many considered that the tools being used to identify problems of development- such as the use of media and school curricula -were deficient. One frustrated observer remarked: "For years now we've been talking largely to ourselves. ... There is no development "movement" yet as there can be said to be anti-pollution or civil rights movements. Public opinion has not been "mobilised" - nor will it be with these passive tools of the trade."[34] The Executive Director of ACFOA, Michael Sullivan asked in 1974:

> Am I wrong in believing that perhaps much of ACFOA's contact with the public is with people who are often called 'the already converted'? Are we having an impact on and changing attitudes of the ordinary Australian person in his or her ideas of developing countries and issues related to them? Has the eight years' existence of ACFOA and the three years' activities of its Education Unit done as much as we would hope to lead Australia into a new era of concern for the poorest people with whom we share this planet?[35]

One of the barriers to creating well-informed public opinion on development issues was the methods historically used by NGOs to raise funds. "Simplistic" notions of development had frequently been supported by simplistic fund-raising campaigns. Such campaigns rarely went beyond providing the opportunity to give money. Many groups were now of the opinion, however, that development education had to prepare people to become more politically involved.[36]

The Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign publicity officer's ironic address to ACFOA in 1971 on "The Intelligent Use of the Mass Media" illustrated the problem. He described the gimmicks needed to "woo, flatter and cajole the ... press, radio and

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[33] Notes on Meeting to Discuss ACFOA Education Project ..., *op.cit.*

[34] "The Generation of The Seventies", Adapted by Ann Pickering from Part One of "Community Encounter: Programme models for the Community" (Canadian Council for International Co-operation), ACFOA RI, 14/73, p.4

[35] Sullivan, M., "Executive Director's Report to ACFOA Annual Council - 1974", Australian Council for Overseas Aid

[36] One group which promoted this argument was the Education Work Group of the World Council of Churches. Traitler, R., *op.cit.*

television"[37] in order to gain aid publicity. Language had to be "newsy, bright and peppy". Events had to be staged as carnivals, festivals, wine tastings, art shows, film premieres or happenings. Such as "Cinhalese dancers saying thanks for a project". Or a dramatisation of a project such as the "Unleavened Bread from the Garden of Eden", consisting of unleavened bread served from flour flown from a seed improvement project in Iraq. What Kelly was describing had been typical of agency fund-raising campaigns over the past two decades. Events which had been advertised in hundreds of local newspapers had been designed to raise funds rather than the consciousness of the Australian public. Kelly blamed the aid agencies for feeding the media such fund-raising hype. The agencies had also provided the media with images of hunger and despair.

Certainly a growing number of spokespeople from developing countries were critical of the way that the West portrayed the Third World. At an aid seminar in August 1975 a representative of the Indian High Commission criticised Australian aid agencies for "... presenting it purely as a place of hunger and starvation". An "Asian Studies educationalist" attacked the agencies for "... making a generation of school children regard asia (sic) as one seething mass of starvation".[38] FFHC's Education Officer agreed stating:

> Aid agencies have created a whole generation of Australian schoolchildren who believe anyone brown in a foreign country is starving. It's time for the aid organisations to be true to their stated purposes and to right real injustices, and this means political change. Agencies should be educating the public in what they know are the facts, instead of just saying that people are starving in India and your money will save them.[39]

ACFOA's Education officer was even more critical on the ABC programme, "Heresies". He said:

> ...the agencies are scared of political action and community education campaigns on the real issues facing the Third World. In scores of committees throughout Australia they are convinced that they are the conscience of the country and must not alienate public opinion. And they go on their way solving nothing, divesting people of their money and diverting public attention away from the key political and economic issues.

He added, "... the senior staff of the big fundraising agencies are often ex military officers, ex clergy and ex business people who have a stake in maintaining the present system, and are threatened when our institutions are questioned."[40] These were fighting words which many of ACFOA's member agencies found unpalatable. But they mirrored the frustration experienced by activist NGOs who were finding that it was not easy to engage their constituents in analyses on Third World poverty. Many NGOs'

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[37] Kelly, L., Publicity Officer FFHC, "The Intelligent Use of the Mass Media", 1971 ACFOA Council, The Role of Voluntary Agencies in UNDD 11

[38] Hill, H., "Overseas Aid - Posturing with the poor?", *Nation Review*, Aug 29-Sept. 4, 1975

[39] "Doubts on Effect of Overseas Help: Two Claim that aid is 'drop in the ocean'", *The Sydney Morning Herald,* Sept., 3, 1975, p.11

[40] Hill, H., "Overseas Aid...", *op.cit.*

programmes to educate the public about development issues had met with stiff resistance. Governor General, Sir Paul Hasluck, had pre-empted as much when he inaugurated ACFOA's public education campaign in August 1971. He argued:

> You will bump hard against the fact that you may have to urge one section or another of Australian economic life to give up something else besides a few million dollars a year for overseas aid. ... You may have to demonstrate clearly that it is to Australia's interest, both for prosperity and for peace, to have a different pattern of world economic relationships from what we have now. Nor will it be enough to make a case for greater external aid. The easiest way for a developed country to relieve its conscience from a feeling of selfishness is to give aid to the less developed countries. ... [But] How do you mobilise opinion around the idea that a land of opportunities may serve itself and the world best by providing more opportunities for others?[41]

Nevertheless, frustrated by their failure to get at the core of world poverty and perhaps with an over-confidence borne of the times (which accompanied the change in government), activist NGOs took up the challenge to create a development "movement" with vigour.[42] The groups included the student International Development Action group (IDA) formed in 1970 to promote interest in the issues of development, Action for World Development (AWD), ACFOA, the Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign and CAA.[43]

Many of the groups began by strengthening their infrastructure to handle these activities. By 1973 ACFOA had established a permanent secretariat in Canberra with a resource centre and library. Its Education Unit provided information on aid and development issues to members of parliament, the press, member agencies and teachers' colleges and Universities, through the *Development News Digest* and a Research and Information service.[44] Funded with contributions from fifteen member agencies the unit also sponsored seminars and conferences on development education involving delegates from Papua New Guinea, Fiji, South East Asia and from the Australian Aboriginal community.[45]

The Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign employed two "education activists" and established a library and resource centre of development materials in Sydney in 1973 - the Ideas Centre. The centre was to provide access to development materials to schools and the public.[46] Action for World Development established a considerable

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41 Hasluck, P., "Launching of a Public Education Campaign for the United Nations Second Development Decade", Canberra, 13 Aug., 1971, mimeo, ACFOA, p.4

42 "Report on Development Education Programme 1973", ACFOA 1973 Annual Council Meeting, p.1

43 CAA *Annual Report*, 1970, p.4

44 It also sent over 500 copies to overseas agencies, many in exchange for overseas publications

45 Contributions ranged from $12,000 from the FFHC to $50. Australian Catholic Relief gave $4,000 and Community Aid Abroad $1,200. "Contributions to the ACFOA Education Programme Aug 1972-Aug 1973 ", Appendix 1, Australian Council for Overseas Aid, 1973 Annual Council Meeting; The unit also received travel grants for its education conference from FAO, the Dept of Aboriginal Affairs, and the Dept of External Affairs and Territories. "Report on Development Education Programme 1973", p.3, *op.cit.*

46 "FFHC To Step Up Public Information", *Hungerscope*, No.21, Sept., 1973, p.3

network of small groups of people and resources throughout Australia to examine development issues.[47] It engaged in government lobbying, placed submissions and held public meetings and educational programmes. These activities had a substantial impact on CAA since many AWD members formed CAA groups.[48]

CAA issued "Drive Kits" for its groups with speakers' notes and fund-raising ideas. It launched a yearly "CAA Week" to advertise the organisation; regularly issued topic sheets on development issues; set in train a film on development in Indonesia: *The Curse of Laradjongran*; and published a critique on aid by its new director Jim Webb, titled *Towards Survival*. The organisation also commissioned a survey of aid and development experts in Australia; sponsored a student research trip on aid to Indonesia; engineered two appearances for Webb on the ABC, *How to involve your child in WWIII*,[49] and on a Four Corners programme on Asian students; and sponsored a study tour of Europe, the USA and Canada, to enable Webb to become conversant with the state of development activity in those countries.[50]

CAA also funded a resource and research organisation in 1973. A review paper (initiated by CAA's Trade Action Director R. Webb),[51] acknowledged that while emergency aid, development assistance and trade concessions helped alleviate the worst symptoms they did not tackle the systemic causes of poverty.[52] A research agency and resource centre would attempt to make the connections between the actions of the developed world and the poverty of the developing world, and to make Australians more aware of their responsibility and ability to change this situation.[53]

The idea was mooted for a research agency titled The Light, Powder and Construction Co-operative. Light, "... to throw some light on the nature and workings of our own society and its relation to the problems of the Third World." Powder, "...implies strategic attacks upon existing values and institutions in our own society", Construction, "... explores the theoretical and practical problems involved in establishing alternatives," Cooperative, "...because ...we believe that progress...can only be made through discussion, dialogue and action with as many other people as

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47 Ryan, A, "Action for World Development", and Ryan, A. & Zivetz, L., "The Ideas Centre", in Zivetz, L., *et al*, *Doing Good:The Australian NGO Community*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1991, pp.124,127

48 It added around 26 new groups. "CAA Groups Surge Ahead in 1973", *NOW*, July, 1973, No.219, p.1

49 "WWIII" being a specific development education campaign initiated by CAA; *Indonesia:Australia's Involvement*, International Development Action, North Fitzroy, nd. c.1972

50 "Drive Kits", *NOW*, Aug. 1970, p.1; "CAA WEEK", *NOW*, Mar.,1971, p.1; *NOW*, June 1971 pp.1 & 3; *NOW*, Sept. 1971, pp.1 & 2; *NOW*, Sept. 1971, p.2; *NOW*, Nov-Dec, 1971, p.2; *NOW*, Jan-Feb, 1972, p.2; *NOW*, July, 1972, pp.2 & 3

51 The review was the product of nine months' work by two research scholars

52 Webb, R. J., "Proposal for a Research and Education Agency", p.7, 9/2/73 presented to CAA Review Conference, 17/18 February, 1973, p.10

53 "Report to the Review Conference of CAA, July 6 , 1974", p.1

possible".[54] In the event it took the name Light, Powder and Construction Works, most frequently referred to as "the Works".

The Work's approach epitomised both the thrust of the activist NGO critique and its somewhat confrontational style.[55] By using the methods suggested by radical critiques, NGOs took up in greater detail the generalised arguments and claims of Western church leaders and Western politicians regarding social justice and environmental issues and transnational corporation interests.[56] Through case studies NGOs shed light on activities of transnational organisations. The AWD's tea campaign was one of the organisation's most ambitious and innovative exercises. The campaign was initially established as a case-study to illustrate the monopolistic nature of the tea industry and the raw deal that tea workers received. But the campaign evolved into a co-operative enterprise in alternative trading with Sri Lankan tea workers. AWD imported tea directly from the co-operative for sale in Australia.

Australian NGOs joined international NGOs in a campaign against the practices of baby food manufacturers. Many manufacturers aggressively marketed the advantages of powdered milk in poor communities which lacked the resources to use the products safely. In many other cases - the dumping and trialing of medical drugs, the injudicious use of pesticides, the increasing impoverishment of seed varieties - it was shown that participants were being harmed rather than "developed".

Western consumption patterns also came under scrutiny and were linked to environmental issues.[57] Some of the churches in particular promoted the theme "live simply that others may simply live", advocating a much less consumer-driven life-style, and arguing that a percentage of income be donated to developing countries for development projects. A few groups took up the challenge, literally, by embracing an "alternative" lifestyle and communal living.

Members of CAA's "Works" ran the agency on a co-operative basis. It linked with many Australian and international "alternative" groups with which it collaborated to encourage "alternative" facilities such as "alternative" radio and the "alternative" Pink Pages. These groups included nuclear disarmament groups, trade unions, women's centres, gay liberation groups and community child-care groups.[58] One of the Works most controversial associations was its identification with *The Digger* magazine. Through *The Digger* magazine and its own *Powder Magazine* the Works focused on

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54 "Research and Action Agency (Co-operative)", R. J. Webb, 26/4/73

55 *DND*, July/Aug 1973, Vol 1

56 "People on a Pilgrimage", AWD, Sydney, nd, p.5

57 Stimulated by the Club of Rome's publication *The Limits to Growth*, New American Library, New York, 1972 by Meadows, D., Meadows, D. L., Randers, J, and Behrens, W.; Webb, R. J., "Proposal for a Research and Education Agency", *op.cit.*, pp.8-9

58 The Light Powder and Construction Works, *Report to the Review Conference of CAA, July 6, 1974, Summary of Activities*

issues which revealed the actions of individuals, governments, organisations or corporations which the Works considered were involved in repressive activities against marginalised groups.[59] Articles addressed issues on martial law in the Philippines, "Redfern blacks", feminism in India, black deschooling, the coup in Chile, US bases, multinational aid to Saigon and the activities of the Leyland Company.

Some NGOs saw little future in developing nations being integrated into the economic system of the West. They agreed with the "centre-periphery" argument of the "so-called" dependency theory which suggested that modernisation created small enclaves imitating Western industrial consumer society which benefited the middle and upper classes. The rest of the population remained "...objects of relief and charity programmes...of marginal concern to professional planners and elite leaders...".[60]

Encompassing much of this discussion was the concept of "liberation" which echoed the liberation theologists and other radical critiques concerned with raising consciousness and breaking down entrenched, conservative and elite barriers. The term liberation was applied widely to include restrictive life styles and practices and oppressive structures within organisations, and was supported most obviously through the "Women's Liberation Movement", "Gay Rights" and "Aboriginal Land Rights".[61] But given the disenchantment of some NGOs with the present world economic system, they began to extend their support for liberation and social justice issues to include the more radical support for liberation movements. China was seen to offer a model of development and liberation worth emulating and was featured in the pages of both ACFOA's *DND* and the CAA *REVIEW*.[62] The liberation struggles of Vietnam, East Timor (after the Indonesian take-over) and Africa were also reviewed and supported. CAA, for example, sent a $2,000 donation to the African National Conference of Zimbabwe in 1973 and strenuously took up the cause of East Timor.[63]

The rhetoric and discourses promoted by activist NGOs, which frequently linked Western wealth to Third World poverty and questioned Western political structures and values, were often unpalatable and uncomfortable to NGO constituents. CAA was acutely aware of the conservative nature of many of its supporters, particularly in the country areas. Jim Webb had noted as early as December 1971 that "The words... [Political Action] raise doubts and fears for some of CAA supporters. I prefer in public to use the word education... to describe this aspect of our work".[64] He explained that by

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59 *The Powder Magazine*, Nos 1, 2, 3/4, 5, 6/7, 8/9, Feb.-Aug., 1975, The Light Powder and Construction Works, Melbourne

60 Webb, R. J., "Proposal for a Research...", *op.cit.*

61 Education Unit, ACFOA, "Draft Programme 1976-1977", p.2; The *DND*, No.15, Mar. 1976 devoted an issue to the topic of liberation including articles by Germaine Greer on women

62 *Ibid*

63 *Ibid*; Memo Neil O'Sullivan to Director, "CAA Support for the African National Council of Zimbabwe", p.2, 21 June, 1973

64 *1972 CAA Programme*, Community Aid Abroad, National Conference, December 18/19, 1971, p.2

political action he meant an attempt to "educate, inform and persuade politicians, pressure groups and the Government" by press releases on public policy, letters to the press, representation to Ministers, Departments and Federal M.P.'s, and personal approaches to key leaders, in commercial, financial, industrial, and trade union positions.[65]

Even before the Works was established the above activities invited criticism from group members who disapproved of expenditures not spent directly on projects. A member from Wagga Wagga indicated that people were "highly suspicious" of monies not spent on projects.[66] Another, from North Balwyn disapproved of the pressure being applied for supporters to ..."send expensive telegrams, etc to politicians". This correspondent suggested that the Director should have abandoned his world trip and allocated the money to "Pakistani refugees relief".[67] Not all CAA members shared these views. Side by side with the above letter published in *NOW* another correspondent supported education and "a certain level of political activity and promotion" as a necessary prerequisite to understanding the problems of under-development and the nature of development.[68]

Despite early indications of constituent hostility towards development education programmes, the key players in CAA were unanimous in their support to steer the organisation into a more progressive and active role. CAA staff members supported the Tucker philosophy that CAA's role was as much to educate Australians about development issues as to provide assistance to developing nations. In his annual Director's Report in 1973, Webb argued that seeds and fertilisers were of little use if people were subject to "political oppression".[69] It was therefore imperative to progress beyond "wells in Indian villages [and] school buildings in Java", though these would still be supported, to embrace "the new demands that reach us about the liberation of all men from oppression and suffering".[70] Trade Action Director R. Webb had argued that it was a question of consciousness;[71] Neil O'Sullivan, Project Officer, argued that to support organisations like the A.N.C. "...would mark a natural evolutionary stage in CAA's philosophy of development and would act as a spur to the conscientization of CAA supporters...";[72] Director J. Webb, felt that only by affecting such action would CAA be being "...true to the vision of our founder Father Tucker who saw years ago the

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65 *Ibid*
66 Letter from Roger Wescomble, to The Editor, *NOW*, 16/8/71
67 "Prune Your Expenses", *NOW*, Oct., 1971, p.4
68 "Education Has Future Benefits", *op.cit.*
69 "Director's Report", CAA Annual Report of Activities for Year Ended December, 1973, p.13
70 *Ibid*
71 "Report to the Review Conference of CAA, July 6, 1974", p.1
72 Memo Neil O'Sullivan to Director, "CAA Support ...", *op.cit.*, p.2, 21 June, 1973

need for what the ill-informed would call radical or political action".[73] This stance reflected considerable frustration by the CAA executive with the slow results being achieved after twenty years of assistance.[74]

The attempts by CAA through the Works to raise the consciousness of its supporters however succeeded in many cases only in raising ire. The letters flowed! A common complaint was that CAA was departing from its stated aims of, "a people to people program of aid and understanding, whereby members of local groups [were] linked to specific projects overseas".[75] It was clear that the nature of CAA's departure went strongly against the grain for some. One group representative wrote: "Already there have been signs that the "grass-root" supporters are not happy with giving so much money to a group [the Works] who openly criticizes institutions that are important to them - the family ... religion, education."[76] The Skipton group complained that there were "un-Christian concepts inherent in [the Work's] publications", and reported that it was considering disbanding its group of 9 years if some "worthwhile changes in National Policy" did not materialise.[77] Another supporter reported:

> The association with 'Digger' [magazine] fills me with repugnance. I am bourgeois, middle class and non-revolutionary. I also search for the truth and will adopt it if our aid methods are wrong. But I will not associate with a leftist Group which is pushing its own wagon, and which is not, I believe inspired by academic neutrality.[78]

CAA was not the only organisation which met with resistance when it introduced controversial development education programmes. The activities of ACFOA's Education Committee was also "causing headaches" for the ACFOA executive.[79] While the Hon. Secretary to ACFOA considered the Education Committee one of ACFOA's most important working groups, he observed:

> ACFOA must be able to present all of the issues and/or arguments and reflect the opinions of all members, regardless of whether or not this represents a minority or majority attitude. ... It should also be recognised, however, that agreement won't necessarily mean an end to conflict. Education for development, particularly in our society, will always lead to or create conflict. For ACFOA it is a question or (sic) whether it should lead or follow in this process.[80]

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73 Director's Report, *op.cit.*

74 "After twenty years of development aid there is some disillusionment at the lack of rapid results.... So much more remains to be done, both in the giving of aid and in the developing of Australian awareness of the aspirations, problems and cultures of the new nations.", J.B. Webb, Director's report "Is It Worthwhile?", CAA Annual Report, 1970, p.1

75 Memo Birch, J. to Webb J., "C.A.A. Policy", 20th October, 1974

76 Letter, Mrs Margaret Moar [Secretary Wangaratta group] to Mr Webb, 20/2/74

77 Letter Mary Kavanagh, Secretary, Skipton CAA to Mr Tudor, State Secretary CAA, 30/5/74; and Letter Secretary Skipton Branch CAA to The Editor CAA *REVIEW*, 28/10/74

78 Letter, Keith R Hallett to Community Aid Abroad, 5/11/73

79 Smith, A., "Honorary Secretary's Report", ACFOA Council Meeting,1975

80 *Ibid*

ACFOA had a diverse membership. Those groups running their own activist education campaigns naturally supported an activist role for ACFOA, although they recognised the difficulties involved. The Freedom from Hunger Campaign Education Officer reported:

> Sweeping social changes were necessary within Third World countries to alleviate poverty, ignorance and disease. But most agencies, who see themselves as fund-raisers, would not publicly admit this for fear of losing the 'donated dollar'. Anything which is controversial - Vietnam, aid to African liberation groups, projects which involve social or political change - alienate sections of the public. For example, when Freedom from Hunger first supported Aboriginal projects, we got many calls from donors saying they would no longer support us. It is safer for the agencies to picture th (sic) Third World as a great starving mass which can be fed by the funds we send.[81]

The debate emphasised the fundamentally different ideological approaches of various agencies. Conservative agencies supported unconditionally the economic growth modernisation paradigm, and assiduously sought to avoid so-called "political" issues and activities. A spokesperson for the Returned Services League remarked: "Our view is that ACFOA, as a body existing to co-ordinate aid, should not become involved in expressing views on controversial subjects".[82] Articles in the March 1975 *Development News Digest,* which reported a visit to North Vietnam by the ACFOA Education Officer, and an article and interview on political prisoners and repression in South Africa, were among six reports which some agencies strenuously objected to as being "biased against the attitudes of the Western world."[83] The Australian Baptist World Aid and Relief Committee expressed deep concern that as a member of ACFOA its organisation would be connected with public statements such as those made about Timor, without an opportunity to put its views.[84] The committee considered that much of the unit's material demonstrated immaturity, imbalance and bias which promoted the views of its authors, or members of ACFOA staff, but was of "little, if any, positive value."[85] The Society of Saint Vincent De Paul shared similar concerns. A letter from the Society to M. Sullivan, Executive Director of ACFOA in June 1976, stated:

> I hope that you can realise that what [we] have been saying re A.C.F.O.A. is not our own thoughts exclusively, but are shared by our members in all states. I think it is fair to say that we see the problems of Aid and Development education in a different light to the members of the Education Unit. I am not too sure that we can say that either of us is right or wrong, and this presents us with a problem. A.C.F.O.A. has to represent a vast variety of organisations with different policies, and different contacts in overseas countries. Some of these organisations are very strong on the Development Education side and I think there is a fairly strong left thinking influence in these

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81 "Doubts on Effect of Overseas Aid ... ", *op.cit.*

82 "Discussion on Dismissal Expected", Bruce Juddery, *The Canberra Times*, August 23rd, 1975, p.1; Kerin, J., H. of R., August 28, 1975, Parliamentary Debates, August 19-Oct. 2, 1975, AGP, Canberra 1975, p.785

83 "Discussion on Dismissal Expected", *op.cit.*

84 Rev. T. J. Cardwell, Secretary, Australian Baptist World Aid and Relief Committee to M.P. Sullivan, Executive Secretary, ACFOA, 16 June, 1976

85 *Ibid*

> organisations which tends to concentrate on political action in one of its many forms. ... This puts organisations like ourselves in a dilemma. We do not have the facilities to provide "balancing" material. Our resources are wholly committed to assisting our members to do their job better in the various Asian countries. ...Frankly I feel that the Education Unit does provide problems for A.C.F.O.A. ... At the same time I feel that there is a place for the activities of the Unit, and maybe it would be a better idea if the unit was to function as a separate identity to A.C.F.O.A. when the Agencies who were prepared to support it could set up a separate organisation to take responsibility for the Unit....[86]

Criticism was most frequently directed at the overall "leftist" character of the Education Unit's output, as well as at specific issues such as "antagonism against South Africa", and support of the East Timorese.[87] ACFOA's campaign to educate Australians about Australian business ties with South Africa allegedly resulted in Woolworth putting pressure on Foreign Affairs and South African diplomats putting pressure on ACFOA's Education unit. ACFOA had criticised Woolworth's frozen fish purchases which they said had been processed and packaged using cheap black labour.[88]

Some criticism (like articles in *News Weekly*) mainly resorted to "Commie bashing", without showing an understanding of the complexity of development issues. Others who were committed to the "growth" position, were unsympathetic to the view that Western development was exacerbating Third World poverty. A member of SID,[89] economist H. Arndt resigned in 1978 because, he argued: "Under the influence of the Club of Rome environmentalism and other anti-growth sentiment, it increasingly gave the appearance of a Society *against* International Development".[90]

Such responses to the activities of development activists were not unique to Australia. ACFOA's Education Officer found a similar situation in North America in 1974. He reported from a development education conference in Canada that there was a split developing between groups organising around the South African issue and those who opposed such activities. He observed:

> There has developed in the past five years quite a split in voluntary agencies, one that could roughly be summed up as a gap between the basically fund raising agencies and those concerned with development education and social change. I see a similar gap developing in Australia within the ACFOA agencies. It would be unfortunate if voluntary aid agencies dismissed the work of

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86 Society of Saint Vincent De Paul to M.P. Sullivan Executive Director ACFOA, 18th June, 1976

87 Memo to All Members of the Executive, Re Resolution on Indonesia, June 3rd, 1976, From M. Sullivan, Executive Director, ACFOA

88 "First Commodity Campaign Launched", *DND*, No.13, June, 1975, p.17. Similar pressures were being brought to bear overseas at the time in a campaign against the use of baby formula in the Third World. The director of the Infant Formula Compliance Program in the USA reported that during the campaign Bristol-Myers (a baby-milk manufacturer) pulled out all advertising from the CBS-TV network after it screened a critical documentary on the subject. The chairman of Bristol-Myers was also on the board of directors of the *New York Times* and frowned on *Time's* coverage of the issue. After that, coverage on either television or in the newspapers was more difficult for the NGOs to achieve.

89 The Society for International Development

90 Arndt, H.W., *A Course Through Life: Memoirs of an Australian Economist*, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1985, p.80

development education groups and there was no communication between the two - that is if the issue became one of radical vs conservative.[91]

Similar tensions were being experienced in New Zealand. The *News Weekly* of June 1976 carried an article titled: "AWD Wrecks NZ Aid Organisation".[92] The article claimed that New Zealand's CORSO[93] faced collapse:

> As a direct result of its having introduced into its operations the Action for World Development program from Australia. ... What has happened in CORSO is a classic example of a Communist take-over, with the Communists, of course, keeping very much in the background and using gullible respected people as their dupes. ... In 1973, a group of Left-wingers, a number of them Catholics, and including at least two priests and some ex-seminarians, moved to import the Action for World Development program from Australia. ... The main opponent of the moves was the Catholic Weekly *The Tablet*, [which]... pointed out that the AWD was essentially Marxist that as such it was opposed to what most of CORSO's member organisations stood for, and that, once they found where it was leading, CORSO would founder.[94]

An Ex-Director of CORSO claimed:

> It is my belief that a carefully planned and brilliantly executed campaign has been carried on within CORSO for at least six years, aimed at changing it from a humanitarian aid agency, concerned to meet human need in relief and development on a people-to-people basis, without discrimination of any kind, into a political organisation concerned to change political structures both here in New Zealand and overseas.[95]

Most activist Australian NGOs which engaged in development education activities, experienced tension and discord from supporters who felt uncomfortable with the general thrust of the campaigns. The Freedom from Hunger Campaign had difficulty reconciling the development and research wings of its organisation. AWD, having run the gauntlet of the criticism by the National Civic Council through *Newsweekly,* would eventually lose its funding from the Catholic Bishops in 1983.

Activist NGOs had the support of a core group who represented, what one observer has called, a "post-materialist" orientation,[96] one which valued quality of life in terms of social and economic equity, ecological balance and "culture" over materialist pursuits. These supporters backed the developing countries' demands for a NIEO and the NGOs' attempts to affect significant systemic change. Frequently well-educated and well-informed on Third World issues, such members tended to represent the "already converted", but they did not constitute the bulk of agency supporters.

Without independent funds NGOs could not proceed unilaterally. After considerable deliberations CAA withdrew its financial support from the Works while ACFOA's Education Officer was dismissed in August 1975 after pressure was brought to bear by a

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91 "Report of the Education Committee and Unit", Australian Council for Overseas Aid, 1974 Annual Council Meeting, p.3

92 Society of Saint Vincent De Paul, *op.cit.*; *News Weekly*, June 9, 1976, p.9

93 The Council for the Organisation of Relief Services Overseas and a counterpart of ACFOA

94 *News Weekly, op.cit.*

95 *Ibid*

96 Inglehart R., *Silent Revolution*, quoted in Smith, *More than Altruism*, *op.cit.*, p.160

conservative ACFOA executive.[97] The Chairman of ACFOA at the time was a former vice-president of the NSW Liberal party while the Opposition spokesperson on Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock, attended a closed meeting of ACFOA on August 21st, where he allegedly used his influence to have the education officer dismissed.[98]

Given that the Education Unit was partly funded by government, members of ACFOA were concerned (after the Liberal Party was re-elected to office), that the new government might use the education unit's activities to cut ACFOA's $50,000 grant.[99] The fears were not unfounded. An ACFOA report of a meeting between ADAA staff and ACFOA, in July 1976, quoted an ADAA representative as stressing that:

> ... ACFOA could 'founder' because of its 'Achilles Heel' - the Education Unit. It was something that the critics from the public, the Government, the M.P.'s and the Bureaucracy could 'Zero in, on'. Complaints had been received about the 'bias' of the E.U. and it was becoming increasingly difficult for ACFOA's friends in the Government and the Department to defend the Grant. At all times he spoke as a sympathetic and understanding supporter....[100]

Activist NGO discourses and rhetoric, of which the ACFOA Education Unit was a prominent part, were typical of wider community activity at the time which was demanding changes in such areas as women's, minority and civil rights, university curriculum, the environment and nuclear disarmament. Whitlam's rapid pace of reform supported this atmosphere of change. But the mood engendered by the ALP victory in December 1972 encouraged activist NGOs to misjudge the public's willingness to set aside self-interest and to take on new paradigms which confronted and challenged the relative "certainty" of established Western models and institutions. Clearly many NGO constituents as well as those on the conservative side of politics were disturbed by these events especially when calls for change effected a strong "anti-Western" stance.

The negative responses to the development education campaigns of activist NGOs, which threatened to affect their funding base, often served to mute education activities. There were exceptions, based on specific issues, as CAA's committed stand on East Timor illustrated, but generally the flamboyant rhetoric of the first half of the 1970s was set aside. ACFOA's Executive Director's report to Council in 1979/80 carried a despondent tone when it noted that ACFOA had trimmed back its staff and resources to "produce a service unit rather than a research or education group". ACFOA also reported a significant shift in its educational activities away from direct public contact

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97 Kerin, J., H of R, August 28, 1975, *op.cit.*; The *Canberra Times, The National Times, Nation Review* and *News Weekly,* all reported the incident.

98 *The Powder Mazagine*, No 8/9, Aug., 1975, 2; *Minutes*, CAA National Review Conference May 3 & 4 1975, p.7

99 Hill, Helen, "Overseas aid...", *op.cit.*

100 Australian Council for Overseas Aid, Report on meeting in Sydney prepared by Paul Cullen, July 21, 1976

in favour of providing information to the media, member agencies and to the government.[101]

This failure of activist NGOs to gain support from the Fraser government or to gain consensus among NGOs for a vigorous, national development education campaign, coincided with the phenomenal growth of World Vision Australia. By 1976 WVA became Australia's largest and most prominent NGO.[102] As such, it was arguably the most influential organisation to shape public opinion about overseas aid for the next decade.

Raising Funds

World Vision International President, Dr Stanley Mooneyham, had begun the 1970s by inviting its organisations in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa to "think in terms of a qualitative expansion".[103] The directive had an almost immediate effect on World Vision Australia (WVA). The first issue of *Heartline*, published in Australia in May 1970, was heavily syndicated from WV USA. By 1972 the quarterly *World Vision Magazine* was written and published in Australia. Its contents now displayed local interest stories, from familiar suburbs. The young exuberantly raising money from craft shows in Taree, an 86 year old pensioner lending her support from a meagre pension and an engaging mis-spelt letter from a 9 year old donating some dollars from "doing jobs".[104] Australian and New Zealand produced films, slides and cassette tape packages, began to supplement those from the USA, along with first-hand reports and articles in *World Vision Magazine* by Australian and New Zealand staff who had visited Asian projects.

The differences between the education campaigns run by activist NGOs and the media campaigns launched by WVA were striking. World Vision's main concern was to increase its funding base rather than to educate its constituents. Its preoccupation was on "twinning" donors with child recipients, focusing on the idea of the value of the individual, rather than on analysing development issues.[105] WVA assiduously avoided a "political dimension" and frequently appealed to guilt and emotion to gather funds. Its promotional techniques were extremely sophisticated. With the assistance of a full-time communications officer with 22 years media experience,[106] and adopting "saturation" marketing techniques of modern advertising, WVA's "Do Something Beautiful -

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101 ACFOA "Executive Director's Report", Council Paper 1, 1979/1980, p.2; ACFOA "Executive Director's Report", Council Paper No.1, 1980; ACFOA "Executive Director's Report", Council Paper No.1, 1981

102 "We're embarrassed!", *World Vision,* April 1976

103 Mooneyham, W. S., "Shape of the 70's", *World Vision Scope*, Vol 7, No.1, Jan, 1970, California

104 "Things People Say", *World Vision*, May, 1974; "Letter from Peter", News in Brief, *World Vision Development Aid News*, Sept 1977

105 *World Vision Magazine,* 1974 Dec. Annual Report

106 "People Page", *World Vision Heartline*, Vol 16, No.3, Aug-Sept, 1972, WVA, p.19

Sponsor an Asian Child" campaign had instant appeal. Using billboards on busy main roads, underground station space, radio, newspapers and magazines, television and door drops, by December 1974, WVA's income had risen to more than two million dollars. That was an increase of 67% on the previous year, with its child sponsorship increasing by 58%.

These activities obviously and deliberately broadened WVA's constituency beyond the church community, although it remained a Christian agency, styling itself "a non-denominational Christian service organisation...helping real people to a better future in the name of Jesus Christ".[107] WVI's President Mooneyham preferred to avoid evangelical flamboyancy declaring on a visit to Australia in 1972 that he "would throw out all pamphlets and books on techniques of evangelism."[108] Nevertheless, the organisation retained a strong commitment to evangelism.[109] "World Vision was born in the heart of an evangelist", Mooneyham reminded supporters.[110]

While WV "toned down" its evangelist approach it did not discarded some of the techniques used in its 1950s and 1960s evangelical crusades. It will be recalled that Pierce, in the fifties, had incorporated the use of "nationally known singers, athletic heroes, prominent businessmen, and actors to say a good word for the Lord".[111] The use of popular culture heroes, florid dialogue, entertainment, and high emotions had proved highly successful in gaining converts. When WV set up in Australia it brought with it the professional and modern business practices utilised by its US parent organisation.[112] The combination of evangelical techniques, which closely paralleled current marketing and advertising practices, and modern business and communication practices proved highly effective for WVA. By the mid 1970s commercial television, with its mass popular audience, offered the most compelling medium for WVA to utilise these skills.

The organisation's first Easter Special in 1976, "One to One", which ushered in "aid as entertainment", introduced a new dimension to NGO fundraising in Australia. Heralded as a "pageant of colour and bright music", and made by World Vision International, the special starred Julie Andrews, the Muppets and the WV's engaging Korean Children's choir.[113] By 1978 the television specials had taken on a local quality and Australians were entertained by actor Leonard Teale, singer and artist Rolf Harris,

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107 As evidenced in its prayers or ethical discussions in its literature, *World Vision Heartline*, Vol 8, No.4, Nov 1971, WVA

108 *World Vision Heartline*, Aug 1972; *World Vision Heartline*, Sept, 1972

109 Mooneyham, W. S., "Shape of the 70's", *World Vision Scope*, Jan 1970, Vol 7, No.1, California

110 *Ibid*

111 *Ibid*, p.38

112 Interview Mrs Jean Philip, Melbourne, May 1991; WVA's chief executive Philip Hunt confirmed that management and efficiency of systems was a strong part of the culture of the organisation. Channel 7, 10.50pm "One Family", Easter Special, 1/4/94

113 *World Vision*, July, 1975; *World Vision*, Dec., 1975; *World Vision*, April, 1976; "What's Worth Seeing?", *World Vision Development Aid News*, Sept., 1976

cricketers Dennis Lillee and Rodney Hogg, and swimmer Tracey Wickam.[114] Endorsement by the States' Premiers and Prime Minister Fraser, added authority and legitimacy to the organisation. World Vision became an admirable subject for Channel Seven's sentimental "This Is Your Life" programme, when WVA's Director Graeme Irvine was transferred to the USA. With host Mike Willesee handing over a cheque to sponsor a child and the Korean children's choir as surprise guests, the switchboard ran hot with requests to sponsor children.[115]

The second half of the decade saw the spectacular growth of WVA, assisted by another innovation - a "mock famine".[116] Participants went without solid food for a specified 40 hours, while being sponsored per hour by friends and colleagues. Piloted in individual States WVA felt confident enough to "go national" in 1978, and persuaded 80,000 Australians to join in the fast. Many more people were involved in sponsoring them.

WVA's successful use of the media reflected a rapidly changing society, one more affluent with expendable income to donate. While church groups, women's groups, and schools continued to be involved in the more traditional forms of raising funds (the whist drives, craft stalls, bring and buy stalls and the like) suburban living, the reality for the majority of Australians, was changing many forms of community involvement. WVA's extraordinarily successful use of television probably lay in the appeal of combining the ingredients of high drama - joy and pathos - with the viewer's participation. A telephone call pledging money to a "telethon" visibly raised the projected tally in front of millions, adding to the tension and excitement generated in the studio and sitting room. As well "famine" participants shared a mutual sense of solidarity and a sense of community with their family and friends who sponsored them. The "famine" invited participants to experience at least some pangs of hunger, and perhaps some reflection on Third World poverty. The TV specials invited a more emotional response. Their appeal evidently impressed one young eight year old and made "cute" reading in WVA's magazine. He wrote "Dear World Vision, I have seen some programs on television the last one I have seen made me make up my mind. I have sent you 50c." [117]

WVA's use of media helped to endorse the notion that consumer capitalism and the modernisation process, which activist groups were questioning, were both "successful" and desirable when it juxtaposed images of the affluent, glamorous and healthy, with

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114 *World Vision News*, Mar., 1978

115 "One Wonderful Week & the nations best kept secret...", *World Vision*, April 1976

116 Initiated by Communication's Officer David Longe. "We have become Australia's largest non-government development aid organisation", Henderson, H., "We're embarrassed!", *World Vision,* April 1976; A pilot "40 hour famine" project held in Victoria in 1975 yielded $570,000 with 16,000 participants. It was followed by similar projects in NSW, Queensland and South Australia in 1976.

117 "News in Brief", Letter from Higgins, P., ACT, *World Vision Development Aid News*, Sept. 1977

the poor, "threatening" and squalid. Such images tended to parody both cultures and did little to advance constituent understanding beyond "'50s" and "'60s" thinking that giving money was a satisfactory and sufficient method to remedy Third World poverty; or that "giving" was a demonstration of Western compassion and benevolence; or that it was a way of expunging guilt, raised by displaying Australia as a land of plenty. The public, for example, was invited to meet and sponsor television, radio and football heroes at local shopping malls.[118]

Adhering to the tenets of popular culture WVAs message was simplistic, superficial, sentimental and persistent - appearing weekly in magazines and TV guides. WVA made skilled use of the shocking one-liner, the throw away phrase and sentimental rhyme, reminiscent of popular greetings card rhymes or women's magazine fiction. Typical examples included:

"Once, when I threw out a crust of bread, "Children are starving", my Mother said. But where to find them she did not say. They seemed to starve secretly, far away."

"Mr Mujib Khan and his Family of Six would like to eat The Scraps From Under Your Table." And under a picture of an emaciated child, "A dog in Australia eats better."[119]

WVA drew successfully on popular culture "fads" - the seventies being the decade of slogans, badges, message T shirts and the "Year Of" campaigns. It launched its "famine" campaign in 1975 in conjunction with the UN "Year of the Hungry ", and linked its child sponsorship programme with the International Year of the Child in 1979.[120] Popular culture thrived on sentimentality and emotion but rarely invited rational thought and reflection. WVA's expressed intention to "raise the level of public awareness about world need", and to help Australians develop a "world view", was therefore confined to an unsophisticated, Western world view which failed to explore the wider issues contributing to world poverty, particularly the role of the West.[121]

Other Australian agencies and media contributed to this simplistic image about the developing world. But WVA had a particularly high profile. Its style of advertising, therefore, did little to encourage Australians to think beyond simple stereotypes. That style of reportage helped mis-inform at least one young Australian soldier. A child of the seventies telethon era who joined the United Nations Advanced Mission in

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118 "Victorians Showed they care...", a pictorial record of these heroes, Gus Mercurio at a Melbourne shopping centre, Tony Rafferty running for WVA, 3AW personalities Denise Drysdale and Mary Adams, football commentators Jack Dyer and Ian Major; "Australians Go Into Action", *World Vision News*, June 1979

119 *World Vision*, Dec 1975; Feb. 1976; April 1976; *World Vision News*, Oct 1978; *World Vision Development Aid News*, Nov 1976

120 *World Vision News*, Mar. 1975 and Feb. 1979; WVA sold Christmas cards, calendars, pens, tea towels and cassettes of the Korean Children's Choir, *World Vision News*, April 1976; Sept. 1977; June 1978

121 "World Vision of Australia", *World Vision*, Dec. 1975

Cambodia in 1991, he expressed surprise "at the relative sophistication of Phnom Penh". He said: "I was expecting a World Vision 40-hour famine scenario or something - I thought we'd be camping in a swamp. But people are out there trying to sell you stuff and life goes on."[122] A WV representative visiting Bangladesh in 1972 was similarly taken aback. "... I am amazed at the spirit of the people and their ability to try to make a new start".[123] As this thesis has argued, life had always gone on, with or without Western help, and frequently at a much more dynamic pace than Western literature had suggested.

While there were some marked changes in the style of WVA literature during the 1970s, much of it continued to be drawn from the language of crisis and urgency, especially in relation to its relief work. The dominant image was of key (male) WV figures using modern Western technology - telephones, cables, aeroplanes - to save passive recipient countries on the "thresh-hold of disaster". With language reminiscent of the tabloid press, each situation was described as the largest and most critical of the century. Simplistic "before" and "after" images - opposing pictures of an emaciated child and a well-fed one - or disorder and hopelessness against WV efficiency and competence - were common.[124] The continued use of such images flew in the face of all the rhetoric being expressed internationally that the "know-how-show-how" days of the Western expert were numbered. The continued depiction of the Third World as an inert and "sad" place also contradicted the many spokespeople in the West who were now acknowledging Third World knowledge and practices. Of Bangladesh, WVA wrote:

> There is no dignity in starvation. Clamoring, hungry people queue up for food handouts. The hungry become angry. Food lines must be controlled by men with sticks. Floods, rising fuel costs, inflation ... have hit the jute industry. ...The country is now bankrupt. ... World Vision has experienced staff and facilities on the spot to overcome this problem. ... Your aid will get there. We **can** make a difference in this sad country.[125]

Even without specific disasters Asia continued to be promoted as a disastrous place. Sponsors were asked to provide "a ray of hope in an otherwise hopeless life", because "thousands of waifs cry out for an expression of your love".[126] Indonesia was promoted as "this poverty locked country", Vietnam as "sad little Vietnam", Bangladesh as "this sad country".[127] A headline on India read "INDIA - a Disaster in a Disaster". While

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122 "Aussie soldiers' big battle is avoiding the fans", *Sydney Morning Herald*, Nov., 23, 1991, p.15

123 Challberg, R., "News Brief, Bangladesh Progress Report," *World Vision Heartline*, Vol 6, No.3, Aug-Sept, 1972

124 *New Life*, Vol 34, No.50, Thurs June 1st, 1972, p.9; *World Vision,* Vol 1, No.4, Summer, 1973, pp.12-13; *World Vision*, Vol 1, No.2, Winter 1973, pp.1-7

125 "Death Sentence", *World Vision*, Dec, 1974

126 "Jesus still says, Whosoever receives one such child in my name receives Me", WV Advertisement, *New Life*, Vol 34, No. 40, p.5, 23/3/72; "In Vietnam and 20 other crisis areas, thousands of waifs cry out for an expression of your love", WV advertisement, *New Life*, Vol 35, No.1, 8/6/72

127 "Jesus Still Says ...", *op.cit.*; "To Vietnam with Love", *World Vision*, Vol 1, No.1, Autumn, 1973, p.5; "Death Sentence", *op.cit.*

further reading indicated that recent severe flooding in India (one disaster) had exacerbated the already critical situation of East Pakistan refugees sheltering in India (the second disaster) the headline implied that India was by nature a disaster.

WVA defended its position promoting itself as a non-political organisation simply wanting to do its job. But just as the St Vincent de Paul Society had argued that it merely wanted to assist its members "to do their job better in the various Asian countries", wishing to avoid politics and controversy, that approach ignored the fact that this stance was not neutral.

WVA tended to answer its critics by making light of them, portraying them as middle-class boffins who sat around debating crises while people died for lack of help.[128] WVA belittled the activist NGO approach which sought to focus on the world's economic system, social justice issues, undemocratic political systems or on 1% "taxation". WVA quipped: "Question: What do you say to a hungry child? Answer: We are in the preliminary stages of organising a seminar to talk about changing the world's economic system."[129] On another occasion a cartoon portrayed safari-suited, middle-class Westerners engaged in discussion while ignoring the bowl held out for food. The text read:

> "Really! We don't give handouts do we James", **James**: "But we should do something for the poor blighters Adrian"; **Adrian**: "Oh yes, we can form a committee to discuss the social injustice that causes this suffering", **James**, "And the undemocratic political system they live under", "Yes that would be good", "And a great contribution to world need."
> In the background the outstretched hand fell back in disgust.[130]

WVA's stance inevitably drew criticism from its ideological opponents. WVA was criticised for its stance on religious conversion, for its practice of child sponsorship, and for its lack of analysis about issues vitally related to development. Its administrative overheads, its methods of advertising, together with its conspicuously professional management practices were of itself enough to draw disapproval from NGOs which prided themselves on their lean administrative budgets. CAA's David Scott preferred the NGO community to display tolerance towards each other. Tolerance within organisations so that they could encompass a variety of opinions from those, as he said, "who wanted to simply give money, to those who wanted to change the world".[131] And tolerance between organisations in order to recognise and acknowledge the distinct, but often complementary, agendas followed by different agencies. Tolerance, however, was not always evident in practice in the 1970s.[132]

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128 *New Life*, June 1972; *World Vision Magazine*, Vol 1, No. 3, Spring, 1973, p.2

129 "Internationalisation is more than just a big word", *World Vision*, June 1976

130 "Wade on Aid", *World Vision Development Aid News*, Jan, 1977

131 Interview with David Scott, 23/8/90, Melbourne

132 Scott cited the example of the Red Cross. It had been criticised for resigning from ACFOA in 1978. It did so to protect its neutral status which it felt might be compromised by ACFOA's political activities,

While WVA did not deny the existence of pressing issues such as injustice, hunger or over-population, it tended to suggest a Christian solution - prayer, working towards world peace, the elimination of abuses of power which harmed children - through the growth of national churches and by making their concern concrete, through child sponsorship.

There were occasions, however, when the current world political climate and first hand experience, persuaded WVA to speak out on political issues. In 1974, WVA issued a statement on behalf of Cambodia. It argued that the Khmer people should be allowed "to work out their own problems in their way without any kind of outside interference".[133] For an organisation so recently allied to USA conservatism, this was a startlingly liberal attitude for it to adopt at the time, though it was not unconnected to the USA's changing policies towards China and Vietnam. The advent of "ping-pong" diplomacy which saw the US make overtures to China required WVI to adjust its policy to fit with current US government policy. In the Winter of 1973 Paul Rees of WVI asked that compassion be bestowed on all men, including those that it had previously referred to as Reds, communists or Viet Cong. He said:

> Something less than Christian is the compassion ...that is active toward the South Vietnamese and inert toward the North Vietnamese... that waxes fervent in prayer for President Nixon ... and never prays for Chairman Mao.... Though others may have their doubts about it, many of us are convinced that a wideranging, non-selective compassion is one of our most acute needs.[134]

Of greater impact for WVA was the publication in 1975 of WVI President Mooneyham's book - *What Do You Say To a Hungry Child?*. It was a damning critique on world poverty and the systems in the First and Third World which upheld them.[135] WVA's conservatism had previously inclined it against criticising first world systems or the status quo. But through its aid delivery it was confronted with uncomfortable issues begging to be analysed. However much it disagreed with the analyses of more activist groups, they had laid the groundwork by familiarising WVA with the issues now raised by its President. The book was thoroughly cognisant with current development issues and literature. It quoted sympathetically from the proponents of Third World equity, grassroots development and limiting affluence, such as Julius Nyerere, Schumacher and Barbara Ward. Mooneyham expressed quite explicitly what needed to be achieved:

> The challenge is to fundamentally change the system. There is no single human task facing mankind today which has a higher priority. Let us be done with tinkering. Within nations, agrarian

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which included a strong stand against Indonesia over East Timor. Scott thought the criticism was unfounded. He argued that the organisation's brief was to get behind the lines in war situations, and that nothing should compromise that objective. *Ibid*

133 "Statement from Combined Board of Directors of World Vision International", Bangkok, March 25, 1974, *World Vision,* May, 1974

134 Rees, Paul, "Compassion is Not Selective", *World Vision Magazine*, Vol 1, No.2, Winter, 1973, p.14

135 Mooneyham,W. S., *What Do You Say to a Hungry Child?*, Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1975

> reforms must be tackled resolutely.... The poor must be franchised into the economy. Between nations, trade policies must be adopted which benefit all, not just the self-chosen few. It is obvious that the present patterns, rigged so favorably in the interest of the developed minority, cannot continue.[136]

The publication had a considerable effect on WVA. This was evidenced in its literature after the mid-1970s which began to display signs of tension and ambivalence. WVA continued to criticise groups which analysed development issues excessively. It accepted that structures and systems needed changing. But it was not prepared to do so at the expense of ignoring people in abject need. In this it was unequivocal. It said: "Sure systems have to be changed. Yes, our concept of development aid must touch on social and economic structures. But, unless we get back to a deep concern for each individual person our efforts are something less than Christian."[137]

Throughout the second half of the 1970s, WVA literature alluded to many pertinent development issues. Their impact was minimised, however, by a defensive attitude and by presenting facts and statements without context, comment, elaboration or analysis. For example, it raised an important issue in reference to a child receiving treatment in a WV funded hospital in Bangladesh. The resident doctor explained that the child would be put on a high protein diet and sent home, but that since it would return to the same poor environment, like most of the hospital's patients, the child would probably return.[138] Since by 1978 WVA, like other agencies, was actively supporting the concept of long-term development, the situation was an opportunity missed to discuss the limitations of welfare aid and the importance of initiating permanent development at the village level.

While this lack of critical analysis, in combination with its advertising style, worked well in terms of raising funds, it did little to educate the Australian public about development issues. It also helped obscure WVA's activities in the field when, around the mid-1970s, the organisation began to adopt a more developmental approach. (This issue will be discussed in Chapter 8). What "child sponsorship" meant had changed beyond recognition from 1950 to the end of the 1970s. But the continued extensive use of the child image - frequently the skeletal, starving child image (what the Director of Caritas, Bangladesh called "pornography of the poor"), continued to be vigorously defended by WVA and several other agencies.

An Australian Save the Children's Fund spokesperson defended the use of gaunt advertisements to raise money for Ethiopia in the early 1980s. "That, unfortunately, is what stirs people. How do you get people to give? There really isn't another way to twist people's hearts."[139] A WVA spokesperson remarked during the same period,

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136 "Stan Mooneyham speaks out on hunger", extracts from "What Do You Say to a Hungry World?", *World Vision*, July, 1975

137 "Cry Bangla", *World Vision*, Sept 1975

138 "Bangladesh - its future?", *World Vision Aid News*, Feb 1978

139 "Sponsoring a Child", *Choice*, Vol 24, No.7, July, 1983, p.14

"advertisements featuring projects where people have achieved self reliance do not motivate people to respond."[140] Although WVA gradually modified its advertising through the 1980s, generally setting aside the excessively emaciated image, it did continue to justify the use of the child and the starving child. Philip Hunt, Director of Planning WVA in 1986 would argue:

> We can't wait for people to get brighter, better educated, more clued in.... If the existing reality is of an image of a starving child that's where we have to start, even though we have concerns about how simplistic and even demeaning such an image is.... Effective development education will never be able to abandon the starving child image until most Australians have been engaged in the development education process. We can't change an image merely by abandoning it, we can only change the need of the image by using it to engage in the process of learning and attitudinal change.[141]

WVA and other NGOs argued that once an individual became a committed sponsor, that was the time to educate them. "Once they've responded we can begin to show them through articles in our publications that people in Third World countries have great dignity and they are resourceful."[142] This argument was greatly at odds with organisations like CAA, AFFHC and the ACC. Bill Armstrong, the Executive Director of OSB, for example, while acknowledging that there was no better way to unzip people's purses and wallets than by showing pictures of starving children, argued that a response based on guilt stopped rather than started the development education process: "We get rid of guilt and put the problem aside".[143] Such groups were strongly opposed to raising funds by capitalising on the misfortunes of the Third World. Armstrong and those like him turned WVA's argument on its head, arguing that effective development education could only begin by discarding the negative images and by promoting a more informed critique on world poverty.

Whatever the quality of the projects funded by emotive means, neither the Western public nor poor communities in the Third World were well-served by such advertising. Studies in the United Kingdom confirmed in 1988 that negative imagery in regard to Band Aid and other African appeals had reinforced patronising attitudes among young people towards the Third World.[144] An African NGO worker, confirmed in the same year, that the campaigns to raise funds for African famines had reinforced racism and a colonial attitude of "looking down" on Africa. In Australia, in the 1970s, an increasing number of emotive appeals for disaster relief also served to reinforce stereotypical and

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140 *Ibid*

141 *Forum on Child Sponsorship*, 3 Sept., 1986, Audio Tape, WVA, AUD 362.71 FOR

142 "Sponsoring a Child", Toycen, D., WVA, *Choice*, Vol 24, No.7, July, 1983, p.14

143 Bill Armstrong, OSB, *Forum on Child Sponsorship*, *op.cit.*

144 Nash, C., & van der Gaag, N., *Images of Africa Project*, OXFAM, U.K., 1988 and Grant, R., & Cameron, J., *Awareness or Understanding?*, Centre for World Development Education, U.K. referred to in Coulter, P. "Pretty as a Picture", *New Internationalist*, No.194, April, 1989, p.12

anachronistic images of a "deficient" Third World.[145] The absence of a national, government-sponsored development education campaign to promote a more sophisticated knowledge of developing nations helped support this too simplistic portrayal of Third World communities.

Development Education and Government Support

Numerous requests by ACFOA and its agencies during the 1970s for government funding to follow up the UN's public education recommendations were declined.[146] The Whitlam government had given the issue some recognition when it granted ACFOA $50,000 for its education unit and provided support for an education conference in 1973.[147] In reply to a request from CAA, for a grant to fund an education programme, an ADAA official acknowledged overseas precedents for such assistance, and stated that the Agency was examining the proposal "with interest".[148] The letter was dated November 11th 1975, the date on which the Governor General dismissed the Whitlam government.

A similar submission from ACFOA to Peacock, in October 1976, requesting government funds for a Public Participation Programme was declined, as were subsequent requests.[149] ACFOA's aim was to enable the public to critically assess different responses to Third World need and to discover ways to contribute to equitable world development.[150] The Fraser government argued that it was "more appropriate", "for the voluntary organisations to rely on their own efforts to arouse greater community interest in aid and development issues".[151] Both the Budget papers and the DAC Memo of 1978-79 referred to the role of NGOs in educating the Australian public

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145 WVA, for example, reported the condition of Indo-China refugees attacked by pirates or victims of leaking ill-equipped boats; the large numbers of East Timorese believed dead over a four year period of conflict; some 500,000 people who had died under nine years of Idi Amin's Uganda regime , "decimation" in Pol Pot's Kampuchea and cyclone and tidal wave damage in Bangladesh. *World Vision News*, Dec., 1979; Kliewer, W., "Report from East Pakistan", *WV Heartline*, Vol 8, No.1, Feb., 1971

146 Crawford first expressed disappointment about the lack of government support for development education purposes in 1971. The government refused to grant financial support to an ACFOA seminar to explore the role of NGOs in promoting the Second Development Decade, Australian Council For Overseas Aid, "Minutes of Council Meeting", Saturday August 14, 1971, Opening of Council

147 "Report on Development Education...", *op.cit.*, p.3

148 Letter Adrian Harris, Director CAA to Mr Johnson, Director ADAA, June 4, 1975; Letter from N Ross ADAA Officer to Adrian Harris, Director, CAA, 11 Nov., 1975

149 The August 1975 ACFOA Council Meeting resolved to launch the Education Unit into an eighteen month development education programme. Its submission was based heavily on Canadian CIDA guidelines. "Draft Guidelines for Government Grants to NGO Public Participation Programmes", Discussed at ACFOA Executive Meeting July 18-19, 1976; "Paper on Influencing Australian Public Opinion...Community Participation Scheme", Michael P Sullivan, nd; Submission to ADAB for Funding of Development Education and Project Expenditure, August 23, 1979, CAA

150 In an effort to push their cause the *DND* of March 1976 published the Canadian Government's application form for NGO funds in its Public Participation Scheme. "Development Education, National Public Participation Campaign", Request for Funding for a Feasibility Study, Education Unit, ACFOA, Sept., 1976

151 *Ibid*

about development issues.[152] But yearly acknowledgments of the NGOs' commitment to development education, fell far short of the UN's call for active government participation.[153]

In this regard Australian aid policy lagged behind many other Western government donors - most strikingly the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and Canada. In those nations governments had swung behind public development education programmes in the early 1970s. Canada gave an average of $1 million annually to development education activities. As early as 1976 the Australian *DND* noted the differences in the two aid communities suggesting that CIDA's support illustrated that information, education and public participation laid the groundwork for public concern and financial as well as political support."[154] It added:

> In Canada NGOs have become a viable third strand of aid policy in addition to and distinct from bilateral and multilateral aid. The most immediate results of this is of course a large and concerned section of the Canadian community who support development and who support CIDA. ADAA has denied itself any support of such a lobby.[155]

A senior CIDA official confirmed in 1989 the very strong basic support for development activities in the Third World in the Canadian community.[156] This he believed transcended party divisions and even divisions between the voluntary sector and business. While he acknowledged that if one probed more deeply there would be different viewpoints about how the Canadian programme should be handled, at a central level there was agreement across the board.[157] During research for this thesis CIDA's influence on the Australian and Asian aid community was clearly evident. CIDA policy and activities were persistently referred to, in documentation and in interviews, by Australian and Asian NGOs. Australian NGOs drew on CIDA guidelines, Australian government aid personnel entered into exchanges with CIDA staff, Asian NGOs

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152 *Australia's Official Development Assistance to Developing Countries, 1978-79,* Budget Paper No 8, AGPS, Canberra, 1978, p.8; Development Assistance Committee Australian Memorandum 1978, ADAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1978, p.22; "Minister's Address to Australian Non-Government Aid Organisations", 7 Sept., 1977, *AFAR*, Vol , No.9, Sept., 1977, p.483

153 "Much of the work of educating and informing the Australian community on development co-operation issues is currently undertaken by the active aid lobby among the voluntary aid organisations in Australia." *Development Assistance Committee Australian Memorandum 1978,* ADAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1979, p.22

154 "Draft", Editorial *DND*, 1976, p.3

155 *Ibid*; The Canadian Council for International Cooperation (the ACFOA equivalent), developed a nation-wide Development Education Animateur Program. CUSO, the Canadian volunteer organisation established a demonstration Mobile Learner Centre. OXFAM CANADA established the Development Education Centre in Toronto., Hunt, J., "Development Education in North America", Report of a Study Tour Sponsored by the Committee for Development Cooperation, ACFOA, Canberra, 1987, pp.5-6; "Public Participation Programmes", *DND 15*, Mar., 1976, p.28; Ingevics, E., ADAB,"A Year With CIDA", ADAB/NGO Consultations, Canberra, 20-21 Nov., 1978, Attachment B

156 Interview Norman Macdonnell, Canadian Embassy, 20/2/89, Manila, Philipppines

157 This was borne out in a Canadian government review on aid in 1986 which confirmed the range of public support for aid in general and the real increases in the aid budget when all others except defence (which had to rise due to a NATO commitment) had fallen. *Ibid*

received CIDA funding to support pioneering projects, reports, seminars and conferences. By 1993/4 Canadian development education funding as a % of its ODA was 1.08% (over US$17m) compared with 0.23% in Australia or around A$1.3m.[158]

In Sweden, Gunnar Myrdal argued that high level public support for the Swedish aid programme came about precisely because it was presented in terms of poverty issues rather than in terms of national interest.[159] By 1990 Sweden contributed almost US$11 million to development education and 0.9% of its GNP to ODA, compared with Australia's 0.35%.[160]

The Netherlands established the National Committee for Information and Development Cooperation (NCO), a government funded but independent body to promote development education in the Dutch community.[161] In contrast to the Australian experience, in the Netherlands there was a broad consensus between the NCO and voluntary groups about the philosophy and practice of development education.[162] Government support for aid was again reflected in 1990 aid figures. The Netherlands contributed 1.13% of its GNP to ODA and around US$15 million to its development education programme.

By contrast, in the USA, strong government emphasis on the efficacy of American democracy and the need to stop communism in areas like Central America or Asia made it difficult for American NGOs to introduce more sophisticated analysis critical of US capitalism or its Third World allies. With a few exceptions - such as USA OXFAM (which was obviously influenced by its overseas partners) - US NGOs were inclined to continue to focus primarily on welfare issues rather than adopting a more political and critical stance by questioning the structural causes of poverty and inequality.[163] According to B. Smith, until the mid 1980s, very few US NGOs were engaged in educating Americans about the Third World or in influencing US foreign policy on aid related issues.[164] USA ODA contributions in 1990 represented 0.2% of its GNP while its development education spending was negligible - around US$250,000.[165]

In Australia, the Fraser government responded cautiously to the UN proposal that governments adopt national development education programmes. That such a

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158 *The Reality of Aid*, ICVA, EUROSTEP, ACTIONAID, Somerset, 1994, pp.148-9,155; *Australia's Overseas Aid Program, 1995-96*, Budget Related Paper, No.2, p.53, AGPS, Canberra, 1995

159 "Interview with Gunnar Myrdal", *op.cit.*

160 "The Reality of Aid", *op.cit.*, pp.35,111

161 "The Netherland", nd. no publisher, booklet appended to ADAB/NGO Consultation: November 1978, papers

162 *Ibid*; "Development and the Australian Public", ADAB/NGO Consultation; Mitchell, I., ADAB, "International Trends in NGO-Government Co-operation", ADAB/NGO Consultation, Nov., 1978

163 Smith, B., *More than Altruism*, *op.cit.*, pp.126-7

164 *Ibid*, p.126

165 "The Reality of Aid", *op.cit.*, pp.,122,111

programme was desirable had been evidenced by the results of a survey of parliamentarians in 1974. This had revealed a "general sense of ignorance" among them about the Australian aid programme. Participants were unable to offer anything but anecdotal criticisms of the programme and displayed a low level of awareness when questioned on whether aid should be focused on development or diplomacy priorities.[166]

By 1976 NGOs were claiming that their earlier education campaigns had generated an increased interest in the aid programme among politicians, news media, teachers and students, the congregations of major churches, youth organisations and many community groups.[167] The claims were supported by the findings of a 1977 Government task-force which examined the issue of public information. The task-force recommended a more vigorous publicity programme to cater for the demands from educational institutions, community groups, the media and business community for materials on aid issues. The 1978 DAC Memo acknowledged that the level of public and parliamentary awareness of development co-operation issues and Australian aid activities "appears to have risen in recent years" (for which the NGO community claimed the major credit).[168] It went on: "Evidence for this includes expanded media coverage, the increased volume of correspondence received by Government, and the increased public response to Government decisions on development assistance."[169] But it also added that: "Relatively little public criticism is directed at the aid program. Criticism, when it occurs, is often aimed at a perceived emphasis on large scale development projects and sophisticated technology."[170]

Rather than building on the NGO sector's work by engaging in a government-sponsored, nation-wide development education programme the government took a very reserved approach. It marginally increased the information available about the government aid programme in a series of leaflets, posters and films.[171] It also expanded the data in its regular publications. The 1979-80 Annual Review of ADAB, for example, expanded to 81 pages compared to the First Annual Report in 1974-75 of 15

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166 "Where Have all the Dollars Gone? M.P.s Review Aid Programme", *DND*, Vol 1, No.5, May, 1973; "Australian Parliamentarians' View on Aid", *DND*, 10, June/July, 1974

167 A discussion paper to the ACFOA Executive Meeting of July, 1976, commented "The development education programmes of Australian non-government organisations over the past decade have generated considerable interest among politicians, news media, teachers and students, the congregations of major churches, youth organisations and many community groups. It would be fair to say that without these programmes the Australian public would not be at its present state of awareness...". Draft Guidelines for Government Grants to NGO Public Participation Programmes, For discussion at ACFOA Executive Meeting, July 18-18, 1976

168 *Development Assistance Committee Australian Memorandum 1978*, ADAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1979, p.22

169 *Ibid*

170 *Ibid*

171 On Bilateral, Multilateral and Training aid and Women in Developing Countries. The posters were titled *Facts and Figures Around the World* and *The Kids Next Door*

pages.[172] Such information continued to be fairly pedestrian, unimaginative and poorly marketed. By no stretch of the imagination was this an education campaign. Groups and individuals interested in aid were required to seek out the information from the government.

The films commissioned by the government had at least changed significantly from their 1950s' counterparts. They played closer attention to individual countries and to individual projects. They were less arrogant. The days of overtly bragging about Western achievements had gone and there was increased interaction with locals working side-by-side with Australian experts. Such images now granted some credence to the oft-stated conviction that Australians were well suited to the "Australian as expert" role. Casey had claimed in the 1950s that Australians were temperamentally suited for aid work; a decade later Hasluck continued to extol the merits of the Australian character - of the ability of Australians to "swing an axe and handle sheep". He claimed: "the merit of Australians is that they get out into the paddock or the garden". In 1977 Peacock also claimed: "Australian experts have a willingness to get their boots dirty and an ability to improvise in difficult circumstances which is perhaps even more important than the professional and technical skills for which they are primarily selected."[173] Neither the film producer nor Peacock could resist embroidering the nationalist myth. Peacock declared that Australian experts brought "to the countries in which they serve the national spirit of making do - a pragmatic and practical approach to life which has been burnt into our national consciousness in settling and developing this country."[174] An Australian sheep breeding project in India which introduced the "All-India Machine Sheep Shearing Championships" to that country, was filmed against a backdrop of Australian shearing verse, spoken with nationalistic fervour and emotion.

Yet there remained a sense of the superiority of Western techniques, if only by the "before and after" transformation - the terraced hillsides against the deforested, eroded swidden techniques of Miao tribesmen in Northern Thailand; the improved cattle and sheep after cross-breeding with Australian breeds against the scrawny local breeds in

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172 *Development Co-operation, Australia's Program of Support for Social and Economic Development in the Third World, Annual Review, 1979-80*, ADAB, Depart. of Foreign Affairs, AGPS, Camberra, 1981; *First Annual Report 1974-75*, ADAA, AGPS, Canberra, 1975

173 Boxer's study on Australian experts noted the Australians' "comparative indifference to status (including their own), their capacity to improvise, and their practical bent ...", Boxer, *op.cit.*, p.96; Australian Aid to Asia, Success of Experts and Advisers:Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. R.G.Casey, 21st August, 1955", *C.N.* Vol. 26, No.11, Nov.1955, p.578; "The Place of Agriculture in Australian External Aid Planning", Minister for External Affairs, Mr Paul Hasluck, 31 Aug., 1965, *C.N.*, Vol.36, No.8,1965, p.490; "International Development:Looking Towards the 1980s", Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock, Canberra, 17 Oct., 1977, *AFAR*, Vol 48, No.11, Nov., 1977, p.575

174 *Ibid*

India; the water gushing from the tap against that carried from the well, in Indonesia.[175] The films therefore continued to reinforce, though with greater subtlety than previously, the image of superior Western competence, achievement and altruism, despite the efforts to stress a congenial "helping neighbours", "extending the hand of friendship" theme.

As well, none of the films presented the projects in a wider context to explore the broader development problems facing a particular country, region or local community. They joined the annual publications on the aid programme - the Annual Reports, the DAC Review, the Bilateral Aid Programme Reports; and Occasional Papers on Development Assistance.[176] Together the information amounted to a bland listing of hundreds of individual projects.

Although the NGOs failed to engage the government in a national development education programme, they were now receiving slightly more government recognition. References to NGOs began to appear regularly, if in a fairly restrained manner, in government budget papers and in annual aid reports, linking NGO activity to government assistance.[177] A 1979 ADAB report stated: "Efforts are now being made to link the NGOs with the official program to fill gaps previously left unfilled at the local level by major projects, both through small-scale development projects and organisation of local involvement in self-help programs."[178]

The Fraser government had maintained the Project Subsidy Scheme (started by the Whitlam government), which contributed funds to NGO overseas projects. By 1979-80 Government assistance to NGOs amounted to $2.24 million with funding continuing to the OSB, ACFOA, the Red Cross, the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the Project Subsidy Scheme. The latter assisted small scale projects such as community leadership training, sanitation, safe drinking water and integrated agricultural activities.[179] In 1979-80 around 170 NGO projects in 34 developing countries were government assisted.[180]

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175 *Philippines-Of Rice and Roads*, Produced by Ian Harris and Associates for ADAB Project Series, 1978, 13min,16mm; *Indonesian Development Action*, Ian Harris and Associates for ADAB Project Series No.3, 1979, 16 min, 16mm; *India-Hissar to Assam*, Ian Harris and Associates for ADAB Project Series No 4, 1978, 19 min.,16mm; *Thailand-Paths to Progress* , Ian Harris and Associates for ADAB Project Series No 1, 1978, 19min, 16mm; *Development Education Services 1978* for ADAB, 14 mins, 16mm; *Water in Bogor*, Film Australia for ADAA, 1974, 14min., 16mm

176 "Key Statements", October 1975 - 3 November 1980, Development Co-operation, ADAB, Depart. of Foreign Affairs, AGPS, Canberra, 1980, pp.142-143

177 Parkinson, N.,"The Management of Foreign Policy", *AFAR*, Oct.,1977, pp.518-523

178 ADAB, *Bilateral Aid Program 1979-80*, AGPS, Canberra, 1979, p.4

179 *Ibid*, pp.4-5

180 The top four grants were given to Australian Catholic Relief - $190,000; Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign $175,000; Australian Council of Churches $170,000 and Community Aid Abroad $115,000. Austcare, Save the Children Fund, Foster Parents Plan and World Vision all received $95,000

The government acknowledged the focus of NGO work in areas of "serious poverty", and its ability to meet:

> ... basic human needs by providing specific levels of nutrition, safe drinking water, sanitation, basic health services, shelter and basic education. Non-government organisations have long experience in sponsoring flexible and simple projects involving local counterparts in implementation and decision-making processes, thus generating self-help programs in a large number of developing countries.[181]

The government also acknowledged the NGO's effectiveness in assisting people at the local level; of involving Australians in the aid process; in educating Australians about aid issues and in providing a forum for dialogue with the official programme, thereby "assisting in the formulation of Australian development assistance policy".[182]

The validity of these claims varied from NGO to NGO. However, the rhetoric linking NGOs to the Official Development Assistance programme was not insignificant. Of course, by linking NGO domestic and overseas grassroots activities to the overall Australian aid programme, the government was seen to be supporting development education and BHN's issues without having to commit the ODA programme strongly to those issues.

But this accommodation with the NGO community also reflected the increased growth of NGOs nationally and internationally. The total flow of private grants from Australian NGOs to developing nations had increased from around $14m in 1970 to some $44m in 1979.[183] Globally NGOs had acquired a much higher and more political profile, as well as greater interdependence, as NGOs all over the world gradually increased their contacts with each other. A group of Western NGOs met in Paris in February 1978 to discuss their joint concerns - their relationship with government, the question of accountability, NGO autonomy and the problem of mobilising public opinion.

Some NGOs had begun to monitor significant international conferences. During UNCTAD IV, in 1976, NGOs lobbied Western delegates and produced conference newspapers articulating the NGO perspective.[184] Senior officials of the British Commonwealth had also endorsed moves for a closer relationship with NGOs in 1976. A Commonwealth advisory committee was established to assess the nature of what it called "the unofficial Commonwealth". It agreed with a Canadian delegation that "NGOs have now become an essential part of international affairs."[185] The committee identified the existence of many thousands of NGOs, varying widely in activities,

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181 "Australia's Official Development Assistance to Developing Countries 1978-79", Budget Paper No 8, AGPS, Canberra, 1978, p.8

182 *Budget Paper, No.8, 1978-79, op.cit.*

183 Rugendyke, B., "Unity in Diversity: The Changing Face of the Australian NGO Community", in Zivetz, L., *et al, Doing Good:The Australian NGO Community*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1991, p.2

184 Lovbraek, A.,"NGO Development Action and the North-South Debate", *Development Education:The State of the Art,* The United Nations Non Governmental Liaison Service, Geneva, 1986, pp.5-17

185 Eggleton, A, "NGOs and the Commonwealth," NGO/ADAB Consultation, 21 Nov., 1978

geographical scope and organisational structure, but drawn together loosely by their contributions to economic and social progress. Their cost-effectiveness and flexibility was acknowledged, as was their function as an important channel of direct communication to the grassroots. Even an Australian government report to the committee in 1978 (compiled by Foreign Affairs and ADAB with contributions from Australian NGOs), though notable more for its rhetoric than its intentions, fell in line with international opinion by acknowledging that NGOs were "in a position to move ahead of official policy and to point the way to innovation and change." The report added that NGOs should be seen by governments as a basic resource on which to draw.[186]

Although the Fraser government showed few signs that it would act on its own advice, and despite NGO setbacks in promoting development education issues in Australia, activist NGOs had helped appreciably to encourage the broader Australian NGO community to adopt more creative development policies in the field. The negative portrayal of Third World communities, projected by some NGOs to raise funds, ironically frequently belied the considerable energy being expended, even by less activist NGOs, on hundreds of thousands of community development projects. Even WVA, despite its persistent child-sponsorship advertising theme, and its prolific use of the gaunt image, had begun in the mid-1970s to adopt community development practices in the field. The negative depiction of Third World communities also totally disregarded the work of activist NGOs who were evolving ways to gain greater equity and social justice for the poor. Reliant as they were on an essentially conservative public for funds the NGO community in the main - some by design, others by default - failed to adequately engage the broader Australian public in these overseas' activities. Paradoxically, therefore, across the spectrum of NGOs, development practices carried out in the field in the 1970s (the focus of the next chapter), were tending to move ahead of public perceptions. These frequently remained locked in the notion of the "charity dollar".

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186 *Ibid*

Chapter 8
"Wells" or "Social Justice"?
NGO Assistance in Action

"'Community development' is the cover-all catch phrase.... An irrigation ditch dug in one place can help a whole community grow more food. Dug in another it can so increase the value of land that the poor can no longer afford to farm it ..., to say that you are involved in community development is not enough. The intended impact has to be carefully chosen...." ..... *Peter Stalker, New Internationalist, 1982*

The Growth of an Asian NGO Community

Just as the seventies had radicalised many Western groups so the same critiques and discourses entered the campuses of the Third World and influenced many of its students. A combination of world factors and internal political events served to politicise young Asian students - Filipino, Bangladeshi, Thai, Indian - and to motivate many of them to work for the poor through NGO structures.

The failure of economic models or of governments to adequately address the issue of economic inequality had become patently clear to many young Asians when, as students and volunteers, they were confronted with the poverty and hardship endured by both rural and city communities. Famine in India, during the late 1960s and in the 1970s, brought many students face to face with village realities for the first time. Similarly, Filipino social work students engaged in field-work witnessed first-hand the poverty in villages and urban slum areas. Many of these young people had grown to maturity nurturing the promises of the independence movements - of political, economic and social progress. But as governments not only failed to put in place meaningful reform, such as effective, widespread land reform programmes, but often became more militarist and repressive, many young Asians looked for ways to seek social justice for the poor.

When Ferdinand Marcos imposed martial law in the Philippines in 1972, when Mrs Gandhi imposed Emergency rule in 1975, and when the Thai government mowed down students engaged in the Thai Democracy Movement on the Thammasat University campus in 1976, the possibility that social change would emerge through radical political change was becoming increasingly unlikely. Many students, therefore, looked to NGOs as a legitimate and relatively safe means of becoming involved in poverty and community development issues. Jon Ungphakorn[1], director of the Thai Development Support Committee NGO, remarked in 1989:

> The unhappy experiences of many Thai intellectuals with constitutional and rapid popular mobilization efforts, right-wing violence, and an ideologically backward Communist Party during

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[1] Son of Dr Puey Ungphakorn, Director of Thammasat University when many Thai students were killed during a student pro-Democracy rally in 1976.

> the 1970s have ... played a part in producing a reaction against much radical social theory and ... confrontational political activism .... [2]

Instead many students put their energy behind peaceful, legal change through the NGO movement claiming autonomy from any "political party, movement or policy".[3]

A Filipina NGO worker, who graduated from the University of the Philippines in 1973 with a Bachelor of Science and Social Work degree, was a typical example. She remarked of the period:

> We were at school at a time when student activism was very strong. In the 'First Quarter Storm' two years prior to the declaration of martial law, there were a lot of rallies, demonstrations, all over the world it was a time of change, in the U.S. there was 'Flower Power', the same thing was going on here.[4]

After graduating she immediately worked in the field as a community organiser mainly with Catholic organisations and through this work came into contact with UNICEF for whom she assessed funds for UNICEF health projects. She explained:

> A group of friends altogether at U.P. thought we should start an organisation. We thought we should continue the commitment to social transformation [engendered during their time together at university] but we were not ready to go up to the hills or underground, nor work with the government, so we thought we should start our own agency. In 1977 we started ACES, Agency for Community Education and Services Foundation. Our first contract was with UNICEF so that exposed us to the aid programmes of multilateral agencies. ... When we had that linkage we were contracted specifically to a training programme for three government agencies and the Social Action Center of the Catholic Church on Community Organisation, since that was our distinctive competence at that point. That was very much influenced by the Christian community organisation approach which over the years has transformed itself into a methodology which need not be church based. I always say there are three influences, the Alinsky influence,[5] the Paulo Freire and Marxist, ... those three influences were present from the very beginning. Over the years there has been a lot of Filipino input and what we have now is a very Filipino approach, a lot of cultural indigenisation has occurred.[6]

War between East and West Pakistan provided the impetus for a young Bangladeshi health worker to become involved in NGO work. She explained:

> I have worked with GK since 1971. That was during the year of liberation. Gonoshasthaya Kendra was then a field hospital for the Mukti Bahini (liberation army). I had my first experience with health work then. When the war was over I went home to go back to school. But I could not forget the suffering I had seen during the war as I moved from camp to camp. I decided to go back to GK which had now become a centre in Savar. My family were very unhappy with my decision. Like most Bengali families they asked 'Why don't you stay at home like a good girl? Home is safe and we can protect you.' I was unmarried, 16 years old and GK was 80 miles away from my home.[7]

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[2] Ungphakorn J, "Thai NGDOs Situation", Paper, Thai Volunteer Service, September, 1987, Bangkok, Thailand, p.3

[3] *Ibid*

[4] Interview with Corazon Juliano-Soliman, 21/2/89, Agency for Community Education and Services Foundation, [ACES], Manila, Philippines

[5] For information on Saul Alinsky see his works on building people's organisations: Alinsky S., *Rules for Radicals* and *Reveille for Radicals*, *op.cit.*

[6] Interview with C. Juliano-Soliman, *op.cit.*

[7] Bhasin, Kamla, *Breaking Barriers: A South Asian Experience of Training for Participatory Development*, Report of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign/Action For Development Regional Change Agent Programme, March-May, 1978, FFHC/AD, Bangkok, Jan. 1979, p.29

The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), which would become one of the largest and best known NGOs in Bangladesh, also formed out of the carnage of the 1971 war. Initially offering humanitarian and relief aid by re-housing and distributing seeds, fertiliser and cash loans and medical care to refugees, it gradually adopted a development focus.[8]

Natural disasters frequently provided the initial link for many Indian students to become involved in NGO work. One NGO worker with 20 years experience by 1991, had his eyes opened during a voluntary drought relief campaign in Maharashtra in 1973: "I went most reluctantly for 15 days but stuck it for three months. They were appalling conditions and I felt something had to be done, my life did 180o turn." He described the group he was with as a group of young, enthusiastic, committed students mainly from St Zaviers College, Bombay. They were trying to create a meaningful economic base for the people to escape drought problems. He continued: "It was a genuine but immature outlook, that was the level of awareness at this time." But at the same time he came into contact with a Swiss aid worker and was introduced to the work of Paulo Freire. Much influenced by Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the complexities of development were brought home to him and encouraged him to change his focus when he eventually took up an academic teaching post in social work. He pressed for a community focused curriculum with field placements to enable students to view their work as a process that was people-centred rather than agency-centred, where people came with problems to be solved by the agency.[9]

One of CAA's Indian field workers in 1991 had also become involved through student voluntary relief work in 1975. With a group of six to seven students he went to Orrisa to help with cyclone relief and stayed there working in relief work for more than two years on irrigation projects. Once again it was a period of awareness raising among the students many of whom had joined the Jayaprakash Narayan anti-Emergency movement. Augustine Ullatil moved in 1976 to South Orissa to work with Khond tribals and subsequently to a Bombay slum project where he came into contact with Community Aid Abroad.[10]

Similar experiences throughout other Asian countries led to a rapid increase in NGOs.[11] As their numbers expanded during the 1970s, particularly in India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Bangladesh, they typically operated with a handful of staff, on small

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[8] "Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committeee - BRAC", *Asian Action*, Jan/Feb., No.6, 1977, p.25, Newsletter of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, Bangkok, Thailand

[9] Interview with Dominic De Souza, 28/2/91 and 11/3/91, IndoGerman Social Service, New Delhi, India

[10] Interview with Augustine Ullatil, 16/2/91, CAA, Bangalore, India

[11] Ajoy Kumar was another full-time NGO worker in 1991 who was introduced to the concept of voluntary organisation and social work in the 1970s. During his Bachelor of Agricultural Science degree in Hyderabad he assisted a Cyclone relief programme in Andhra Pradesh. Interview Ajoy Kumar, Director of TREND, 17/2/91, Bangalore, India

budgets which were frequently funded by foreign NGOs seeking increased involvement in Third World development.

While this was taking place multilateral agencies, such as FAO through its FFHC programme, and ecumenical organisations - particularly Protestant and Catholic ones - were becoming influential world-wide in focusing on development and poverty issues. The activities of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, Vatican II and the WCC Assemblies in the 1960s had created new ideological agendas concerned with the growth of Third World poverty. The awareness of these organisations about the realities of poverty in developing nations was growing substantially. It was assisted by input from Third World sources. Information had been provided, for example, by Third World Bishops who attended the long residential Vatican II deliberations.[12] Individuals such as Sri Lankan, Chandra de Fonseka, and B.R. Sen, the Indian Director of FAO, helped inject a Third World perspective into the FAO/FFHC.[13] With strong organisational, financial and administrative backing behind them these organisations sought to become actively involved with the Asian development community and generated a number of activities in the region during the 1970s.

The Tokyo Asian Ecumenical Conference for Development, held in June 1970, encouraged inter-faith co-operation. The concept was explored at an Inter-Religious Meeting on Justice and Development in March 1973 in Bangkok and in December of the same year at a seminar on Religion and Development in Asia in Sri Lanka. From these meetings a regional NGO evolved named the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD) which was located in Bangkok. The Asian Partnership for Human Development (APHD), a partnership of Catholic Church Agencies in Asia comprised of various national social action centres was also formed in 1973. In August 1974 a workshop titled, Development of Human Resources for Rural Asia, attended by some 100 people engaged in rural development in twelve Asian and Pacific countries, established the Centre for the Development of Human Resources For Rural Asia or CENDHRRA. The organisation was subsequently located in the Philippines. Another network of NGOs, the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), emerged from a meeting called to discuss the upcoming World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in 1979.[14]

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[12] More than two thousand bishops met over a period of three years. (1962-65) Smith, B, *More Than Altruism: The Politics of Private Foreign Aid*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1990, p.82; The Latin American Bishops' Conference held at Medellin, Colombia in 1968 helped to introduce the "liberation" perspective to Christian theology. Baum, G., "The Theology of Liberation", *New Internationalist*, No.70, Dec., 1978, pp.6-7

[13] Interview with Edgar Valenzuela, 15/2/89, Manila, ANGOC 1989

[14] Status Papers on NGO Involvement in Rural Development:A Perspective of Ten Countries in Asia, ANGOC, Manila, 1984, p.7

Logistically, what evolved from the numerous workshops, field visits and interactions held during the 1970s was essentially two-fold. Regional NGOs were established which could network throughout the Asian region. Stemming from that, regional training courses for development workers were evolved. The result was that many NGOs at various levels from field-workers up, were put in touch with each other. Through field visits, intensive six to seven week training workshops and newsletters, development workers were exposed to issues and conditions in other parts of their own countries or in different parts of Asia. The themes they pursued demonstrated a strong reaction against Western development, and encouraged an emphasis on Asian conditions and values and on the human side of development. The titles of many of their workshops carried these messages: "Human Resource Development in Asia"; "Development Training for Asian People's Action"; "The Case For Alternative Development of the People for the People by the People"; and "Struggle for Self-Reliance in Asia Today".[15]

As the newly born *Asian Action* (the newsletter of Hong Kong based ACFOD) announced in January 1976:

> ...a network of small voices is beginning to be heard; voices which do not seek to be identified with the passive acceptance of poverty, exploitation and oppression. ...These voices and words are to be found in small newspapers, pamphlets, information sheets, scribbled poems and stories or in journals and research papers - all of which add up to a significant counter-network of ideas.[16]

The voices were demanding active Asian participation in the world aid and development debate, and that a more Asian perspective and more relevant solutions be found to address Asian poverty. Such a view assumed a much greater role in the future for Asian NGOs in delivering services to the poor.

Having lost faith in "trickle down" ideology or hand-outs, and recognising the previous *ad hoc* approach of community development practices, Asian NGOs sought to establish why development programmes failed to reach or benefit the poor and what they could do about it.[17] While following this focus they identified and located innumerable barriers to equitable development and devised practical methods to overcome them. They frequently used analysis and arguments from the works of Freire, Schumacher, Mao Tse Tung and liberation theology.[18]

They were assisted by seminars organised by the FAO Freedom from Hunger Campaign, which had added an additional title to its name in 1971 "Action for

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15 "A Report of ACFOD's Development Workers Programme for 1976...", ACFOD Publication - 1, Thailand, 1977; "A Report of ACFOD's Development Workers Programme for 1977...", ACFOD Publication, Thailand, 1978; Pan Asian Assembly, May 13-22, 1976, World Student Christian Federation and International Movement of Catholic Students, Asia Region, Thailand 1976; Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Rome, July 1979

16 *Asian Action*, No.1, Jan.1976, p.1

17 *Breaking Barriers ... op.cit.*, p.6

18 Baum, G., *op.cit.*; O'Brien, N., *Revolution from the Heart*, Claretian Publications, Quezon City, 1987

Development" (FFHC/AD), to accentuate its interest in development work. FFHC/AD identified rural-based NGOs working with local populations and assisted them with workshops and training programmes to improve those projects which encouraged self-reliance.[19] The Asian Regional Workshop on People's Participation in Development held in Poona in 1973 brought together what it called "change agents and development practitioners" to prepare and train them to encourage a more participatory process of community development.

Most Third World NGOs had previously placed their faith as readily as Western NGOs in the infallibility of the development expert. But in the 1970s Third World NGOs began to question development which focused solely on introducing technical improvements and in judging "progress" by a measurement of production.[20] A seminar titled Breaking Barriers argued:

> Much too often it is the case that experts in fertilisers, insecticides, irrigation, live stock, fisheries, farm management, soil science and farm machinery, etc. are trained to understand their job only from the narrow point of view of their respective disciplines.... Very seldom is it that their training incorporates an analyses of the social and other effects of their activities. It is hardly surprising therefore for such experts and extension agents either to be ill-informed or not concerned with who is deriving the benefit from the practice of their skills. For them it would not really matter if the profits of a well to do farmer are being increased at the cost of small farmers or the operations of a multinational industrial monopoly extended at the cost of local business. ... they would also be taught to measure progress through increased production only. So long as it could be shown ... that more fertilisers and more farm machinery are being sold all would be considered to be going well and in the right direction. It is precisely to check such an a-social application of technology that this kind of training assumes added importance.[21]

Schumacher had pointed out the pitfalls of relying too heavily on statistics to gauge "success", arguing that since poor people lived on amounts on which others could not survive - they obviously possessed knowledge and survival power, "but" he added:

> If 'development' weakens or destroys this survival ability it is a killer disease: incomes may rise from, say, $100 per person per year to $150 or even $200; yet misery deepens and turns into despair. The appropriateness of the 'pattern of living' is of immensely greater importance than the amount of income disclosed by the statistics.[22]

During this period of considerable revision and review Asian NGOs acknowledged that development programmes had all too often been thrust on recipients. Extension agents or development workers had often been more attuned to the needs of officialdom than to the problems and aspirations of the people they were supposed to work with.[23] The government-sponsored CDPs, with their quotas and projected achievements, had

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19 FFHC/Action for Development, FAO Fact Sheet, 4 Sept., 1982

20 *Breaking Barriers...*, *op.cit.*, p.5; "Asian Cultural Forum on Development Workshop on Development: A Report", *Voluntary Action*, *[VA]* , Vol XVIII, Nos 7 & 8, p.102, Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD), New Delhi

21 *Breaking Barriers...*, *op.cit.*, p.17

22 Schumacher, E.F., *VA*, Vol XX, No.4, Apr. 1978, pp.11-12

23 *Breaking Barriers... op.cit.*, p.5

been most guilty of that approach. But many NGOs had also followed such a course. However well-meaning their intentions, NGO groups had rarely ever been held accountable for their work with the poor. If, for example, vegetable gardens were deemed an appropriate development practice by UNICEF, an army of NGOs helped deliver them, whatever the quality of the project. It was not unusual, therefore, for NGOs to begin to encounter communities which were reluctant to accept more "assistance". An experienced Indian development worker confirmed that some communities had become "shy of aid" and "sceptical about motives".[24]

One village centre, which had been organised in response to famine in the early 1960s, and had been influenced variously by the principles of Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan, illustrated how *ad hoc* assistance could be.[25] In 1978 assistance to the village included a Sarvodaya (or Gandhian) worker of 22 years who wore khadi in solidarity with the poor; a young man in his twenties, the son of a high police officer, who had left his medical studies to organise the people against corruption in the administration; "an elderly, white bearded man, who had been working with the poor for over 50 years, [who] roamed the countryside on a moped, helping the poor with their legal... problems."; and a team of young engineers and hydrologists from the NGO Action for Food Production (AFPRO) who were carrying out a survey for an irrigation plan. The old tribal leader of the village who had fought for independence and walked with Vinoba Bhave during the land gift movement and was now "struggling for the development of his [tribal] people", remarked wryly: "I have experienced the British and now I am experiencing the Indians."[26]

Once it was recognised that it was inappropriate for agencies to foist development programmes onto communities, the whole tenor of development began to change. Starting from a premise that knowledge, values, ideas and plans of action should not be "handed out",[27] but should rather evolve between the most disadvantaged groups and NGOs, the latter became more aware of the experience and knowledge possessed by poor communities. As Shumacher said:

> It is not possible to help the poor to help themselves, except by learning their secrets of their arts of survival. To assume the attitude of a learner requires a degree of genuine humility and respect which is not easily attained by people who have been conditioned to think of poor peasants as backward and inferior to educated townsmen. [28]

Given the widespread negative attitude about poor people, some NGOs were taken off-guard when they discovered the level of aptitude and competence displayed by poor

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[24] Mini Bedi, CAA Workshop, Poona, 14/1/88, CAA Headquarters Poona, India; Bhasin, K., & Malik, B., "Peasant Perceptions of Poverty - And Their Implications for Outside Change Agents", *VA*, Vol XXI, No.20, pp.13-18, 28

[25] The Banwasi Seva Ashram

[26] Bhasin, Kamla, *Breaking Barriers:... op.cit.,* p.48

[27] *Ibid,* p.5

[28] Schumacher, E.F., *VA*, Vol XX, No.4, Apr. 1978, pp.11-12

communities once they were encouraged to fully participate in development activities. In Thailand it was reported:

> Quite contrary to the expectations of some community development workers in Thailand, the village women learnt to chair and report meetings in no time. Narrating their experiences to others and telling others how they perceived the main issues of development in their village came quite naturally to them. They also turned out to be quite capable of developing exhaustive questionnaire through group work which they used during field visits.[29]

The Indian Ahmedabad Study Action Group on Low Income Housing was just one NGO which responded practically to the suggestions being mooted internationally to consider the knowledge of poor people in development activities. The group called for projects to be re-oriented to take account of the needs of the people, and to adopt a "fundamental attitudinal change" which recognised that the poor were capable, resourceful and productive members of society. They were able to contribute to their own problems if their skills and creativity were put to use.[30] People's participation in this instance meant that the people could provide housing suitable for their own needs if they were given access to land, building materials, finance and services rather than finished housing.

A survey carried out in the early 1970s by the Indian umbrella NGO, AVARD, had established that the sophistication and experience of the Indian voluntary sector had increased substantially over a period of twenty-five years. A wide depth of experience and research had been accumulated beyond the area of relief and welfare assistance.[31] NGOs were involved in rural extension and development work, in health care, child welfare, cultural activities and family planning programmes and in village and cottage industries.[32]

Activist NGOs, however, had realised that while such projects provided skills and materials, they were not guaranteed to change political and social structures or to grant agency to poor people. Paulo Freire's influence was conspicuous in this regard. Some NGOs, therefore, assisted the poor to articulate why they were poor, encouraging them to have confidence and conviction that their situation could be changed for the better.[33]

As a first step to achieving agency indigenous NGOs stressed the need for village communities to become independent. A Papua New Guinean visitor to Australia, Utula Samana, recommended,"I should like to see Community Aid Abroad and other

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29 *Breaking Barriers..., op.cit.*, p.16

30 *Cendhrra Development Memo, [CDM],* No. 2, Mar. 1981, Centre for Human Resources in Rural Asia, Metro Manila, p.4; "An Architect Learns to Build with the People", *CDM*, No.43, Aug., 1987, p.2; "Towards an Asian Housing Network", *CDM*, No. 11-12, Apr.-May, 1982

31 Itself strongly tested with the Pakistan, Bangladesh and Tibetan refugees crisis and numerous famines.

32 Sen, A., Ed., *Introducing Voluntary Agencies in India*, ARVARD, New Delhi, 1971

33 *Breaking Barriers..., op.cit.*, p.5; "Asian Cultural Forum on Development Workshop on Development: A Report", *VA*, Vol XVIII, Nos 7 & 8, p.102

voluntary agencies funding more awareness programs involving the village people, so that they can develop their own capacity for decision-making and leadership."[34] Abdur Rahman Chowdhury, Field Co-ordinator of BRAC, and a guest of CAA in 1976 went further. Chowdhury suggested that independence meant breaking away from assistance since what he called the "aid/dependency trap" was helping to perpetuate poverty.

> We have never before made any attempt to make our people self-reliant and desist from taking alms from others. Rather, millions of tons of food-grains have been released by way of relief which ultimately helps nobody. Of course, we do not deny the necessity of relief in times of grave crisis. But one cannot allow the period of crisis to continue for an indefinite period. We discourage this dependence on relief. Assistance might be given, but it should aim at increasing the productivity of resources. [He added] BRAC believes that development cannot be imposed on the people.... It should be formulated at the grass roots, along with the development of the individual and their social and economic institutions and with the bureaucracy made accountable to the people. Then and then only the economic development can look after itself.[35]

Chowdhury added a further, critical dimension, however, when he introduced the concept of social justice. He explained:

> Our field personnel are engaged in organising and reorganising co-operative societies, participating in their weekly meetings and endeavouring to make individual members conscious of their rights and obligations. This means we are trying to democratise the institutions... We believe that any development presupposes the attainment of social justice. ... Our committees managing co-operatives are mostly people of poorer and neglected classes. But this is not sufficient to ensure social justice. Unless these people can be helped through education to become conscious of their rights, and their rightful place in society, attainment of social justice will remain a pious hope for ever.[36]

Others echoed his arguments suggesting that economic gain did not guarantee social liberation (that is, freedom from unjust oppression, attitudes and patterns of behaviour.)[37] The theme of social justice was one which the churches had raised during the late 1960s. Social justice issues had subsequently been taken up by activist Catholic priests working with the poor in Latin America and in the Philippines, around an evolving liberation theology. As the issue affected the work of activist NGOs it tended to focus on individual issues such as inactive land reform legislation, the appropriation of development resources by local elites and debt bondage to moneylenders or landowners.[38] But social justice also incorporated issues of community participation and of avoiding disadvantaging groups within or adjacent to communities assisted. Words and phrases embodying the idea of social justice, such as "conscientization", "social action", "collective resources", "community pressure", "methods of confrontation", "enlightened self-interest", "bargaining power to deal with exploitation

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[34] "Radical Visitor From PNG", *Community Aid Abroad REVIEW [REVIEW]*, Sept.-Oct., 1976, p.2, N.B. *NOW* was renamed *Community Aid Abroad REVIEW in* October 1974

[35] "Project Visitor From Bangladesh", *REVIEW*, June, 1976, p.2

[36] *Ibid*

[37] Gonsalves, G.,"Development and Voluntary Agencies", *VA*, Vol XVII, No.3, Mar. 1975, pp.57-59; Bhatt, G.B., "Report on Central Regional Conference on Voluntary Action Feb.-Mar., 1975, *VA*, Vol XVII, No.3, Mar. 1975, p.72

[38] Thapur, S., "The Challenge of Voluntarism", *VA*, Vol XVII, No.3, Mar. 1975, pp.53-4

and injustice",[39] began to be commonplace in conferences, workshops, newsletters and journals among the relatively small section of Asian NGOs prepared to confront social action and social justice issues. Gradually the notion of "liberation", which had previously usually been linked to liberation movements seeking to displace governments, was broadened to focus on issues of social, economic and political servitude which directly affected poor communities. "Liberation" would be effected not by revolution, but by slowly educating oppressed groups and by assisting them to gain access to resources which were rightly theirs. It was not a question of revolution, welfare or even wells, but of justice.

The impact of these activities was felt initially mainly within the Asian region. It was not until the 1980s, with the rapid expansion of Third World NGOs and the changing attitudes of Western NGOs, that the voices of Third World NGOs would become audible enough to substantially influence the project activities of large numbers of donor agencies in the West.[40] In the 1970s, activist NGOs were supported by those few Western agencies which were sympathetic to the ideas of systemic transformation.[41] In Australia, CAA typically began to apply the discourse of social justice to its development projects and to assist people in developing countries who were consciously acting as agents of change.

NGO Activities in Pursuit of Social Justice

From the time of its National Review Conference in 1975 CAA began to give priority to projects which supported people's liberation from social and economic oppression. CAA refined its thinking with the aid of a Project Evaluation Committee which carried out the agency's first in depth evaluation of its Indian projects. And it participated in workshops and seminars in developing nations.[42]

Like all new project policies they took time to take effect. All donors had projects on their books which reflected the evolution of their development thinking over the past several years. It would take time before there were sufficient numbers of experienced development activists to initiate the changes. And while many of the existing projects would gradually take the new ideas on board, others, like funding school buildings, did not fit into the new category at all. Projects on CAA's books by the end of the 1970s, therefore, encompassed various types. They were all, however, supposed to fall into the general policy categories outlined periodically by CAA. By 1979 CAA project policy stipulated that where possible projects should be of a development nature, which it

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39 "Bombay Conference Report of the Western Regional Conference of Voluntary Action, 15-16 June 1974", *VA* , July-Oct 1974, pp.40-46; "Report on Central Regional Conference on Voluntary Action", Feb-Mar, 1975, *VA*, Vol XVII, No. 3, Mar. 1975, pp.71-72

40 Interview with C. Juliano-Soliman, *op.cit.*

41 For example ACFOA was a member of ACFOD

42 For example, the Rural Development Seminar in India organised by OXFAM (and funded by CIDA)

defined as being "... aimed at the liberation of people from economic and social oppression." Projects were to be in keeping with the wishes of the community and to either have their active involvement or that of their accepted representatives. Projects were to assist the poorest section of the community and to have a catalytic effect or at least be self-supporting.[43]

One of the strongest themes expressed at a CAA-sponsored workshop near Hyderabad, which brought together more than 60 CAA project partners from all over India, was the need to look behind poverty to expose and correct the injustices which caused it.[44] A CAA sponsored project involving Harijan reed workers in Kerala illustrated some of the forms of oppression which could occur. Workers had customarily bought reeds from local businessmen at 90 cents a bundle. These were woven into a mat - a day's work - then sold back to the businessman for $1.15, a profit of 25c for the reed worker's family. The businessman made a profit of anything from $1.10 to $1.70 per mat. With a loan from CAA, social worker Augustine went into competition, buying truck loads of reeds and guaranteeing the Harijans $1.50 for each mat. Harijans came from miles around to buy reeds and to sell their mats to Augustine, until the businessmen agreed to raise their prices.[45]

Much of the work beginning to engage the more activist NGOs consisted of informing groups of their legal rights. This was particularly so in India where legislation often existed to protect minority or disadvantaged groups but was frequently ignored by local landowners or officials. The NGO, Action for Welfare and Rural Awakening (AWARE) which CAA supported, had by 1979 more than 100 field staff working in the economically depressed areas around Hyderabad. Despite laws prohibiting bonded labourers, many still existed, tied to landlords by small debts which were frequently compounded by high interest rates. Debts were passed from family to family virtually enslaving generation after generation. One AWARE field worker working with a group of bonded labourers explained the legislation to them and encouraged them to petition the District Collector. On receiving no reply they took matters into their own hands refusing to harvest the crops. When the crops threatened to spoil, the landlords eventually gave into the labourers' demands, cancelling their debts, and agreeing to pay them wages, to grant them holidays and to supply them with two sets of clothing.[46]

Another very common problem among the poor was their reliance on moneylenders, who might charge as much as 50% to 100% interest or more per annum. The poor frequently felt distanced from banks and government officials by social hierarchy,

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43 "CAA Project Policy, 1978 CAA Projects", *CAA REVIEW Supplement, March/April 1979*
44 "Workshop on Rural Development, Hyderabad", CAA *REVIEW*, No.261, Mar-Apr,1979, p.3
45 *Ibid*
46 *Ibid*, p.2

illiteracy and terms and conditions that were unfamiliar to them. Recognising this dilemma many NGOs organised communities and groups into credit co-operatives, sometimes with dramatic effects. Apart from now being able to save money to cover such events as crop failure, illness, ceremonies and lack of income during pregnancy, and also being able to take out loans at a favourable interest, members found that they were "empowered" or granted individual agency in other ways. One farmer remarked:

> Because we are a group now and we stick to each other, we have suddenly become more powerful. The moneylenders are afraid to exploit us now. The government officials speak to us, they even speak nicely. We are also no more afraid to enter the bank or the office of the cooperative.[47]

Another remarked of the change: "We used to be like frightened mice. At the sight of a better-off person... we used to run away."[48]

Assisting communities to gain agency in sufficient numbers so that they acquired the skills and courage to challenge the entrenched power of elite groups was an imperative first step to effecting lasting change. Without agency, richer individuals and families would continue to use stand-over tactics and to co-opt resources for themselves. For example, a tube well installed in Bangladesh as part of a health project by a foreign NGO for the use of the whole village, was monopolised by two or three rich families. Such families frequently intimidated the poor who were often afraid to speak out when NGOs visited.[49] When the fear of local reprisals was combined with an entrenched deference towards authority and "outsiders" - bureaucrats, the educated, city people or foreigners - the barriers for change were formidable, however altruistic the "outsiders'" intentions. A Thai NGO remarked of villagers there: "Although they observe a strong visitor protocol and they treat people from outside with high respect, very little will be gained from conversation - and this pertains even more so to a foreigner. They will first want to please though inside they may be saying no."[50] An Australian student, funded by IDA to evaluate Australian NGO projects in Indonesia, found it difficult to get people to talk frankly about projects, rather, she reported, "They were keen to say what they thought would please me."[51] Kamla Bhasin and Bakit Malik found in Indian villages that the "Yes response" was often a survival tactic, they reported:

> We asked them, why do they keep being polite to the officials who visit them; why do they keep saying yes to everything they say? The answer was given to us in the form of an old couplet...'if the circumstances so demand, keep saying YES; if someone asks whether you saw a cat carrying a camel in its mouth, say YES!' What the man meant was that the submissive affirmations of the

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47 *Breaking Barriers, op.cit.*, p.41
48 *Ibid*
49 *Ibid*, p.30-32
50 Interview with Chalad Buranaphol, 13/3/89, THIRD Institute, Bangkok, Thailand
51 Carolan, C., "Australian Voluntary Aid to Indonesia", p.67, in *Indonesia:Australia's Involvement, op.cit.*,

village people were nothing but a strategy for survival... it was not their lack of awareness of the situation that made them submissive.[52]

Retaliation by powerful groups and individuals against NGO workers attempting to fight unjust practices was not uncommon and was intended to encourage the continued submissiveness of poor communities. A 25 year old paramedic in Bangladesh lost his life because he challenged the practices of rich and powerful individuals involved (among other things) in illegally selling health centre drugs.[53] A CAA-sponsored field worker in Gujarat was badly beaten by rich farmers for attempting to distribute empty river-bed land, used unlawfully by the rich farmers for years, to 200 landless families.[54] CAA reported of the incident: "Manvar's struggle is being repeated in many areas of Western India at the present time. For CAA it is a far more important involvement than that of simply providing pumps and wells."[55]

But it was equally imperative for groups like CAA to thoroughly understand all the likely repercussions involved in such action, and to be resourceful enough to bring action to a satisfactory conclusion. A group of Harijans motivated by an NGO to apply to the Government for land and subsequently granted 40 acres, was threatened by a rich landowner who had used the area illegally for years to graze his cattle. He twice authorised armed men to chase a herd of cattle through the Harijans' ripe crop. Without continued support from the NGO sector the matter might have rested there, despite the Harijans legal entitlement to the land. Instead, the NGO Khet Vikas Parisad filed a case against the landlord in court to gain justice.[56] CAA and groups like it began to realise that fairly small amounts of money to support the legal costs of cases such as the one above, where successful, were a vital adjunct to the more traditional forms of aid.

One CAA-supported project typically illustrated the group's attempt to evolve its assistance from a traditional Gandhian approach to one where community awareness and involvement was paramount. During a 1975 OXFAM-sponsored seminar there had been discussion about the continued appropriateness of the Gandhian movement's approach to development. It was praised for its philosophy of working with the poorest and the most oppressed. But generally it was thought that the movement had lost its momentum and creativity and was failing to attract young supporters.[57]

CAA had been assisting the Vedchhi Intensive Area Scheme (VIAS) run on Gandhian principles since 1962. The scheme involved some 10,000 tribals in the

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52 Bhasin, K., Malik, B., "Peasant Perceptions of Poverty - And Their Implications for Outside Change Agents", *VA*, Vol XIX, No.20, Feb., 1978, p.17

53 *Breaking Barriers...*, *op.cit.*, p.32

54 "Wells or Welfare", *REVIEW*, Nov-Dec 1978, p.3

55 *Ibid*, p.3

56 "Workshop on Rural Development, Hyderabad", *REVIEW*, No.261, Mar-Apr,1979, p.2

57 "OXFAM Rural Development Seminar", Paper compiled by Adrian Moyes, Development Secretary of OXFAM on seminar held at Social Work and Research Centre, Tilonia, Rajasthan, India, Feb 27 - Mar 9, 1975, attended by international OXFAM groups including CAA

sixteen villages of Kamlapur. The CAA Karinggai Group had supplied buildings for a school and a meeting place. But CAA was now interested in developing the new concepts of development which embraced the notions of "liberation" and justice. CAA suggested therefore that the problems and potential of the whole area should be investigated by VIAS but with the direct involvement of the people. Subsequently in late 1977, a young activist engineer, Ashok Chaudhari, who was disenchanted with the Gandhian ways, was appointed to supervise the "Kamlapur Plan".[58] The report stressed that from the start the plan was to be the people's plan not that of VIAS, CAA or the government. The Kamlapur Integrated Development Plan decided to "leave behind the more conservative, traditional Gandhian approaches to development [to] tackle head-on the seemingly intractable problems of the area."[59] Each village participated in mass meetings which formed a People's Committee, identified the poorest people and discussed ways to assist them.

An innovative feature of the CAA and VIAS strategy was to educate and give administrative assistance to the recipients to help them tap into monies which were locally available to them, rather than relying totally on Australian funds. The scheme gained support from local banks and various government agencies. Every Australian dollar was matched by about four locally. The State government's Small Farmers Development Association, the central government's Tribal Subsidy Plan, the Mandvi Taluka Industrial Co-operative Society, the government's Khadi and Village Industry Commission, all became involved.[60] The scheme's success in raising funds meant that a wide variety of projects could be introduced to the villages. These included land-levelling, improved seed and fertiliser kits, fishing nets, industrial training, carpentry and tailoring, repairs of farm equipment, diamond cutting and polishing, buffalo distribution, fruit tree distribution, a cotton spinning centre and irrigation schemes.[61] CAA also used monies gained from the Australian Government's Project Subsidy Scheme for a diamond cutters' factory, a tribal carpet co-operative, and what CAA described as a more ambitious field workers' assistance programme.[62] By 1979 CAA was supporting a growing number of such field workers, each paid $300 a year by CAA groups. Their work was described as being "simply to organise the poor, to make them aware of their rights," in order to take advantage of the many government assistance schemes available to them.[63]

All of the schemes initiated were important to raise the skills and income of the participants. However, by far the most valuable asset gained by the participants was

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58 "Kamlapur Integrated Development Plan", CAA Project Sheet No GUJ8W1B, 24.5.78
59 *Ibid*
60 *Ibid*, pp.5-9
61 *Ibid*
62 Letter Neil O'Sullivan, CAA Project's Director to Neville Ross, NGO Section ADAB, 27 July, 1979
63 "Wells or Welfare", *op.cit.*, p.3

their increased confidence to question injustice and their increased knowledge which allowed them to access ways to address injustice. Less intimidated than previously by the presence of district officers, one tribal woman from Un village demanded: "Why is it that we do the work and they (the landlords) have all the money?"[64] NGOs could best help initially by acting as a link between the village community and the legal system, bureaucracy or financial institutions, at least until the community gained skills and confidence to act for itself. A fair amount was being learnt in the development area especially in terms of funds and legal rights. Yet gaining justice and holding onto it remained a difficult process. It was frequently challenged step-by-step by groups who stood to lose from the gains of poor people.

In the case of the Kamlapur scheme, for example, landlords in the area reacted swiftly to the changes. Many of them had historically paid only half the legal wage and held land in excess of the permitted ceiling. The police were frequently brought in to harass groups which called strikes,[65] and CAA's Neil O'Sullivan had his jeep stopped on one occasion to be presented with a list of "crimes" of Chaudhari and his colleagues.[66] It was a measure of the impact that the activities of the young engineer Chaudhari made that he was arrested in a land dispute at Kamlapur in 1979. CAA *REVIEW* reported: "Ashok remains nonplussed by the police action and considers such incidents as inevitable in the long struggle to wrest power from the moneylenders and big landlords of the Kamlapur region." The arrest served to make something of a martyr of Ashok and to spur on his supporters. A report from the leader of VIAS Bhikhu Vyas indicated: "The leaders of the poor and the landless villagers of Kamlapur have become more determined than ever to continue their struggle."[67]

But the landlords were not the only ones to oppose the more radical stance of VIAS. Some VIAS participants did not feel comfortable with the new direction VIAS was taking. O'Sullivan indicated the tensions on the project in a letter introducing an ADAB officer to CAA projects in India:

> ... You may, with a little luck, detect some of the tensions that have built up in the last year or two within this organization. These tensions I regard as a healthy sign since the root cause is a frustration at the lack of progress in meeting the basic needs of the people in the area. In the past VIAS has tended to have a slightly paternalistic attitude.... I hope it might be possible for you to meet one of the new generation of workers at VIAS, Ashok Chaudhury. Ashok is himself a tribal and is tackling the work in a much less formal way than has been the typical approach of VIAS. It is those new initiatives by Ashok and his colleagues that have caused some of the current consternation.[68]

As various NGOs sought to put these new methods into practice they began to encounter a variety of obstacles to implementing them, besides the reaction of groups

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64 *Ibid*

65 "Kamlapur Integrated Development Plan", *op.cit.*, p.4

66 *Ibid*, pp.5-9

67 "Project News", *REVIEW*, No. 263, July-Aug, 1979

68 Letter Neil O'Sullivan, *op.cit.*

which stood to lose from the increased agency of poor communities. These included shedding many of their own assumptions about poor rural and urban communities. Informed contact with such communities began to reveal that village communities were not "models of co-operation... [based on a] rosy and ideal picture of rural life ...", which the CDP programme had often assumed. Communities were generally much more complex. A knowledge of caste and/or class conflict in village social organisation, of village hierarchies, and of the linkages between rural elites and privileged groups in urban and metropolitan areas, was essential if the activities introduced by NGOs were to be at all effective.[69]

Frequently, even the process of locating and identifying the poorest groups was difficult. A Philippines NGO noted the difficulties in physically reaching the poorest communities. The poor lived on the edge of villages far from main roads, they were illiterate, had no radios, rarely attended public meetings and travelled little except for work. If they were squatters or refugees they might even try to hide from officials because of their illegal status. Lack of familiarity with communities could also make it difficult to even identify the poorest. Indeed, a West Kenyan study had revealed that quite inadvertently and through ignorance of the local region, staff from one NGO had concentrated on assisting "better-off" households.[70]

Asian NGOs participating in field visits discovered that much physical effort was required, "to reach the poorer sections of the population...". The infrastructure of roads, bus and train routes did not service areas inhabited by people who were economically poor and politically weak.[71] The "invisibility" of poor people coupled with a lack of local knowledge by groups seeking to assist the poor, was a potentially serious problem. It could lead Western NGOs particularly to assist groups fairly arbitrarily, since large numbers of communities in the Third World, relative to Western affluence, appeared "poor".

Western NGOs, particularly those which continued to ignore the complexities of the aid and development process, were most likely to become involved in such indiscriminate assistance. But even indigenous NGO personnel, academics and community workers, who were obviously not as remote from the grassroots as foreigners, found that their understanding could be affected by barriers of region, language and class. Some had also added further layers of distance during their Western overseas schooling.

A common stumbling block to effective understanding was language differences. Chalad Buranaphol of THIRD explained that although many NGO workers lived with the people they could not talk the same way as the villagers:

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69 FFHC/Action for Development... *op.cit.*
70 *Ibid*, No.3, Apr. 1981, p.4
71 Breaking Barriers..., *op.cit.*, p.25

> When it comes to a systematic way of talking they can't do it, we have to talk freely, but our arrangement of speech is different. We have learnt certain patterns and concepts in university frequently influenced by the West which promote a linquistic and conceptual barrier. Even the most simple questions can be misunderstood - how much rice might be answered in numbers of buckets where as we were looking for kilos - the most difficult question for them is why - it is not something they question, they just do. [72]

A National Consultation on Agricultural Reform and Development (NCARRD) in Manila reported similar observations in a meeting between Filipino fishermen, farmers, and NGOs. One fishermen told the NGO representatives: "Your thinking is different. We do not conceptualise our problems; we live them". It was noted that when the people's organisations tried to articulate what they wanted from reforms they found it a very difficult process. One NGO stated:

> We NGO workers who have been schooled somehow approach problems differently. We tend to define a problem, conceptualise it, then arrive at solutions. But to peasants whose lessons are derived from practical experience, there is no dichotomy between concept and practice...To a peasant for instance, the expression to measure distance to the next village is not two or three kilometers, but 'twenty minutes away', 'two cigarettes away', (meaning the time taken to consume two cigarettes while walking at a regular pace), or 'as near as you can drink two cups of coffee'...Similarly, while we NGOs might define the output of this Conference in the form of a published report, the community representatives would like to see concrete, tangible results accruing to their villages.... Theirs is a view of a real, non-abstract world.[73]

This meeting demonstrated that it was one thing to resolve to fraternise with the "grassroots", and quite another to form a productive relationship with poor communities. NGO representatives at the above conference reported feeling unsure about their role, should they take the initiative or stand back? How should they accommodate the four major dialects represented, as well as the several sectoral groups? In the event, although language and sectoral differences slowed down the proceedings, participants viewed the meeting as an invaluable experience since it opened them up to variety of development in the Philippines. One delegate commented that he was made aware of how land reform would affect rice and corn areas differently from export crop areas such as coconut and sugar, or tribal lands where land was tilled by the family but owned communally. Some of the delegates' horizons had expanded beyond a preoccupation with their own local and limited areas.

Research organisations like THIRD and the Centre for Society and Religion in Sri Lanka, also began to dramatically change their approach to village communities.[74] Like many Western institutes their previous research had primarily benefited the researchers, research had been about the village and the villagers. But from around the mid 1970s, and with the obvious influence of Freire, these two institutes decided to turn to "action

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[72] Interview with Chalad Buranaphol, *op.cit.*

[73] *CDM*, Nos. 37 & 38, Aug/Oct , 1986

[74] Interview with Chalad Buranaphol, *op.cit.*; Breaking Barriers..., *op.cit.*, p.54

research", where villagers were regarded as subjects and dynamic participants, rather than as objects.[75] THIRD refined the technique so that by the 1980s many aid workers spent long preparation periods in their selected districts, perhaps for a year and a half, talking with district officials, the mayor, the headman and villagers. They worked with locals who knew the people well, preparing questions and information. One NGO worker organising small farmers in Bihar in India and who had spent the first year understanding the terrain and establishing a rapport with the people, nevertheless reported: "At times I felt like someone who was thrown in mid waters."[76]

Groups like CAA which were actively involved in promoting agency for poor communities were in the minority. Most NGOs in the 1970s were still evolving a developmental approach. They were disinclined to support or were ignorant of the more controversial methods of assistance. It was the case, also, that much of the more activist, advocacy role which CAA was beginning to pursue in India, was difficult to replicate in an Asia growing in authoritarianism. A CAA report on the development of its programmes in Indonesia in 1974 referred to growing government repression there and to increased controls on foreign aid agencies.[77] Suspicion towards groups working at the village level by an Indonesian government wary of the previous popularity of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) made it difficult for an activist NGO sector to flourish in Indonesia.

CAA's Adrian Harris, who in 1972 took up the position of Indonesian field officer jointly for CAA and British OXFAM, encountered many obstacles to evolving an NGO programme which resembled in any form its more activist work in India. Direct village level contact was reported to be "strongly discouraged", and prior government approval was required for all projects funded from overseas - a procedure which was frequently time-consuming, obstructive and unproductive.[78] Indonesia also lacked a tradition of social service as it had evolved among some sectors of the Indian voluntary community. CAA therefore encountered a great scarcity of people "willing or able to devote themselves full-time to the development cause".[79] In such circumstances it was not possible to build up the network of NGO leaders and workers in Indonesia like those which CAA so relied on in India. The process was further hampered by cultural differences. Indonesia was more difficult for English-speaking people to work in than

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75 Interview with Chalad Buranaphol, *op.cit.*

76 Breaking Barriers..., *op.cit.*, p.46

77 Harris, A., *The Development of our Aid Programme in Indonesia,* nd, 1973-4

78 "CAA Overseas Programme Review", 1975; Harris, A., "Final Report from Adrian Harris, Indonesian Field Director", 20/2/75

79 *Ibid*, p.5

South Asia, Malaysia or the Philippines which had strong British and US colonial links.[80]

It might be argued that Asian governments had every right to vet foreign agencies seeking to evolve community development programmes with poor communities - with squatters or small farmers or workers. Yet vetos frequently had more to do with a government's desire to maintain the political and economic status quo, than with a regard for the conditions of poor people. A Filipino priest, for example, was imprisoned during martial law for his efforts to serve the people through community development projects. He had attempted to enlighten poor communities about "the nature of their society". He told the CAA Projects' Director in 1979:

> In theory, the problems of land reform, usury, unemployment, low wages and homelessness are all being tackled. In practice, the problems of the poor are increasing daily. The government has various model projects, which certainly benefit a few of the not-so-poor, but once the speeches have been made and the photographs taken, the basic problem is immediately forgotten.[81]

Similarly, CAA found that most Indonesian organisations involved with the poor in the mid 1970s were "quasi government bodies" engaged in providing traditional welfare to the sick, needy and handicapped.[82] Such groups were usually not even aware of the type of work which engaged activist NGOs among landless families or urban slum dwellers. NGOs such as CAA, therefore, found that to work in Indonesia their assistance was largely confined to the areas of family planning, formal education, agriculture and welfare programmes. In 1975 CAA assisted an orthopaedic surgery training course, a family planning and health clinic, poultry and seed distribution projects, and agricultural and carpentry training for groups about to join the transmigration scheme.[83] All the projects lacked a social justice component.

Although CAA had hoped to build on its programmes in Indonesia, in the event it withdrew from there entirely in 1976 because of its public stand on East Timor. CAA's executive became deeply involved in the East Timor issue, David Scott being present in November 1975 at the swearing in of the East Timorese cabinet, before the Indonesian invasion on December 7th.[84] CAA's continuing activity on behalf of the East Timorese led it to withdraw from Indonesia to avoid any reprisals against the people associated with its projects.[85] But in any case, by 1977 when the current CAA/OXFAM field officer described CAA as being "persona non grata in Indonesia and ... likely to stay so

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80 Harris, A., "Our Man in Indonesia on the Road", *NOW*, July, 1973

81 "Of Prisons and Priests", *REVIEW*, Sept.-Oct., 1979

82 Harris, A., *Final Report ... op.cit.*

83 "1975 CAA Projects", *Supplement to REVIEW*, June, 1976

84 Letter Adrian Harris, National Director CAA to Brian Walker, Director OXFAM, U.K., 10/10/75; "Timor Blood on Our Hands", *REVIEW*, Dec., 1975; Blackburn, S., *Practical Visionaries, A Study of Community Aid Abroad*, Melbourne University Press, 1993, p.99

85 "Visitor from Forgotten Timor", *NOW*, Sept., 1974; "ACFOA Motion", *REVIEW*, Aug./Sept., 1975; "Timor - Dunn Report", *REVIEW*, Aug./Sept., 1977; "East Timor Tragic Dilemma", *REVIEW*, Dec., 1979; "Indonesia", *REVIEW*, Sept.-Oct., 1979; "A Letter from East Timor", REVIEW, Jan/Feb., 1978

for at least another ten years", it was no longer feasible for CAA to proceed there.[86] It would not be until the late 1980s that CAA would review its work in that country.[87]

NGOs and Religious Conversion

WVA in the meantime encountered different problems. The organisation was working both in Indonesia with a Dayak community in West Kalimantan and in Thailand with child-sponsorship schemes and development and relief work. The Australian Development Assistance Secretary in Bangkok explained in 1976: "Foreign non-government agencies are not a big thing on the Thailand development scene at all. Either the Thai Government has precluded them from working here or perhaps there is a feeling among the agencies that Thailand was not one of the most needy countries".[88] Nevertheless, the Thai Minister of Education in 1977 welcomed WV and congratulated it for the meaningful contributions that it was making to the "grassroots level of Thai society". He said: "We are pleased to have you in our country and thank you for your concern for our Thai children as well as our development and relief problems. We strongly support your organisation".[89] After Buddhist Cambodia became embroiled in the Indo-China war and felt threatened by communism, despite having previously portrayed Christianity as a foreign religion linked with Western imperialism, the Cambodian government also welcomed WV.[90] Mooneyham reported in July 1970 that: "As a Christian organization trying to minister to people in need, World Vision has been welcomed to work in Cambodia at the highest levels of government."[91]

WVA, like other NGOs, worked among those groups which many governments believed were highly susceptible to communist influences. It is difficult to assess the extent to which the governments of predominantly Islamic Indonesia, and Buddhist Cambodia and Thailand considered WV's Christian ideology a useful countervailing influence against communism. Certainly the countries were all preoccupied with areas of communist insurgency. They therefore presumably welcomed any measures to stabilise "sensitive areas" - be it through Australian bilateral aid with roads and bridges or Australian NGO aid with relief and development assistance. In both Cambodia and Indonesia WV openly sought to introduce Christianity. However, in Indonesia, it worked among the minority Dayak community rather than in the broader, Moslem and nominally Moslem population.[92]

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86 Blackburn, *op.cit.*, p.107

87 *Ibid*, p.111

88 "Our Ambassador Urges More Government Aid", *REVIEW*, May, 1976

89 "Thai Minister Commends World Vision", *World Vision Development Aid News*, Jan., 1977

90 "Facts of a Field, Cambodia", *World Vision Heartline*, August-Sept, 1972, Vol 16, No.3

91 Mooneyham, W.S., "Cambodia" A Special Report", *WV Heartline*, Vol 7, No.4, July, 1970, p.2

92 USA fundamentalist Christians were allowed similar access to minority groups in areas which were thought to be strongholds of the communist People's Liberation Army in the Philippines in the late 1980s

WV's work with the Dayak community in 1972 included a childcare programme to assist Dayaks with schooling; development projects to improve their standard of living and a religious component to introduce the Dayaks to evangelical Christianity.[93] In Cambodia, Mooneyham presided over four public meetings in Phnom Penh in 1975 where, in what WV described as an "Evangelistic Explosion", almost 2,000 people indicated they wished to convert.[94]

However, in the Philippines at least, there was no such equivocation even under martial law. In that predominantly Catholic country, particularly in the north, it was made clear to WVA by 1978 that its presence was not welcome if it persisted in trying to convert Catholics. At the beginning of the 1970s, WVI had still aimed to make useful citizens of the children it sponsored by rearing them in a Christian atmosphere.[95] It advised its donors: "You as a sponsor are helping to build a Christian witness in another country".[96] While the USA was beginning to engage in "ping pong" diplomacy with China, and US businessmen focused their interest on the extensive Chinese market, WVI was preoccupied with conversion. Promotional material advertising a WV film on China remarked: "This just released film looks at the 800 million in mainland China, the largest single group of people in the world, not as a suspicious enemy but as a people to be evangelised the moment the doors are opened".[97]

But as the 1970s progressed there was clearly pressure on WV to modify its policies. This reflected both the Third World's increasing proclivity to assert its authority in such matters, as well as a more conciliatory and informed attitude adopted by Westerners towards Third World cultures. Some Third World nations were unequivocal on the issue of evangelism. Their leaders viewed Christianity as an evil appendage of Western imperialism which had had a negative impact on indigenous culture. The Sudan, for example, refused entry to missionaries offering aid. Papua-New Guinea's Chief Minister, Michael Somare was another leader who attacked Christianity as "a western cult which had helped destroy Papua-New Guinea culture".[98] WV and other Christian agencies gradually began to experience pressure from two quarters: from developing countries which opposed the whole idea of Christian conversion and from Christians in developing countries who pressed for greater local involvement in running their Christian churches and organisations in a manner more consistent with indigenous traditions.[99]

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93 "Dimension to Aid Work", *WV Heartline*, Vol 16, No.4, Oct-Nov, 1972
94 "Evangelistic Explosion in Cambodia", *World Vision*, Dec., 1975
95 "What is a Sponsor?", *WV Heartline*, Vol 8, No.2, May, 1971
96 *Ibid*
97 "Missionary Challenge is Target: China", *WV Heartline*, Vol 8, No.1, Feb, 1971, p.7
98 *New Life*, June 1972; Irvine, G, "News Brief", *World Vision*, Vol 1, No.3, Spring 1973, Melbourne
99 "Leadership", *World Vision*, March, 1974

In response WV gradually became more conciliatory towards Asian religions, avoiding the "pagan" references of the past. In 1972, Mooneyham suggested that WV had to earn a right to be heard in Asia. WV had to reconcile its evangelical aspirations with the wishes and beliefs of non-Christian communities and cultures. It had to change the emphasis of its assistance work away from conversion and to be more flexible and less "Western" with its Third World evangelical Christian partners. By the late 1970s WVI had banned proselytism in its aid programmes. In 1977 it remarked: "World Vision works with local churches in each project, so that the people's spiritual needs are met. However our guidelines are clear. There is no coercion. No attempt to make 'rice-Christians'. It is against World Vision's policy to demand allegiance to a church in return for life's necessities."[100]

However, events in the Philippines, at least, suggested that it was not always easy to assure that this WV policy was carried through. Some of the more zealous Filipino pastors with which WV was connected, continued to proselytise causing WVA's executive director, Harold Henderson to consult with Cardinal Sin and the Secretary of the Asian Council of Bishops, over the matter in 1978. He stated: "World Vision's policy, 'Strictly forbids any form of proselytising by an individual or church body, in any of its programs.'"[101] WV had to answer three complaints: that it was encouraging Catholics to use birth control methods contrary to the Catholic faith; "... that only a fraction of World Vision's money [was] reaching the needy"; and that "Protestant groups [were] proselytising Catholics".[102] While WV was able to show that it was not at fault regarding the first two complaints, it conceded that proselytising had taken place. The full extent was revealed by WVA journalist Peter Philp. He reported from Father Alban Kelly, an Irish Carmelite priest in Sapang Palay, that: "... the worst type of sheep stealing went on. Church groups used aid, the Bible and offers of Bible College education. The aid that was offered as a lever to proselytise was being given by World Vision."[103] The priest added, "... the worst thing that has ever happened to the Philippines was the arrival of World Vision".[104] Numbers of other priests and bishops reported similar experiences.[105] WV's new director in the Philippines admitted that: "... World Vision has been let down by some of the Christian groups it has channelled aid through. These people have disregarded World Vision guidelines which prohibit any form of proselytism".[106] He added that the agency had been labelled because it worked

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100 *WV Development Aid News,* Sept., 1977
101 "World Vision in the Philippines", *WV News*, June 1978
102 *Ibid*
103 Philp, P., "We must all be patient", *WV News*, Dec. 1978
104 *Ibid*
105 Bishop Gaudencio Rosales, for example, confirmed that he was "confronted with widespread proselytism in his archdioceses of Manila." *Ibid*
106 *Ibid*

through many evangelical groups, but that WV was determined to rid itself of such labels.

The incident again raised the problem of the internationalisation of NGOs if their policies and practices were difficult to supervise and standardise in all parts of the globe. It called into question too, what "meeting the people's spiritual needs" meant when an evangelical Christian group, which frequently focused narrowly on concepts of personal sin, was sponsoring Hindu, Moslem or Buddhist communities.

NGOs and Child Sponsorship

"Development", as it was evolving in the more activist NGO community in the 1970s, was about building community, participation and self-reliance.[107] But child sponsorship, WVA's "flagship", which selected a child out from a community, was frequently criticised for being elitist, divisive and for not contributing to a sense of community. On the contrary, in the worst circumstances, child sponsorship could contribute to the child's alienation from home and community, leaving the child stranded between cultures. In 1980 two independent film makers travelled to Kerala and Andhra Pradesh in India to interview people in numerous villages where youths had been previously "fostered" in their communities or in hostels. (World Vision was by no means the only agency involved in child sponsorship or "foster" care. Other large organisations involved in sponsoring included: Save the Children; PLAN; Christian Children's Fund; Action Aid and Compassion.)

One of the most consistent problems revealed was the alienation of the sponsored child from family and community. Bishop Poulose of the Syrian Church in Kerala said of the hostel children: "They are too educated as far as the village is concerned and they have no education at all as far as the standards of the town are concerned". A former foster child supported these observations: "When we ask anyone for an office job, they say, 'Your education is very meagre and you're unfit for any useful work'. When we offer to do manual labour, the employers say, 'You don't have stamina, you are unfit for continuous work.'"[108] Parents who had hoped that the child who had been "given a chance in life" might in turn be able to help the rest of the family, were instead burdened by a child often unable and/or unwilling to contribute to manual labour and who found it difficult to survive on "simple village food". Children used to enjoying a privileged position in the family in terms of better clothes and food were frequently disrespectful to their parents.[109] That was a position which WV India was aware of and warned against. A World Vision of India employee cautioned that "at no time should

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[107] Bill Armstrong in *Forum on Child Sponsorship*, 3 Sept., 1986, Audio Tape WVA, AUD 363.71 FOR
[108] Knott, H., & Krieg, P., "Homes Away from Home", *New Internationalist*, Issue No.111, May, 1982, pp.14-15
[109] *Ibid*

the parents of the children be ridiculed, or sponsors lifted up at the expense of the parent".[110] Other observers agreed that children returning on vacation to the village often disliked the hard rural life, they took home views and attitudes which they had learnt in the hostel which made them embarrassed about conditions at home. Contact with affluent Westerners could also create unfulfilled and unrealistic aspirations and maintain a consciousness of dependence. It could also waste resources. However carefully such schemes were administered a great deal had to be outlaid to cover the cost of identifying specific children, photographing them and administering correspondence.

A WV report undertaken in 1987-88, on the employment status of formerly sponsored children in India, found that while many thousands had been assisted with food, shelter, clothing, health-care, education and "spiritual nurture", only 17% of those surveyed were employed.[111] On average, children were sponsored for five to eight years. Most had not acquired vocational skills by the time they left the project.[112] In such circumstances monies had been donated, rudimentary letters exchanged between recipient and donor (frequently perceived as "Americans" or "rich Sahibs and Memsahibs"),[113] and expectations raised on both sides. At the very least, as the report acknowledged, many of the unemployed previously sponsored children felt immensely frustrated at expectations unfulfilled.[114]

World Vision, PLAN and others could all provide examples of sponsored children "success stories". In the case of WV, for example, bright young Korean orphans had distinguished themselves at university or otherwise. In the case of PLAN, a young woman from Hong Kong had emigrated to Australia to work as a secretary.[115] But their "successes" did little to change the circumstances from which their initial poverty stemmed and to which a large number of other sponsored children returned.

Successive WVA Directors continued to vigorously defend child sponsorship.[116] They argued that involvement reduced the isolation of the child because it knew someone cared. At the same time it created a better future for the child through such provisions as an education, school uniform, medical care and food. And it created

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110 Kumar, S., "Family and the Sponsored Child", in *Family and Development, The Development Perspective*, Vol IV, No.1, Jan-Mar, 1985, p.10

111 *Report of the Study on the Present Status of Employment/Unemployment of Formerly Sponsored Children Carried out by Vocational Guidance Section of World Vision of India During 1987-1988*, pp.5,38

112 *Ibid*, pp.5,33

113 Pradhan, E., DHS Welfare Centre, "Sponsorship Through the Eyes of a Project Manager", *The Development Perspective*, Vol 11, No.1, Jan. 1983, World Vision of India, p.6

114 *Report of the Study..., op.cit.*, p.34

115 *New Internationalist*, May 1982, p.15

116 Irvine, G., "Is Sponsorship a Dole System?", *World Vision*, Summer, 1973

independence by helping the child to become self-supporting. As the Indian study at least disclosed this was seldom the case.

The arguments against child sponsorship were sustained over two decades in Australia, debated periodically in the *New Internationalist* and *Choice* magazines, and also in WVA Forums. Criticism came from CAA, AFFHC, ACC and the Executive Director of ACFOA, as well as from individuals involved in the development process in developing nations.[117] Nevertheless, child sponsorship became an increasingly popular method for Australians to "assist" developing nations. World Vision Australia increased its sponsorship from 66,908 (1983) to 101,822 (1990) and Foster Parents Plan of Australia (PLAN) from 18,000 (1983) to 25,000 (1990). Overall the numbers of children sponsored by Australians would grow from 91,000 in 1983 to 153,000 by 1990.[118] The debate continued to be aired by critics especially as advertising for funds remained focused on individual children. The strong response to that form of advertising suggested that large numbers of Australians continued to have a fairly superficial knowledge about development issues. Yet paradoxically, WVA and other sponsorship agencies were gradually modifying the scheme to embrace the concept of development for whole communities.

Even by the early 1970s child sponsorship had undergone considerable changes since Pierce first took care of one child in China. WV institutional care had become more professional and accountable. "The unfaithful superintendent" was dismissed, the erring orphanage closed, though reasons were not made public.[119] In Vietnam efforts were made to locate relatives of children to avoid institutionalisation and where possible it arranged to have others adopted to become part of a local family.[120]

While WV gradually upgraded its institutional care it began to shift its focus beyond the institutions. By winter 1973 WV was providing assistance for children within their

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[117] Ron O'Grady ACC, "Child sponsorship divides the community", he added that the Council did not support child sponsorship because church leaders in Third World countries did not want it.; Bishop Poulose Mar Poulose, Kerala was concerned at the number of Australians sponsoring children in 1983. "That sort of thing won't help at all,...it may salve your conscience but it won't solve anything for others." *Choice,* Vol 24, No.7, July, 1983, p.12. Rey Natividad, National Council of Churches in the Philippines, "Many would prefer that local organisations initiated the projects themselves. Long-term development is the aim. There should be more emphasis on oppression - the system that creates poverty"; Russell Rollason ACFOA, "The Third World never requests child sponsorship"; Bob Debus AFFHC, "The idea of child sponsorship distorts the real problems of poverty and social justice in the Third World"; Peter Holden ACC, "It is not the way they operate themselves or want us to operate in their countries. *Choice*, Vol 31, No.4, April 1990, pp.25, 27

[118] "Sponsoring a Child", *Choice*, Vol 24, No.7, July 1983, Journal of Australian Consumer's Association, Macquarie Publications, NSW, pp.11-16; "Sponsoring a Child Overseas", *Choice*, Vol 31, No.4., April, 1990, pp.23-29,

[119] "Marlin Nelson Reports from Korea", *WV Heartline*, Vol 7, No. 4, July 1970, p.9; "What is a Sponsor?, *WV Heartline*, Vol 8, No.2, May, 1971, p.6; Irvine, G., "Globe at a Glance", *World Vision*, Vol 1, No.2 , Winter, 1973; Janss, E., Director of Childcare, WVI, "A Canopy for Mei Lin", *World Vision*,Vol 1, No.4, Summer, 1973, p.21

[120] "Roy Challberg Reports from Hong Kong," *WV Heartline*, Vol 7, No.4, July, 1970, pp.6-7; "What is a Sponsor?", *WV Heartline*, Vol 8, No.2, May, 1971, p.5

own families in Laos, Thailand, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Bangladesh.[121] In the Philippines, WV broadened its support to improve the economic conditions of entire families. By 1974 some forty social workers assisted seventeen projects. WV provided free medical care, educational assistance, family planning lectures, handicraft classes and nutritional programmes - which taught families to grow and preserve vegetables. WV also began to link child sponsorship to community development programmes in Indonesia, providing schools and improved public health and food production programmes.

A "Wells" Approach

WVA, like other NGOs, was confronted in the 1970s with the international and national debate on changing development trends, especially as it now had more contact with other Australian agencies. One of the briefs given to WVA's relief and development officer was to maintain liaison with ACFOA, other aid organisations and the Australian government.[122] WVA literature began to adopt the rhetoric of development. The 1973 Executive Director's Annual Report referred to the growing emphasis on development aid which meant, "... getting at the root causes of poverty and setting up projects in such a way that whole communities benefit".[123] WVA referred to "village development" in relation to Ethiopia and Vietnam, "community development" in relation to Indonesia, "social welfare" in Hong Kong and "self help forestry projects" in Korea.[124]

The development focus was pursued in other ways, WVA employed a full-time relief and development officer to evolve the concept of assistance aimed at self-reliance. And WVI established an International Board with representatives from both donor and recipient countries,[125] explaining: "The decision demonstrates World Vision's eagerness not to impose Western patterns on international operations."[126]

This increasing emphasis on development work called into question the ability of the missionary-turned-welfare-worker to adequately meet the new demands. Gradually younger people began to fill the requirements of missionary/ agriculturalist or engineer. A mechanical engineer worked in Kenya, "introducing cultivation techniques, new crops, training local carpenters, and helping the local church".[127] A missionary with the

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121 Irvine, G., "Globe at a Glance", *World Vision*, Vol 1, No.2, Winter, 1973

122 *World Vision*, June, 1976

123 "Year in review", Executive Director's Report, *World Vision*, Vol 1, No.4, p.20, Summer, 1973; *World Vision*, Vol 1, No.4, Summer 1973, p.23. Universities pressured to include women's issues in their courses in the 1980s, adopted the same technique. Many initially simply appended "and women" to their course descriptions, giving the distinct impression that they had little idea what that entailed.

124 "World Vision at Work", *World Vision*, Vol 1, No.2, Autumn, 1973

125 "Internationalisation is More than just a Big Word", *World Vision*, June, 1976

126 *Ibid*

127 *Ibid*

Church Missionary Society who was a qualified agriculturalist introduced "small farming techniques...improved crop yields and better nutrition".[128] But by 1978/79 WV recognised that its growing focus on community development projects required specialist field-work training. It therefore began to evolve a "Community Leadership Training" scheme (COLT) which was strongly influenced by the work of Dr James Yen and Dr Juan Flavier of the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction in the Philippines, and with considerable input from a WVA staff member.[129] The objective was to train indigenous personnel for grassroots development work. Besides practical training on literacy campaigns, health care, co-operatives, appropriate technology and agriculture, attention was also given to the importance of self-reliance, attitudinal change and conservation.[130]

WVA's range of assistance already covered a much wider area than its child sponsorship label implied. While most of WVA's revenue was raised by using images of children, funds were never exclusively used for children's projects. On a field visit to Cambodia in 1973 WV reported, "No two situations are quite the same. One man needs medicine. Another needs training. Others need a school building, or the know-how to get a water supply ... We realised ...the wisdom in keeping our help flexible".[131]

WVA established a Strategic Aid Team (SAT), in 1976, to raise funds for specific community projects. It described SAT as the "next step in the onward march against poverty and hunger in the Third World".[132] Such projects it stressed did not involve child sponsorship - there were no personal pictures and letters - rather they were practical development aid projects.[133]

WVA's interpretation of "development aid" was similar to the FFHC 1960s focus. WVA supplied money and knowledge, such as agricultural enrichment and irrigation projects, windmills, well-drilling, small dams and trucking programmes.[134] Such assistance frequently carried with it the same optimistic assumptions of the 1960s. Of its work in the Philippines, for example, WVA reported that the way ... "to release these people from the web of circumstances that keeps them entangled in this dismal way of life is simply in the provision of money." SAT had so far raised $85,000 towards the development of 4 barrios.[135] Of the Philippines WVA said: "They can have their own 'Green Revolution' vegetable gardens and orchards... [with a] year round supply of

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128 *Ibid;* Hunt, Philip, "Crop flops drop!!", *World Vision News*, Sept., 1978

129 Steward, J., *Colt-Indonesia, Community Leadership Training for Rural Development: The First Four Years*, World Vision of Australia, Melbourne, 1984

130 *Ibid*

131 "The Edge of Terror", *World Vision*, Vol 1, No.2, Winter, 1973

132 *World Vision*, June, 1976

133 *World Vision*, Feb., 1976

134 "From the Director", *World Vision*, Dec., 1975; "Onward in Africa", *World Vision*, June 1976

135 "Freedom for 4 Barrios", *World Vision*, Oct.,1976; "World Vision Strategic Aid Team", *WV Development Aid News*, Nov.,1976

freshwater and they can be free from the parasites and diseases which they accept as their way of life."[136]

Headlines about the scheme read: "Strategic Aid Team Moves to Upper Volta. ...Now with work getting under way in the first S.A.T. project in the Philippines, and with team members' pledges ensuring the barrio development costs, the Strategic Aid team can move on".[137] Although WVA stressed that these were joint enterprises, the hand of the Westerner was obvious and the impression remained of WVA striding from one part of the world to another, confidently promoting projects and solving problems. WVA reported: "The job of the Aid Team is to train...The rural training centre will teach them to make better use of their land....they will be shown that the land is more than just land to accommodate cattle".[138] Of a larger project it reported:

> The World Vision Aid Team is to support pig farmers in the formation of co-operatives and also improve the quality of their stock. Four large breeding coops are being erected - each will cost $18,850...Wells, equipped with pumps, will be drilled on the co-operative sites. ...Twenty women and 45 men will each be given three sheep to raise. An enclosure will be erected, and food and the necessary vaccine supplied. Chicken raising will also be incorporated. The third section of this project is fishing. Fifty people are involved. World Vision Aid Team money will be used to purchase five boats. ...Over three years each area will be supplied with improved seeds and the people shown how to use fertiliser and insecticides. Better tools will be bought...The program will allow for an agriculturalist to be employed, who will guide the whole project over the three years.[139]

Although this approach was a considerable departure for WVA, like the majority of NGO projects at the time, such activity continued to lack the in depth knowledge of poor communities which was essential if assistance was to be both equitable and sustainable. The approach continued to assume too much Western influence and lacked the critical edge which activist NGOs applied to their activities. WVA assumed, for example, that an African dam project it was assisting, provided a favourable example of grassroots or people development, since the local chiefs saw it as their scheme, and were involved in sub-dividing the land and looking after the earth equipment.[140] WVA did not question whether the local chiefs might perhaps be part of the problem.

By the 1970s, the majority of NGOs had now progressed from a "charity" perspective to adopt a "wells" approach to development assistance. In addition they were assuming the vocabulary common to activist NGOs. Reports referred to "self-reliance", "peoples' participation", appropriate technology, etc. CAA noted in 1979 that even the Indonesian government referred to the "importance of equitable distribution,

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136 *Ibid;* "Freedom for 4 Barrios", *op.cit.*

137 "Strategic Aid Team moves to Upper Volta", *WV Development Aid News*, Jan., 1977; "Onward in Africa", *World Vision*, June 1976; *WV Development Aid News*, Sept, 1976

138 "Modern techniques for Age-Old Maasai", *WV Development Aid News*, Oct., 1977; "Habitat-Quiche, A new horizon for World Vision Aid Team", *World Vision News*, Special Aid Team Report, Mar., 1979; "Aid Team drills for water", *World Vision of Australia Aid Team News*, Ap.,1978

139 "The World Vision Aid Team Plan for Upper Volta", *WV Development Aid News*, Feb., 77

140 "All They Need is Water", World Vision Aid Team, *WV Development Aid News*, Oct., 77

self-reliance and basic needs." CAA added "While there are no indications that this reflects a change of heart, at least it reflects a sensitivity to international opinion".[141] What was most critical, however, was that these concepts were understood and that they moved beyond rhetoric to enter policy. For, as Stalker's quote which heads this chapter intimated, to *say* that one was involved in community development, appropriate technology, helping the poorest, was not enough. The process and impact of that approach needed to be recognised. It was one thing to apply the "wells approach", providing a community with a road, chickens, pigs or wells. But to ensure that these processes did not unjustly disrupt communities required an in depth knowledge of local cultures and of poverty and development issues. Moreover, to restrict assistance to a "wells" approach, without addressing the "complex" or the "political" - in other words without defining and seeking to redress the causes of poverty - was to continue to run the risk (in the same manner that bilateral or multilateral aid ran the risk), of supporting development projects which were palliative, *ad hoc,* or which could even add to entrenched inequalities.

By the end of the 1970s, in Australia, the nascent attempts to reform the bilateral programme made by the Whitlam government - especially its stated commitment to respond to the needs of the poorest groups[142] - had been largely undermined by the Fraser government's regressive aid policy with its preferred focus on strategic and trade concerns. The education campaigns of activist NGOs which attempted to inform Australians about development issues by drawing links between the actions of the developed world and the poverty of the developing world,[143] frequently met with an equally conservative response. As well, the most prominent images used to depict developing nations, in the context of development assistance, continued to utilise "pornography of the poor" material - the skeletal, passive image - to raise funds.

On the other hand, and belying popular imagery, activist Asian NGOs in the field had matured considerably. They were developing NGO networks across cultures, questioning the relevance of Western development to Asia's poorest people, and, with activist NGOs from the developed world, they were continuing to evolve the concept of "development" to more readily advance the agency of poor communities. Through their actions, discussions and analyses activist NGOs also extended the development lexicon to reflect these changes. In leading ideology and practice in this manner they continued to "nudge along" the activities of less activist groups. This influence was most obvious in the emerging rhetoric of less activist NGOs but it was also evident in their willingness to reassess their development practices - as in the case of the child

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141 "Indonesia", *REVIEW*, Sept.-Oct., 1979

142 Willesee, D., "New Direction in Australia's Development Assistance", *op.cit.,* (1975)

143 "Report to the Review Conference of CAA, July 6, 1974", *op.cit.*

sponsorship schemes which were being revised to encompass assistance to whole communities. That said, the practices of the majority of NGOs remained a decade behind those innovative groups which sought systemic change. As the global economic environment became more conservative in the 1980s and as world poverty increased, the need to engage the broader NGO community in seeking ways to effect systemic change would become more urgent.

Chapter 9
"Questioning Practice"[1]
From Cold War to Trade War

I am not very much into helping the poor; I really think it is more important to get development going ..... *Helen Hughes, 1989*

Primarily, the objective of the aid program is supposedly to assist the poor, to combat chronic poverty..... *CAA, 1989*

The North-South dialogue [resembles] two stuck gramophone records playing in separate rooms..... *quoted by Andrew Peacock, 1980*

The North-South Debate

The increased visibility of the South through OPEC, the NIEO and the growing significance of the NICs, generated a spate of reports in the West on Third World issues. Assisted by the "Harries" report - *Australia and the Third World* (April 1979), the Brandt report - *North-South:A Programme for Survival* (December 1979) and the Ardnt report -*The World Economic Crisis: A Commonwealth Perspective* (July 1980),[2] "Third World", "North-South" issues held the Fraser government's attention to a surprising degree in the years 1980-1983.[3]

Behind the publications of these reports and the Australian government's increased emphasis on North-South issues was a complex mix of interests and concerns, among them Australia's economic and strategic interests. For the Fraser government these were heightened by the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia, and the subsequent intensification of great power military presence in the Indian Ocean.[4] The Fraser government believed these events signalled a breakdown of détente and were evidence that the USSR intended to increase its influence in developing countries. At a time when the Western world remained under pressure from the South to substantially restructure the global economy, the Fraser government was

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[1] Title from an NGO publication Porter, D., Clark, K., *Questioning Practice: NGOs and Evaluation*, NZCTD Pacific Aid Research Monograph, No.1 March, 1985

[2] *Australia and the Third World*, Report of the Committee on Australia's Relations with the Third World, AGPS, Canberra, 1979; "The Arndt Report", Summary of the report titled *The World Economic Crisis:A Commonwealth Perspective*, prepared by a group of experts from Commonwealth Countries, *AFAR*, Vol 51, No.9, Sept., 1980, pp.330-334; *North-South: A Programme for Survival*, The Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues under the Chairmanship of Willy Brandt, Pan Books, London, 1980

[3] See "United Nations General Assembly - 35th Session", *AFAR*, Vol 51, No.9, Sept., 1980, p.342; "Global Negotiations: The General Background", *AFAR*, Vol 51, No.9, Sept., 1980, p.334; "Minister's Address to UNGA", Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock at UN General Assembly, 35th Session, 25 Sept., 1980, *AFAR*, Vol 51, No.9, Sept., 1980, pp.344-352

[4] "Minister's Address to UNGA", *op.cit.;* "The Commonwealth: Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting", New Delhi, 4-8 Sept., 1980, *AFAR,* Vol 51, No., 9, Sept., 1980, pp.316-329

concerned that developing countries might decide to throw their support behind the USSR, if only out of frustration with the West. The Australian High Commissioner in London, representing the Fraser government in an address to the Royal Commonwealth Society, stated that the North-South dialogue was in part about: "... preventing the creation of a permanent and dangerously disaffected group of nations which feels that it has no stake in the existing order and no hope for the future."[5] Foreign Minister T. Street highlighted the economic dangers for the West should the developing nations pursue such a course, when he argued: "It is clearly in the political and economic interests of the West that the developing countries remain within the existing market system. The maintenance of the system will only be assured if the benefits are, and are seen to be, mutual."[6] These concerns prompted the Fraser government to increase its aid to Pacific nations, and to persistently criticise the USSR's performance in developing countries.[7] A statement to parliament by Street was typical of his government's stance:

> The USSR has demonstrated both its unwillingness and its inability to provide the assistance which the Third World needs if the great mass of humanity is to achieve the prosperity it seeks. The USSR cannot provide the markets, capital, technology, the flexibility of adjustment which has made the West the dynamic force in international development. The USSR may offer arms, ideology and disruption but they bring chaos not prosperity.[8]

The government's sustained rhetoric on South issues was also strongly centred around global economic concerns. Not the least of these was the continued pressure from developing nations to implement a NIEO in a period of recession, unemployment and high inflation. Concern over the extent to which oil prices had caused the deteriorating world economic situation marshalled the developing nations at UNCTAD V in Manila, and key leaders of the Group of 77, prior to the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in August 1979. They called for an extended round of global negotiations on the world economic situation, to examine the issues of energy, money and finance, trade, development and raw materials. They pressed hard to establish negotiations for an International Development Strategy, during the Eleventh Special Session of the United

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[5] "Address to the Royal Commonwealth Society, London", Delivered for the Prime Minister by the Australian High Commissioner in London, the Hon. R. Garland, 27 July, 1981, *AFAR*, Vol 52, No.7, July, 1981, p.384

[6] "North-South Issues: Domestic Economic Implication", Address by Foreign Affairs Minister Tony Street to the Society of Senior Executives in Sydney, 27 July, 1981, *AFAR*, Vol 52, No.7, July, 1981, p.381

[7] "Aid to the South Pacific", *AFAR*, Vol 51, No., 6, July, 1980, pp.255-257, "Australian aid has increased rapidly and in February 1980 the Prime Minister announced a further commitment of $120 million for the three year period 1980-81 to 1982-83."; Prime Minister Fraser remarked on the... "appalling record of the Soviet Union and the other Eastern European countries as economic aid givers to the Third World combined with their extremely impressive record as suppliers of arms, is the clearest indication that they see their interests as lying in the promotion and exploitation of instability and violence." "'North-South' Issues", Address by Prime Minister The Rt., Hon. Malcolm Fraser, to a Commonwealth Club luncheon in Adelaide on Feb., 9, 1981, *AFAR*, Vol 52, No.2, Feb., 1981, p.76

[8] "Overseas Aid Program 1980-82", Statement by Foreign Affairs Minister Street to the Parliament on 20 August, 1981, *AFAR*, Vol 52, No.8, August, 1981, p.422

Nations General Assembly in September 1980.[9] At the centre of their demands remained the issue of restructuring the global economy and they attempted to use the UN General Assembly - one of the few organisations where the developing countries had some voting strength - to resolve the issues.[10] These actions created a certain unease among Western countries. Street indicated the concern of the Australian government when he commented in 1982:

> Few could deny that the United Nations has provided Third World states with a forum where limited diplomatic resources, effective use of numbers and solidarity not only balance but can sometimes outweigh super or great power influence. Indeed, there can be no dispute that the numbers game of the UN rest securely in their grasp....[11]

Developed countries strongly resisted attempts to prescribe a "legislative" role to the UN General Assembly, or a role which would enable the UN to overrule the specialised agencies such as the IMF and World Bank, where the West had stronger voting rights.[12] Negotiations to agree on even the procedural framework for a 'global round' in these circumstances were both difficult and protracted.

Many aspects of the numerous reports commissioned in the West to examine North-South issues claimed to be sympathetic to South demands. The Arndt report, for example, stressed an urgent need to increase the levels of ODA, to ease the burden of debt and to facilitate freer trade.[13] The World Bank's *World Development Report*, recommended lowering tariffs for developing country imports and avoiding competitive currency devaluations and export subsidies.[14] The Bank's report also admitted that "no grand new theories have been conceived after three decades of experimentation in growth paths for the countries which house the world's poorest." But it added that the importance of human development was now recognised, "... not because of obvious humanitarian reasons, but as one of the pillars of economic growth."[15] That stance complemented the World Bank's support in the 1970s for a Basic Human Needs component in development.

Among the Brandt Report proposals were recommendations for a World Development Fund. Such a fund would provide increased resources for development and incorporate a system of international taxation.[16] The Commonwealth Heads of

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9 "Global Negotiations... *op.cit*, p.334; UNGA Special Session on Economic Development, *AFAR* ,Vol 51, No.10, Oct. 1980, pp.371-373

10 Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock, to HR, 18 Sept., 1980, "NIEO: Implications for Australia", *AFAR,* Vol 51, No.9, Sept., 1980, pp.339-34

11 "Australia's Role as a Middle Power", Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tony Street to the Tenth National Conference of the Australian Institute of International Affairs," 14 May, 1982, *AFAR*, Vol 53, No.5, May, 1982, p.307

12 *Ibid.*, p.340; "UNGA Special Session on Economic Development", *op.cit.*, pp.371-2

13 "The Arndt Report", *op.cit.*, pp.331-333

14 "The World Development Report - 1980", *AFAR*, Vol 51, No.12, Dec., 1980, pp.493-495

15 *Ibid*

16 "The Brandt Report", *AFAR*, Vol 51, No.3, Mar., 1980, pp.48-49

Government regional meeting of Asia and the Pacific, urged that ways be examined to improve the export trade of developing countries in commodities, semi-manufactures and manufactures.[17] An Australian Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, released in February 1980, also urged accommodation with the South stating:

> Australia's long-term interests require a more constructive approach by the "North" to the developing countries than has been evident in the past, [adding] Australian policy towards developing countries and NIEO proposals has clearly demonstrated the necessity to go beyond a defensive reaction.[18]

The most critical issues to emerge from these reports included Third World debt (especially among net oil-importing developing countries whose debt was being seriously exacerbated by accelerated inflation), inadequate levels of ODA, increasing levels of protectionism, and the necessity to implement structural adjustment programmes.[19] Stress was placed on the inter-dependence of the world economy and the necessity to establish collective decision-making from both North and South.[20] Yet despite the rhetoric issuing from the reports little of substance occurred to strengthen the position of developing nations. In fact trade barriers imposed by developed nations actually increased between 1978 and 1988.[21]

In Australia the various reports helped the government to clarify the world political and economic situation which was starting to undergo immense change. Increased knowledge of the South focused the government more sharply on Australia's position in that changing global environment. The Fraser government concentrated on two major international economic issues. The first concerned the increasing tendency of European nations and North America towards protectionism and bilateral trade agreements. The second concerned the increasing prosperity of the NICs - Singapore, Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. In 1981 real GNP expanded in Hong Kong by over 10%, in Singapore by nearly 10% and in Korea by 8%.[22] Australia's growth rate at the time was 5% while the average OECD rate was only 1%. On both these issues, protectionism and the growth of the NICs, Australian interests were linked and intersected with the interests of the South.

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17 "The Commonwealth: Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting", *op.cit.*, p.325

18 "NIEO:Implications for Australia", *op.cit.*, p.340

19 "The Arndt Report", *op.cit.*, pp.331-334; "International Development Strategy", *AFAR* ,Vol 51, No.10., Oct., 1980, pp.377-379; "The Commonwealth: Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting", *op.cit.*, pp.316-329

20 "The Arndt Report", *op.cit.*, p.331; "Dependence and Self-Reliance: Capital Mobilisation in Developing Countries," *AFAR*, Vol 51, No.10., Oct., 1980, pp.378-379; "The Commonwealth: Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting", *op.cit.*, p.324

21 Todaro, M., *Economic Development in the Third World*, Longman, London, 1989, p.458

22 "Prime Minister's Address to the Australian Chamber of Commerce", 10 June, 1982, *AFAR*, Vol 53, No. 6, June, 1982, p.387

As a middle power heavily dependent on commodities, Australia had long and consistently supported arguments put by Third World nations for a more rational and equitable commodity market. As a small trading nation not part of any large trading block, it was in Australia's interest to continue to press for equitable conditions through multilateral channels, especially the GATT. Hence Australia's genuine support for much of the developing world's call for a more rational commodity market, especially at a time when the European and North American markets were increasing their bilateral trade arrangements and their protectionist policies (what Australia increasingly referred to as policies of "beggar-thy-neighbour").[23] At the United Nations Special Session on Economic Development, Foreign Affairs Minister A. Peacock noted: "The widening of the EEC in the early 1970s may have brought down the barriers to industrial trade within Europe but it raised walls around the British import market for food - until then the largest in the world." He added that agriculture remained the most protected of all lines of world business.[24] Of the many statements made on the subject, the Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs summed up the government's position well and betrayed government fears about three major trading areas. He stressed: "We have an enormous amount at stake in keeping protectionism at bay - particularly in the big markets of the United States and Western Europe, while Japan can look outwards we can be confident."[25]

In an attempt to facilitate adjustments in the field of agriculture, the Prime Minister laid out several propositions to Western nations prior to the summit at Versailles. He called for a freeze on existing levels of protection, particularly in non-tariff forms; suggested that there be no new or increased export incentives and subsidies, and that an international commitment be made to abolish existing export incentives and subsidies over a five year period. He also called for a commitment towards progressively implementing reductions in all forms of protection in accordance with a set formula to be agreed through the GATT.[26] The Foreign Affairs Minister reported favourable responses to the proposals from the Director General of the OECD, the Secretary General of the UN and the Commonwealth.[27]

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23 "Visit by Vice-President of the U.S.", Speech by Prime Minister Fraser at a dinner to honour Mr and Mrs George Bush, May 1, 1982, *AFAR*, Vol 53, No.5, May, 1982, p.278

24 "United Nations General Assembly: Australian Statement to the United Nations Special Session on Economic Development", *AFAR*, Vol 51, No.8., Aug., 1980, pp.305-6

25 "Australia-Japan Economic Relations", J. Menadue, Sec., of Dept. of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, to NSW Branch of Institute of Directors of Australia, 8 Nov., 1980; Also see "OECD:Address by Minister for Foreign Affairs", to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Ministerial Council Meeting in Paris on June 16, 1981, *AFAR*, Vol 52, No.6, June, 1981, pp.321-324

26 "Australia-ASEAN:Present and Future", Address by Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Tony Street, to the Foreign Correspondents' Club in Singapore, 18 June, 1982, *AFAR*, Vol 53, No. 6, June, 1982, p.397

27 *Ibid*

The OECD argued that even minor structural changes by the USA, Europe and Japan could have a positive impact on other countries. A 1% reduction in the production of cheese in North America, Western Europe and Japan, for example, corresponded to an increase of 35% of the production of cheese in Australia and New Zealand- a figure that would double 1982 exports.[28] Yet despite pursuing the matter vigorously through GATT the issue was at an impasse at the end of the Fraser government's term of office in early 1983, causing Trade and Resources Minister, J.D. Anthony to comment: "The sorry story of agriculture is one that the founding fathers of GATT could never have foreseen in their most despairing moments".[29]

In other areas the Fraser government accepted the recommendations in the reports of "Harries" and the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence to restructure industries which were suffering from increased competition from the NICs. These industries were mainly in the areas of clothing, footwear and textiles. The NICs had clearly demonstrated their competitive edge based on a comparative cheap labour advantage. In various venues in 1981 Street suggested the inevitability of some structural adjustment of Australia's industries, stating, "Australians must accept the need for change."[30] The government argued that the average nominal rates of Australian assistance - tariffs, quotas and bounties - to manufacturing had been reduced from over 40% in 1968-69 to about 14% in 1980-81, which it argued had allowed imports to increase.[31] About 70% of Australian imports were at non-protective rates of duty and in the case of ASEAN, 88% of imports entered duty free or were subject to developing country preferential rates of duty.[32] Some argued nevertheless, including the ASEAN countries, that Australia's markets were still too highly protected. Certainly the measures pursued by the Fraser government were motivated primarily out of self-interest and necessity. But because Australian and South interests overlapped, especially with regard to increased Western protectionism, the Australian government's policies to lobby for a more equitable commodity market and to reduce some trade barriers, also favoured the South.

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[28] "World Agricultural Trade", News release issued by the Minister for Primary Industry, the Hon. Peter Nixon, 2 Dec., 1982, *AFAR*, Vol 53, No.12, Dec., 1982, p.774

[29] "United Nations: Foreign Minister's Address", Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Tony Street, to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, 6 Oct., 1982, *AFAR*, Vol 53, No. 10, Oct., 1982, p.620; "GATT Ministerial Meeting", Statement by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Resources, the Rt Hon. J.D. Anthony, to the morning Plenary Session of the Ministerial meeting of the GATT, in Geneva, 24 Nov., 1982, *AFAR*, Vol 53, No.11, Nov., 1982, pp.744-5

[30] "Australia and Asia 1981 - Retrospective and Outlook", Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon, Tony Street, at the 25th anniversary of the Australian-Asian Association of Victoria, 15 Oct., 1981, *AFAR*, Vol 52, No.10, Oct., 1981, p.524

[31] OECD Ministerial Council Meeting, Paris, Statement by Minister for Industry and Commerce, Sir Phillip Lynch, May 11, 1982, *AFAR*, Vol 53, No.5, May, 1982, p.293

[32] "Australia-ASEAN:Present and Future", Address by Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Tony Street, to the Foreign Correspondents' Club in Singapore, 18 June, 1982, *AFAR*, Vol 53, No. 6, June, 1982, pp.397-8

The Pacific Rim

In concert with the Fraser Government's concern to resolve North-South issues for strategic and economic reasons, was its growing interest in collaborating in the Asia-Pacific region. The concept of a Pacific Community or Pacific Rim had been evolving for many years. It had intensified during the early 1980s in response to the growth of Japan, the ASEAN countries and the "smaller dragons" or "Asian Tigers" of South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The "Age of the Pacific" as it was being dubbed, was believed to be at hand.[33] Countries bordering the "Pacific Rim", especially the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, were eager to share in the region's growth at a time when economic recession was depressing growth in the West.

When the Hawke Labor Government came to office in March 1983, the importance with which it held Australia's participation in the projected "Pacific Century" profoundly influenced its domestic and foreign policies. That period coincided internationally with (and was not unrelated to) the promotion of "Reaganomics" and "Thatcherism" which supported hard-edged, economic rationalist policies. Far from heeding the voice of the South, that economic environment encouraged a deeply pragmatic response by the West both to the lagging Western economy and to the perceived competition coming from the Asia-Pacific region. Industry and Commerce Minister, Senator J. Button in 1984 described the export growth economies of the Pacific Basin as formidable. Adding: "Their impact has squeezed not only us, but is causing problems in the world's most industrialised countries."[34]

In Australia, the rhetoric of restructuring the economy and industry espoused by the Fraser government was fast put into practice by Hawke. It included, as outlined by Treasurer P. Keating to the OECD, floating the exchange rate, deregulation of financial markets, wide-ranging tax reform, major cuts in import protection, and deregulation of domestic transport sectors.[35] It also included structural adjustment plans in a number of Australia's major industries with a view to promoting efficiency over protection. Initiatives included a seven year Textile, Clothing and Footwear programme and plans for the steel and motor vehicle industries.[36] These procedures had less to do with responding to the South's demands for a more equitable market share, than with

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[33] AJMC:Keynote Address, "Partners on the Pacific Rim", Minister for Foreign Affairs, to Australia-Japan Ministerial Committee in Canberra, 29 July, 1982, *AFAR*, Vol 53, No.7, July, 1982, p.489

[34] "Australia: Poor White Nation of the Pacific?", Speech Senator Button, Industry and Commerce Minister, Australian Institute of Political Science conference, Melbourne, 26 May, 1984, *AFAR*, Vol 55, No.6, June 1984, pp.603

[35] "Structural Reform to Lift Real Income", Remarks by the Treasurer, Mr Paul Keating, at a meeting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, in Paris, May 31, 1989, *The Monthly Record, (MR)*, Vol 60, No.6, June, pp.277-8, Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra

[36] "Australia's Relationships with Western Pacific Countries in the 1980s", Speech by Acting Sec. of Dept. of Foreign Affairs, G Miller, Australian Council of the International Chamber of Commerce, Sydney, Oct., 5, 1984, *AFAR*, Vol 55, No.10, Oct., 1984, pp.1058-64

Australia's concerns not to be left out of an increasingly competitive global market, in which the EEC, North America and Japan continued to sanction protectionist policies.

Significantly, the North-South debate which had enjoyed such intense rhetorical scrutiny under the Fraser government dissipated under Hawke. Foreign Affairs Minister, Senator G. Evans remarked in 1989 that the issue of the North-South divide, "...regrettably seems to have gone quite out of fashion in Western countries."[37] In major ministerial statements "North-South" references quickly made way to those of "Globalism", "Asia-Pacific Dynamism", "Multipolarity" or "Trade".[38] References to the East-West remained but in a dramatically changing context as USSR President Gorbachev, elected in 1985, presided over the reform of communism, including relinquishing control over Eastern Europe.

While the major issues underlying the tensions in the North-South divide may have gone "out of fashion" in the West, they continued to be pressing in the South - particularly for the many millions of people who lived in absolute poverty. Given the critical economic position of many developing countries, the remarkably fast way that references to the North-South debate dropped off the political agenda in Australia, during the course of the 1980s, requires some explanation. It lay partially in the weakened state of the UN and its specialised agencies during the 1980s. Australia's Ambassador to the UN from 1982-88 observed that "the stocks of the UN had sunk as low as they had ever been" in the first half of the 1980s.[39] Twenty-one countries, including the USA did not support the budget in 1985 which brought the organisation near to bankruptcy. A popular slogan in the US at the time stated, "Get the UN out of the US and the US out of the UN."[40] Although a variety of criticisms were levelled at the UN including that it was a costly, unwieldy bureaucratic structure unable to make effective decisions, the growing influence of Third World nations in the Assembly was obviously one strong area of contention. Acting Foreign Affairs Minister Evans said in 1985, "Many Western countries feel dissatisfaction on the grounds that their political influence has waned although their financial contributions continue to increase and remain the principal source of funding."[41] The increased leverage of developing nations drew comment from the West that the UN had been taken over by the Third World. As R. Woolcott pointed out, in reality what had happened was the United Nations had

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[37] "Foreign-Policy Priorities", The Roy Milne Memorial Lecture 1989, delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans, to the Australian Institute of International Affairs, Melbourne, April 27, 1989, *MR*, Vol 60, No.4, April, 1989, p.141

[38] "Foreign-Policy Priorities", *Ibid*, pp.139-141; "Australia and the UN in the 1990s", 1989 Evatt Memorial Lecture, Secretary of the Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Richard Woolcott, to UN Assoc. of Australia, Canberra, Sept., 22, *MR* , Vol 60, No.9, Sept., 1989, p.521

[39] *Ibid*, p.523

[40] *Ibid*, p.521

[41] "Fortieth Anniversary of the United Nations: An Australian Perspective", Speech by Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator G Evans, H.V. Evatt Memorial Lecture, to the UN Association, Queensland, 23 Aug., 1985, *AFAR* , Vol 56, No.8, Aug., 1985, p.704

changed: "... from a fairly comfortable club, formed by the victors of the Second World War, into a much larger and more representative organisation, on which neither the United States and its allies, nor the Soviet Union and its allies, can impose their wills."[42]

The withholding of funds by the United States from the UN and its retreat from UNESCO, were consistent with the Reagan administrations tendency to withdraw from multilateralism and internationalism in an attempt to retain its past global economic and political dominance. It was the view of the members of the South Commission,[43] in fact, that the evolution of the Group of Seven was part of this process. The Group of Seven, the South Commission argued, saw itself as the custodian of the world economy, disregarding the principle of multilateral discourse and decision-making embodied in the United Nations Charter.[44] For the South, any weakening of the UN structure, and the simultaneous "ganging up" of the most powerful economic nations in such groupings as the Group of Seven, diffused its push for a NIEO.

At the same time, economic rationalist policies were being taken up aggressively by conservative Western governments, especially the United States and Britain and to a lesser extent by the Labor government in Australia. Todaro argues that with the US and Britain controlling votes in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and with the simultaneous erosion of the influence of other UN agencies, such as the ILO, UNDP and UNCTAD- in other words the organisations which most represented Third World interests - it was inevitable in that economic climate that development theories more favourable to South interests would be challenged and difficult to implement.[45] A major loser was the Basic Human Needs model. Supporting an interventionist policy aimed directly at the poor, the BHN approach had been championed in the 1970s, by among others the World Bank's Robert McNamara and Mahbub Ul Haq, both of whom left the Bank in the early 1980s. Higgott and Cox have argued that the period epitomised the decline of the "social democratic or Keynesian/welfare state approach" to development and explained the hostile reception from some quarters given to the Brandt report which had supported the concept of BHN.[46]

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[42] Woolcott, R., "The United Nations in a Great Power World: An Australian Perspective", to Pennsylvania State University, 16 Nov., 1983, *AFAR*, Vol 54, No.11, Nov., 1983, p.710

[43] *The Challenge to the South*, The Report of the South Commission, Chairman J Nyerere, Oxford University Press, 1990, p.72

[44] *Ibid*

[45] Todaro, M., *Economic Development in the Third World*, Longman, Harlow, 1989, pp.82-83

[46] The broader effects and aspects of the West's economic rationalist policies on Third World nations are discussed in Chapter 10. Higgott, R., "Structural Adjustment and the Jackson Report: The Nexus Between Development Theory and Australian Foreign Policy", in Eldridge, et al, *Australian Overseas Aid*, p.42, Croom Helm, Sydney, 1986; and quoting Robert Cox (1979) in "Ideologies and the New International Economic Order:Reflections on Some Recent Literature", *International Organisation*, 32, 2, 257-302; Brandt, W., *North-South:A Programme for Survival, op.cit.*

In a rapidly changing global environment other events conspired to render the North-South debate less critical to the West. They included the subsequent recovery and economic boom in the West, the withdrawal of Russia from Afghanistan, and Vietnam's withdrawal from Cambodia in 1989. Most critically they included the thorough and on-going reforms in the USSR and Eastern Europe which heralded the end of the Cold War, an event which many aid agencies feared might serve to divert monies from traditional Western recipients.

In concert with these events the economic successes of the Asia-Pacific region served to deflect attention from Third World communities which were not prospering - including communities in the Asian region. Australia's analyses and interaction with ASEAN, for instance, assumed a strong economic as opposed to "development" focus during the 1980s.[47] Yet many developing countries were not growing and were suffering from crippling debt problems. The issue was highlighted most dramatically by Mexico in 1982-3, when it was bailed out by a consortium of Northern interests, in effect to save a run on Northern banks.

In this economic environment Australian domestic and foreign policy increasingly focused on economic issues. The recognition of the growing importance of trade (Senator Button in 1987 said that debate in Australia ought to be about "trade, trade, trade"[48]) prompted moves to integrate foreign policy and trade policy by amalgamating the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 1987. The Secretary of the newly created department remarked of the amalgamation on the "...growing priority of economic as against political issues with the passing of the intensity of the cold war."[49] This easing of Cold War tensions saw a greater emphasis in the newly emerging states of the former USSR, in China and eventually in Vietnam on free market economics. Coupled with the high growth rates of the Asian NICs these initiatives served to highlight to the Australian government the importance of elevating economic and trade interests. Australia's increasing balance of trade deficit and its escalating foreign debt

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[47] See The ASEAN-Australia Lecture Series, 11, 13,15 and 18 April, 1983, *AFAR*, Vol 54, No.7, July, 1983; Statement to Parliament by Mr Bill Morrison, 9 Oct., 1984, "Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence: Report on Australia and ASEAN", *AFAR*, Vol 55, No.10, Oct., 1984, pp.1093-1095; "Australia and ASEAN, Relations and Management Practices", First Assist. Sec. Dept. Foreign Affairs, J. Humphreys, to ASEAN-Australia International Business Management Program, Victoria, 18 Nov., *AFAR*, Vol 55, No.11, Nov., 1984, pp. 1199-1209; Statement by M Lightowler, Leader of Australian delegation to ASEAN-Australia Forum, June, Manila, *AFAR*, Vol 59, No.6, June, 1988, pp.248-249; Address by Foreign Affairs Minister G Evans, 12th Australia-ASEAN Forum, May 15, 1989, "An Idea Whose Time Has Come", Vol 60, No. 5, May 1989, pp.183-186

[48] "The Economics of Multiculturalism", Minister for Immigration, Ethnic Affairs and Local Government, M. Young, Flinders University, 3 Dec., 1987, *AFAR*, Vol 58, Nos 11 & 12, Nov/Dec., 1987, p.604

[49] "The Amalgamation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade", Address by the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Dr Stuart Harris, Australian Institute of International Affairs, March 17, 1988, *AFAR*, Vol 59, No.3, Mar., 1988, p.71

(prompting Treasurer Keating to remark that Australia could become a "banana republic") only accentuated the need.[50]

Many of the distinctions between the North and South were becoming blurred - as some developing nations became more prosperous and as economic power internationally became more diffused. After forty years of domination by two super-powers, there were now many more major actors in the global economic scene especially Japan and Germany. Increased population growth and raised expectations from a vastly increased, better educated, and well-travelled middle class in both the First and Third World, all placed growing demands on the planet's resources. The increased tendency, too, of countries to support regional blocs using protectionist methods, added to global economic tensions and competition.

This increasingly competitive economic environment which placed Australia in the cross-fire between its traditional allies, Europe and the USA, encouraged Australia to seek more independent alliances of its own. As a commodity-dependent country, located in the Asia-Pacific region, without membership in any large trading bloc, Australia sought the company of other countries who were in a similar situation. This exercise encouraged it to strengthen alliances across the North-South divide. The Minister for Trade, John Dawkins, convened a meeting in Cairns in 1986 of agricultural countries eager to liberalise the EEC, USA and Japanese agricultural markets. Known as the Cairns group, it consisted of 14 countries representing both North and South, all of which sought to trade according to the rules of multilateralism or "fair trade", rather than through bilateral agreements and trade blocs.[51] The group acted as a considerable lobby group in the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations in the GATT which commenced in 1986. And in another initiative, Prime Minister Hawke succeeded in bringing together countries of the Asia-Pacific in a new regional grouping - Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, or APEC - in 1989, to discuss regional economic and trade issues.

In Australia, these events pushed the question of relationships with the region on to centre stage. Some strategic concerns remained, centred around the unresolved position of Cambodia, which attracted the interests of powerful nations such as China, the USSR, and the USA, thereby creating uncertainty in the Indo-China region. As well, the growing numbers of refugees seeking asylum in the West, also caused the government some disquiet. But in general Australia's relationship with the region was changing

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[50] Australia's net international debt changed from an average in the 1970s of 4-5% of GDP to 31-32% of GDP by the mid-1980s. Harris, S., "Australia in the Global Economy in the 1980s", in Boyce, P., Angel, J., *Diplomacy in the Market Place, Australia in World Affairs 1981-1990,* Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1992, p.33

[51] Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Uruguay, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Hungary

dramatically from previous decades as trade and economic interests assumed high priority.

By the end of 1989, Australia's interest in what it called the Western Pacific Rim - which included North Asia, South-East Asia, the South-West Pacific and the USA and Canada - had grown enormously. The region accounted for more than 50% of Australia's exports and over 40% of its imports. Seven of its ten largest markets were in the region and a quarter of total foreign investment in Australia also came from the region. Foreign Affairs Minister Evans put Australia's case plainly to a gathering in New York in October 1989, when he said: "Put simply, we believe that our economic well being depends upon the continuing economic success of the Asia-Pacific region."[52] Yet despite this rhetoric, the ability of Australia to successfully link its economic well-being to the region was in question. The title of a seminar and a paper delivered by Industry and Commerce Minister Button in May, 1984, betrayed the continuing lack of confidence in Australia's ability to make this transition. It was titled: *"Australia: Poor White Nation of the Pacific?* "[53] A steady stream of statements and papers by Ministers throughout the 1980s grappled with the issue of Australia/Asia-Pacific relations.[54] While many of them concentrated on commercial aspects, the issue was more complex and more subtle than Australia's ability to engage in strong trade activity in the region. Australia had also to come to terms with some strong prejudices and apprehensions which persisted on both sides of the relationship.

Australia-Asia Relations

Australia's self-image in relation to the region changed radically after the 1950s. As we have seen, in the 1950s Australia welcomed its physical isolation from the region, it wanted separateness and feared the proximity of Asia accentuated by increased air travel. Asia was commonly depicted as a menacing, threatening place, its eyes trained predatorily on the Australian continent. By the 1980s, however, Australia's enthusiasm to share in the region's economic strength had encouraged many Australians to shed that image. While there were those who continued to look fearfully over their shoulders - particularly because of the swelling numbers of refugees in the world - others turned

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52 "Australia and the 'Pacific Century'", Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator G Evans, to the Asia Society, New York, *MR*, Vol 60, No 10, Oct., 1989, p.564

53 "Australia:Poor White Nation of the Pacific?", *op.cit,* pp.602-606

54 They included, *"Australia's Relationship with Western Pacific Countries in the 1980s"*, (Oct. 1984); *"Pacific Economic Co-operation: Australia and Japan"* (March 1985); *"Strengthening Our Ties with Asia"* (Dec.1985); *"Australia's Contribution to the Asia-Pacific Region's International Profile"* (April 1988); *"Australia's Future is in the Pacific Basin"* (May 1988); *"Asian-Pacific Co-operation: Towards 2000"*, (Nov., 1984); *"Leadership in the Asia-Pacific Region"*, (June 1988); *"Australia in the Asia-Pacific Region"*, (Oct 1988); *"Regional Economic Co-operation"*, *"Australia and Asia: Managing Reform"*, *"Trade Opportunities in Asia-Pacific": "Relations with the South Pacific"*, (April 1989); *"Asia-Pacific:the Australian View"*, (June 1989); *"Australia and the 'Pacific Century'"* (Oct.1989); *"Australia in Asia: The Integration of Foreign and Economic Policies"*, (Nov. 1989) See *AFAR* 1984-1988 and *AFFAT The Monthly Record* 1989

their gaze firmly in the direction of the Asia-Pacific region, to view it as an area of opportunity. Where Foreign Ministers in the 1950s had emphasised Australia's "Britishness", their successors in the 1980s were claiming - if not their "Asianness" - at least a right to be considered a legitimate part of the region. No longer in the 1980s did the Australian government think of itself as "an alien appendage" to the region, or "some kind of artificial arm or leg grafted onto the region."[55] Neither did it regard itself any longer as a "European outpost." That model, Evans argued in 1989, was simply untenable.[56] Rather, Minister's regularly argued Australia's claim to be part of the region, stating, for example, "... the Asian, Pacific and Indian Ocean areas are part of *our* environment. They are *our* home too", "This is our home." "... it is where we live..." "Australia is not going to go away from here."[57]

The Hawke government's analysis of the Asian/Pacific region in the 1980s reflected the pragmatic economic climate of that decade. It also reflected the relative stability of the region which had been absent during the previous thirty years. Analyses suggested that Australia could not rely indefinitely on supplying raw materials to its largest market, Japan, or even to new and expanding markets like South Korea. New technologies were competing with traditional materials, such as carbon fibres, fine ceramics, and amorphous materials used in aerospace, automotive engineering, power generation and electronics.[58] Such concerns were not new. Commodity producers in the 1950s had faced similar pressures when plastics and synthetics began to compete with wool, cotton and rubber. The vagaries of weather and market forces and the competition from synthetic substitutes were all a reminder of the problems involved in relying too heavily on commodities. They were also confirmation of the increasing technological sophistication of the world's industrial sectors.

The far-ranging and radical reform in major facets of Australian economic life during the 1980s, notably in industry, was partly a function of Australia's own decolonisation process. But strong competition from the region, especially in the high technology and industrial fields, also provided strong incentives to change. There was a certain irony to these actions. For thirty years Australia had promoted the image of Western experts taking their expertise to the Asian region - a region Australia had popularly portrayed as unsophisticated and poor. Now the area was being promoted as a "boom" area,

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55 "Australia and Asia: Options and Opportunities", Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs, B Hayden, University of Sydney, Sir Herman Black Contemporary Asian Affairs Forum, 16 Oct, 1984, *AFAR,* Vol 55, No.10, Oct., 1984, p.1065; "Challenges in Foreign Policy", Minister for Foreign Affairs, B Hayden, Graduation Ceremony of School of Modern Asian Studies, Griffith University, 13 April, 1985, *AFAR* , Vol 56, No.4, April, 1985, p.294

56 "Australia and the 'Pacific Century'", *op.cit,* p.568

57 *Ibid*; "Australia and Asia: Options and Opportunities", *op.cit.*; "Australian Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Independence", Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bill Hayden, to Perth Press Club, 14 Nov., 1984, *AFAR*, Vol 55, No.11, Nov., 1984, p.1175; "Challenges in Foreign Policy", *op.cit.*, p.294

58 "Australia and Asia: Options and Opportunities", *op.cit.*, p.1070

threatening for its economic competitiveness rather than for its political (communist) designs on Australia or for the designs of the "hungry millions". Yet just as the "starving millions" image had ignored the considerable indigenous development activity carried out in the Third World so the "boom" image now being promoted ignored those communities which were not benefiting from Asia's high economic growth rates.

These too simplistic portrayals of Asian nations did not apply to all sectors of the community. Some had worked hard to increase Australian/Asian understanding and by the 1980s resources to pursue that goal had considerably increased. Asian Studies centres, Australian/Asian Institutes, the government's Australia-Asia Council, the Australia-China Council, the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Asian language courses, study days for high school students, seminars on doing business with Asia, and language and research scholarships to Asia, all aimed to increase Australian expertise on the Asian region. As well, many organisations had been established to promote the links between business and political leaders in Australia and Asia, such as the Australia-China Business Co-operation Committee. Such activities represented a much more thorough attempt to come to terms with the region than existed in Europe or the USA, both of which were also casting their eyes in the direction of the Asian economic boom. To Britain, the Atlantic remained the centre of gravity, the Asia-Pacific region still being referred Eurocentrically as the "Far East", even though it was fast usurping the economies of the Atlantic.

That said, apprehension and prejudice about Asia were still very much alive in Australia. Although racism in its more blatant forms was less detectable than in the 1950s, a latent Australian racism emerged periodically in acrid and passionate debate particularly over Australian/Asian immigration policy, or what critics of Asian immigration called the "Asianisation of Australia".[59] The "Blainey" debate in 1984 and the "Stone and Howard" debate in 1987/88 about the intake of Asian migrants and refugees[60] (which had increased at the end of the Vietnam war), reflected the government's attempts to promote a country committed to social justice and equity.[61] Reported throughout Asia, such debates only served to evoke the old images of an essentially white, Western, arrogant and racist nation. On both occasions, Prime Minister Hawke attempted with public statements to repair the damage. To the Asia-Consultative Council in September 1989 he said:

> Australia's relationship with the Asian region has...been threatened by certain recent events. The so-called immigration debate of recent times has done Australia and Australians - including Asian-

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59 "Immigration Policy", Statement to Parliament by the Prime Minister, Mr Bob Hawke, 10 May, 1984, *AFAR*, Vol. 55, No.5, May, 1984, p.506

60 Professor Blainey believed in 1984 that the pace of intake of Asian migrants and refugees was ahead of public opinion. John Stone in 1988 argued that the pace of Asian immigration should be slowed.

61 "Australia: A Multicultural Society", Speech by Prime Minister Hawke, to Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia, 26 April, 1984, *AFAR*, Vol 55, No.4, April 1984, p.320

> Australians - no good at all. ... It gave comfort to the small minority of people in Australia who still harbour visions of a white Australia. By offering them respectability, it unleashed some vicious physical expressions of racial hatred. It reminded our Asian neighbours that the repugnant attitudes and tendencies of the old Australia still survive in some quarters. It will take time to heal the domestic wounds and repair the international damage.[62]

While Hawke represented the dissenting voices as a minority opinion, the fact that successive governments clung to a bipartisan immigration approach suggests that neither major parties was prepared to put Australian public opinion on the issue to the test. It was a public debate which neither side wanted. Immigration Ministers and the Prime Minister made this clear on many occasions. In an address to parliament in 1980 Hawke stated: "A bipartisan policy in this area is of crucial national importance. Splitting the debate along political and partisan lines would only serve to cause wholly undesirable divisions within our society."[63] He added:

> I repeat the call which I made to the Leader of the Opposition...to put an end to this debate as a party political dispute and in particular to dampen down the racial overtones which it can so easily assume. I said that it would be to the great service of this country and all its citizens, and to our relations with countries in this area, if we did not allow this very dangerous issue to be raised and to become something that is in the forefront of political debate.[64]

Creative debate on immigration therefore tended to be submerged beneath a bipartisan recognition of Australia's regional interests.

Australia's relationship with the region was also strained by intermittent disagreements with individual Asian countries, frequently involving the Australian media. Criticism of Indonesia over human rights issues by Australian correspondents led to their expulsion in 1980/1981 until 1988. An article critical of the Suharto family's economic interests, published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1986, particularly raised the level of tension between the two countries.[65] The arrest of an Australian priest in the Philippines and the execution in Malaysia of two Australians convicted of drug trafficking, raised similar human rights tensions.[66]

The Harries report had noted the continuing propensity for some Third World leaders to criticise the West for its neo-colonial activities in developing countries. Criticism was directed at the activities of, "... multinational companies, the Western news and entertainment media, intelligence agencies and some Western controlled international economic and aid agencies...".[67] Australian journalists, facilitated by a freedom of the

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62 "Asia's Growing Role in Australia", Speech by Prime Minister Hawke, Asian Consultative Council, Melbourne, Sept. 3, 1989, *MR*, Sept., 1989, p.498

63 *Ibid*, p.513 and "Australia: A Multicultural Society", *op.cit.*; "A Nation of Immigrants", Speech by Prime Minister B Hawke, to the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia in Canberra, Nov. 30,1988, *AFAR*, Vol 59, No.11, Nov., 1988, p.501

64 *Ibid*

65 Boyce, P., Angel, J., *Diplomacy in the Market Place, Australia in World Affairs 1981-1990*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1992, p.159

66 *Ibid*

67 *Australia and the Third World*, *op.cit.*, pp.16-17

press not enjoyed by the majority of its Asian neighbours, were typically outspoken and direct in their criticism of Asia.[68] When Asian governments disapproved of such criticism they tended to draw on the arguments of Western interference or Western neo-colonialism, whatever the actuality and however justified the claims. There was, for example, extensive evidence of Asian government and bureaucratic corrupt and repressive practices. Events in the Philippines (Marcos), China (Tiananmen) and Indonesia (East Timor) were only the most obvious. Authoritarian government was equally evident in North and South Korea, Burma, Taiwan, Pakistan and Singapore. Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, was a persistent critic of Australian press coverage on Asia. Lee's address to the Canberra national press club in 1986 was typical of his on-going assertions. He said: "When Australian journalists censure Third World leaders, especially very close neighbours, they arouse enmity, resentment and antagonism not only against Australian media men but I fear against Australians generally."[69]

Tensions regarding human rights issues as well as Australia's Western allegiances continued to weaken Australia's designs to be accepted as a legitimate part of the region. Clearly Asia-Pacific nations looked to Australia to demonstrate, on significant issues, that it was willing to "throw in its lot" with the region, even against Western opinion. Until this was demonstrated in any significant way the observations of a Southeast Asian observer were likely to remain:

> It is ... no wonder that ASEAN suspects that Australia seems to hold on to a high degree of ambiguity in her foreign policy, that it keeps considering itself as a European enclave in a region of non-Europeans, that its real identity is actually still with the West. This is very noticeable in Australia's economic policies, as well as in its defence policies. Unless, and until Australia is able to decide for herself that she is a Western Pacific nation, politically, economically, and in the end, culturally, ASEAN-Australian relations will remain a function of Australia's ambiguity. Australia's wish 'to be an integral part of the region' will require these steps.[70]

Australia's preoccupation with economics and trade and with the successes of the NICs in East and Southeast Asia, left the deteriorating condition of the poorer countries, and the "downside" of the boom countries, largely unreported to the wider public. Swept up in structural adjustment programmes to save their own economic skins, Western countries largely ignored a growing reality which saw the poorest nations, as well as poor and marginalised groups in the booming nations, bear the brunt of the changing global economic climate. These issues will be discussed in Chapter 10.

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[68] McCawley, P., "Australia's Misconception of ASEAN", in Dibb, P., Ed., *Australia's External Relations in the 1980s*, Croom Helm Australia, 1983, pp.84-95

[69] *The Australian*, 17 April, 1988, quoted in Maher, M., "The Media and Foreign Policy", in Boyce, Angel, *Diplomacy in the Market Place, op.cit.*, p.59

[70] Angel, J., "Australia and Southeast Asia", in *Diplomacy in the Market Place, op.cit.*, p.160

In Australia, the government's past disinclination to emphasise poverty issues over strategic and economic concerns, in combination with an intellectual climate supporting conservative economic reform, confirmed these negative trends. In that climate the aid programme was placed under intense scrutiny to perform, with particular emphasis on the commercial aspects of aid.

Australian ODA Reviewed

If the government aid programme had been allowed to muddle along from its inception in the 1950s, the changed climate of the 1980s with its emphasis on pragmatism and accountability, placed it under close scrutiny. Reviews were undertaken in 1981, 1982, 1984 and 1989.[71]

The image of ADAB which emerged from those reviews was bleak - an unprofessional and demoralised organisation. In the decade from 1971 Australia's aid programme had been administered by seven different departments. That was a degree of turbulence judged by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts to have imposed considerable costs.[72] Eighteen or so reviews between 1973 and 1983 had cut costs and staffing dramatically leaving, in the assessment of the Parliamentary Committee: "... a demoralised aid administration with little or no consequent improvement in the effectiveness of development assistance".[73] Even DAC was moved to comment on the extent of such cuts. It observed:

> ...there has been, in no other country belonging to the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, such a severe and sudden cutback in staff during a time of rising ODA programme and it is hoped that any adverse affects can be avoided in the interests of the efficient management of Australian aid.[74]

Press speculation in 1981 that the committee of Ministers popularly known as the "razor gang" were in possession of a Public Service Board paper recommending "the virtual abolition" of ADAB, as well as a damning report on a cross-section of ADAB functions by the Auditor General in October 1981, only added to the demoralisation.[75]

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[71] Auditor General 1981; Joint Committee of Public Accounts, *Efficiency Audit: Administration of Australia's Bilateral Overseas Aid Programme 1982*; Australian Overseas Aid Program, Report of the Committee of Review, Mar., 1984; Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Feb., 1989

[72] (Pre-1973); an interim office made up of the staff of five Departments (1974); a statutory authority (the Australian Development Assistance Agency) (1974); a semi-autonomous Bureau of the Department of Foreign Affairs (the Australian Development Assistance Bureau) (1976); and by a fully integrated Bureau within the Department of Foreign Affairs (1981). From PAC Administration of Bilateral Overseas Aid, 1989, p.7, quoted in *A Review of the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau and Australia's Overseas Aid Program,* The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Feb., 1989, AGPS, Canberra, 1989, p.4

[73] *Ibid*, p 5

[74] *Ibid*; Quoted in ACFOA Position/Discussion Paper on *Joint Committee on Public Accounts Efficiency Audit: Administration of Australia's Bilateral Overseas Aid Programme*, nd c late 1982, p.4

[75] "Merge Aid Agency: PS Board", *The Age,* 29, Jan., 1981, Melbourne; "'Razor Gang' slammed by Foreign Affairs Dept", *The Australian*, Jan., 29, 1981, p.3; "'Razor Gang' Hones in on Assistance Bureau", *Financial Review*, Jan., 1981, *Report of the Auditor-General on an Efficiency Audit,*

Central to any revamping of ADAB were two fundamental issues - aid policy and aid administration. And essential to both issues was whether the aid programme was to continue to reflect the past focus: infrastructure projects supporting the economic growth model and administered by technicians and clerks, or a more "developmental" focus managed by development practitioners. The two positions were epitomised in the submissions made by Helen Hughes and Community Aid Abroad to the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. The former declared: "I am not very much into helping the poor; I really think it is more important to get development going...". In contrast CAA stated: "Primarily, the objective of the aid program is supposedly to assist the poor, to combat chronic poverty...." [76]

Not surprisingly, the NGO community promoted the second position vigorously. It actively engaged in grassroots development work and had been grappling with changing forms of assistance which focused increasingly on development issues. By the 1980s, most NGOs embraced certain fundamental tenets, at least in their rhetoric: to locate the poorest of the poor, to involve the poor in their own development, to promote sustainable and equitable development. There was a strong "developmental" theme to the NGO community's strategy, therefore, when it decided to target the government to improve the quality of Australian aid. Having previously concentrated on tariff cuts, tax deductions on donations and the need to implement the UN's resolution of 0.7% of GNP, ACFOA had established a Quality of Aid Committee in the late 1970s, and a series of Quality of Aid seminars.[77] CAA acknowledged that its attitude of "blindly demanding more of the same" had been unhelpful. In a letter to the incoming Labor Foreign Affairs Minister W. Hayden in 1983, CAA's Director stated: "We... now seek quality as well as quantity."[78] What constituted "quality", however, beyond the broad prescription that funds were not wasted, involved strong ideological differences between the advocates of "growth" and trickle-down, and those who were disenchanted with that model and demanded a community-focused programme.

ACFOA criticised the Australian programme for being unpioneering, derivative of the USA "trickle down" model (which Hughes supported), and with "bits and pieces" (such as Basis Human Needs) tacked on. As such it was always lagging behind current theory and practice.[79] One of the NGOs' major criticisms of ADAB, which the reviews

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Administration of Australia's Bilateral Overseas Aid Program by the Australian Development Assistance Bureau, AGPS, Canberra, 1981

[76] Hughes, H, Director of National Centre for Development Studies, Evidence, p.385 and Community Aid Abroad, Evidence, p.469, to *A Review of the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau and Australia's Overseas Aid Program, op.cit.*, pp.14,17

[77] ACFOA Position/Discussion Paper on *Joint Committee on Public Accounts Efficiency Audit, op.cit*; ACFOA issued a booklet titled *Crisis in Overseas Aid* and initiated a series of Quality of Aid seminars. "Some of the ideas and concerns that were expressed during the 1982 ACFOA/ADAB Quality of Aid Seminar", Appendix to ACFOA Executive Meeting 12-13 May

[78] Letter CAA Director, Harry Martin to Hon W.G. Hayden, 25/2/83

[79] Notes: "ACFOA Submission to the Jackson Committee", nd, p.2

supported, was its lack of understanding of development issues. ADAB, the NGOs argued, continued to carry out aid projects rather than development work. It was time for government to revise its meaning of the word "Aid" to mean "help for the neediest".[80] That had been the thrust of the BHN's approach. It had been taken on board by ADAB to a degree, when it broadened its focus to incorporate agricultural, health or marketing schemes in the areas surrounding some of its infrastructure projects. ADAB, however, lacked guidance and expertise in implementing sound integrated rural development projects, and was anyway more heavily influenced by the economic growth, "trickle down" ideology than social development policy. In the early 1980s Hunt found of the ADAB integrated rural development project in Thailand, TARIP - "no coherent conception of the principles of integrated rural development"; a "neglect of social factors" and "no genuine evidence of participation by the people in any stage of project design or implementation."[81]

In 1980, ADAB was still measuring the "quality" of its aid in terms of grant aid and in the provision of a major portion of assistance as untied aid.[82] As important as those policies were, since they enabled recipients to choose the most cost-effective materials and to avoid incurring debt, by the 1980s "quality" was assumed to go well beyond defining development as a certain level of per capita income. Many other aspects, particularly ecological and social - such as notions of family security, identity, dignity and self-reliance -were being promoted by development practitioners as essential ingredients to the development process.[83] The Auditor General's report confirmed that ADAB did not demonstrate a well-developed understanding of this broader definition of development or of the role of development assistance in promoting it. The Jackson report on the same issue said: "... in contrast to all other industrial economies, and despite its proximity to developing countries, Australia has failed to develop the analysis of development and aid-related issues on a significant scale."[84] In CAA's view, a commitment to "development" rather than aid, was an area which had never been considered by the Australian government.[85]

In undertaking "aid" projects rather than "development "projects (as the participants of the Breaking Barriers seminar in Asia had argued) experts were likely to arrive,

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80 *Ibid*

81 Hunt, J., *A Critical Assessment of Australian Official Development Assistance: Policy and Practice, op.cit.,* pp.253-4

82 *Development Co-operation, Bilateral Program 1980-81*, AGPS, Canberra, 1981, p.iii

83 *Ibid*, pp. 617, 608

84 *Australian Overseas Aid Program, Report of the Committee of Review*, *op.cit.,* p.11

85 A CAA spokesperson before the Joint Committee of Public Accounts stated: "I do not have a clear idea of what the Australian government policy is as regards aid. There is no shortage of statements by Ministers and by the Prime Minister on objectives of the aid program in specific situations. But to the best of my knowledge there is no overall coherent and consistent policy which can be used by administrators and the Foreign Affairs Department". Joint Committee of Public Accounts, 8 June 1982, Transcript of Community Aid Abroad evidence p.605

deliver their aid and depart, without ever understanding the context or consequence of their effort. In this respect, ADAB's growing propensity to use consultants - often a function of the staff cuts - was likely to perpetuate the problem, because many consultants were as uninformed about development issues as ADAB. By way of example a CAA spokesperson noted:

> In discussions with a consultant quite recently he said to me that consultants are very good at aid work but they are not very good at development and that ADAB cannot tell the difference. ... to carry out the work which is called aid but which is nevertheless not development is something that consultants do and do very well. But they are effectively stepping into an enormous breach where there is simply not a policy on what should be done and what development actually means. They carry out their work. They very often come in, do the job, build a great road, leave and are never asked to account in a developmental way for what they have done.[86]

In the same way that activist NGOs were learning to interact with the poor, on the terms of the poor, so government projects, NGOs argued, needed to take the interests of poor communities adjacent to projects into account.[87] As it was, CAA was concerned that the poor were appearing less frequently in government statements about aid programmes, and doubted whether the words "the poor" actually existed in the Foreign Affairs submission to the Audit.[88] Government projects did not focus on the needs of the poor, did not consult poor communities, and did not take into account the large numbers of poor people who would be affected by them.[89] All of those observations supported the contention that interest in the BHN's approach was weak.[90]

In the absence of a strong developmental framework the effects of Australia's projects on the local people and terrain were little considered. The continued confidence in the "trickle down" model, moreover, made ADAB resistant to change. This resistance was evident in its reaction to CAA's evaluation of the Zamboanga Del Sur Integrated Area Development Project. Substantially a road building programme, the project also incorporated irrigation, multiple cropping, coconut land development and a livestock and a tree crop component.[91] R. Richards, who evaluated the project for CAA in 1981, concluded that it had had very little positive impact on the poor, in fact the benefits had tended to flow away from the poor to the better-off. As an example, he noted that the major beneficiaries of the roads were the wealthier traders and businessmen who could

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86 *Ibid*, p.636
87 *Ibid*, pp.639, 643
88 *Ibid*, p.607
89 *Ibid*, pp.610, 617
90 Hunt found of the Thai integrated project, TARIP, that it had "... not been planned with the most disadvantaged groups in mind, nor with the explicit aim of satisfying basic needs", despite ADAB rhetoric claiming otherwise. Hunt, *op.cit.*, pp.254-5
91 "The Zamboanga Del Sur Development Project, The Impact on the Poor", Dr.R. Richards, November, 1981, p.1

use the roads to carry out their business or to take goods to market, or could set up houses and stalls by the road side. Fishermen reported increased competition from wealthier businessmen/fishing boat operators who combined their motorised fishing boats with refrigerated transport to move the catch to the city.[92] The agricultural programmes which incorporated a multiple cropping production programme, the distribution of cows and a pastures programme, were all judged to place the poorer tenant and subsistence farmers at a disadvantage.[93] Those groups frequently lacked many of the attributes which were a necessary pre-condition of the programmes, such as land ownership and were also often subject to local political patronage pressures.[94] The report also questioned the advisability of sanctioning Australian assistance to areas of social and political unrest, when Australian made roads increased access to the area for the military and either the military or the project or both, actually frustrated equitable development rather than facilitating it.[95]

In 1982 ADAB strongly refuted most of the report's findings, suggesting: "It seems that Dr Richards does not fully appreciate the process of development...."[96] It continued:

> The basis for much of the report's analysis and criticism is that when the project sets out to benefit the poor, this must mean the poorest of the poor. This definition is Dr Richard's own and not the Bureau's. ...we are dealing with a development project, not a relief project. ... Almost axiomatically, the poorest sections of any community are not those capable of introducing and sustaining profitable change - that is why they are poor.[97]

The report added somewhat obliquely that the project was "... designed to benefit 'the poor' in a global and, especially, in a Philippine context."[98]

The ADAB response illustrated the wide ideological gulf which divided the adherents of the economic growth policy from those who placed positive value in directly assisting the poorest groups. ADAB clearly regarded assistance to very poor people in the "hand-out", "relief" category rather than as a viable development alternative or complementary development strategy to bilateral projects. By denying that such very poor people could be "developed" ADAB displayed that it did not give credence to the full dimension of development as it was now being more broadly defined.

NGOs argued, on the other hand, that it was not necessary or desirable to relegate the poorest groups to the "too hard" non-productive welfare basket. In CAA's experience, if

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92 *Ibid*, p.2
93 *Ibid*
94 *Ibid*, pp.2-3
95 *Ibid*, pp.3-4
96 Letter to CAA National Director from Assistant Secretary South East Asia Programs Branch, ADAB, April 1, 1982
97 *Ibid*
98 *Ibid*, p.5

it could generate a basic confidence in a poor community to change and the community was prepared to share resources, genuine development could take place which did not need continued assistance. CAA acknowledged the difficulties of working at the village level especially in countries where there was tight government control, such as the Philippines under martial law or in Indonesia.[99] It also acknowledged that understanding local social and economic dynamics and initiating sustainable development was a difficult process. But such difficulties did not justify ADAB ignoring the poor while continuing to support infrastructure projects - the roads, bridges, dams and power stations - which were based on questionable development assumptions.[100]

Despite ADAB reticence to address social variables, a *post hoc* ADAB evaluation of its 1975-1980 projects undertaken in 1982, made use of anthropologists and sociologists to evaluate the Thai TARIP roads and rural development project; the Fijian Yalavou Beef project and the Kenyan Magarini Land Settlement programme. In both the Margarini and the Yalavou case, the projects had assumed quite drastic and detrimental changes to traditional systems of farming and residence. The report concluded that many of the problems could have been foreseen had consideration been given to the cultural aspects at the design stage.[101] Of its Bogor Water Supply project in Indonesia the report also concluded that, "...benefits were restricted to those able to afford connection fees... the most disadvantaged groups were not being assisted."[102] In what was a fairly major turn around for ADAB the report conceded that "policy makers and planners" were now recognising that development "was not simply economic growth" but involved "complex social inter-relationships."[103]

From 1982-1983 ADAB made some tentative efforts to introduce a social component to its integrated rural development projects. However, subsequent evaluations demonstrated that it was not enough simply to embellish infrastructure projects with a "social content", without a thorough understanding of the social dynamics of the local community. This "add-on" approach was therefore invariably unsuccessful. It took another decade for AIDAB (ADAB's successor) to accept and to routinely consider the full diversity and complexity of the aid process. In a 1990 evaluation of the Zamboanga Del Sur project (which substantially vindicated the earlier CAA claims), AIDAB admitted that it had identified the recipients of the project in very broad terms - simply as the "rural population".[104] As a result (in AIDAB's words): "The main participants in,

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[99] Joint Committee of Public Accounts, 8 June 1982, Transcript of Community Aid Abroad evidence pp.620-21, *op.cit.*
[100] *Ibid*, pp.621 -622
[101] "Social Science, Development Assistance and Evaluation", Appendix V, p.154-5, *Summaries and Review of Ongoing Evaluation Studies, 1975-80*, ADAB, AGPS, March 1982
[102] *Ibid*, p.8
[103] *Ibid*, pp.136-7

and beneficiaries of, the agricultural and livestock programs were farm owner-operators rather than tenant farmers and rural landless." Similarly the main beneficiaries of the roads were judged to be "the rice and corn traders, particularly a small number of large traders based in Ozamis City who were able to purchase much of the surplus production and provide fleets of large lorries to shift it from the production areas to the market centres."[105] The evaluation concluded:

> In general, the rural poor of ZDS (tenant farmers, landless) benefited relatively little from ZDSDP inputs. Social and health programs introduced specifically for the underprivileged came too late in the project's life to have a significant impact, and the farm technologies introduced by the project were generally unsuitable to resource-poor farmers, both owners and tenants. The main beneficiaries have been the rice and corn traders, transport operators, and some owner-operator farmers.[106]

Fundamental to the attempts by the NGOs to persuade ADAB to adopt a stronger poverty focus in its aid programme, was the suggestion that it should divest aid policy of strategic and economic concerns. Some of the issues that NGOs had raised - their questioning of assistance which enhanced the militarisation of areas, their suggestion that assistance to Australian industry and commerce was leading Australian aid policy - served to remind that Australian aid was still required to operate by juggling three objectives, foreign policy, trade and humanitarian aims. NGOs argued that in the absence of a coherent aid policy ADAB was likely to be influenced more by groups like the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation or the desire to involve Australian industry and technical expertise in assistance, than by poverty concerns.[107] CAA suggested to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts that the apparent lack of an overall coherent and consistent policy to be used by ADAB administrators and Foreign Affairs seemed to be deliberately maintained "... to allow maximum flexibility by the Department of Foreign Affairs to direct the aid program in whatever direction happens to suit the need of the day, and we believe this is a very wrong policy." Rather, it argued, the fundamental notion of aid should be to help the poor in countries of the Third World.[108] Ideally that required a separate organisation with its own Minister, so that its philosophy once defined could be sheltered from foreign policy considerations and narrow national interest concerns.[109] A stronger more autonomous agency might also be shielded from the pressures of different departments which continued to impose their different wills on ADAB. The Audit had reported continued significant differences

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104 Aguda, V. et al, The Zamboanga Del Sur Project: An integrated Approach to Rural Development, p.7, AIDAB Evaluation Series, No.9, AGPS, Canberra, 1990
105 *Ibid*
106 *Ibid*, pp.1-2
107 Joint Committee of Public Accounts..., *op.cit.*, pp.622-623
108 *Ibid*, p.605-6
109 *Ibid*, p.629

and tensions between ADAB and the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Treasury, Finance and Trade and Resources about the ways to achieve aid objectives.[110]

CAA's Director, Harry Martin, pressed for an aid policy based on established sound international development criteria, arguing that the government should commit itself to a much loftier national interest than one which simply responded to the political expedient of the day.[111] A large number of Australian NGOs now shared the view that the aid programme should have an equity or poverty focus, centred on the poorest countries and the poorest people, and that aid delivery should be separated from strategic and trade concerns.[112] The government's concentration of aid to ASEAN nations and to the Pacific region emphasised the continued diplomatic objectives of Australian aid.[113] ACFOA argued that Australia would get much closer to the humanitarian concept of aid by isolating trade and political negotiations from the aid delivery process. While the ODA Programme remained attached to the Department of Foreign Affairs, ACFOA believed aid policy could not be seen to be "fair and independent".[114] World Vision supported the re-establishment of ADAB as a separate statutory body.[115] Australian Catholic Relief believed that ADAB should be independent from Foreign Affairs and that aid should not be used as a political weapon or to fulfil trade objectives.[116] CAA argued that commercial incentive schemes should be phased out of the ODA budget and that the use of consultants should be gradually reduced.[117]

Whether a statutory body or otherwise, to be effective ADAB needed a wide degree of autonomy and influence. It might be that such influence would be easier gained within another department like Foreign Affairs, but for that option to be effective required a substantial change in the Foreign Affairs/Aid relationship.

Most of ACFOA's member agencies (which had now increased to fifty-six), had prepared submissions for the Jackson Committee. While the agencies represented a wide area of interests there was much on which they agreed. There was a consensus for a more humanitarian aid programme; for increased ODA; for the integration of women into development and for a more effective use of multilateral funds.[118] Some agencies emphasised a preference for smaller projects, to avoid the unpredictability of ecological

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110 Report of the Auditor-General..., *op.cit.*, p.12

111 Joint Committee of Public Accounts, 8 June 1982, Transcript of Community Aid Abroad evidence p.631, *op.cit.*

112 "ACFOA Position/Discussion Paper ...", *op.cit.*, p.5; Lee, P., Research Officer, ACFOA, "ACFOA Summaries of Submissions to the Aid Review Committee", 12, Sept., 1983

113 Notes: "ACFOA Submission to the Jackson Committee", *op.cit.*, p.2

114 "ACFOA Position/Discussion Paper ...", *op.cit.*

115 Lee, P., *op.cit.*, p.2

116 *Ibid*, p.7

117 *Ibid*, pp.9-10

118 *Ibid*

and social damage.[119] All of the major agencies believed that ADAB should support a strong development education programme. They included World Vision, the Australian Council of Churches, Australian Catholic Relief, the Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign and Community Aid Abroad.[120] The NGOs firmly endorsed the role of NGOs in development assistance and called for their stronger recognition and involvement with the ODA programme.[121]

Never before had there been such sustained support and emphasis in Australian aid circles for new directions focusing on the developing world's poorest.[122] Having presented its case, the NGO community awaited the outcome of the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program. Many of the recommendations for administrative reform were welcomed by the NGO community. But the ideological focus recommended for ADAB caused a great deal of disappointment.

Reform

The Jackson Committee confirmed the findings of the earlier reviews of the aid programme, undertaken in 1981 and 1982, which had identified problems in almost all areas of assistance - in project selection, planning, management and evaluation. The Committee affirmed the essential *ad hoc* nature of the aid programme and the necessity for ADAB to undergo fundamental change. The Committee also concluded that the "education, professional and management experience of ADAB officers" compared poorly with field managers of major Western donors. The better donors had become highly skilled using professional staff, sound administrative practices and a developed aid philosophy. ADAB lagged far behind such donors. As a consequence ADAB was considered an unattractive proposition to prospective employees. In an advertisement for a senior vacancy (in 1984) no applications had been received from the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Treasury, Finance or Trade. Only a few applications had been received from the private sector.[123] The Jackson Committee confirmed that morale in ADAB had been low for some time, and stated: "Change is needed, and not just marginal or incremental change with a few positions here and there; but dramatic change, a breaking of the mould, that will make an ADAB career exciting and satisfying for good professionals."[124]

The Committee acknowledged that aid administration was now recognised internationally as requiring high standards of professionalism. The Jackson report therefore recommended strongly that ADAB foster such standards by recruiting new

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119 "ACFOA Submission to the Jackson Committee", *op.cit.*, p.2
120 Lee, Penelope, *op.cit.*, pp.2, 5, 7-10
121 ACFOA Executive Meeting 12-13 May
122 It had generated 422 submissions
123 *Australian Overseas Aid Program, Report of the Committee of Review, (1984)*, *op.cit.*, pp.219-223
124 *Ibid*

quality staff, by instigating intensive training courses and by strengthening management in all areas. This included policy and planning, corporate planning, programme management, field management, appraisals, monitoring and evaluation, effectiveness reviews, financial management, administrative support, information systems and liaison arrangements. Library and research facilities needed upgrading to enable ADAB to keep up with international development issues and evaluation techniques. ADAB lacked the mechanisms and resources to effectively liaise with other aid agencies and Australian interest groups, which meant that "ADAB frequently lacked the best advice and relevant information when assessing proposals or making judgements."[125]

Serious problems were reported by the Jackson Committee in some large bilateral projects. For example, there were low socio-economic returns in the Magarini settlement project in Kenya, "...because the design was excessively capital-intensive"; a desiccated coconut processing project was unable to go into production, because of "...inappropriate Australian design"; and a silo project in Burma had encountered problems because of design weaknesses.[126] Faulty project design, or a failure to develop the recipients' full capacity, or incremental creep, could extend the project life and result in excessive tinkering and patching, without increasing the quality of the project.[127] Subsequent evaluations of the Magarini Project revealed the ultimate in "tinkering and patching" as well as severe community dislocation. Such dislocation had arisen because project terms of reference focused on technical matters rather than economic, social or appropriate alternatives. The Audit report of 1981 had previously noted: "... for road construction, public utilities, or agricultural development, ADAB's agents have tended to emphasise engineering aspects and neglect other aspects of project design in their study reports," in particular the social costs and benefits.[128]

The Committee recommended that in future ADAB should focus on country programming in order to develop projects in context with the country's overall development strategy and capabilities. It was further proposed to develop a sectoral focus. This would encompass expertise in areas other than agriculture and roads, such as health, medicine, population planning and urban development. Other proposals recommended a stronger focus on women in development, that funding to NGOs be doubled and that a high priority be given to development education, especially within all levels of the formal education system.[129]

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125 *Ibid*, pp.225-6

126 *Ibid*, p.221

127 Report of the Auditor-General, *op.cit.*, pp. 101-112; See the critical evaluations of AIDAB's Magarini Settlement Project, Kenya, *Magarini Settlement Project, Kenya*, Evaluation Report, 1990 No.2, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1990; Porter, D., *et al*, *Development in Practice, Paved with Good Intentions*, Routledge, London, 1991

128 Report of the Auditor-General, *op.cit.*, pp.91, 100

129 *Ibid*, pp.3-11

Many of the recommendations of the Jackson Report were subsequently taken up by the Hawke government. Aid was not separated from trade, diplomatic and strategic concerns, or separated from the Department of Foreign Affairs, but the Bureau did become an autonomous unit within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with control over its own resources. ADAB's name was changed in 1987 to the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB).[130] Thereafter every "division, branch, section and position was redesigned".[131] Jointly those two initiatives - autonomy and redefinition - created the potential for major change. A Country Programs Division was responsible for all aid targeted for a particular country or region. The Commercial, Community and International Division covered international organisations and the Australian community. The Policy, Planning and Management Division covered corporate services - policy, financial and personnel administration.[132]

Country Programming was considered the most dramatic innovation. It brought a "large number of disparate forms of aid" together under one Country Program Manager.[133] A major component of the Country Program was a provision for annual consultations between AIDAB and the recipient government with the assistance of country papers to provide a more professional framework for project design.[134] Staffing levels were raised from 400 in 1983-84 to 503 in 1989. The biggest increase occurred in the Administrative Service Officers levels 7 and 8.[135] Short courses on aid management, development, financial and computer skills were introduced. By late 1988 AIDAB had initiated a series of major training programmes "to equip AIDAB staff with the skills and attitudes to plan and implement coherent programs of development assistance".[136]

Despite these considerable administrative changes, the political and economic climate had placed strong pressures on AIDAB to adopt an ideological position consistent with the government's increasing support for economic rationalism. In that economic environment, appeals to the Jackson Committee by the non-government sector for a more poverty-focused aid programme failed to make a substantial impact. Rather, the committee was more influenced by current World Bank economic orthodoxy - neo-classical, free market economic theory - than by the arguments put

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130 *A Review of the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau and Australia's Overseas Aid Program, (1989) op.cit.*, p.20
131 *Ibid*, p.26
132 *Ibid*, p.25
133 *Ibid*, p.25
134 *Ibid*, pp.25-26
135 *Ibid*, pp.26-27
136 *Ibid*, p.31

forward by the NGOs in support of grassroots communities.[137] The economic rationalist model was based on supply rather than demand macroeconomics and supported privatisation of state enterprises and the end of regulatory controls. The government's support for the model had been demonstrated in the deregulation of the economy. Within that free market, laissez-faire economic system (the "level playing field" in late 1980s jargon), the so-called "magic of the market place" or "invisible hand of market prices" was assumed to automatically guide resource allocation and stimulate economic development. Prosperity, efficiency and justice were assumed to follow.[138] Consequently, economic growth strategies with a strong emphasis on exports based on the theory of comparative advantage and the use of "structural adjustment" policies were favoured.

The Treasury Department strongly endorsed the economic rationalist position. Its Jackson Committee submission stated: "Economic considerations should be respected in determining aid policy and, indeed, the valid non-economic objectives will, in general, be achieved most effectively (particularly in the longer term) by an aid program which is economically 'rational'."[139] What was economically rational for the review was an emphasis on what it termed, "growth with equity". It stated:

> ... development cannot be achieved simply by providing poor people with basic needs. Development requires investment in people and in such capital-intensive facilities as roads, dams and ports to increase productivity and so to create higher incomes... Natural resources and people's abilities can be mobilised only by growth-oriented policies....

Such statements were more than a little reminiscent of the first Colombo Plan document of 1951, although in other respects the review covered much broader cultural and social aspects than the fifties' documents. The Basic Needs approach of the 1970s was to be abandoned in favour of "growth", though the term was now married to that of "equity".

No-one would argue against the concept of "growth with equity", but equity solely reliant on growth meant nothing. Thirty years of growth in developing countries which had not been distributed, which had not trickled down, was evidence enough of that. At least the Basic Needs approach focused on what it was that human beings needed to survive - food, shelter, clean water etc.. A "growth with equity" policy which focused on growth without promoting equity - in other words which relied on the "invisible hand" - rather than government intervention to make sure that equity took place was tantamount to supporting the old "trickle-down" approach.

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137 Given the strong "economics and business" bias of members of the committee (as pointed out by the NGO community) this was perhaps not at all surprising. ACFOA Press Release 6/83, "Aid Body Welcomes Inquiry into Australia's Overseas Aid But Critical of Committee Membership", 19 April, 1983, ACFOA, Canberra; Higgott, R., *op.cit.*

138 *Ibid* ; Todaro, M., *Economic Development in the Third World*, *op.cit.*, p.82-83; Carroll, J., & Manne, R., *Shutdown*, The Text Publishing Company, Melbourne, 1992, pp.7-8

139 *Australian Overseas Aid Program, Report of the Committee of Review, Mar., 1984*, *op.cit.*, p.23

Under the influence of economic pragmatism the main focus of Australia's aid continued to be on public utilities and infrastructure, though it was now clothed in the current economic terminology. Assistance was justified in terms of being required by the "private sector", and described as the type of assistance which was to Australia's "comparative advantage", which in reality meant it was the type of assistance that Australia was most used to providing.[140]

The NGOs also failed to convince the government to divorce aid objectives from trade and strategic interests. In fact, the Jackson report recommended strengthening economic opportunities for Australia through the aid programme, arguing that by helping developing countries grow, Australia also provided economic opportunities for itself.[141] The Cold War concerns which had historically driven government aid policy were giving way to trade imperatives.

Commercialisation of the Aid Program

The Jackson Report recommended that the education component of the aid programme should effect a market orientation. The private overseas student charge should be gradually increased to full cost and education was to be developed as an 'export' sector."[142] The recommendation was controversial and in the event, although Australian educational institutions expanded this area when they were allowed to charge full fees to overseas students, AIDAB did not become involved in "education for sale" schemes. Rather, it continued to offer full scholarships covering educational, living and travel allowances. AIDAB did take up one recommendation to move towards a target of making women 50% of the student intake, although, in the event, that was easier said than achieved.[143]

In terms of Australian business the report stated:

> ... Australian business plays an important role in aid delivery, and participation in aid programs provides firms with the experience necessary to compete in export markets. By focusing aid on particular sectors where Australian services and goods have a comparative advantage, a coincidence of aid and commercial interests can be served without sacrificing the integrity of either.[144]

AIDAB responded by undertaking individual country studies to consider the options open for increasing the relationship between aid and trade. A study on Thailand noted Australia's comparative lack of competitiveness in the Thai market. The report made its recommendations based on the assumption that in future, "aid [was] to be seen in part as a weapon in Australia's search for trade...". Prospective projects should thus be subjected to several criteria: does Australia have a demonstrated comparative

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140 *Quarterly Aid Round-Up*, Oct-Dec 1990, No 4, pp.42-3, *op.cit.*
141 *Ibid*, p.3
142 *Ibid*
143 *Ibid*, p.11
144 *Ibid*, p.115

advantage?, is it possible to commercialise the mode of aid delivery?, is the project of sufficient scale and time scan to encourage recurrent contact between the recipient and the supplier.[145] A similar report on China recommended a seven point check list to evaluate the trade-creating potential of projects.[146]

AIDAB also concentrated on informing the Australian business community about the business opportunities now available in the aid programme.[147] These included the provision of around 78% of project aid in goods (in 1987-88 amounting to $129m[148]), and the services of experts, consultants and contractors, sourced in Australia. In addition, 95% of Australia's food aid was spent on Australian grain and other commodities bought from Australian farmers. Such aid was used in both a developmental capacity, for example, in food for work programmes in Bangladesh to pay labourers engaged in repairing cyclone damage, and for emergency relief.[149] As AIDAB geared-up to involve the business community more centrally, some 400 people attended seminars and more than 500 companies received a quarterly publication, *Business Newsletter,* informing them of the policy changes and opportunities in the aid programme in 1987/88.[150]

One of the most significant initiatives with regard to business and the aid programme was the decision to increase the Development Import Finance Facility (DIFF). DIFF allowed Australian businesses to supply goods and services for aid projects, at concessional rates.[151] It was a mark of the competitive nature of the aid tendering process, and its obvious commercial attractions, that AIDAB had introduced the DIFF scheme in 1983. Australia's international competitors had combined aid with other "soft" financing schemes to lower the cost of projects. This use of "mixed credits", in the words of the Jackson report, "exposed Australian suppliers to unfair competition" or "spoiled markets".[152] In reply, Australia developed its Development Import Finance Facility. DIFF consisted of grant aid. When used in combination with commercial finance from Austrade's Export Finance Insurance Corporation, DIFF enabled firms to

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145 Broga, B., Herderschee, H., *Australia's Bilateral Aid Policies Towards Thailand: Issues and Options*, National Centre for Development Studies, ANU, Dec., 1987, for AIDAB, Development Papers, No.6, pp.iv, 6-7

146 Findlay, C., *Trade Related Issues in the Aid Program to China*, Dept. of Economics, University of Adelaide, Aug., 1987, for AIDAB, Development Papers, No.4, p.3

147 *A Review of the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau and Australia's Overseas Aid Program, (1989) op.cit.*, p.111

148 *Cooperation, A Review of the Australian International Aid Program, 1987-89*, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p.77

149 *Ibid*, p.76; *A Review of the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau, (1989) op.cit.*, p.111

150 *Ibid*; *Cooperation, op.cit.*, pp.76-77

151 *A Review of the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau, (1989) op.cit.*, p.119

152 *Report of the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program, Executive Summary*, AGPS, Canberra, 1984, p.11

offer very low interest, or sometimes interest free loans to developing countries.[153] AIDAB's expenditure on DIFF made a major leap from $15.6m in 1986-87, to $93.3m in 1989-90. This caused even DAC (despite its overall support for the DIFF scheme), to express concern that Australian DIFF allocations should not rise above $100m.[154] Examples of the projects funded from DIFF in 1987-88 were over $40m towards a $178m contract for steel bridges in Indonesia; a silkworm cold storage facility in China and two tuna fishing vessels for the Solomon Islands.[155] AIDAB also assisted joint venture schemes, small credit schemes, the Market Advisory Service and the Australian Executive Service Overseas.

The 1989 Joint Committee review encouraged the commercial aspects of the programme further, when it recommended that Australia tender for multilateral aid programmes carried out by organisations such as the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank. Other countries, notably Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Federal Republic of Germany, had all achieved significantly better results in that area than Australia.[156]

Few critics of the aid programme argued against Australian projects using Australian goods and services. However, if the increased emphasis on the commercialisation of the aid programme was to be at the expense of a developmental focus, then it raised real problems in terms of the growth with equity policy to which the programme was meant to adhere. In the case of Thailand, AIDAB's Development Paper No 6 suggested a change away from village-based projects, to embrace fewer, larger projects focused on Australian skills. Such projects would focus on public works, including irrigation, mining and ancillary activities, and technology associated with new forms of energy such as natural gas and low grade coals.[157] The acting Assistant Director General of AIDAB confirmed, in March 1988, AIDAB's intentions to increase economic and trade assistance in Thailand with a greater emphasis on rural industries and agribusiness initiatives.[158] Given AIDAB's poor record in promoting "development" in the larger social context an aggressive programme to invite even more Australian businesses, ignorant of complex development issues, to pursue trade interests in the aid programme did not bode over well for those who sought to strengthen the poverty focus in Australia's aid programme.

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153 *Cooperation, op.cit.,* p.77

154 *Australia's Overseas Aid Program, 1990-1991*, Budget Related Paper No 4, p.39, AGPS, Canberra, 1990; *Quarterly Aid Round-Up*, Oct-Dec, 1989, AIDAB, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra, 1990, p.14

155 *Cooperation, op.cit.,* p.77

156 *A Review of the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau , op.cit.,* p.123

157 Broga, B., Herderschee, H., *op.cit.,* pp.17-18

158 Letter L.Engel AIDAB, to Dr M. Dwyer, Research Fellow, University of Sydney, 11 March, 1988

Accompanying this policy change was the growth of a rather subtle but pervasive atmosphere which threatened to undermine the whole importance of aid. On several occasions, Labor Foreign Affairs Minister Hayden, supported the view previously put forward by Liberal governments, that aid was only one element, and perhaps not a very important element, of development.[159] As well, he argued that the critics of aid cuts in Australia were more than matched by other Australians who insisted that "charity begins at home". Hayden reported (to a Papua New Guinea audience): "If there were ever any doubt about this, it is dispelled by the letters to me from people all over Australia suggesting clearly that the prime duty of the Government is the welfare of Australians, not foreigners."[160] While Hayden asserted that it was a view to which the government did not ascribe, ODA nevertheless, after a rise from 0.47% of GNP in 1982-83 to 0.51% in 1983-84, gradually declined thereafter to 0.36% in 1988/89.[161] The DAC committee of the OECD in its review of Australia's aid in November 1989 rapped Australia over the knuckles for what it called these "brutal cuts".[162] But the trend was a world-wide one. Using 1982 prices, whereas ODA rose from $16 billion to $35 billion between 1960 and 1982, in 1982, the volume of aid in real and in terms of the GNP target, declined for the first time.[163] The USA's ODA-GNP ratio of 0.56% in 1961 had fallen to 0.24% by 1985.[164] Hayden placed other pressures on the aid programme, when he introduced the concept that the relatively well-off, developing countries could join, what he called "the donor club" to assist the less well-off.[165] Indeed, he reasoned that they were perhaps more culturally attuned to doing so than was Australia:

> Is not PNG far better equipped socially and culturally to assist the Solomons after a cyclone than Australia? Are not PNG and Fiji more likely to have workable solutions to the problems of the small island economies than we can provide.... Development is not (sic) longer a one way process from the rich to the poor. By turning it around to be a process of exchange between richer and poorer, it will have come of age to reflect the richness of a range of experiences and the realities of the later 20th century. Aid for development, as a responsibility shared by sovereign States, is far more likely to find acceptance among all our constituencies.[166]

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159 "Australian Aid Program: Policy and Economics", Minister for Foreign Affairs, B.Hayden, to Queensland Economics Society, Brisbane, 2 Sept., 1986, *AFAR*, Vol 57, No.9, Sept., 1986, p.775-76; "The Ethics of Development: Aid - a Two-way Process?", Foreign Affairs Minister B. Hayden, University of Papua New Guinea, 10 Sept., 1986, *AFAR* ,Vol 57, No.9, Sept., 1986, pp.781

160 *Ibid*, p.782

161 The rise was assisted by the inclusion in the aid budget for the first time, of the estimated amount of supplying places to overseas students, free of charge, at Australian educational institutions. *A Review of the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau, op.cit.*, p.94; *Australia's Overseas Aid Program, 1988-1989*, Budget Related Paper No 4, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p.3

162 *Quarterly Aid Round-Up*, Oct.-Dec., 1989, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1990, p.13

163 "The Ethics of Development: Aid - a Two-way Process?", *op.cit.*, p.781

164 *Ibid*

165 *Ibid*, p.782

166 *Ibid*

While the arguments of cultural compatibility were a welcome change, they were probably offered more to allow Australia to avoid responsibility, than to acknowledge the Eurocentric focus of most Western aid assistance. It was true that aid receipts represented only a small proportion of developing country investment. It was also understandable for donors, given the long emphasis placed on GNP as a measure of economic growth, to argue for a reassessment of aid practices, once a developing country's GNP had undergone a substantial and sustained rise. Nor was it unreasonable for donors to suggest that a country enjoying sustained high growth rates, might start to assist its own poor, or for donors to insist that recipients "... maximise the impact and effectiveness of the aid dollar."[167]

There were, however, some fundamental problems with these arguments. The emphasis on the better-off, adjacent economies, as well as the claims that Australian aid was fairly inconsequential to the development process, encouraged and legitimised the trade-oriented aid programme. By concentrating on the trade aspects of aid the needs of countries which housed the world's poorest people, for example, in Africa and in South Asia were bypassed.

The claims that Australian aid was relatively inconsequential to the development efforts of Third World countries related closely to the Australian government's historical perception of aid and poverty issues. It also enabled the government to avoid the tough questions. Had the programme been harnessed historically more strongly to poverty alleviation, rather than national interest, and had the government had the will, it could have helped muster support far beyond the impact of its monetary contributions. Internationally, the initiatives of smaller powers, singly and in combination could make a substantial impact, as the Cairns group was proving in negotiations in the Uruguay round. Nationally, a realistic, poverty-focused aid programme in combination with a national development education programme, might also have encouraged Australia to meet its obligations to reach the target of 0.7% of GNP. It would certainly have given Australians a more informed understanding of developing countries, of aid and development issues and of the Asia-Pacific region which was engaging so much of the government's attention.

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167 *Ibid*

Chapter 10

NGO Responses to the "Lost Decade"
Grassroots Consciousness and Alternative Solutions

"Among the public in the industrialized world, it is still widely believed that money is flowing from rich nations to poor nations to assist in the struggle against poverty. ... Taking into account - loans, aid, repayment of interest and capital - the southern world is now transferring at least $20 billion a year to the northern hemisphere.... For much of the developing world, the economic climate has therefore darkened quite dramatically in the last decade." ..... *UNICEF 1989*

"The old definition of development does not hold good any more. Tell me, who is more developed, more scientific, more wise, a better world citizen, the head of a multinational corporation or a rural woman activist of an environment movement in India?"..... *Kamla Bhasin, 1990*

The pragmatic economic climate of the 1980s which saw ODA stagnate in absolute terms neglected broader realities. For a sixth of the people on earth (almost nine hundred million people in 1989), the Third Development decade brought them increased inequality and poverty.[1] Measurable social and economic gains began to be reversed. As UNICEF put it, "... social advance is trying to walk up an economic escalator which has begun to travel downwards."[2] The problem was most visible in the majority of African nations where economic growth remained at around zero.[3]

Famine in Africa illustrated graphically the extreme face of poverty. It was the result of what occurred when a number of processes combined to conspire against the poor. These included debt, militarisation, corruption, population increase, inequitable trading, poor development choices and ecological destruction. Famine in Africa was greeted with an out-pouring of humanitarian aid from the West prompted by harrowing television images and "Live Aid" and "Band Aid" appeals. But concern was often short-lived and short-term. Relatively few organisations stayed to pursue long-term solutions.

The signals being picked up in the West about Asia, meanwhile, were of an unfettered economic boom. It is true that in the decade of the 1980s some East and Southeast Asian nations enjoyed high economic growth rates.[4] Since the introduction of

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[1] *The State of the World's Children,* UNICEF, Published for UNICEF by Oxford University Press, Oxfordshire, 1989, p.1

[2] *Ibid,* p.15

[3] An adviser to the UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development remarked of Africa in 1988: "It matters not what you choose: GDP, GDP per capita, consumption per capita, export growth, import growth, change in terms of trade, commodity prices, debt service ratios, foreign aid - it is, with few exceptions a chronicle of despair." *The State of the World's Children, op.cit.*, pp.1, 20; *World Development Report 1989*, Published for World Bank by Oxford University Press, New York, 1989

[4] The countries of South Asia also enjoyed moderate to good economic growth. The average annual % increase in real GNP for the years 1980-1991 for the following Asian nations was: South Korea 10.0%, China 9.4%, Thailand 7.8%, Taiwan 7.6%, Singapore 7.1%, Hong Kong 6.9%, Pakistan 6.5%, Indonesia

the Colombo Plan and other multilateral UN programmes, some of these countries had also achieved more social indicators of progress, such as falling infant mortality rates, rising life expectancy rates and rising literacy rates.[5] The World Health Organisation and UNICEF had pioneered immunisation, oral rehydration therapy and birth spacing programmes. With the aid of "bare-foot doctors" and a national cold-chain system, China had reduced the total number of measles, diphtheria, whooping cough and polio cases to 166,000 in 1987 compared with over 1.6 million in 1978.[6] Certainly Western visitors to many Asian nations at the end of the 1980s could not fail to notice the existence of a large and conspicuous middle-class, suggesting that substantially more people were materially "better-off" than they had been forty years previously. That was evident in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and in India and China.

Yet the tendency for Western nations to focus on Asia's economic boom detracted from other social and economic indicators. In 1989, South Asia - Bangladesh, India and Pakistan - contained the majority of the world's absolute poor people.[7] South Asia also accounted for a third of the world's child deaths.[8] Despite considerable gains, the under five mortality rate per 1,000 births was still high in many Asian countries. It was in 1987: Nepal 200, Bangladesh 191, Pakistan 169 and India 152.[9] The GDP's of Nepal, Cambodia, Bangladesh and Vietnam were among the twenty lowest in the world.[10] The poorest groups in the Philippines and Burma in 1989 showed clear evidence of increasing malnutrition.[11] In Bangladesh, expenditure on education as a percentage of total government spending fell from 14.8% in 1972 to 9.9% in 1986. In the same period expenditure on education in Sri Lanka fell from 13.0% to 8.4% and on health from 6.4% to 4.0%.[12] Despite moderate growth rates in many Asian countries therefore, poverty in these countries was often severe and in some cases was increasing.

Even in rising economies like Thailand and Indonesia or in the economic "darlings" of the West, such as Taiwan and South Korea, "growth" had frequently come at a high cost to labour, minority groups, the marginalised and the environment. Poverty in many Asian countries was often not as visible to the West as African famine. It was a chronic poverty played out in city slums and rural communities. Between 1977-86, for example,

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5.8%, Malaysia 5.6% and India 5.5%. *The Economist Pocket World in Figures,* 1994 Edition, The Economist in Association with Hamish Hamilton Ltd, Ringwood, 1993, p.26

5 *Our Common Future:The World Commission on Environment and Development,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987, p.2

6 *The State of the World's Children, op.cit.*, p.6

7 Those which UNICEF defined as having an income level below which "a minimum nutritionally adequate diet plus essential non-food requirements is not affordable."

8 *The State of the World's Children, op.cit.*, p.26

9 In Australia, it was 10, *Ibid*, p.94

10 Nepal US$178, Cambodia 199, Bangladesh 216, Vietnam 27, *The Economist Pocket World in Figures, 1994 Ed, op.cit.,* p.24

11 *The State of the World's Children, op.cit.*, p.18

12 *Ibid*, p.17

34% of rural Thais, 38% of rural Malaysians and 44% of rural Indonesians lived in absolute poverty.[13] While the West lauded the region's high growth rates it ignored or played down the issues of basic human needs or "growth with equity" - issues which might have highlighted this state of chronic poverty.

The State Plans which had been instigated by non-Communist Asian nations in the 1950s and 1960s with their focus on equality and eradication of poverty, had frequently failed to achieve that goal - especially with respect to rural poverty. As early as the 1960s planning "experts" had begun to question the role of planning. A United Nations meeting suggested in 1964 that planning was in crisis, a theme developed by an Institute of Development Studies conference in Sussex in 1969.[14] Albert Waterston's seminal study of development planning in over fifty nations concluded "... an examination of postwar planning history reveals that there have been many more failures than successes in the implementation of development plans."[15] By the 1980s Todaro observed the widespread rejection of development planning and the growing adoption of more market-oriented economies.[16]

Although development plan rhetoric had supported balanced growth in practice government policies had been biased towards capital-intensive urban industrialisation. The failure to sufficiently develop small and medium-scale labour intensive urban and rural industries and agriculture meant that there were insufficient employment opportunities in either urban or rural areas. At the same time some rural policies actually displaced labour causing it to migrate to the cities and to add to urban unemployment and poverty.

Despite reasonably strong economic growth-rates enjoyed by some Asian nations (see footnote 4) the strongest contributors were the manufacturing and commerce sectors not the rural sector. Todaro argues that agricultural output as a percentage of GDP constituted no more than 35% in Third World nations in 1985 yet the percentage of the labour force engaged in agriculture was 72% in South Asia and 65% in East Asia.[17]

Ozay Mehmet has observed of Malaysia that despite the nation's rapid industrialisation and benefits gained from petroleum production, Malaysia experienced persistent rural poverty in fisheries, rice farming and rubber production.[18] The nation

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[13] The size of the problem becomes apparent when one considers that the population of Indonesia in 1986 was 167 million. *Statistical Year Book for Asia and the Pacific 1993*, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations, Bangkok, Thailand, 1993

[14] Faber, M. & Seers, D., *The Crisis in Planning*, 2 vols, Chatto and Windus, London, 1972

[15] Waterston, A., *op.cit.*, p.292

[16] Todaro, M., *Economic Development ...*, *op.cit.*, p.524

[17] *Ibid*, pp.292-3

[18] Mehmet, O., *Development in Malaysia, Poverty, Wealth and Trusteeship*, INSAN-Institute of Social Analysis, Kuala Lumpur, 1988, p.51

remained heavily dependent on rubber and to a lesser extent on palm oil exports,[19] yet Malaysia's Second Plan of 1971-75 and Third Plan of 1976-80 had allocated only 24.2% and 23.6% respectively to agriculture and rural development.[20] (Other nations had allocated even less funds to agriculture. An FAO survey of a sample 18 nations found they had allocated as little as 12% of national investment to agriculture during the 1950s and 1960s.)[21]

While the post-war modernisation of rubber estates in Malaysia saw high productivity rises the continued use of cheap labour, entrenched during the colonial period, allowed the real daily wages of tappers to actually decline from $3.40 to $3.37 between 1960-1981.[22] Local labour began to resist this situation in the 1980s preferring to migrate to the cities in search of more highly paid work. But producers merely substituted this labour with imported "guest-workers" from Indonesia at similarly exploitative rates.

There was an even higher incidence of poverty among Malaysian rubber smallholders. Despite high yields per acre and the assistance of government subsidies most holdings were simply too small to be financially viable.[23] A genuine cooperative of small-holders to increase holdings to a profitable size might have eased this situation. Yet the Indian experience had demonstrated that wealthier landowners were quick to exploit such changes to land use. This was borne out in Malaysia's experience of the Green Revolution. As elsewhere Green Revolution techniques were introduced to Malaysia against existing land ownership. While the commercialisation of rice utilising high yielding seeds, fertilisers, irrigation etc., greatly maximised rice production it strongly favoured those able to access such technologies. Large landowners quickly acquired a competitive edge over smallholders who were frequently driven out of the market. And as larger landowners increased their land-holdings there was a dramatic decrease in tenant farming and small-holdings and an increase in seasonal labourers.[24] India experienced a similar scenario as discussed in Chapter 4.

Rural areas were also disadvantaged where governments intervened to keep agricultural prices low in order to serve the industrialising urban areas.[25] Clearly there could be a legitimate role for government marketing boards in procuring and storing surplus grains to protect farmers from selling at unremunerative prices, to distribute at

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19 *Ibid*, p.19
20 *Ibid*, p.17
21 Scepanik, E., "Agricultural Capital Formation in Selected Developing Countries", Agricultural Planning Studies, No 11, FAO, 1970, quoted in Todaro, *Economic Development ..., op.cit.*, p.298
22 Mehmet, *op.cit.*, p.23
23 *Ibid*, p.30
24 *Ibid*, pp.40-42
25 Brown, G., "Agricultural Pricing Policies in Developing Countries", in Todaro, M., *The Struggle for Economic Development*, Longman, New York, 1983, p.240

equitable prices to assist the poor or to distribute in times of emergency.[26] But where developing nations kept agricultural prices low to provide urban areas with cheap food, producers had little incentive to expand or to invest. In some instances farmers responded by switching from crop staples controlled by government quotas and prices to more lucrative crops affordable only to the urban middle-classes.[27] In either case supplies of basic food staples were likely to fall short of demand.

And there were other planning policies which adversely affected the agricultural sector. A dominant feature of Asian development planning in the 1950s and 1960s centred on manufacturing through import-substitution. In order to attract cheap foreign capital and goods to establish the manufacturing base domestic governments typically over-valued the foreign exchange rate. The resultant rise in the price of exports strongly disadvantaged primary produce on the world market.[28]

Michael Lipton argued in his book *Why Poor People Stay Poor:Urban Bias in World Development* (1977) that pro-industry policies stemmed from an inherent urban bias which was sustained by urban interest groups.[29] The rural sector served the interests of the city - an imbalance which could only be redressed by shifting resources to the rural sector including the "efficient rural poor".[30] Lipton maintained that this was the *"overriding"* development task. He contended: "Only on the basis of a tolerable level of living for a mass agriculture of small farmers can most poor countries construct, speedily and efficiently, a modern industrial centre."[31]

But to achieve such wide-spread equity required major changes - economic, structural, social and institutional - to ensure that the development efforts of developing nations did not work to the exclusive advantage of both rural and urban elites while disadvantaging both rural and urban poor. Some governments in the late 1970s and the 1980s did begin to recognise the importance of giving equal attention to the agricultural sector as the early Five-Year plans had acknowledged.[32] Brown argued that the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan expressed concern about lagging agricultural production and sought to increase agricultural prices during the 1970s.

Yet as many commentators continued to argue if the benefits of agricultural modernisation were to become really wide-based then changes to land-tenure were

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[26] Fonseca, A., *Food Aid for Relief and Development: An Evaluation*, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 1983, pp.56,116

[27] Brown, G., *op.cit.*, p.243; Todaro, *Economic Development ..., op.cit.*, p.321

[28] *Ibid*, pp.435-439

[29] Lipton, M., *Why Poor People Stay Poor:Urban Bias in World Development,* Temple Smith, London, 1977, p.16

[30] *Ibid*, p.18

[31] *Ibid*, p.23

[32] Todaro, *Economic Development ..., op.cit.*, p.298; Mahalanobis, P., *The Approach of Operational Research to Planning in India,* Statistical Publishing Society, Calcutta, 1965, p.74; Brown in Todaro, *The Struggle for Economic Development, op.cit.*, p.240

imperative.[33] Todaro believed there was a need to transfer "land-ownership or control directly or indirectly to those who actually work the land". He suggested various means by which this could be accomplished by transferring ownership to tenant farmers to create family farms; by transferring land from large estates to small farms; through co-operatives; through state farms or by appropriating large estates for new settlements.[34] For such changes to be successful they required extensive support services - roads, technology, marketing, pricing policies and credit facilities. And in order to narrow the rural-urban divide substantially rural incomes and rural industries needed to rise and educational and social welfare services needed to expand.[35]

Many of these ideas were embraced in the rhetoric of aid programmes through the concept of integrated rural development projects and a basic needs approach. Yet, as discussed in the last chapter, the application of the rhetoric was frequently tentative and uninformed and not at all suited to a mass and equitable growth of the agricultural sector as proposed by Lipton. As well, the lion's share of aid continued to fund public utilities and infrastructure not the agricultural sector.

The pressures placed on governments by vested interests *not* to effect substantial institutional changes had traditionally been much greater than any pressures for changes made by the poor. But in the 1980s many indigenous NGOs recognised the need to effect just such a stance. That issue is discussed in detail below.

That developing nations were in increasing economic trouble in the 1980s was largely only acknowledged by the West through its response to the growing debt problem. That was a fact that Western financial institutions could not ignore because of the likely destabilisation of Western financial systems. The most troubled debt-encumbered nations, largely in Latin America and Africa but also in some Asian countries such as the Philippines, demonstrated clearly the effects of unprincipled leadership which had injudiciously followed Western modernisation programmes at the expense of the local populace, the local environment and political ethics.[36] Conspicuous consumption by the wealthy, white elephant projects (such as the nuclear power plant planned for an earthquake zone in the Philippines), arms buying, and capital flight (the Marcos family alone conservatively created at least 15% of their country's US$26

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[33] See Todaro, *Economic Development ..., op.cit.*, p.321; G. Myrdal's three volume *Asian Drama*, Penguin, Middlesex, 1968; Lipton, *op.cit*; Balasubramanyam, *op.cit.*

[34] *Ibid*, p.322

[35] *Ibid*

[36] Susan George and her associates at the Transnational Institute, Amsterdam, and the Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, have argued persuasively the various circumstances in which developing countries incurred onerous debt problems. See George, S., *A Fate Worse Than Debt,* Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1988 and George, S., *The Debt Boomerang:How Third World Debt Harms Us All*, Pluto Press with Transnational Institute, 1992

billion debt[37]) had all contributed to the debt problem. It was exacerbated by the oil crisis and also by the pressures of Western financiers on Third World nations to borrow for modernisation programmes. Those nations which succumbed, borrowed cheap money at variable interest rates, only to encounter crippling real interest rates and disastrously low commodity prices in the 1980s.[38] The rich and the banks were generally well protected. The latter gathered in enormous profits through interest payments, while the poor in developing nations paid. As a UNICEF report remarked in 1989: "... it is hardly too brutal an oversimplification to say that the rich got the loans and the poor got the debts."[39]

The subsequent "debt crisis" engendered by these activities became obvious in 1982 when Mexico came close to defaulting on its loan repayments.[40] The response to this crisis by Western financial institutions, especially the World Bank and the IMF, was to initiate "structural adjustment programmes". For nations already experiencing wide-spread chronic poverty such solutions, which focused solely on the macro economic picture and ignored what was happening at the micro level, could only exacerbate the situation. George states that for every month between 1982 and 1990, an average of six billion, five hundred million dollars (US) was paid by countries of the South to the North in interest payments alone.[41] Or as George put it: "... in the eight years from 1982-90 the poor have financed six Marshall Plans for the rich through debt service alone."[42]

The cost of debt repayment was to undermine many of the gains made by post-war development efforts. Structural adjustment packages demanded a strong focus on exports, devaluation of the currency, privatisation of public resources - electricity, water, transport - wage restraint, higher taxation, the abolition of price controls and a restriction on credit.[43] Critically, they also demanded a severe cut-back in government domestic spending. With little fat to trim when debt was repaid, it came at the expense of cuts in education spending, health and other social welfare programmes. As the South Commission reported, the social impact of these cuts was reflected in set-backs in the areas of infant mortality, life expectancy, levels of nutrition, incidence of disease and school enrolments.[44] UNICEF reported cuts per head in health care by 50% and in education by almost 25% in the thirty-seven poorest nations in the 1980s.[45]

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37 George, S., *A Fate...., op.cit.*, pp.16-21
38 *Ibid,* pp.27-29
39 *The State of the World's Children, op.cit.*, p.31
40 *Ibid,* p.41
41 George, S., *The Debt ...., op.cit.*, p.xiv
42 *Ibid.*, p.xvi
43 George, S. *A Fate ..., op.cit.*, p.52
44 *The Challenge to the South, op.cit,* p.3
45 *The State of the World's Children, op.cit.,* p.17

While the debt crisis tended to focus attention on Latin America and Africa, a substantial number of Asian countries were also accruing high levels of debt.[46] Countries like the aspiring NICs - Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia - did not lack the capacity to service their debt. But they tended to rely on short-term expedient solutions such as cutting down native forests. Among the top eight debtors, for example, India and Indonesia were also among the top ten deforesters between the late 1970s and 1989.[47]

Recession in the North and debt in the South accentuated labour's weak bargaining power in an increasingly conservative global political and economic environment and served to sanction this process. The works of George, Bello and Rosenfeld and others exposed the lengths to which owners of production, whether in the North or South, were prepared to go to retain an economic edge. Filipino NGOs reported that workers' demands to unionise in an Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in Baguio, led to management issuing an ultimatum that it would close down and relocate to China where, ironically, (in that socialist state), labour was more compliant.[48] Hong Kong, in the early 1990s, experienced large relocation of plant to mainland China to take advantage of what amounted to sweat shop labour. Bello reported similar relocation from Taiwan to China. And George reported the relocation of Californian companies to Mexico to circumvent environmental conditions imposed in the USA.

In developing countries, profits were guarded by a steady increase in militarisation - often for domestic use as much as for national security against aggressor nations. This was very apparent in the Asian region.[49] In Bangladesh, government expenditure on defence rose from 5.1% of total government expenditure in 1972 to 11.2% in 1986 and in Sri Lanka, from 3.1% to 8.0%.[50] (Meanwhile, in both countries, social welfare budgets decreased.) In the West, also, economic rationalist policies at their extreme supported a conservative political environment and sanctioned increasingly regressive work practices. Non-unionised labour, individual wage bargaining, increased working hours and cuts in benefits, wages and staff were increasingly mooted by conservative elements in Australia during the 1980s.

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[46] In US$ billions they ranked in 1989 as - India 60, Indonesia 53, China 45, South Korea 44, the Philippines 29, Thailand 24, Malaysia 19.5, Pakistan 18, Vietnam 11.6 and Bangladesh 10.7. George, S., *The Debt ..., op.cit.*, p.10

[47] *Ibid*, pp.10-11

[48] Field visit Center for Labor, Education Assistance and Research, Baguio, Philippines, 8/1/89. This organisation was funded among others by CAA and APHEDA

[49] *Asian NGOs Task Force Meeting, 23-30 Jan., 1988*, Chiangmai, Thailand, p.5; Lopez, E., "Development Through People's Empowerment", 1989 unpublished paper presented to *Asian NGOs Task Force Meeting* on activities of Ecumenical Center for Development, Philippines, 1988

[50] *The State of the World's Children, op.cit.*, p.17

This powerful conservative economic trend spearheaded by the USA and to a lesser extent by the UK, boded ill for the Third World poor. In a tight global economic environment where regressive work practices became acceptable, the practice of MNC taking advantage of the cheapest labour market, without regard for industrial relations and ecological standards in developing countries, was likely to increase. As well, any weakening of social equity issues in the West, such as the support for a "user pays" policy for health and education services, lessened the likelihood of Western nations finally affecting a strong poverty focus in their ODA programmes. In 1989, over 30% of the USA's non military aid went to two countries - Egypt and Israel. Neither sub-Saharan Africa nor India were among the top ten recipients of US assistance. An Independent Group on British Aid likewise reported: " ... most of our aid programme at present is irrelevant to the real needs of the poor throughout the world ... It is not concentrated on the poorest countries of the world, still less on the poorest people in the countries we help."[51] As established in Chapter 9, Australia followed similar policies.

The poor were also likely to suffer if Third World governments backed economic rationalism. Asian NGOs noted with alarm in 1989 the prospect of Third World nations taking on the recommendations of the World Bank, IMF and the Chicago School[52] which encouraged Western governments to withdraw from services in favour of the private sector.[53] Whatever their views of government, NGOs were against such a policy arguing that the State should be fully responsible for improving and revitalising services.[54] Given the fore-going, the decade of the 1980s was described variously by NGOs as the "lost decade"[55], "the decade of despair" or "the brutal and mindless 80s", which saw development "derailed" and progress "reversed". Such epithets could be applied in varying degrees and circumstances to many developing countries.

NGO Activity

Many NGOs working with poor communities in the 1980s were confirming (as activists foreshadowed in the late 1960s and early 1970s), the extent to which the processes that had combined to raise the economic growth of a nation, equally had contributed to the poverty of its poorest groups. As even the Brundtland report - commissioned by the UN to examine environmental and development issues - agreed in 1987:"... the same processes that have produced these [development] gains have given

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51 *Ibid*

52 Home of free-market guru Milton Friedman

53 *NGO-Government Relations: A Source of Life or a Kiss of Death?*, p.21, Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi, 1989

54 *Ibid*

55 "For most countries of the South, the decade of the 1980s came to be regarded as a lost decade for development...", *The Challenge to the South*., *op.cit.*, p.61

rise to trends that the planet and its people cannot long bear."[56] And it was the poorest and most marginalised groups which were especially affected.

While the activities of NGOs rarely fell exclusively into any one category this chapter is substantially concerned with the growing number of Asian development professionals - academic and NGO - who were attempting in their various ways, through research, education or agitation, to soften the impact of the "lost decade" on marginalised people and who were focused on empowering the rural and urban poor. If ever anything pointed up the crassly simplistic image of passive Third World recipients waiting for Western development (an image which still persisted in the West), it was the activities of such Third World NGOs and their constituents - the poor. This chapter demonstrates the growing sophistication, assertiveness and effectiveness of Asian activist NGOs who worked with poor communities in the 1980s. These NGOs debunked the myth of an all-embracing economic boom in Asia, by exposing the deteriorating economic conditions of many Asian communities. In an attempt to more effectively address poverty issues, activist Asian NGOs began to explore alternative solutions and methods to existing NGO development practices. These processes, which saw "Southern" NGOs and also, POs, increasingly take the initiative in community development matters, attracted responses from their local governments, from Western governments and from the "Northern" NGO community. The responses of the Australian NGO community to these shifting circumstances, as it renegotiated its relationship with Asian NGOs and re-examined its wider role in the development process, are also considered.

Networking

Since the work of activist Asian NGOs tended to evoke the suspicion of their home governments, NGOs increasingly saw the benefits of closer liaison with each other. Only by strengthening their numbers could they expect to make a significant impact and to survive. Thai NGOs first came together towards the end of 1981. Representatives of thirty-five organisations gathered to exchange ideas and experiences, to develop closer co-ordination and co-operation and to improve their relationship with government agencies.[57] An umbrella organisation - the Thai Development Support Committee - was initiated to facilitate these goals.[58] Like ACFOA in Australia the Committee represented organisations with a broad range of activities in urban and rural community

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[56] *Our Common Future...*, *op.cit.*, p.2

[57] Ungpathorn, J., Director of Thai Volunteers Service, "Non Government Organization and Thai Development", *CCTD Newsletter*, Mar-Jun 1983

[58] Established in August 1982,"Thai Development Support Conference", *CCTD Newsletter*, Mar-Jun 1983

development, child welfare, community health, human rights, community workers' training, workers' rights, appropriate technology and research and publications.[59]

In India, a "National Convention on Collaboration between NGOs" was held in Delhi in September 1986, with representatives from four hundred NGOs India-wide.[60] The conference was described as "... a unique opportunity for in depth stock-taking and analysis of the state of [the] voluntary movement in India today....[61] In Bangladesh, NGOs came together under ADAB - the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh. In Sri Lanka, NGOs formed the Sri Lanka National NGO Council. As ACFOA was demonstrating in Australia, the act of bringing disparate groups together to discuss the full range of development issues, performed an educative role which placed pressure on the more conservative, naive or inexperienced NGOs to change.

On another level, the international NGOs which had emerged during the 1970s, such as ACFOD, ANGOC and CENDHRRA,[62] continued to bring NGOs together within the Asian region. ANGOC organised many forums during the decade. These included Asian Regional NGO Workshops in Thailand in 1980 and 1982; a Rural Community Participation Programme covering India, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand in 1983; an Asian NGO Regional Workshop on Rural Development Cooperation in 1985; and a workshop to discuss "The State of NGOs in Rural Development and Selected NGO Perceptions of Rural Development Policies" in 1987.[63] The other international NGOs were similarly engaged. As well, an increasing number of resource NGOs emerged during the decade engaged in research, advocacy, information exchange, documentation, technical assistance and training.[64]

Poverty Examined

Through these various interactions NGO analyses of development practices, backed by empirical evidence gained from their grassroots work, highlighted both the extent of poverty and its various causes. These included pollution, deforestation and a lack of industrial relations and human rights practices. Many NGOs were becoming

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59 Initially 17 NGOs grouped together, *Ibid*

60 Editorial, "Cooperation Among NGOs", Society for Participatory Research in Asia, *Newsletter*, No.17, Oct-Dec, 1986, p.1

61 *Ibid*

62 Asian Cultural Forum on Development; The Asian Non-Governmental Organisations Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development; Centre for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia

63 Workshop Report, "The State of NGOs in Rural Development and Selected NGO Perceptions of Rural Development Policies", p.11, held at Silang, Cavite, Philippines, 23-7 Mar, 1987, ANGOC, Manila, Philippines

64 *Strengthening the Grassroots, Nature and Role of Support Organisations*, Seminar Report, pp.5-6, Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi, Oct, 1990; *Development Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region, International NGOs Towards Promotion of People's Initiatives*, Consultation Report and Directory of NGOs, ACFOD, Bangkok, 1988, p.8; Sabur, M., "Asia: Grassroots and Transnational Networking, The ACFOD Experience", *IFDA Dossier*, 55, Sept/Oct, 1986, p.67

increasingly sceptical about their respective governments' capacities or desire to rigorously tackle these issues. One group of NGOs commented:

> Most NGOs have begun to realise that [the economic growth model] is anti-development, it is anti-people; because it wastes resources, it destroys environment, it destroys natural habitats, it displaces people and this kind of development only serves the interest of a few sections of the society, the middle and the upper classes, at the cost of the poor, the tribals and the deprived.[65]

Third World NGOs made a major contribution to the on-going development debate in the 1980s by confirming and widely publicising the causal links between poverty and the modernisation process in developing countries. NGO members of the Thai Development Support Committee in collaboration with the *Bangkok Post*, for example, produced a series of articles in 1989, titled "Behind the Smile: Voices of Thailand". The articles elaborated on the conditions of many Thai communities facing the effects of "modernisation" and "development". These included debt, labour migration, landlessness, environmental degradation, deforestation, slum living, prostitution and child labour.[66] In rural areas, many communities had scarce access to food. Yet immediately after the Second World War, Thailand's forests had been as crammed full of produce as the exclusive supermarkets of the large Asian cities of the latter 1980s, which were accessible only to the middle and upper classes.

Cicadas, snakes, spiders, squirrels, quail, mongoose, civet, frogs, birds, nuts, fruit and fish had supplemented kitchen garden produce, rice and chickens of Northeast Thai families.[67] By 1989, those resources had been severely depleted and villages of the Northeast faced poverty and family dislocation. A village headman from Roi Et

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[65] South Asian NGOs from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, were of the opinion in 1985 that: "... the building of roads, dams, irrigation schemes; the exploration of oil, gas, and other natural resources; the need for wood, etc., has not only, in many cases, forced out the rural poor from the areas of these activities, but has taken away from the rural poor the control, and access to, the very resources on which they depend."A report of a five day consultation held near Dhaka reported in Khan, Nighat Said, and Bhasin, K., "Sharing One Earth Responding to the Challenge of Rural Poverty in Asia", *IFDA Dossier*, No.53, May/June, 1986, p.10; The World Commission on Environment and Development confirmed in 1987: "The people who are already living on such lands at low population densities and with only traditional rights to the land are often swept aside in the rush to develop lands that might better be left in extensively used forest.",... p.153; "Asian NGOs Task Force Meeting Report", 23-30 Jan., 1988, p.5, Appendix; Workshop Report "The State of NGOs in Rural Development and Selected NGO Perceptions of Rural Development Policies", Silang, Cavite, Philippines, 23-27 Mar., 1987, ANGOC, Manila 1987; *NGO-Government Relations: A Source of Life or a Kiss of Death?*, Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi, 1989, p.13; "Aquarian" Reform For the Small Fisherman of Asia", in *The Case for Alternative Development, Of the people, For the people, By the people*, Rome July 1979 Documentation Kit, Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Bangkok; "Small-Scale Fisheries in Asia: A Neglected Sector", *LOKNITI*, The Journal of the Asian NGO Coalition, Vol 5, No.3, nd

[66] Ekachai, S., *Behind the Smile: Voices of Thailand*, Thai Development Support Committee, Bangkok, 1991, first published in Bangkok Post in 1989; ACFOD Workshop for Middle Management NGOs, Chiangmai, Thailand, 26/3/89; Field Visit to Mabfang village, 1 April, 1989, Thailand

[67] See the autobiographical novels of Pira Sudham, and Kampoon Boontawee's novel *A Child of the Northeast*, which catalogue the abundance of village life in the Northeastern area of Thailand before it became linked to the world's markets, foreign assistance, loans and trade. Sudham, P., *Siamese Drama, and Other Stories from Thailand*, Siam Media International books, Bangkok, 1983; Sudham, P., *People of Esarn*, Shire Books, Bangkok, 1988; Sudham, P., *Monsoon Country*, Shire Books, Bangkok, 1988; Boontawee, K., *A Child of the Northeast* , DK Editions Duangkamol. Bangkok, 1988

province explained the increasing scarcity of food sources: "Our life revolves around food hunting,... you start looking for food early in the morning to have something to eat in the evening, and another day passes".[68] Tadpoles and frogs were becoming rare, because batteries, used to catch fish, electrocuted the frogs and tadpoles as well.[69] The birds were decreasing since the forests had disappeared. Said the headman: "The forest is diminishing. The droughts are getting longer, and food is harder too (sic) find. Hunger is the enemy we still cannot beat."[70]

George confirmed that Thailand increased the exploitation of its forests by 76% from the late 1970s to 1989. By 1989, 83% of its forest land was destroyed.[71] As a consequence, many of the men seasonally migrated to Saudi Arabia or Bangkok for work.[72] They were obliged to live in slums, to do day labourer work with no guarantee of continuous employment, to work without helmets or the protection of workers' compensation. Countless daughters were sold into prostitution.[73] In Baan Nongham, in Khon Kaen province, married couples had to seasonally migrate to the sugar cane plantations leaving the elderly, young mothers and small children in the village. The older children migrated to Bangkok, returning only for the Thai New Year Songkhran Festival in April, causing severe dislocation of the traditional Thai village, family and culture.[74]

In 1989, common woodland was still being taken over by land speculators. One farmer remarked: "They are not buying our land. They're stealing it and chasing us away. ... Big projects for plantations or resorts need huge areas of land. Our fragmented ricefields won't do, so they take our common woods, and we're robbed."[75] Robbed of common grazing land, firewood, mushrooms, bamboo shoots and wild vegetables.

Dr Prawase Wasi, prominent and respected Thai doctor and Magasaysay award winner, at a meeting to bring NGOs and the press together in 1987, addressed the problem as follows:

> We always proudly say that our country is prosperous. In the water there is fish; in the field there is rice. The Thais never starve or are short of what they need. At the moment, this saying is not true any more. The question is why? .... On the one hand, the economists would say that Thailand is experiencing an economic growth rate of 3.4 to 5 per cent. Furthermore, mass media all around the world have publicized the growth, the excellence of Thailand's economy. ...Clearly they do so by judging from the economic growth. ...At the same time, if we listen to the ordinary people themselves, to the Non-Government Organizations who work at the grassroots level in

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68 "Today's Menu: ants' eggs, beetles, crickets", Ekachai, S., *op.cit.* p.41

69 *Ibid*

70 *Ibid*, p.45

71 George, *The Debt..., op.cit.*, pp.10-11

72 Field Visit to Mabfang village, 1 April, 1989, Thailand

73 *Ibid;* ACFOD Workshop for Middle Management NGOs, Chiangmai, Thailand, 26/3/89; EMPOWER visit, 25/4/89, Bangkok

74 Ekachai, *op.cit.*, pp.25-27

75 *Ibid*, pp.25-27,131; Workshop for Middle Management NGOs, Chiangmai, Thailand, 26-30th Mar., 1989

> the countryside or the researchers working in the rural areas, it would turn out to be another world - an opposite world. Researchers... came out with the opinion that 85 per cent of the approximately 50,000 villages around the country are facing bankruptcy.
>
> In the past, our people in the rural areas had a self-contained self-reliant economy.... From growing a variety of crops...farmers turned to a cultivation of a single crop, such as rice, tapioca or sugar cane....This change has evidently had profound effects on the economic system, environment and culture. Previously, when farmers used an integrated farming technique, nature was in balance. There was no need for fertiliser for the dung of the cattles [sic]... were the best natural fertiliser available. No pesticides were needed. A certain kind of insect would eat a certain sort of plant. And since the crops were grown in rotation, chances were that the number of insects were naturally controlled. ... Nowadays the destruction of the forests has reached a critical point because we have less than 30 per cent of the whole forest left,... many people begin to be afraid of the advent of desert in Thailand. Drought is a clear consequence of this destruction....[76]

Although the examples have been taken from Thailand, NGOs in other parts of Asia were echoing similar concerns. The fishing sector, for example, represented another group which reflected this pattern of growing dislocation and impoverishment due to the over use of natural resources. The conditions of small fisherworkers in Asia were documented by a number of Asian NGOs. Their studies found that industrial fishing had placed severe constraints on small fisherworkers by encroaching on inshore waters and depleting stocks. Small fisherworkers were unable to compete against high cost capital ventures with sophisticated (and destructive) boats and equipment. Large trawlers, with mechanised trawl and purseine boats, drove fish shoals away from the shore leading to the extinction of some species.[77] In the Gulf of Thailand, heavy fishing had resulted in distinct changes in the composition of species. By 1987, 95% of the world's fish catch was threatened by over fishing.[78] Evidence gathered from NGOs in India, Thailand and the Philippines confirmed that trend.

Fisherworkers were also adversely affected by development carried out on the land. Waste from factories, whether industrial or fish canneries, frequently polluted the rivers, lakes and seas and destroyed its life forms. Reclamation of land, destruction of mangrove swamps and shoreline development to build hotels or other commercial enterprises, also affected the ecological balance of the areas and displaced fishing communities many of whom had existed there for generations.[79] Most poor fisherworkers did not own the land they lived on making them easy to displace when commercial activities, such as tourism, made the hitherto ignored beaches of Asia

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[76] Wasi, P., "Back to the Communal Culture: A Solution to the Rural Problems?" *Thai Development Newsletter*, Third Quarter, No.14, 1987, pp.6-10

[77] "An Overview of the Traditional Fishing Sector in Asia", Cendhrra Development Memo, Feb., 1985, Metro Manila, 1985; "Aquarian" Reform For the Small Fisherman of Asia", in *The Case for Alternative Development, Of the people, For the people, By the people*, Rome July 1979 Documentation Kit, Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Bangkok; Small-Scale Fisheries in Asia: A Neglected Sector, *LOKNITI*, The Journal of the Asian NGO Coalition, Vol 5, No.3, nd

[78] *Our Common Future, op.cit.*, pp.263, 266

[79] "A Small Fishermen's Workshop", May 1978, Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Bangkok, part of *Case for Alternative Development, Of the people, For the people, By the people*, Rome July 1979 Documentation Kit

highly prized commodities.[80] Fish processing factories displaced fisherworkers who once salted and dried the fish locally for market.[81]

The desire and necessity for developing nations to attract overseas investment and the opportunity provided to investors to gain access to the cheapest possible markets, added to the poverty of many Third World workers. Safe working environments, basic wage commitments and unionisation were all frequently ignored. Export Processing Zones were established in the Philippines on the expectation of technological transfer and of skilled labour opportunities. Established in Baguio, Bataan and Cebu companies from all over the world enjoyed tax free privileges, infrastructure, roads, electricity, telephones, warehousing and wharf facilities (which was invariably far superior to the infrastructure outside the zones), and cheap labour.

In an environment of high unemployment, labour was typically drawn from well-educated young women, who were denied union representation, who were paid below award wages and who worked under draconian conditions. A survey conducted among women piece-workers in Baguio by a Filipino NGO revealed high incidents of urinary tract infection caused by employees working long hours without rest breaks. Reports of sexual abuse were common, while micro-chip processing caused stress and eye strain.[82] The demands of piece work were unfair and onerous. Women frequently took work home to finish into the early hours of the morning. Labour was typically hired on a temporary basis, laid off for several weeks in the off-season and rehired at a temporary rate in order to avoid the higher wages which permanency enjoyed. Any woman attempting to form a lobby group was dismissed or demoted. Any skills a worker may have gained were short-lived, since the working life of a woman thus employed tended to be extremely short.[83] Both CAA and the Australian Trade Union NGO APHEDA[84] funded NGOs to assist the above communities. They were in effect, and ironically, "picking up the pieces" created by deficient development practices.

The conditions for some mining communities in the Philippines were equally poor and equally in need of NGO assistance. In 1989, miners in Northern Luzon existed in

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[80] See "An Overview of the Traditional Fishing Sector ...*op.cit.*; "ANGOC Organises Regional Consultation in Small-Scale Fisheries Development in SEA", Information Notes, Vol 8, No.5, April 1988, ANGOC Newsletter; *Kabilkat, The Development Worker*, No.2, Mar., 1989, Council for People's Development, Quezon City, p.11; Thomson, D, "Big Fish Little Fish", *VA*, April 1981, Vol 23, No.9, pp.385-6

[81] "An Overview of the Traditional Fishing Sector .. . ", *op.cit.*

[82] "The Effects of EPZS Export Processing Zones on the Workers. A Case Study of BCEPZ Baguio City Export Processing Zone", Center For Labor Education and Research, Bagui City, 1989

[83] *Ibid*; del Rosario, R. *Life on the Assembly Line*, An Alternative Philippine Report on Women Industrial Workers, Philippine Women's Research Collective, nd; "Industrial Women Workers in Asia", *ISIS* International, Women's Journal produced with Committee for Asian Women, No.4, Sept., 1985, [This issue was published with the support of Australia's ADAB]; *Beyond Labour Issues, Women Workers in Asia*, Committee for Asian Women, Hong Kong, 1988

[84] Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad, the overseas aid agency of the ACTU.

shanty town conditions balanced precariously on a hillside in shacks made of corrugated iron and odds and ends.[85] They rented rooms for P50-100 a month, approximately 5x7 metres, with no ventilation and with an average of 6 family members. Some 15 families shared one common "comfort room", the ultimate euphemism. Since those facilities were entirely inadequate the community tended to use the river for toilet, bathing and washing and its pollution therefore contributed to health problems. Contagious diseases spread quickly because of over-crowding. Skin diseases, respiratory and gastric problems and tuberculosis were common. Some of the camps had movies, but otherwise there were no recreation facilities and drinking problems were commonplace. In 1989, the miners were paid P64 a day which was way below the poverty line set by the Philippine government. Some women knitted to add to their income (again for exploitative rates) and they planted tea and vegetables on the mountainside, though it was difficult to raise chickens or pigs because of the overcrowded conditions. One hundred per cent of the products were exported (copper to Japan, gold to the USA and elsewhere).[86]

Most of the major mining companies in the Philippines also held significant logging concessions. Both logging and mining had displaced large numbers of people from their land and added to environmental degradation and resource depletion. In the resort island of Palawan in the Philippines, siltation from heavily logged areas had begun to threaten the beaches and Thailand had similar concerns of its southern beaches in 1989. As a consequence in both Thailand and the Philippines, near the end of the 1980s, the effects of resource depletion were being felt in another development growth area in the region - tourism.

The rapid growth of tourism in Asia (tourist revenue in Thailand, for example, increased from 3,852 million baht in 1974 to 37,000 million in 1986),[87] also created severe dislocation to many local communities.[88] Those engaged in promoting tourism increasingly commercialised popular or folk culture capturing it for mass consumption, which added to the alienation of village life. A Thai community development worker in Khon Kaen spoke, in 1989, of a traditional village ceremony in his region which had been co-opted by the district and provincial government for tourism.[89] He said that now everyone watched, even the villagers who no longer understood the significance of the rituals which were a mish-mash of activities without meaning. Previously villagers had

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[85] Field visit to Camp 6 Baguio with Mining Community Development Center, NGO, 9 Jan., 1989, Philippines

[86] Field Research, Center for Labor, Education Assistance and Research, Baguio, Philippines, 8th Jan.,1989. Centre funded both by Australia's CAA and APHEDA

[87] Pholpoke, C., "A Cable Car for Doi Suthep? No, Thanks," *Thai Development Newsletter*, Third Quarter No.14, 1987, p.20

[88] Ekachai, *op.cit.*, p.87; Pholpoke, *op.cit*

[89] Interview with Surasit Bubpha, Community Development Worker for CCD, Khon Kaen, 6 April, 1989, Thailand

gathered together as a community to dance, light fireworks around a bonfire and talk.[90] The Thai Development Support Committee confirmed in 1987 that the commercialisation of local culture was given official sanction during the 1987 "Visit Thailand Year". Provincial governors were instructed to develop local cultural activities into commercially viable tourist attractions.[91] The Thai Development Newsletter reported:

> The "Visit Thailand Year" was inaugurated in January with a grand parade of cultural activities from all over Thailand down Rajadamnoen Avenue in Bangkok. The colourful procession was telecast nationwide. But critics claimed that cultures were commoditized and bastardized because they were performed out of season. They cited that rain making ceremony, normally performed in the village in the northeast at the end of the dry season, was paraded in mid-winter along the streets of the capital city.[92]

Associated with the growth of tourism, particularly in Thailand and the Philippines, was an increase in "sex tourism" with all the attendant risks of AIDS, violence and exploitation.[93] Prostitution was frequently linked directly to poverty. Young rural women were contracted to brothel owners by impoverished parents who were often under the mistaken belief that their daughters would work in the cities as domestic servants or factory workers.

The rapid proliferation of Asian NGOs in the 1980s working with such marginalised communities - whether "street workers", farmers, fisherworkers or miners - attested to the increasing numbers of communities suffering from the undesirable affects of "development". But this growth in NGO activity reflected more than increasing community need. It demonstrated also the effectiveness of development networking which had facilitated the exchange of ideas and experiences focused on principles of empowerment, agency and raising consciousness. The social justice activities of NGOs were therefore beginning to be applied by increasing numbers of individuals and groups. In some cases, NGO activity was also being scaled up to impact at the national level.

Seeking Alternatives

In attempting to interact with compassion with poor and marginalised groups, activist NGOs had increasingly become aware of the energy, skills and wisdom residing in poor communities. The value of many grassroots techniques in the areas of agriculture, forestry preservation and fisheries and of village ethics and culture had become

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90 *Ibid*

91 Pholpoke, *op.cit*.

92 *Ibid*

93 "Women's Issue", *Thai Development New Letter*, Second Quarter, 1986, Vol 4, No.1; Field Visit EMPOWER, Thai NGO working with street workers, 25/4/89, Bangkok, Thailand

compelling to these NGOs.[94] As a consequence the ways that activist NGOs perceived and presented the poor began to change dramatically. Experience at the village level led Thai development worker, Apichart Thongyou (who had worked with CAA), to question his "development worker" life in poetry. Before Apichart worked in the village villagers had been represented to him as:

> ....stupid...poor...sick, backward... undeveloped; not-growing... inert... lazy; unhealthy... lacking education. That is the force which pushed me here, together with the sound floating on the wind:'You are a developer'.[95]

Apichart's subsequent experiences of rural life led him to question his university learning and to revise his position of the village. He wrote:

> Eternal Truth is found in the village, astonishing theories are there, the Way of life is there, a textbook of ethics is there, a symphony and poetry are there, art and literature are there. There, which is called "village".[96]

His sentiments were echoed by others. The influential Indian development activist, Kamla Bhasin, declared: "Those who were condemned as illiterate, conservative, fatalist, farmers have to be recognised as repositories of life saving knowledge and techniques."[97] British OXFAM development worker, John Clark, observed: "[Poor people] should not be viewed as the objects of charity but as commercially viable entrepreneurs."[98]

While a few NGOs advocated a self-sufficient "back to the roots" ideology, operating outside mainstream economics, the majority of activist NGOs came to other conclusions. Rather than keeping poor communities marginalised, they needed to be fully integrated into the main economic and political life, but one modified to embrace the needs of poor people. Development activists therefore searched for new development paradigms. "Another development" became their *modus operandi.* Materials emerged from a wide variety of groups seeking alternatives to the economic growth model and focusing on Asian paradigms. ANGOC published a critique supporting alternative development titled:"The Case for Alternative Development, Of the People, For the People, By the People". Representatives of Asia's youth produced a

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[94] See *Turning Point of Farmers*, Phongphit, S. and Bennoun, R., Eds, Thai Institute for Rural Development, Bangkok, 1988; Phongphit, S. Ed., *Back to the Roots, Village and Self-Reliance in a Thai Context,* Rural Development Documentation Centre and Village Institution Promotion, Bangkok, 1986; "Development at the Crossroads, Back to Culture and Religion?", *Thai Development Newsletter*, Third Quarter, No.14, 1987, Thai Development Support Committee

[95] Interview Apicahart Thongyou, Khon Kaen, Thailand, April 10, 1989; Thongyou, Apichart, *Simplicity Amidst Complexity: Lessons from a Thai Village*, Translated by James Hopkins, Moo Ban Press, Bangkok, 1988, p.15

[96] Thongyou, *Ibid*, p.129

[97] "Towards South North NGO Partnership - Some Thoughts", Kamla Bhasin, June 1990

[98] Clark, J., *Democratizing Development:The Role of Voluntary Organizations*, Earthscan Publications, London, 1991

report: *Searching for Asian Paradigms*.[99] A monograph, *Development, Crises and Alternative Visions,* which analysed the affects of three decades of development on Third World women, emanated from a network of Third World women development activists and researchers.[100] The monograph, *Religion in a Changing Society,* presented eight case studies of monks and lay leaders who sought alternative Buddhist roads to development in Thailand.[101] And while NGOs grappled with methods and programmes to promote an alternative development, researchers sought to place it in a new conceptual and theoretical framework, such as Indian Professor, Rajni Kothari's monograph: *Rethinking Development, In Search of Humane Alternatives*.[102]

Alternative methods were characterised as being flexible, experiential, participatory, alert to traditional methods and focused towards establishing a more equitable society. The alternative paradigm would embrace every facet of life: education, health, livelihood, housing, communication, disputation, technology, marketing, research and tourism.

Fundamentally, the practice of funding one-off scattered projects at the village level, like the pumps and wells, whatever their value at that micro level, was now being viewed as a "drop in the bucket". The development paradigm promoted since World War II had, in the words of one NGO group: "... empowered politicians and bureaucrats to capture control of most national resources, often resulting in their unproductive and inequitable use," [while] " ... the needs of the poor have been addressed primarily through dependency-creating welfare handouts."[103] Dabbling in villages, trying to ease the excesses of development, was therefore no longer the preferred option for these NGOs. Rather, they acknowledged the essential political nature of under-development and the imperative to engage the poor directly at the national level, to define and manage the direction of their development, and especially to gain an equitable share in national resources. The most certain way of accomplishing this, in non-authoritarian states, was for the poor to become involved in the political process.[104] That is not to say that projects were abandoned - they were regarded as a valuable entry point into a

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[99] Itty, C.I., Ed., *Searching for Asian Paradigms,* Asian Cultural Forum on Development, Bangkok, 1984

[100] They called themselves - Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN). Sen, G. & Grown C., *Development, Crisis and Alternative Visions*, Third World Women's Perspectives, for DAWN, Earthscan Publications Ltd, London, London, 1988

[101] Phongphit, S., *Religion in a Changing Society*, Arena Press, Hong Kong, 1988; "Buddhism and Alternative Development", Book Review *Rudoc News*, Vol 3, No.1, Jan-Mar 1988, Thai Institute for Rural Development, Bangkok, pp.19-20

[102] Kothari, R., *Rethinking Development: In Search of Humane Alternatives*, Ajanta Publications (India), New Delhi, 1990; *The University Inquires into the Future, Nation in Crisis Part II*, University of the Philippines, Manila, July 1986

[103] *Democratizing Asian Development: A Commitment to Leadership*, ANGOC Monograph Series No 7, Manila, 1988, p.13

[104] Hsu, V., review of C. I. Itty, Ed., *Searching For Asian Paradigms*, *Asian Action*, Jan/Feb.,1985, No.49, p.8; Morales, H. Jnr., "Strategies and Mechanisms for Empowerment of People in the Rural Sector", *Asian Action*, May/June 1987, No.63, pp.7-9

community. But they were regarded now as a means to an end rather than an end in themselves. This focus differed significantly from past NGO practice. It recognised that social organisation was more important than resource delivery and that alternative development, encompassing both social organisation and "alternative" methods, should not go on outside the main development process. This was a major change in NGO thinking. It accepted the fact of capitalist development but sought to modify and reform it from within and below, rather than being marginalised by it or co-opted by it.

Southern NGOs and their allies increasingly took the initiative to focus on adapting the political process to more readily represent the poor. They encouraged people's organisations and interest groups to become politically active, by political representation, large-scale protest, advocacy and lobbying. The ANGOC group sought to assist the development of people's organisations in order to "build the power and voice of the poor", including encouraging them to seek election to public office. ANGOC stated:

> The goal is to build the capacity of the poor to become active participants in the political process. This goal is not served by NGO leaders or staff putting themselves forward as candidates for office on behalf of the poor in the manner of the traditional political elites.[105]

Past experience had shown only too well the measures that candidates, so-called sympathetic to the interests of the poor, could take. "Buying votes", for example, was standard practice in some Asian countries. NGOs or People's Organisations in the Philippines might spend time and effort mobilising people to vote for certain candidates, only to find that on polling day, what they called, "guns, goons and gold", prevailed.[106]

To facilitate "another development", activist NGOs continued to seek creative ways to raise the awareness of poor communities. In illiterate communities, the use of folk art to deliver a political or social message had a long tradition. Indonesians made use of the Wayang (shadow puppets) during the Second World War to undermine the Japanese presence. The National Liberation Front used dramatic performances in South Vietnam to gain recruits in the 1960s. The Chinese government used street theatre with drums and masks to promote their "one child, one family" programme in the 1980s.[107]

NGOs and People's Organisations in the 1980s drew on such non-formal education techniques building on traditional art forms like puppetry, ballads, mime, recitations, singing, procession theatre, cycle plays, and street, temple and courtyard theatre to raise

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[105] Democratizing Asian Development: A Commitment to Leadership", *ANGOC Monograph Series* , No 7, Manila, 1988, pp.11-12

[106] Wong, S.,"Trends and Issues Facing the Philippine NGO Community", *CENDHRRA*, Manila, Philippines, 1990, p.11

[107] Sutherland, F. *The Emergence of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam 1959-1964,* BA Thesis, University New South Wales,1979; Visit China, Jan. 1983

community awareness.[108] The Philippines NGO theatre group, PETA, helped develop these techniques throughout Asia.[109] In Bangladesh, using songs or *Puthi* (folk-literature with a particularly enjoyable rhythmic pronunciation and style), NGOs introduced issues about exploitation, organisation, accumulation of savings, income-generation, family planning and illiteracy, to draw the audience into discussion.[110] A Filipino fisherworkers' co-operative was encouraged to produce films to illustrate its problems - conceived, researched, discussed, scripted and voiced-over by its members.[111]

Essentially the process was democratic, aiming to provide participants with the means to look at their lives more critically and to evolve methods to challenge inequitable structures.[112] And to take the process further, NGOs provided literacy programmes and skills' training in lobbying and legal issues.

Collective Action

One of the ways NGOs hoped to achieve justice for poor communities was to catalyse them into action around specific issues, initially at the local level, but with the intent to extend to national and even international issues.[113] Pressure would be brought to bear on salient issues which affected certain groups by sheer force of numbers. Fisherpeople and tribals or bonded labourers would concentrate on dams, mining, logging or land reform issues.

Many NGOs were encouraged to engage in this form of activism by the successes of groups like the Chipko movement, which had drawn on Gandhian, non-violent methods to stop logging in the Himalayas. The Chipko battle had been protracted, over eight years. It gathered support by organising foot marches, seeking to win allies slowly by personal contact, by small pamphlets written in the local dialect, by folksongs and stories. In 1981, a ban was placed on logging in the Himalayas.[114]

The movement's leaders subsequently spread their message vigorously throughout the Asian development community during the 1980s. The Chipko leaders explained that deforestation to accommodate agricultural, mining or dams, had reduced forests in the

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108 Patil, B.R. & Mukhopadhyay, R., "Folk Media for Development", *Social Change*, Vol 13, No.4, Dec., 1983, pp.3-8; *Cordillera Currents*, Cordillera Resource Center, Vol 2, No.1, June, 1989, p.2; *Cordillera Currents,* Cordillera Resource Ceter, Vol 3, No.2, April-June, 1990

109 Interview Remy Rikken, *op.cit.*

110 Miah, A., "Bangladesh Culture", *Asian Action*, No.48, Nov-Dec., 1984, pp.18-19

111 "Building People's Awareness Through Participatory Media", *Cendhrra Development Memo*, Nos. 39 & 40, Dec., 1986 & Feb., 1987, pp.1-2

112 Sirikanokvilai, Dr S., "Primary Health Care and Community Participation: A Case Study of Noan Kui Village", pp.21-26, *Thai Development Newsletter*, Vol 4, No.2, Second Quarter 1986; Interview by Lou-Anne Barker with Sister Menggay Balazo, Manila, 11/2/89

113 "Asian NGO Task Force Meeting Report", p.15, 23-30 Jan., 1988, Chiangmai

114 Sunderal Bahuguna, Chiangmai, Thailand, 27/3/89 at a meeting with him and Dr Indu Tikekar who had worked with hill women in the Himalyas for 20 years

Himalayan region by more than 40% over the past 30 years and had threatened the livelihood of those reliant on the forests.[115] When the loggers came to fell the trees, the illiterate village women turned to Gandhian passive-resistance to save them, by hugging the trees. (Chipko means to hug). The forestry commission attempted to dazzle them with science, to persuade them that scientific felling was sound. But the women met the delegation with lighted lanterns - silently telling them that though it was broad daylight the Commission did not see. The forest dwellers considered the forest a permanent economy not "foreign exchange".[116] The Chipko example inspired other groups in Asia to work collectively to highlight specific injustices and grievances.

A Harijan community in Tamil Nadu, co-ordinated by an Indian NGO, PMD (with CAA support), organised marches and rallies in 1987 and achieved a series of successes. The community gained access to drinking water - previously enjoyed only by caste Hindus. It also gained link roads to several villages. Significantly, in the first case of this kind, in Duttnagar village, it acquired control over the local Panchayat (the equivalent of the local council), thus gaining control of the allocation of public resources.[117]

In December 1987, people's organisations and trade unions marched down the east and west coasts of India to advertise the plight of small fisher-workers. The Kanyaumari march demanded a Marine Fishing Regulation Act to protect resources and the livelihoods of fishermen. The aim was to raise awareness, to encourage the development of people's organisations, to form a network with which to pressure the government to evolve sustainable water use, and to revive traditional water conservation practices which had been in existence before trawling, dynamiting, deforestation, damage to mangroves, construction of dams, siltation and pollution had affected the small fisherworkers' livelihood.[118]

People's resistance increased markedly in the 1980s, especially in India and the Philippines, where groups protested against proposed large-scale hydro-electric and irrigation projects, nuclear power plants and the destruction of forests.[119] In the Philippines, the World Bank-funded Chico dam project sparked a protest movement by 200,000 indigenous peoples - Kalingas and Bontocs - whose existence was threatened by the dams. United opposition caused the project to be discontinued, though not before

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115 The Chipko leaders explained that forest dwellers considered timber a dead product - for them trees meant soil, water and oxygen and much more besides. The women in the area gathered products of the forest - fuel and construction wood, fodder for the animals, fibre for weaving cloth and food - vegetables, fruit, nuts and honey. As the charasmatic representative of the Chipko group reasoned, "...there you have everything, food, clothes and shelter."

116 *Ibid*

117 Field visit to PMD Agricultural Development Programme, Tamil Nadu, January, 1988

118 Kocheri, T., "Protect Waters, Protect Life", *People's Action*, Vol 4, No.1, Jan., 1990, p.15

119 *Cordillera Currents*, Cordillera Resource Center, Vol 2, No.1, June, 1989, p.2; *Cordillera Currents*, Cordillera Resource Center, Vol 3, No.2, April-June, 1990

one of the group's leaders was killed by "military troopers" for his "uncompromising opposition to building four giant dams".[120] Filipino NGOs acknowledged the high level of consciousness raising, politicisation and organisation in the Philippines by the late 1980s. EDSA was seen as the product of 20 years of organising and consciousness-raising, partly by NGOs.[121]

Advocacy

To build on increasing community awareness, resource NGOs became more actively involved in advocacy work on behalf of the poor. They identified sympathetic "prime-movers" at the various government, business, education, trade union and church levels in order to influence policy, to press for enacted legislation to be implemented, and to get outdated legislation changed.[122] In India, for example, corruption and loopholes in the law frequently prevented the implementation of Acts on bonded labour, child labour, minimum wages and equal remuneration.[123]

The Philippines NGO, PHILDHRRA, registered in 1984, concentrated on resource exchange and advocacy work. A spokesperson explained:

> Because NGOs tended to be very localised and isolated and independent from each other, it was felt if we really wanted substantial change in society and not just palliatives which are not addressing the root causes - the structural problems, ... we thought if we banded together for advocacy and other purposes we would have an impact in terms of social change. Aside from that we also realised that ... we could share a lot, there was a need for a clearing house to facilitate this exchange of resources and networks could open up avenues for network members, linking them to other NGOs locally and internationally, especially in resource communications.[124]

Both PHILDHRRA and the international resource NGO ANGOC focused on the issue of land reform in the Philippines. PHILDHRRA became active in lobbying the government for change and in educating People's Organisations to "...come up with a substantial contribution in advocacy for agrarian reform according to what people at the grass roots think agrarian reform should be."[125] On a smaller scale they were also addressing ecology and health issues.[126] ANGOC's Director commented: "In order for farmers to produce they have to own their own land. So [land reform] was seen as a key issue, and all kinds of groups got involved. We organised and rationalised this lobbying for agrarian reform in the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform."[127] He insisted that

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120 *Ibid*, p.1

121 The so-called "People's Power" which brought the downfall of Marcos. Interview Corazon Juliana-Soliman, 21/2/89, ACES, Manila, Philippines

122 Democratizing Asian Development: A Commitment to Leadership", *ANGOC Monograph Series*, No.7, Manila, 1988, p.8

123 Khanna, G.,"Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Some Recent Policy Measures in India", *SA*, Vol 40, Jan-Mar., 1990, pp.35-6

124 Interview Carmen La Vina, PHILDHRRA office, Manila Philippines, 13/2/89

125 *Ibid*

126 *Ibid*

127 Interview Edgardo Valenzuela, Executive Secretary, ANGOC, Manila, Philippines, 1989, 15/2/89

a non-violent approach was the way forward, although ANGOC had been criticised for that stance by more radical groups, as had other Filipino NGOs.[128] He reported:

> Over the last ten years people laughed at us or sniggered behind our backs, 'Why are you calling for dialogue with governments?' We believe that the government is the single biggest actor in development, and if you can't interact and influence what they do, and what they say, we don't think it will really work..... Governments are not monolithic bureaucracies, where there are enlightened bureaucrats something can be done. The thing is to search that out in any given society and community. You might be able to do something in the Department of Agriculture - O.K. you do it.[129]

That the resolution of the land reform issue in the Philippines was going to be difficult and protracted was confirmed by a report published by the resource NGO CENDHRRA in 1990. It outlined the lack of progress and set-backs because of entrenched opposition from the "landowner dominated Congress." The latter's tactics had caused the resignation of a "pro-farmer" Secretary of Agrarian Reform who had enjoyed the enormous backing of farmers' groups and NGOs.[130]

Remy Rikken, in the Office for the Status of Women in the Philippines, was another who advocated "finding the soft belly of the beast", to influence the attitude towards women in the departments of government - the various departments of Justice, Agriculture etc.[131] She had a strong background in grassroots and NGO work, having developed the famous NGO drama group PETA. She proposed using her extensive experience in theatre workshops in the bureaucracy to dramatise the role of women. Rather than organising women or becoming involved in traditional projects, as she had done in the past, Rikken concentrated on influencing policy-making. She organised a congress of 500 women, 10 from each "line agency" in March 1989, to talk about the conditions of women in government. She also worked in consultation with NGOs in the areas of health, community organisation, agriculture, law, prostitution, rural women, families and education, to produce a "Counter Programme for Women" to influence the government's Philippine Development Plan for Women. She hoped that by changing attitudes in the government it would spill over to their various constituencies, although she acknowledged the process would be protracted.[132]

Women in Development

Women and children represented 70% of the world's poorest people.[133] It was appropriate therefore for NGOs to pioneer women's projects and to lobby donor

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128 Rikken observed: "Some are professional oppositionists, they criticise us but what are they doing?" Interview Remy Rikken, Director National Commission of Status of Filipino Women, 16/2/89, Manila

129 Interview Edgardo Valenzuela, *op.cit.*

130 Wong, S., *Trends and Issues Facing the Philippine NGO Community, CENDHRRA*, Philippines,1990

131 Interview Rikken *op.cit.*

132 *Ibid*

133 *Global Change and Australia's Overseas Aid Program,* Ministerial Policy Paper and Sixth Annual Report to Parliament on Australia's Development Cooperation Program, AusAID, Nov., 1995, p.5

governments to give priority to women's roles in development programmes. The United Nations Women's decade, which had stimulated widespread research and placed pressure on governments to focus on issues concerning women, concluded in 1985. In the more positive cases, governments in developing countries financed research into the position of women, incorporated women into their development plans and established government departments to enhance the status of women. India, the Philippines and Thailand, for example, all responded in these ways.[134] Western governments and NGOs also incorporated Women in Development policy into their assistance programmes. And some Western NGOs worked exclusively on WID projects, like the Australian International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) established in 1985.

The studies and research undertaken on women in developing countries soon challenged old stereotypes. An Asian Women's Research and Action Network with representatives from sixteen countries, brought together to review the Decade on Women, concluded that Asian women were exploited at home, at work and in society. The reasons were political, economic and cultural, and patriarchy cut across all three.[135] Women were involved in production, distribution, transportation and marketing in both the agricultural and industrial sector, and were frequently more exploited in their work conditions than men.[136] In some 25-40% of households in many countries, women either contributed the prime earnings, or lived in single-parent households headed by women. And most women experienced the "double day, double burden, double shift" syndrome as both workers and domestic carers - cooking, washing, cleaning, fetching water and firewood and attending to children.[137] Remy Rikken remarked: "It must be recognised that women are not just 'home economics' but farmers and producers too, so they need appropriate technology to lessen work for women." Research had shown, however, that technology usually flowed to men and frequently displaced women from traditional agricultural work.[138]

Legislation and policy was one thing, enacting it was another. As AIDAB established, when it sought to change its student intake to 50% women, cultural constraints had frequently intervened. Filipino NGOs had trouble getting the idea

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134 *Summary of Long Term Women's Development Plan (1983-2001),* The Royal Thai Government, Thailand National Commission on Women's Affairs, Dec., 1981; *The Women's Decade in the Philippines, Analysis of Significant Changes in Women's Role and Status,* National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, Manila, 1985; *Philippine Development Plan for Women,* Prepared for presentation to President and the Cabinet, Feb., 1, 1989, National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, Manila

135 Santiago, I., "Asian Women Speak Out", *IFDA Dossier*, 50, Nov/Dec., 1985, pp.36-37

136 Gabriela Women's update, Vol 4, No.3, July-Oct., 1988; Women's Issue, *Thai Development Newsletter*, Second Quarter Vol 4, No.1, 1986; "Women Development and Technology", *Sibol*, No.1, Sibat, Manila nd c 1987

137 Bhasin K. &, Khan, Nighat Said, Booklet, *Some Questions on Feminism and its Relevance in South Asia*, p.10, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1986

138 *Ibid*

accepted that women in the Philippines actually had a problem. Typical of the comments were:

> We don't have any problems here, we don't burn brides, we don't bind your feet, you don't have to wear the veil, the President is a woman, what else can you ask for?[139]

Yet in a predominantly Catholic area of the Philippines, a fisherwoman attending a fisherworkers' consultation remarked: "We are really cursed because of the rib, it is written down and no-one can change it."[140]

Activist NGOs sought more sophisticated solutions than the traditional "health-care and handicraft" response to women's poverty. They sought to imbue women with the confidence to challenge their traditional positions, to address unequal gender relations and to redefine their roles both as women and as poor, marginalised people. One of the most successful women's groups in India to effect such a role was the Indian Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), an alliance of self-employed women in Gujarat State. It was funded, among others, by CAA, and became an influential model for other self-employed people, having spread to six other states by 1985.[141]

Self-employed workers included labourers - cleaners, cooks, launderers and agricultural workers; vendors - selling food, clothes and household goods; and home producers - making clothes, footwear, handicrafts and furniture. SEWA's first success was to register as a trade union. It countered the argument that it had no employers to agitate against by stressing that many other sectors of the population discriminated against its members. SEWA proved its point through the Supreme Court in 1984 after Ahmedabad authorities tried to move vendors from the main and congested central town market. The Supreme Court authorised local authorities to prepare a suitable scheme for vendors. As a result, a new market was built in consultation with SEWA's members who were provided with vendor licences. The founder and General Secretary of SEWA, Ela Bhatt, who through these activities became an active member of parliament, argued that the judgement "... proved a turning point in present urban policy with respect to the status of hawkers in big cities."[142]

Self-employed workers shared many problems. They were usually illiterate. They were exploited by raw materials' suppliers, by merchants who bought their wares and frequently by husbands who drank their profits. They lacked access to credit and possessed out-dated or low levels of skill. They experienced loss of income and poor

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139 Interview Corazon Juliana-Soliman, *op.cit.* 21/2/89; "Many men in terms of politics are very progressive, but when they go home - pity their wives!", Interview Carmen La Vina, PHILDHRRA, *op.cit.*

140 *Ibid*

141 Bhatt, E., "Organising Self-Employed Women for Self-Reliance in India", in Kinnock, G., *et al*, *Voices for One World*, Fontana, London, 1988, p.152; CAA Headquarters Poona, meeting with Mini Bedi CAA Indian Project Officer, 14/1/88

142 Bhatt, E., *op.cit.*, p.152

health during child-birth. SEWA gradually sought to tackle these issues. Against resistance from regular banks, it opened its own bank. It began in 1984 with working capital of some US$800,000 and a rate of repayment of more than 98%.[143] As the majority of NGOs found, repayment on loans by poor people was considerably higher than the repayment rate in traditional banks. The bank provided legal aid, maternal protection and life insurance. SEWA established nine co-operatives - some contracting out their services, others making and marketing their wares through their own shops. Many women learned new skills which were previously the preserve of men such as carpentry, plumbing and radio repair.

Bhatt commented in 1988, "The struggle to claim our rightful economic place and then move forward in the national economy has only just begun."[144] However, considerable strides had been made. SEWA's 40,000 membership gained the organisation legitimacy and bargaining power. Its individual members had markedly increased their confidence. Attitudes were also changing at the local authorities and government level. The act of licensing stall-holdings stopped police harassment. After years of lobbying for women's organisations to supply goods and services to government, a Government of Gujarat contract produced a steady income to a large number of vendors.[145] Despite the continued entrenched discrimination against women, SEWA's success illustrated that progress could be achieved. International pressure, the national and local legislature, and effective advocacy and parliamentary representation backed by an aware grassroots constituency, had all contributed to SEWA's progress.

Indigenous Peoples

Many indigenous communities throughout Asia were also among the most marginalised. The Ita in the Philippines, for example, had traditionally hunted, fished and practised swidden agriculture but had been driven from the lowlands by developers who had presented them with papers establishing land ownership. Unable to read, the Ita left to avoid trouble. In trade, they faced unfair practices paying soaring prices for introduced commodities like sugar and salt, while the prices of their own goods, such as bananas, remained low. They were vulnerable to being cheated by middlemen and harassed by the military.[146] The Ita had been introduced to commercial drug remedies -

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143 *Ibid*, p.156
144 *Ibid*, p.165
145 *Ibid*, p.162
146 Under Mrs Aquino a campaign of low intensity conflict had been sanctioned, purportedly against the communist New People's Army. In reality it sanctioned the use of private armies and vigilantes which acted for business - mining, logging, agriculture - against the traditional settlers. Those who acted on behalf of the poor, human rights' lawyers, NGOs, social workers were at high risk - branded as communist, some were killed, others threatened and abused. Tribal communities were frequently stood over forced to be trackers or to provide food to the military.

aspirins and syrups (not to mention tea, coffee, alcohol and cigarettes) and they now considered their herbal remedies inferior.

In the 1980s, a group of Filipina social work nuns decided to set aside their formal development training with its emphasis on institutionalised welfare-style rural projects.[147] The sisters entered the Ita community prepared to understand all aspects of the indigenous culture, and gained the respect of the Ita people by living along side them - collecting firewood, going to the river and eating what the community ate.[148] Moreover, the nuns did not attempt to build churches or to convert or baptise the Ita, although most Bishops in the Philippines considered conversion a major priority and the mark of a "successful" development project even in the late 1980s.

Drawing on the principles of Freire, the sisters used poems, stories and drawings, to depict images of oppression - logging, "salvaging", debt, ecological problems and landlord exploitation. The nuns familiarised the Ita with words relevant to their lives, both in their own language and in English. And facilitators from the community were encouraged to assist and to take over.

With funds from CAA and the Australian Council of Churches' Force Ten programme, the nuns helped the community to build a store in order to become familiar with commodities and prices. Members of the community were taken on exposure tours to show them "development" in Manila - to the hotels where their bananas were consumed but where they were not allowed entrance despite their transformation from "G" string to shirt and trousers.[149] The Ita were taken to the squatter areas full of beggars - which "they could not swallow because there were no beggars in the mountains;" and they visited other tribal communities in different areas of the Philippines.

By 1989, the Ita had taken over administration of 15 literacy centres using non-formal education methods. They felt more able to face the government by negotiation and collective action and also the military, "as long as they don't use guns, as long as we can speak." Some of them proved to be effective speakers at rallies and on radio, which was encouraged through participation in drama workshops.[150] The Ita had set priorities to "stand up for their rights", to take back their ancestral lands, and to improve their means of production. Though there were many odds stacked against them, the Ita were at least beginning to set their own agenda rather than merely being the passive recipients of an agenda set by outside donors, governments or developers.

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147 Sirikanokvilai, Dr S., "Primary Health Care and Community Participation: A Case Study of Noan Kui Village", pp.21-26, *Thai Development Newsletter*, Vol 4, No.2, Second Quarter 1986; Interview by Lou-Anne Barker with Sister Menggay Balazo, Manila, 11/2/89

148 *Ibid*

149 Sister Menggay reported: "They were very sad about that" and were told, "That foreigner with a coat and tie, that's what they call well dressed."

150 Interview by Lou-Anne Barker...*op.cit.*

Primary Health Care: "A movement of the people" [151]

The area of Primary Health Care offered further opportunities for NGOs to promote awareness programmes, and relatively inexpensive and effective alternative health-care methods. Most health workers were not well equipped to practice primary health care and frequently opted to work in the cities. [152] It had been commonplace over the years for teams of government health workers to descend on communities, and without explanation, to carry out vaccination programmes or the like. Many communities, therefore, expressed apprehension when first approached by activist NGOs to train villagers in primary health care methods. [153] Women village health care workers in an Indian project run by AWARE had expressed fear when AWARE arrived. But once communities engaged in the participatory processes with grassroots workers, using simple and innovative teaching methods, they commonly expressed a very strong sense of empowerment. CAA provided funds to train teams of village-based health workers in India and to train motivators in the theoretical and practical methods of community development. [154] One woman, who had received AWARE training, commented:"Now we face [the officials] face to face and fight for our rights". [155]

The Organisation of Peasant Women (AMBI) in Isabela, in the Philippines, which started in 1985, had members in 15 different municipalities by 1989. It carried out basic orientation seminars and basic skills' training covering primary health care, childcare, weaving, appropriate technology (such as clay stoves) and communal farming. But it also considerably increased the organisational skills of village women. AMBI women members commented variously: "I'm really thankful to AMBI because I developed my skills not only in cooking and taking care of babies but also in speaking before a crowd, organizing my fellow women, and increased my friends (sic);" "I have become aware of national issues like land reform, US Bases and equality of men and women;" "I have influenced my husband to join the struggles of the poor people;" "Before I was too shy to face other people especially men but now I can confidently stand amidst a large crowd and express my thoughts and feelings unhesitatingly without fear." [156]

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151 *Cendhrra Development Memo,* No 30, June 1985, p.1

152 Visit to Community Health, Education Services and Training in the Cordillera (CHESTCORE), Baguio, Philippines, 11/1/89

153 Field visit, meeting with village women, AWARE Medical Centre, 16/1/88; Field visit NIRID, 9/1/88, India; Field visit to Community Health Program, Baronjay Minang, 16/1/89, Isabela, Philippines

154 Marginal Women's Socio Economic Development Project, ISKN/GVK/DH, *CAA 1988-89 Projects*; Community Health Centre Extension Programme at Padkal, AP 605J4, *CAA 1983 Projects*; Urban Community Development Programme GUJ 981 1983 Projects; Community Organisers in the Rural Environment Training Project, AP/605/875, *CAA 1983 Projects*

155 Field visit, meeting with village women, AWARE Medical Centre, 16/1/88

156 Visit to Organisation of Peasant Women in Isabela, Philippines, 17/1/89

On a broader national and international level, CAA assisted Asian delegates to attend a conference at the People's Health Centre in Bangladesh, in 1983.[157] The intention was to bring together people concerned about the appropriateness of health schemes in the developing world and to seek ways to provide more equitable and effective national health care.[158] Towards those ends CAA contributed $50,000 to an alternative pharmaceuticals factory in Bangladesh - Gonoshasthya Kendra. It was a pioneering project established by a non-profit organisation to produce essential drugs at reasonable prices. It was an attempt to break the stranglehold and bad practices of multinational drug companies. And in a related step, CAA contributed to a mass media consumer education campaign in Bangladesh to counteract multinational pressure against new Bangladesh government regulations which had banned over 1700 harmful or unnecessary drugs.[159] The Bangladesh government continued to support the home production of drugs and to limit the importation of foreign drug products, despite pressures from Western drug companies.

Some Asian resource NGOs focused on health issues which linked poor international and national practices to the economic and social problems in the village: the companies trialing drugs without restrictions; organisations flooding the market with drugs (often long past their "use by" date); companies promoting infant formula over breast feeding.[160] National governments implicated in such practices were targeted, as were those which focused the health budget on expensive treatments and equipment inaccessible to the majority.

The increasing visibility and sophistication of an activist indigenous NGO sector, which was prepared to challenge inequitable national and international practices, prompted many Third World governments to intensify their control over NGO activities. At the same time, attempts by Asian NGOs to redefine their relationship with Western donors drew mixed responses from the broader international development community.

Negotiation, Accommodation, Co-optation, Control

During the 1980s, Asian NGOs made it clear to Western donors that they wanted to be rid of the charity aspects of aid. They argued that charity and pity belonged to a

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157 South Asian Seminar on Legal Support GUJ133Y, *CAA 1983 Projects*

158 Support for Delegate from Korea to Attend Health Conference in Bangladesh, BD 760D, *CAA 1983 Projects*

159 Alternative Pharmaceutical Factory BD 760; Mass Media Campaign BD 760C, *CAA 1983 Projects*

160 *Thai Development Newsletter*, Vol 4, No.2, Second Quarter 1986, Full issue on Primary Health Care and NGOs

bygone age.[161] Equally, they were critical of Western neo-colonial practices such as the proclivity to appropriate knowledge gained from studying Third World communities. The *CDM* newsletter complained that [donor] NGOs were too reluctant to share evaluation studies or to have frank exchanges of successes and failures.[162] Asian NGOs stressed increasingly in their dialogue with each other, the importance of "sharing", "co-operation", "two-way exchange", "meaningful dialogue", and "reciprocity".[163]

Asian NGOs began to discuss options to acquire more independence from donors. They recognised anyway the irony that in relying on Western funds they were hardly practising the notion of self-sufficiency which they promoted at the village level.[164] Those in favour of autonomy saw few advantages to foreign aid. They viewed it as a hindrance which could gnaw away at their integrity, creativity and initiative. Some NGOs learned, often painfully, to heed Professor Randolf David's advice given at a CIDA/NGO forum in the Philippines that, "the only safeguard available" for NGOs to insulate themselves from the "pernicious effects of over-dependence", was by diffusing funding sources.[165] One such painful experience was outlined in the Philippines by an agency which had had its Australian funding dropped after a personnel change in Australia caused a clash of ideas. After initially feeling bitter and abandoned, the agency learned to spread its funding among several donors.[166]

NGOs in Asia were weary of receiving inflexible, tied funds, and of having to respond to the donor "flavour of the month" syndrome. This required recipients to tailor their proposals to fit the latest Western development "fad", be it "women", "indigenous peoples" or "health care". NGOs were also frequently burdened with lengthy proposal writing, evaluation and other administrative details and with endlessly hosting Western visitors.[167]

Some NGOs began to adopt a "minimalist" approach playing down the role of funding, goods and expertise from outside while stressing the abundance of local

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161 One journal questioned: "How can vigorous and creative projects issue out of the conditioned mentality of mendicants and the condescending attitudes of benefactors?", *CDM*, July 1982, No.13

162 *CDM*, Oct., No.25, 1984; *CDM*, July, No.13, 1982; *CDM*, June-July, Nos. 5 & 6, 1981

163 Workshop for Middle Management NGOs, Chiangmai Thailand, 26-30th Mar., 1989

164 David, R., Director of Third World Studies Center University of the Philippines, "The Role of International Development Agencies in the Philippines", *Partnerships*, The Philippine-Canadian NGO Consultation for the CIDA Country Program Review, A Report Prepared by the Steering Committee of the Philippine-Canadian NGO Consultation, Tagaytay, Philippines 12-15 June, 1988, p.71

165 *Ibid*

166 Interview Patricia Sarenas, Kahayag Foundation, Davao City, Philippines, 8/2/89

167 "Of FFHC/AD, Donors, Hopes, Beggars, Asian NGOs, Etc.", *CDM*, No.1., Feb., 1981; Interviews, KADUAMI, Baguio, Philippines, 13/1/89; Sarenas, P., KAHAYAG Foundation, Davao, Philippines, 6/2/89; "NGO Partnership and the Challenge of the Rural Poor", the Third International FFHC/AD Consultation, Rome, 3-6 Sept., 1985, *Ideas and Action*, No.165, 1985, p.5; For a colourful open letter to donors which expressed the above sentiments see "To donor agencies", *Asian Action*, Mar./Apr, No.3, 1976, pp.1-2

resources and resourcefulness.[168] BRAC in Bangladesh and Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka experimented with their own income-generating projects. BRAC operated a commercial printing press and cold storage facilities. Sarvodaya ran a four colour cartography and lithography organisation based on sound labour practices. Since they were non-profit agencies, they both initially had to defend their positions from allegations of misapplication of funds.[169]

THIRD Institute in Thailand explored options to raise its funding locally by engaging Thai banks, businesses and individuals. By the early 1990s WV India was also aiming to increase its internal funding.[170] The YMCA in Chiangmai imposed strict limits on its overseas funding. The Council for People's Development in the Philippines responded in a different way, cutting out the need for overseas "experts" by developing a local registry of permanent Filipino volunteers. These were professionals prepared to volunteer their services for varying periods throughout their lives, to explore ways to share their individual expertise with the poor. Other NGOs switched totally from being recipients of aid to being involved in hosting and educating concerned Western citizens. The Ecumenical Centre for Development in the Philippines, no longer in 1989 received funds from CAA, but hosted yearly tours to educate Australians about development issues. The above changes were indicative of a broader decolonisation process which reflected the increasing confidence, affluence and education of Asia's middle classes.

Despite an emerging Western development rhetoric supporting the concept of a North/South partnership, in reality this had been slow to evolve. Even Western NGOs had been unwilling to liaise with Third World NGOs on equal terms. As the exasperated Indian Director of the NGO AWARE claimed in 1988: "It's not a dialogue its a *lecture, a lecture* ."[171] The International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) epitomised this lack of partnership having functioned more like a European-American club since its establishment in 1961.[172] It was not until November 1981 that ICVA granted representation to an Asian NGO, and chose a Third World venue (Sri Lanka) for its international conference.[173] Asian NGOs at that time were sceptical about the motives

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168 Both Dr Itty, of the World Council of Churches and Vorakit, of the Chiangmai YMCA, supported such a position. They taught bewildered young community organisers (who had been of the view that too few funds undermined their work), that lack of money need present no problems. Workshop for Middle Management NGOs, Chiangmai, *op.cit.*; Phongphit, S.,"A Way to Development Professionalism: The Thai Institute for Rural Development (THIRD), *Rudoc News*, Vol 3, No.1, Jan-Mar, 1988, p.10, Thai Institute for Rural Development, Bangkok

169 *CDM*, June No.42, 1987

170 Visit WV India, Madras, Feb., 1991

171 Interview with Madhavan, M., AWARE, 18/1/88, India

172 The newly elected Chairman of ICVA in 1990, Australia's Russell Rollason from ACFOA, commented: "The days of it being a rather exclusive Geneva club have passed." *ACFOA NEWS*, No.6, May 1990, p.3; "Adequate Representation for Asian NGOs?", *CDM*, No.15, Oct., 1982

173 ICVA General Conference Report, Colombo, Sri Lanka, Nov. 22-27, 1981

pointing out that they remained voiceless in such bodies as FAO, UNHCR and the World Bank which were beginning to collaborate with Northern NGOs about issues affecting village economy and governance. The result, one commentator argued, was:

> ... the closets of Third World NGOs contain the piled remains of projects that failed because decisions were made by those ignorant of village realities or peasant attitudes. ...Is it not time for an Asian 'ICVA' to take its autonomous place among the ranks of other NGOs from both North and South? Only then will development dialogue become credible and democratic.[174]

Their complaints were legitimate. The first World Bank meeting with NGOs in May 1981 had taken place without Third World representation. Western NGOs had acquiesced arguing that many local NGOs were too inexperienced to handle development programmes of their own.

The Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF acknowledged in 1984 that while NGOs (by which he meant substantially Western NGOs), had been discussed at length in the United Nations system for thirty years, discussion had been more or less at the level of lip-service.[175] The Director explained that disenchantment about the level of progress in the Third World was now causing the multilateral organisations to "... look for new actors, new perceptions of programme design, of development so that we will have different results in the next few years."[176] For similar reasons the World Bank had shown interest in "more systematic and extensive cooperation" with the NGO community and had formed a Bank-NGO Committee as well as guide-lines on Bank-NGO co-operation in 1981.[177] This growing interest in NGOs in the multilateral sector was not unrelated to the current enthusiasm for privatisation and smaller government, but liaison was still, initially, confined to Western NGOs.

Asian NGOs in the 1980s had plenty of examples of the arrogance of Western organisations which continued to make assumptions on behalf of Asian recipients. The Asian Bureau of Agriculture in the Philippines summoned one NGO member to a meeting enclosing the booked air tickets, assuming that he would drop everything and go. A major European NGO demanded that a group of Indian NGO workers from AWARE be sent to Europe for training. AWARE responded by inviting the European donors to India for training. They went![178]

On another occasion, in Europe, AWARE's director Madhavan, publicly tore off the front cover of a conference programme. It had depicted the conference theme - "Footsteps to the Future" - with large white footsteps at the top of the page opposite

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174 *CDM*, Oct., 1982, No.15

175 Vittachi, T., "Popular Movements, Not Just NGOs", *Development:Seeds for Change* , 1984, p.67

176 *Ibid*

177 Masoni, V., Advisor World Bank's International Relations Department and Secretary of the Bank-NGO Committee, 1985,"Nongovernmental Organisations and Development", *Finance and Development*, Sept., Vol 22, No.3, Sept., 1985, IMF, Washington, D.C, pp.38-41

178 Interview with Madhavan, M., AWARE, 18/1/88, India; Interview Kit Vorakit, Chiangmai, YMCA , 31/3/89, Thailand

small brown ones. Though some delegates criticised his stance as overreaction and trivial, most of them joined him in tearing off the cover. (Feminists met with the same kinds of derisive criticism when they campaigned for non-sexist language to tackle the less tangible but no less pervasive aspects of prejudice.)[179]

Gradually, as the 1980s progressed, the activities of Southern NGOs began to earn them more equal representation in the international development forum. They joined NGOs from the North to draw on development information from within the UN system - from UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and FAO.[180] Regular dialogue was established through UNCTAD-NGO consultations and the UN-Non-Government Liaison service. Together the international NGO community focused world attention on meetings of the World Bank, the IMF and the Asia Development Bank raising concerns about the environmental, debt and the human impact of multilateral programmes and policies.[181] NGOs also acted as observers to several UN forum - the General Assembly, UNCTAD and the UN Human Rights Commission meetings.[182] Australian NGOs were part of these developments. They were represented at the NGO conference held in Geneva to work out strategies for the upcoming UNCTAD VII meeting and at the UN-NGO workshop, on Debt, Adjustment and the Needs of the Poor, held in the United Kingdom in September 1987.

Increasing North/South NGO cooperation also began to have an impact at the bilateral level when the resources of governments and NGOs were brought together and applied to bilateral projects. Such activities were welcomed by many NGOs for their potential to focus governments on poverty issues. In Australia, despite pressure on the government, especially from Treasury, to make the bilateral programme more economically "rational" during the 1980s, countervailing influences supporting a more pluralistic definition of development, as well as the increasing focus on NGOs and community development work internationally, had a small impact on AIDAB projects. A group of Thai NGOs from the Thai Volunteer Service and CAA joined with the Thai government and AIDAB in late 1984 to add an NGO component to a bilateral project. The Pichit Land Reform Area Development Support Project was a five year bilateral project funded jointly by AIDAB and the Thai Government.[183] The project brief included groundwater research and development, farming systems research and

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179 Vorakit was extremely cynical about Western intentions - he called them the three cs - "culture - when they taught us to drink tea, cultivate - when they took our resources, and cut - when they quit".

180 ACFOA, *Annual Report,* 1986, pp.17-18

181 ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1989, p.12

182 ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1986, p.6

183 Field visit to Pichit Project, Interview with Peter Cox, Pichit Land Reform Area Rural Development Support Project, (Australian Sociologist funded by CAA) and Wal Budee, Project Manager, PLRA Project Pichit, (Australian consultant) 2/4/89, Pichit, Thailand

agricultural extension, flood control, health, education and community water supply.[184] The NGO component was added to assist small-scale, village-level, development activities.[185] These were funded jointly by CAA and the project with CAA providing the services of an Australian sociologist experienced in Thai community development work.

Initially, the NGO presence was seen with a deal of suspicion by some government agencies and by villagers. The Thai Internal Security Operations Command claimed the NGOs were a fifth column front for the Communist Party of Thailand.[186] Villagers thought they were either communists ("anti-insurgent training had taught villagers that any strangers offering to assist them without asking for money must be communists"), or spies for various government departments.[187] From fairly tentative beginnings, the NGO component was put on a more formal footing when it was given the status of a sub-project - the Community Self-Reliance Subproject - in 1986.[188]

Besides acting as an instrument of liaison between the village community and the project, the NGOs aimed to raise the confidence of the village communities to enable them to co-operate independently with authorities in the future. NGOs also aimed to promote, through various community development programmes, increased community co-operation and self-sufficiency. In the area of community development, farmers were taken on observation tours to other provinces to compare activities and methods and to build networks. Community activities developed rice banks, a fuel cooperative, a funeral cooperative, medicine funds, a cooperative store and various income generating activities. There was a high incidence of indebtedness in the region, which could be exacerbated by a poor rice crop, or a death or illness in the family. The various co-operative schemes were initiated to cushion families on such occasions and to prevent further indebtedness through high interest borrowing from money lenders. The NGO component had some considerable successes in its role as a liaison agent between the village community and the project. Irrigation technology was modified to a lower cost system more appropriate to community management and changes were also made to a drainage system which would have disadvantaged some farmers.[189]

While the Thai experiment was being implemented, attempts were also made to strengthen the community development component of AIDAB's Northern Samar, Philippine project. In 1984, the project commissioned a survey of community needs and discovered that the main focus of the project - bridges and roads - ranked well behind

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184 Bennoun, P., Cox, P., Mangkranonchai, O. and Zivetz, L., Case Study, *Strategies in Government and Non-Government Co-operation, The Pichit Experience*, Community Aid Abroad, Oct., 1988

185 *Ibid*, p.ii and interview Cox, *op.cit.*, Field visit to Pichit

186 Bennoun *et al*, *op.cit*, p.26

187 *Ibid*

188 Bennoun *et al*, *op.cit.*

189 *Ibid*, pp iv,.v

those of food, housing, water, employment, education and health care named by the community.[190] Filipino NGOs were hired to undertake community development work. They formed groups of market vendors, fishermen, pedicab operators, youth and farmers, established a credit fund and addressed the role of women as project implementors and as a large component of organised groups.[191] The Australian project leader believed AIDAB had broken a lot of new ground "in terms of Australian foreign aid projects generally", when the project drew to a close at the end of 1988.[192] He said:

> ... we have spent a tremendous lot of time learning the culture of the Philippines so that we don't step on people's toes... We try not to be Australians telling Filipinos what to do, or how to do it. We work very much in a Filipino mode, but using a Filipino counterpart as the third person.
> ...when AIDAB sends in a team to discuss a project proposal, they usually don't get to talk with the people who are going to be the real beneficiaries of the project ... [but] .... It was only when we...focused on the needs of the people in the province rather than on the perceptions of officials that the project started having a direct impact.[193]

AIDAB's increased interaction with the NGO sector - both in Australia and in Asia - began, in a modest way, to focus AIDAB personnel on the issues which had long engaged activist NGOs, especially the needs and involvement of poor communities. Even so, some Southern NGOs were ambivalent about increased multilateral and bilateral contact. While they welcomed the opportunity to try to influence those sectors, especially in terms of more closely addressing cultural and poverty issues, they were wary of losing their independence. In fact, the higher profile of activist Southern NGOs was already being viewed with suspicion from their home governments and inviting various degrees of government control. The research NGO, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), voiced its concern in 1986:

> [The] ... growing visibility, articulation and coordination of NGOs has been perceived as a political threat by the existing power structure in several countries. The State, the ruling elite and the regimes in Africa, Asia and Latin America have begun to take steps to regulate, control and neutralise the voice of dissent represented by these NGOs. ... In Brazil and Indonesia, new laws were enacted in 1985 to regulate NGOs; in Peru in May 1986, the parliament appointed an investigation team to look into the affairs of 50 major NGOs, in Chile and Malaysia, NGO workers are regularly harassed and intimidated by the state machinery. We in India are also witnessing similar trends.[194]

Almost all developing countries had imposed some form of regulation on NGOs. Control ranged from registration, codes of conduct, approval of programmes,

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190 Trickett, P.,"Northern Samar: A Project that Changed to Meet the People's Needs", *FOCUS*, Vol 3, No.1, Oct., 1988, p.4, AIDAB, Canberra, 1988

191 *Ibid*, p.6

192 *Ibid*

193 *Ibid*

194 "Regulating NGOs", Editorial, p.1, PRIA Society for Participatory Research in Asia, *Newsletter*, No.16, July-Sept., 1986 New Delhi; "Asian NGOs Task Force Meeting Report", 23-30 Jan., 1988, Chiangmai, p.7

monitoring of programmes and scrutiny of funding - especially from overseas.[195] The Foreign Contributions Regulation Act in India, for example, directly contributed to the closure of AVARD's newsletter *Voluntary Action. VA* had been in existence since the 1950s and relied on overseas funds to survive.[196] If nothing else, being bogged down in endless paper work to satisfy government requirements was a very effective means of control.[197] In some instances, control was less subtle. Many NGO workers experienced the whole spectrum of violence against them from intimidation, harassment and torture.[198]

From about 1987/88, the concerns about government control and co-optation were expressed frequently by Asian NGOs across the region. Representatives from India, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand commented: "Cooptation and control is a reality that NGOs have to face and address". NGO delegates representing the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Pakistan remarked, "... government control over the NGOs is causing anxiety .... and there is a growing suspicion that the government is trying to dominate all fields of development activities...". A consultation representing 18 different developing countries of Asia, South America and Africa, generated a report titled "NGO-Government Relations: A Source of Life or a Kiss of Death?" The report noted: ".. the experiences of this relationship in most countries of the South has been such that has generated hostility, suspicion and mutual antagonism."[199] Groups from these countries reported that welfare and relief agencies were welcomed by most governments but those engaged in more activist work were uniformly suspected.[200]

NGOs were also wary of private, conservative organisations which adopted some NGO techniques. A Filipino resource NGO had details of a very conservative project funding proposal, clothed in the most modern and progressive NGO language, put forward in 1989 by a provincial mayor.[201] Indian political scientist Professor Rajni Kothari argued in 1986 that increasingly:

> ... major new projects were promoted by governments in dairy farming, dryland and wasteland development, afforestation, development of rural technologies and new energy resources, as well as

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195 *NGO-Government Relations: A Source of Life or a Kiss of Death?*, p.21, Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi, 1989

196 Interview President AVARD, Sen, 17/1/91, Delhi, India

197 *NGO-Government Relations, op.cit.*, p.18; Fernandes, W., "Threats to the Voluntary Sector: An Introduction", *Voluntary Action and Governmental Control,* Ed. Fernandes, W., Indian Social Institute Monograph Series, No.28, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 1986, p.7

198 "Health Workers Risk Lives to Save Lives", unpublished paper CC...Philippines, 1989; Lopez, E., "Development Through People's Empowerment", *op.cit.*; *NGO-Government Relations:, op.cit.*, p.18-19; Fernandes, W., *op.cit.*, p.5; Visit Medical Action Group, Manila, Philippines, 19/1/89; Bhasin, K., FFHC Conference, 20/10/91

199 *Ibid* ; *The State of NGOs ...op.cit.*, p.18; *NGO-Government Relations:...op.cit.*

200 *Ibid*, p.12

201 Interview, Gonzales, E., Council for People's Development, 31/1/89, Quezon City, Philippines

> new exploration of sea-bed and islands ... set up on the model of voluntary agencies with their own autonomous boards and with no accountability to governments.[202]

He described it as "...a smart cooptative move that increases the sophistication of the new capitalist thrust."[203] Kothari gave the example of the National Dairy Development Board, India's biggest agri-business, running the world's largest dairy project, whose identity was inseparable from State or global economic interests, but which was registered as a "voluntary" body.[204]

Another non-government organisation, the Society for the Promotion of Wastelands Development registered in 1982, Kothari argued, was a direct result of agitation over a controversial Forest Bill. It had sought to limit the rights of rural people by extending control of commercial forestry at the cost of conservation and the basic needs of forest dwellers.[205] The agitation and accompanying publicity by NGOs, journalists and courts for government accountability had highlighted government's unsuitability for the current commercial expansion. A "corporate NGO" or "Government Organised NGO" or "GONGO", Kothari argued, was a far more convenient vehicle able to manipulate the use of popular symbols and slogans - "environment", "people's participation" and "voluntarism" - thus diffusing dissent, while being unaccountable to the public.[206] These tactics were entirely opposite to activist NGO policy.

Whatever the reaction of indigenous governments and the multilateral and bilateral sectors to the work of activist NGOs, their demands for changes in many aspects of the development process were compelling to a widening section of NGOs. The logic of restructuring bilateral projects to incorporate community needs; the necessity to focus on structural change to promote effective, sustainable development; the need to develop greater equality between donors and recipients - whether Western or Asian - became more apparent as NGOs witnessed the realities of the "lost decade". In Australia, members of the NGO community began to extend this focus to several facets of their work: to development projects, to advocacy work and to the area of disaster relief.

Australian NGO Responses to the "Lost Decade"

Characteristically, CAA continued to support the efforts of Third World communities to address structural inequalities by increasing funding to programmes focused on training, research and advocacy. For example, CAA funded a series of workshops for SEWA on labour laws, banking, government welfare schemes and the benefits of union

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202 Kothari, R., "The NGOs, the State and World Capitalism", *SA*, Vol 36, No.4, Oct-Dec 1986
203 *Ibid*
204 *Ibid*
205 *Ibid*
206 *Ibid*

membership.[207] It also funded training programmes to provide community workers with basic lobbying, media and legal skills (including exposure visits to witness court procedures).[208] Other activities strengthened people's organisations by funding functional literacy programmes and by facilitating links between communities and government resources.[209]

The organisation also continued its support to secure the release of bonded labourers, to provide rehabilitation programmes, and to lobby for wage increases.[210] And it supported trade union movements in Africa and union organisers trying (against many odds) to promote a trade union movement among Bataan Export Processing Zone workers in the Philippines.[211] CAA also assisted Australia Asia Worker Link, an association which aimed to educate Australian trade unionists about the conditions faced by Asian workers and the extent to which this linked to Australian practices.[212] At the same time, CAA continued to provide assistance for grain banks, social forestry, fair-price commodity shops and thrift and credit societies with a view to increasing the security, independence and agency of poor communities.

The focus on structural change promoted by activist NGOs in Asia built readily on CAA's ideology and practice. That less activist Australian NGOs were also becoming more receptive to such issues was suggested by WVA's changing development education focus. WVA's Director conceded in 1983, "I think it would be fair to say that evangelical Christians haven't been the front-runners in addressing the development issues facing our world."[213] With this admission the organisation attempted to rectify the position to some extent during the 1980s. WVA publications began to focus on a range of development issues including the exploitative conditions in which labour was forced to work in a number of Asian countries, human rights' issues, drug dumping, unfair trade practices and deforestation.[214] Also explored was the work of numerous social justice activists, such as Dom Helder Camara, Bishop Desmond Tutu and

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[207] Leadership Training for Women's Organisations, Orissa, INOR/PCN/D, Awareness Education Program for Women Workers, Gujarat, ISGU/SEW/F, *CAA 1988-89 Projects*

[208] Socio-Legal Activists' Training Program, Bihar, INBI/FLA/DA, *CAA 1988-89 Projects*

[209] Saura Tribal Community Development Project, Orissa, INOR/SAM/DB, Non-Formal Education and Social Action Program, Bihar, INBI/NFJ/FA; Social Action for Development, Bihar, INBI/NKJ/DA, *CAA 1988-89 Projects*

[210] Bonded Labourers Training and Income Generating Project, Madhya Pradesh, INMP/CKM/DB, *CAA 1988-89 Projects*

[211] These included the Congress of South African Trade Unions and South African Black Trade Unions. Bataan Export Processing Zone Workers Support Programme, PL852A, *CAA 1983 Projects*

[212] Development Education Amongst Trade Unionists, *CAA 1986 Projects*

[213] Henderson, H., "Personally", *WVNews*, Sept., 1983

[214] Fenton, T., "Labour At Bargain Prices", *WVNews*, Mar., 1983, p.7; Stuart, M. "The Needy and the Greedy", *WV News*, Nov., 1982, p.9; Ash, A.,"Human Rights, Political Oppression", *WVNews*, Ap., 1982, p.7; Bird, P., "Drugs Helpful or Harmful?", *WVNews*, Jan., 1983, p.4; Rogas, G., "Deforestation", *WVNews*, June, 1982, p.3; "Rainforest Logging", *WVNews*, Sept., 1989, pp.7-8

Archbishop Oscar Romero.[215] WVA increased the reach of its publications by fostering some 150 World Vision (women's) International Clubs, a volunteer support team, a Project Partners scheme and school project materials.

WVA rhetoric now emphasised social action in the field which encouraged people to take control over their own lives and, with the support of change-agents, to tap into local and national government resources.[216] Community development work was still generally centred on providing health care, hygiene, agriculture, water supply and vocational training.[217] Social action, therefore, continued to lack the political edge of activist NGOs which sought broad structural change through the political process. Nevertheless, by the late 1980's, WVA's level of understanding of development issues, and its willingness to debate them through its various publications, had unquestionably risen dramatically. Critically, also, WVA was starting to apply that knowledge to the area of disaster response which was a significant and growing part of Australian NGO assistance.

A disturbing trend in the 1980s, which required that more of the aid dollar, both voluntary and official, be channelled to the relief efforts of civil emergencies and natural disasters, confirmed the reality of the "lost decade". Throughout the 1980s, Ethiopia, Somalia, Tigray, Mozambique, Sudan, and at times Bangladesh, dominated the pages of both WVA's *News* and CAA's *REVIEW* as those two organisations concentrated more of their energies on disaster relief.[218] Even CAA, which had previously been reluctant to engage in relief work, felt obliged to become involved. The percentage of total international ODA devoted to relief increased from 1.5% in 1970 to 6.5% in 1991. By 1995, Africa would be by far the largest recipient of Australian NGO assistance.[219] The increased focus of Australian NGOs on African disaster relief, despite the Asia-Pacific region having the largest share of the world's poorest people (by 1995 estimated at some 800 million of the world's 1.3 billion poorest),[220] diverted resources from initiatives focusing on more lasting structural change.

However, accompanying the increased demands for disaster relief, came a re-evaluation of traditional methods of disaster response and a recognition by some aid

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215 Bird, P., *WVNews*, June, 1982, p.19; Philp, P., "Profile", *WVNews*, Feb., 1982, p.9; Bird, P., *WVNews*, June, 1982, p.13

216 Renner, G., "Salvation and Transformation: A Biblical Agenda for Marginalised Peoples", Oct., 1986, WVA; Swincer, G., "World Vision's Pilgrimage in Sponsorship and Development", Draft Paper, Oct., 1991; *Project Update*, Summer 1989, WVA

217 *World Vision's World*, WVA pamphlet, nd

218 See WVA's *NEWS* and CAA *REVIEW*, 1980-1989

219 Witham, P., "Crisis Prevention", *FOCUS*, June, 1994, AIDAB, Canberra, June, 1994, p.30; *The Reality of Aid 95*, Earthscan Publications, London, 1995, p.31

220 Morales, H., "Civil Society Must Claim the Future", *Proceedings of the Asia-Pacific NGO Symposium on Social Development, 12-15, July, 1994*, Bangkok, ACFOA, Deakin, 1994, p.12

agencies that prevention and rehabilitation were more important focuses than continually dispensing relief aid. In other words, some agencies began to incorporate the longer term sustainable development strategies into relief programmes which they were applying to their development projects. At the same time, they also began to consider the broader picture, the structural problems which contributed to disaster situations.

CAA looked critically at emergency aid in the early 1980s arguing that relief methods were liable to create a situation of dependency or a "relief-mentality" among camp populations and that relief could undermine the confidence and capacity of indigenous relief workers.[221] CAA also argued that relief aid frequently provided assistance that was sophisticated but unsustainable.[222] Health care was a case in point.[223] CAA noted:

> ... the apparent need by some donors to 'make their mark' by overproviding certain unnecessary or inappropriate assistance. By the end of this year each camp [in Somalia] will have, for example, either an elaborate 9-room hospital...or nine individual pre-fabricated lock-up huts.
>
> The over-ready willingness of some western teams to provide injectible or even intravenous medications for a relatively minor ailment has also helped to develop a fascination for sophisticated medicine among both CHWs [community health workers] and patients alike.[224]

CAA readily acknowledged that the reality of disaster conditions made it difficult to apply sustainable development methods. The conditions of refugees demanded quick life-saving responses from an over-worked support staff. There was little time to evolve effective community-based groups among disparate peoples who often lacked any sense of "community".[225] Drought or flood or renewed hostilities could dislocate or abruptly end development programmes. Unfamiliarity with local conditions could even exacerbate disaster conditions.[226] Under such conditions arguments to create strong sustainable infrastructures using indigenous personnel and low-tech, local resources were compelling. The establishment of CAA's Disasters Response Unit in 1987 was a recognition both of continued and increasing need and of the necessity for increased professionalism in evolving disaster policy.

WVA's relief programmes were increasingly committed to rehabilitating communities. It had considerable success in the Ansokia valley, where five years after some 60,000 people had gathered there in "a huge famine camp", WVA reported: "The valley of Ansokia, now green from end to end, feeding itself and exporting food, is a

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221 "Proposal for CAA to Establish Medical Programme in Somalia", 1980-1983 Projects File

222 O'Sullivan, N., "Somalia: A Report on Visit to CAA Health Programme", August, 1981

223 *Ibid*

224 *Ibid*, p.4

225 "Proposal for CAA to Establish ...", *op.cit.*, pp.3-4

226 A too rapid and ill-informed response to drought in Tigray resulted in CAA despatching an inappropriate drilling rig to that country in 1984, although CAA subsequently devised a more appropriate shallow wells programme using local people and local materials. Blackburn, S., *Practical Visionaries, A Study of Community Aid Abroad*, Melbourne University Press, 1993; O'Brien, J., "Searching for the Human Element in Disasters", CAA REVIEW, May-June, 1986, p.3; O'Sullivan, *op.cit.*, p.2

small but graphic model of self-sustaining development created in Ethiopia since the mid-1980s."[227]

Increasingly, links and connections were made by development workers between the causes of disasters and "development" issues. The losses inflicted during "natural disasters", for example, often occurred because of the vulnerability of poor communities who were victims of unsolved development problems. Bangladesh's frequent flooding was exacerbated by deforestation in the Himalayas. Lack of land reform forced Bangladeshi farmers onto low-lying land which was vulnerable to flooding and cyclone damage. Gross inequalities allowed the wealthy to stock-pile food in times of famine. CAA reported, "the poor know that it is only they who starve during famine, whilst local elites stockpile rice ... famine provides excellent business opportunities".[228]

There was then a common and growing propensity of both disaster response and development assistance to stress the importance of sustainability and prevention by addressing structural issues. Activist Asian NGOs were seeking such reforms through organisation, education, political representation, lobbying and mass protest, with a decreasing emphasis on one-off scattered projects. Many of them now suggested that rather than financing micro-projects in a developing country Western NGOs would be better served applying pressure to the multilateral and bilateral sectors to address important global structural issues. These included foreign debt, trade, human rights abuse and the export of hazardous products or polluting industrial processes[229] - in other words, many of the issues which activist NGOs in Australia had sought to raise for public concern, with only moderate success, in the early 1970s.

In Australia, despite the former tense history surrounding development education campaigns which had demoralised ACFOA by the end of the 1970s, ACFOA did not abandon its research activities. Instead it redirected its advocacy role to more firmly address member agencies, the government and multilateral organisations. ACFOA

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[227] WVA assisted local communities to establish tree nurseries which provided millions of seedlings, humus and top soil to rehabilitate eroded mountain areas.Water programmes drilled wells, built village reservoirs and covered springs with stone tanks to protect the water from animals and contamination. By the end of 1990 leopards had been attracted back to the area after decades of absence. Philp. P., "Ethiopia Remains a Towering Inferno", *WVNews*, Winter 1988, pp.3-6; Philp, P., "Ethiopia - A Struggle Between New Life and Death", *WVNews*, Autumn, 1988, pp.3-7; Brander, B., "Ethiopia, Five Years On", *WVNews*, December, 1989, pp.3-5; Smith, J., "The big cats come back to Ansokia", *Project Update*, Dec., 1990

[228] Philp, P., Akol, J., "The Return of Ethiopia", *WVNews*, Jan., 1986, p.4; "Bangladesh", CAA *REVIEW*, Jan-Feb,1986, pp.1,3; O'Brien, J., *op.cit.*

[229] "NGO Partnership and the Challenge of the Rural Poor", the Third International FFHC/AD Consultation, Rome, 3-6 Sept., 1985, *Ideas and Action*, No.165, 1985, p.5; Novak, A., "Development and Justice", Paper given at ICVA Conference Sri Lanka, 1981,*VA* ,Vol 24, No.6, Jan., 1983, p.258; A staff member of PHILDHRRA argued in 1989 that it was a matter of joint education between recipients and donors and that exchange should take place at all levels - NGOs, farmers, grassroots people and academics. Interview Carmen La Vina, PHILDHRRA, *op.cit.;* "Non-Government Aid Organisations & Government - An NGO Perspective", Reprint of an article by Bob Whan, from *AFAR*, April 1981; "ACFOA Submission to the Jackson Committee", Notes, nd, p.2

lobbied members of Parliament, conducted letter writing campaigns, drew up submissions and briefed parliamentarians on a range of issues.[230] The organisation had regular meetings with Treasury and established contact with the Foreign Affairs Human Rights section,[231] the National Women's Consultative committee and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Through committee membership, ACFOA's member agencies investigated a range of topics including disarmament, trade, primary health care, debt, shelter, AIDS, North/South issues, development education, environment issues and human rights. As well, ACFOA focused on the difficulties of specific countries or regions such as East Timor, Africa, the Pacific, Central America and Indochina.

ACFOA's North/South Committee, for example, initiated a series of commodity studies - the first published in 1986 on sugar titled: *Sugar Sweet and Sour*.[232] The Committee examined financial institutions, the debt crisis, trade/aid issues and plant variety rights.[233] Arguments remained essentially the same as previous decades, the problem of fair and stable prices for commodities and access to markets. ACFOA pointed out that a small Pacific island wishing to export 25,000 tons of salt was refused access to the Australian market, though it would have had little impact in Australia and would have considerably helped the island economy. It noted, too, that in 1986 Tanzania doubled its cotton crop only to have the price of cotton fall from 68 cents to 34 cents a pound.[234] Ironically, such falls were now often a function of structural adjustment programmes. Countries were pressured to export their commodities to service their debts, which frequently depressed commodity prices. The net effect for those developing countries with a high dependency on commodities, was an inability to invest, repay debts or purchase imports thereby exacerbating their debt problems.[235] ACFOA's Development Issues Study Group addressed the debt issue in a publication titled *Life After Debt: Australia and the Global Debt Crisis,* which was commended by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hayden.[236]

ACFOA had long pointed out that militarisation and the denial of human rights were too common in the South East Asian region. The organisation confirmed its long standing concerns in that area for the rights of peoples in Irian Jaya, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, New Caledonia and French Polynesia and throughout the decade disseminated information to ten key international points and to the UN, about East Timor.[237]

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230 ACFOA, *Annual Reports*, 1983-1989
231 ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1986, p.16
232 *Ibid*, p.12
233 ACFOA, *Annual Reports*, 1983-1989
234 *One World or ... None Making the Difference*, ACFOA and Pluto Press Australia, NSW, 1989
235 *Poor Trade*, ACFOA, Development Dossier No.11, August, 1983, pp.1,25
236 ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1988, p.11
237 East Timor Report, ACFOA, 1983 Annual Meeting, 24-25 Sept., 1983

With regard to Africa, ACFOA pressed for sanctions against Apartheid.[238] It supported Commonwealth initiatives to give job experience to black South Africans and hosted anti-apartheid leaders to Australia.[239] Destabilisation in the Horn of Africa saw ACFOA also focus on the problems of drought, locusts, food insecurity, health care, AIDS and refugees and to lobby the government against cutting the aid budget to Africa.[240]

Another ACFOA committee monitored the Pacific area, organising a seminar on "Decolonisation in the Pacific and the Nuclear Free Pacific" prior to the South Pacific Forum held in August 1983.[241] It wrote a submission to the government inquiry on Australia's relations in the Pacific and covered topics on health problems, women in the Pacific, human rights, militarisation, aid and trade.[242]

Members of ACFOA, AFFHC, OSB, WVA and Save the Children's Fund visited Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia on a goodwill visit, to plan for the expansion of NGO projects and to gather development education material in 1983.[243] Eventually they established NGO offices under the auspices of ACFOA in Vientiane and Phnom Penh, and by the end of the decade were being assisted by AIDAB with special NGO funds to Vietnam and Laos.[244] In 1989 ACFOA submitted a study outlining ten years of Australian NGO involvement in Cambodia to the Minister, in order that the wealth of NGO knowledge could be used by AIDAB country programmes.[245]

ACFOA also worked closely with the Refugee Council of Australia and Austcare, and with Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and the UNHCR on refugee issues.[246] Through the decade it covered issues of protection and asylum and the immigration bill, providing advice and case work on areas such as Hong Kong camps and transmigration in Irian Jaya.[247] ACFOA continued its involvement in human rights matters assisting the president of the Human Rights Council of Australia to attend a critical planning meeting for a Human Rights Congress in Geneva. The Congress aimed to raise the level of international consensus on human rights.[248]

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238 Executive Director's Report, ACFOA, 1983 , *op.cit*.
239 ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1989, p.8
240 ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1987, p.7
241 Executive Director's Report, ACFOA, 1983, *op.cit.*
242 ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1986, p.15; ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1987, p.10
243 Indochina Report, ACFOA, 1983 , *op.cit.*
244 ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1986 pp.13-14; ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1989, p.11
245 ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1987, p.8; ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1988, p.10; ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1989, p.11
246 ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1986, p.17
247 ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1988, pp.14-15; ACFOA, *Annual Report*, 1989, p.13
248 East Timor Programme Assistance ET 12F, 1983 Projects; Human Rights Solidarity Programme PL 906A, 1983 Projects; Research and Documentation on the Minorities Cordillera, PL1016, 1983 Projects; Aboriginal Human Rights Camapign, 1986 Projects

Compared with its activities in the 1970s, analyses carried out by ACFOA and its member agencies were now more sophisticated and professional. Each of the issues analysed by ACFOA exposed serious obstacles to the attainment of equitable growth and development, such as the high cost in economic, social and human rights' terms of militarisation.[249] The strong focus on environmental issues linked the deprivation of the environment to people's basic rights.[250] The wide range of issues[251] which engaged ACFOA in the context of aid and development policy demonstrated vividly the enormous complexity of the development process and the paucity of a development approach which concentrated exclusively on economic growth.

ACFOA's considerable advocacy work in the 1980s was indicative of the growing numbers of development groups internationally focusing on the issue of poverty prevention. The growth of an assertive NGO community in Asia and in other areas of the South, which had pressed the North to work together equitably and to pool resources and knowledge, helped to promote and strengthen this objective. The process of analysing the causes of poverty highlighted both their diversity and their interconnectedness. This in turn helped to support and foster a climate at the multilateral level which was receptive (at least rhetorically) to broadening the meaning of "development" beyond supplying basic needs.

In 1987, through the World Commission on Environment and Development established by the UN,[252] formal recognition was given for the first time at a multilateral level to the thesis that all of the links which made poor people poor needed to be examined and acted upon - such as the links between poverty, inequality and environmental degradation. The Commission's report, popularly known as the Brundtland Report,[253] supported NGO arguments and concerns about Third World poverty and incorporated many of the issues which NGOs and the broader non-government sector had been pursuing for two or more decades. In acknowledging the broadening definition of development, the UNDP's Human Development Index, which monitored levels of life expectancy, adult literacy, mean years of schooling and standards of living, was retitled the Human Freedom Index in 1991 and refined to incorporate issues of political freedom and human rights.[254]

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249 Militarisation covered the whole spectrum from outright warfare, such as in the Horn of Africa or Central America; low intensity conflict, apparent in the Philippines, to authoritarian and repressive regimes.

250 Hunt J, *et al. One World or ... , op.cit,* p.38

251 Issues included: Human rights, WID, disarmament, trade, primary health care, debt, shelter, AIDS, North/South issues, Dev. Ed., environment, commodity markets, militarisation, apartheid, refugees, disasters, and land reform.

252 *Our Common Future, op.cit.*

253 *Ibid*

254 *Human Development Report 1991*, United Nations Development Programme, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991, pp.15, 20

By the end of the 1980s, internationally, a combination of factors helped legitimise this broadening definition of development and to draw the NGO community more into the mainstream of development policy-making. These included: the fact of growing poverty; environmental degradation; the increasing visibility of the NGO community and (paradoxically) a prevailing ideological environment which was predisposed to supporting the private sector (including, at least in the West, NGOs). There was also a prevailing mood among multilateral organisations which reasoned that since former development efforts had failed to alleviate poverty there was nothing to lose by involving NGOs.

By keeping abreast with the whole range of development issues, by effecting more professional management practices, by liaising with government bodies, and through their practical knowledge and experience with marginalised communities, activist NGOs were increasing their ability to liaise effectively with the bilateral and multilateral sectors. NGOs were, therefore, in a reasonably strong position to take advantage of the seachanges which occurred when the Cold War came to an end providing a more receptive global environment for NGO demands, ideas and views.

In Australia, the ending of the Cold War placed considerable pressure on the government to review its international relations -in Foreign Affairs, Trade and Aid. Foreign Affairs Minister Evans with Bruce Grant described the late 1980s and early 1990s as "watershed years" for Australia, in which Australia was engaged in "nothing less than the reshaping of our national identity."[255] In so doing, for the first time since assistance to developing nations was initiated in the early 1950s, as the final chapter will discuss, the Australian aid programme underwent major changes. These included widening the ODA agenda to accommodate the plurality of issues raised by ACFOA and other groups in the 1980s. Significantly, those changes also invited substantial government liaison with the NGO community from both the North and South.

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[255] Evans, G., Grant, B., *Australia's Foreign Relations In the World of the 1990s,* Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1991, p.323

Chapter 11

"Reshaping Destiny"?
"Middle Power Diplomacy with an Asia Pacific Orientation"[1]

...what is needed is that the world community as a whole should transform radically the institutions and arrangements which arose in a different age - an age of domination, imperialism, and inequality - and which are wholly inadequate to present needs and inconsistent with the goals of democracy, equality, and equity in international relations..... *The Report of the South Commission, 1990*

... development is not just about meeting economic goals - it is about building quality of life through the integration of economic, environmental and social objectives within a long-term perspective..... *AIDAB Towards a Sustainable Future, 1994*

The international environment in the 1990s had changed dramatically from the early post-War years. The ending of the Cold War - of East-West rivalry - which had for so long permeated international affairs, suggested opportunities for a new process of global cooperation. The success of a large international coalition force which combined against Iraq in the 1990-91 Gulf War built on this optimism and raised the hope that a "New World Order", a new era of cooperation executed largely through the UN system, might reduce international conflict.

While the end of international bipolarism saw the USA with significant global power, especially political and military power, the diffusion of global economic strength which had become evident in the 1980s continued. The weakening of bipolar power and the growing focus on internationalism and globalism gave individual states, and coalitions of states, an increased potential to negotiate in international forums, as the Cairns group had demonstrated in the GATT Uruguay Round. There were certainly pressing issues, such as mounting international concern about environmental degradation, which invited solutions forged from global cooperation and liaison. The process of decolonisation and freeing up of civil rights had also increased the capacity of marginalised nations and groups to have some input into resolving such issues. Potentially, then, the New World Order and the process of internationalism offered opportunities for greater global equality and peace.

However, the failure of UN troops to stop atrocities in Somalia, Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia soon took the gloss off New World Order expectations. Civil conflicts unleashed by the break-up of the former Soviet Union and in post-colonial Africa undermined any hopes for global stability. As well, many of the international

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[1] Evans, G., & Grant, B., *Australia's Foreign Relations In the World of the 1990s*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1991, p.332

processes which had been a source of criticism and friction between the North and South - such as skewed financial markets, trade protectionism and political and economic authoritarianism - had not automatically disappeared when the Cold War ended. Numerous international pressures therefore remained to threaten and undermine initiatives for greater international cooperation and equality. This chapter demonstrates, in the context of aid, how these contradictions - both a willingness and increasing potential to embrace a "new order" against continued international tensions and resistance to change - influenced aid policy in Australia and internationally in the first half of the 1990s.

The Cold War had provided the major rationale for instigating and maintaining Australian economic aid to the Asian region. The end of the Cold War therefore invited a substantial reappraisal of the aid programme. Significantly "non-military threats" were now identified as the major causes of international instability. These were listed in the 1994-95 aid budget papers as: "Poverty; human rights abuse; endemic disease; environmental degradation; humanitarian emergencies; illegal trade in narcotics; trade wars; and a lack of democratic freedoms".[2] The end of the Cold War, therefore, had an immediate and significant impact on Australian aid policy. The changed international conditions provided the sea change for AIDAB to redirect its focus to address, in a much more formal capacity than it had previously addressed, the plurality of development issues long discussed by the broader development community. The ability for AIDAB to effect substantial change to the aid programme was assisted, co-incidentally, by a process of administrative reform which had commenced in the late 1980s.

When the Hawke Labor government took office in 1983 it had not spontaneously taken up the social equity concerns in the aid programme voiced by the Whitlam government in the 1970s. It did, however, follow-up the Jackson Committee recommendations for AIDAB to adopt substantial structural reform. Following these recommendations, AIDAB became an autonomous unit, located in one building, with control over its own resources, within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.[3] The 1989 report, *Review of the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau and Australia's Overseas Aid Program,* judged this a major and positive step while noting AIDAB's real progress in improving policy and planning effectiveness and

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[2] *Australia's Development Cooperation Program, 1994-95, Budget Related Paper No.2*, AGPS, Canberra, 1994

[3] Since Fraser changed ADAB from an autonomous to a semi-autonomous department within Foreign Affairs in 1976, the organisation had gradually been further integrated into that Department.

its improved reputation among other government departments.[4] AIDAB's metamorphosis was becoming evident by 1990 in ministerial speeches, in AIDAB literature and in AIDAB's increasingly flexible policy and project approach. In 1993, AIDAB's status was further enhanced with the creation of a junior ministry within the portfolio of Foreign Affairs and Trade - the Minister for Development Cooperation and Pacific Island Affairs.

By 1995, AIDAB's credibility within the government bureaucracy had risen dramatically. In the field of corporate management, for example, AIDAB procurement policy was considered at the cutting edge of government purchasing practices while its policy on contracting had been published as a guide for industry and partner governments. AIDAB dialogue with other departments had also strengthened as the aid programme addressed an increasing number of issues and as other departments sought information and experience overseas in response to the focus on internationalism. AIDAB, for example, worked "more closely than ever before" with the Department of Defence and the Australian Defence Force in Rwanda, and maintained contact thereafter to address issues on peacekeeping and crisis prevention.[5]

Government pressure on AIDAB to increase the commercial aspects of aid had grown out of economic rationalist policies in the 1980s and had intensified with the ending of the Cold War and the increased dynamism of the Asia-Pacific region. That stance reflected a major priority of Australia's broader foreign policy preoccupations to support a free and international trading regime. AIDAB's 1992 *Annual Report* supported a strong trade focus when it led with an article titled "Expanding Trade Opportunities Through Development Cooperation".[6] This position continued to draw criticism from the NGO community. NGOs questioned the dominance of trade-led assistance to China despite its high levels of poverty and the continued commercial focus on Southeast Asia rather than strengthening poverty objectives in the areas of extreme need in South Asia and Africa. Aside from New Guinea, Indonesia remained the top recipient of Australian aid ($129.3m in 1995-96) and Southeast Asia the most favoured region.[7]

However, despite the increasing commercial focus in the aid programme, there were also strong pressures on AIDAB to address more social aspects of aid policy. The World Bank's 1990 Development Report addressed the issue of poverty alleviation and

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[4] *Review of the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau and Australia's Overseas Aid Program*, 1989, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Feb., 1989, AGPS, Canberra, 1989, pp., 20, 22, 129, 132

[5] *Global Change and Australia's Overseas Aid Program, Ministerial Policy Paper and Sixth Annual Report to Parliament on Australia's Development Cooperation Program,* AusAID, Canberra, Nov., 1995, pp.6, 34

[6] *Second Annual Report to Parliament on Australia's Development Cooperation Program*, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1992

[7] Vietnam 72.1m; Philippines $68.5m; Thailand 37.4m; Cambodia 29.0m; Laos 17.5m, *Budget Summary*, AusAID, Canberra, 1995

a series of UN forums kept the international community focused on a plurality of development issues. The forums included: the World Summit for Children in New York, in September 1990; the Conference on Environment and Development in Rio, in June 1992; the Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, in June 1993; the Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, in September 1994; the World Summit for Social Development in Denmark, in March, 1995; the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, in September 1995 and the projected Habitat II Conference in Istanbul in 1996. Issues raised in these forums included health, education, the position of women, human rights and the environment. And in all of these forums the NGO community played an active role. One hundred and twenty-five NGOs from the Asia-Pacific region met in Bangkok prior to the Social Development Summit to provide input to the ESCAP region's Summit response.[8] An estimated 36,000 people registered to attend the NGO section of the Conference on Women in China. Therefore, both the multilateral and NGO sector maintained pressure on the aid programme to address the cross-section of development issues. The restructuring of AIDAB was also creating its own pressures. As the organisation took on the form of a modern international aid agency, it was inclined to respond to aid issues more "developmentally".

Broader Australian foreign policy priorities in the 1990s focused on the defence of Australia, on the support of free and international trade and on the maintenance of a reputation of Australia as a good international citizen.[9] In 1992, AIDAB argued that such a reputation legitimised Australia's status as a "respected middle level power which can play a significant role in a number of specific areas."[10] Australia's support for the dismantling of apartheid and more particularly its role in Cambodia, the Cairns Group and APEC were cited in illustration. The non-military threats listed in the 1994-95 aid budget papers were all issues of global concern whose resolution might benefit from international negotiation and mediation. And since the definition of "development" internationally had widened to embrace many of these issues, the aid programme provided an obvious forum for the government to be seen to be actively addressing such problems as poverty, human rights abuse, endemic disease and environmental degradation. A cluster of factors then placed pressure on the aid programme to effect changes: active multilateral and NGO forums, increased AIDAB professionalism and, critically, a new readiness to address non-military issues as strategic concerns were removed from the aid programme in the post-Cold War era. This new willingness to effect a change of focus in the aid programme was especially evident in the areas of the environment and poverty alleviation. While both issues had long been aired in the

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[8] *Proceedings From the Asia-Pacific NGO Symposium on Social Development*, 12-15 July, 1994, Bankok, ACFOA, Deakin, nd

[9] Evans, G., & Grant, B., *Australia's Foreign Relations In the World of the 1990s*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1995, 2nd Ed., pp.33-35

[10] *Second Annual Report to Parliament on Australia's Development Cooperation Program, op.cit.*, p.9

international development agenda, it was not until the Cold War ended that the Australian government gave them serious consideration in aid policy.

Environmental issues had become more urgent with the findings and recommendations of the Brundtland Commission. The discovery of a hole in the ozone layer and the Chernobyl disaster compounded concern.[11] The Brundtland Commission identified firm links between poverty, inequality and environmental degradation. Moreover, it had expressed the view in 1987 that, "... no trends identifiable today, no programmes or policies, offer any real hope of narrowing the gap between rich and poor nations".[12] The Commission made strong recommendations for the international community to integrate environmental and development concerns, arguing that the two were inseparable and that many of the development practices of developed nations were unsustainable.[13] An Australian Senate Standing Committee subsequently recommended that AIDAB respond to the Brundtland report *Our Common Future*,[14] an exercise which encouraged major changes to the Australian aid programme.

The Environment and the Aid Programme

In 1989, AIDAB commissioned the Environment Institute of Australia to produce a report titled: *Australian Environmental Expertise, Resources for Development Assistance*. For a publication issued in AIDAB's name, the report was surprisingly candid. It questioned two decades of modernisation along the lines normally argued by the non-government sector. The report noted, for example:

> Over the past two decades the world has experienced agricultural "progress" but at the price of substantial increases in the use of fertilisers and pesticides, greater dependence on engineered plant and animal varieties, more intensive use of land by multiple cropping and a shift towards monoculture.... The possibility exists now that development itself, if not planned and implemented taking into account ecological principles and social welfare consequences, is the biggest threat to sustainable human prosperity. There is certainly growing concern to more carefully assess new development projects, the consequences of pesticide use, forest exploitation, soil erosion and land degradation, desertification, salinisation and environmental health problems. ... Traditional cropping systems tend to be more productive and stable yet retain a high degree of sustainability. The introduction of new technology, for example new high yielding rice varieties, whilst greatly increasing productivity is likely to lead to lower sustainability and to have unexpected social consequences.[15]

AIDAB acknowledged that the costs of economic development had resulted in "the overuse and depletion of natural resources."[16] It accepted that in future economic

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[11] Evans, G., & Grant, B., *Australia's Foreign Relations In the World of the 1990s*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1990, p.152

[12] "*Our Common Future*", op.cit., p.xi

[13] *Ibid*, pp.xi-xii

[14] *Ecological Sustainable Development in International Development Cooperation, An Interim Statement*, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1990, p.iii

[15] *Australian Environmental Expertise, Resources for Development Assistance*, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1989, pp.22-23

[16] *Australia's Overseas Aid Program, 1990-91*, Budget Related Paper No.4, AGPS, Canberra, 1990, pp.6-7

growth must be compatible with the environment and that strong links existed between environmental concerns and poverty in developing countries. From its 1989-90 budget, the government made increased provisions to incorporate conservation, forestry and pollution control issues into policy.[17] It also increased funding to the UN's Environment Programme and supported Australian NGO environmental activities, "in recognition of the valuable role they play in promoting sustainable development".[18]

Critically, from 1989, comprehensive environmental screening guidelines were established to be applied to the selection and evaluation of AIDAB projects. The guidelines were to be applied to major construction and infrastructure projects; energy production; industrial development; minerals extraction; agriculture and forestry; fisheries; integrated rural development; small-scale rural water supply; transport planning and tourism development.[19] Environmental issues covered the management of soils, land, water, biology, air quality and noise, waste, risk and hazard management. But they also included social and economic issues.[20] Importantly, then, the environmental, economic and social impact of Australian assistance was to be considered at the design stage of a project. Such questions as whether the project would displace or disrupt populations or change their relationship to the environment were to become routine. AIDAB acknowledged that such evaluation required awareness of a recipient nation's life styles, religion, culture and traditional land tenure and usage.[21] By 1991, additional staff provided advice on environmental issues initiating regular training courses and workshops to train AIDAB employees in "sustainable development" practices.[22] These practices were to be applied to the next generation of development projects.[23] The burden of proof now lay with developers to demonstrate project sustainability. Qualitative development, rather than quantitative growth, was a key objective.[24]

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17 *Australia's Overseas Aid Program 1989-90*, Budget Related Paper No.4, AGPS, Canberra, 1989, pp.iv, 3

18 *Ibid*, p.iii, "NGO Environment Initiative", in *Funding Opportunities for Australian NGOs in 1993/94*, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, p.16; The 1990-91 Budget statement expanded the programme with an additional $5.2m allocation for activities addressing issues such as population, tropical forestry and climate change. *Australia's Overseas Aid Program, 1990-91*, Budget Related Paper No.4, AGPS, Canberra, 1990, p.iii

19 *Environmental Assessment of Official Development Assistance*, AIDAB, 1989, Appraisals, Evaluation and Sectoral Studies Branch, p.9

20 *Ibid*, pp.13-14

21 *Ibid*, p.30

22 *Poverty Alleviation Through Australian Development Cooperation*, International Development Issues, No 15, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1991, p.36; Bilney, G., *Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth in Australia's Development Cooperation Program*, Ministerial Policy Paper and Fourth Annual report to Parliament on Australia's Overseas Development Cooperation Program, AIDAB, Nov., 1993, AGPS, Canberra, pp.32-33

23 *Ecological Sustainable Development in International Development Cooperation, An Interim Statement*, *op.cit*, p.3

24 *op.cit.*, pp.8-11

A series of project evaluations conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s created an added incentive for AIDAB to adopt new approaches to aid delivery. AIDAB projects were reviewed in the areas of agriculture, cattle, forestry, fisheries, roads, education and mining. Many of these projects had been commissioned in the late 1970s and reflected government disinterest at that time in a Basic Human Needs or "people" focus. The evaluations confirmed, in AIDAB's words, "a mostly reactive aid process, with inadequate forward planning and focus".[25] The familiar phrase, *"ad hoc"*, continued to surface to describe past assistance. Evaluations carried out with a new awareness about environment and people invariably chronicled many project weaknesses.[26] AIDAB evaluation reports reflected:

> All development assistance is fraught with difficulties by intervening, as it does, in complex and interdependent social systems and diverse technical problems....
>
> ... In retrospect, some of the projects might have been designed differently, one or two might best have not been attempted, ... in some cases we should admit defeat and recognise that economic technology for agriculture does not exist, nor is likely to exist....[27]

Compared with the confident assumptions of previous decades intervention had certainly become more circumspect. On the other hand, AIDAB policy remained nothing, if not pragmatic. By 1994, AIDAB had identified trade opportunities for Australian business linked to environment and health issues. A new environment initiative in the aid budget centred on a Green DIFF of $20 million per annum to transfer environmentally friendly technology and to finance environmental infrastructure in the region. It was expected to generate up to $100 million per annum in export revenue for Australia. AIDAB reported:

> By demonstrating the capacities of efficient Australian firms to provide environmental expertise and technology, this will play a major role in allowing Australian companies to gain a share of the rapidly growing environment infrastructure market.[28]

Government concerns that Australia's growing involvement with the Asia-Pacific might increase the incidence of imported disease into Australia - namely malaria and polio - and that growing regional tourism could potentially increase the incidence of HIV/AIDS, [29] were linked to the domestic push to increase service sector exports.[30]

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[25] Chandra, S., Hewson, R., *Agriculture Projects Review*, AIDAB Evaluation Series No.11, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1991, p.63

[26] Of the road building component of a project in northern Thailand it was judged: Without proven and sustainable upland farming systems, the access roads constructed had the potential to result in significant environmental damage. There is already a reported decline in soil fertility and lower upland crop yields in the area., Hewson, R., *et al, Review of Integrated Area Development Projects*, AIDAB Evaluation Series, No. 10, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1991, p.10

[27] Hewson, R., *et al, Review of Integrated ..., op.cit.,* pp.ix, p.iii; Chandra, S., Hewson, R., *Agriculture Projects Review*, p.48

[28] *Australia's Development Cooperation Program, 1994-95, op.cit.,* p.v

[29] Malaria was endemic to many Asia-Pacific countries and imported malaria had more than doubled in Australia since 1985 to over 900 cases in 1991. The World Bank projected that the number of HIV cases

Introducing a four year $110m health initiative focused on the Asia-Pacific region, the government argued that it would expand Australia's access to the growing regional health market and provide the means for Australian companies to "build long-term commercial opportunities in the region".[31] While that was no doubt so, there was a strong measure of irony in the West's push to capitalise on the problems created by rapid industrialisation in the region - such as air and water pollution and waste management, as well as in the areas of poor health - which deficient development decisions, sometimes assisted by aid, had helped to produce.

Frequently new aid initiatives, especially in the so-called "brown" environmental area, amounted to "damage control". They attempted to tackle the effects of heavily polluted water courses, inadequate liquid and solid waste disposal or toxic energy supplies. Grants to China in 1993 included seven major environmental projects worth $300 million. One of these sought to reduce the high level of lead emissions from batteries. Another contributed to a major Environmental Master Plan for Shanghai to reduce the effects of high pollution created by industry, transport and high population levels.[32]

An AIDAB-supported Remote Sensing Project in the Philippines was designed to supply information on a range of activities such as forestry and marine resources and weather activity. Using aerial or satellite data to create thematic maps, remote sensing contributed towards disaster preparedness by tracking cyclones, monitoring volcanoes or algal bloom. It was also crucial for long term conservation and management. The process, for example, could detect illegal logging operations. That was critical in a country such as the Philippines where old growth forest had declined from 10.4 million hectares in 1972 to 6.16 million hectares in 1990 and was projected to be totally destroyed (if logging continued at that rate), by the early 2000s.[33]

A rather modest project[34] - the Seeds of Australian Trees Project - funded by AIDAB and managed by CSIRO, supplied high quality Australian tree seed to the research and development needs of developing countries. The seeds were used to rehabilitate areas of deforestation and land degradation with the objective of providing building timber, firewood, shade, fodder for animals and food for humans. These were precisely the traditional uses necessary to sustain local communities outlined by the Chipko movement in the 1970s and 1980s, when it campaigned against logging in the

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in Asia would surpass the number in Africa in the century's end. *Australia's Development Cooperation Program, 1994-95, op.cit.*, p.24

30 *Ibid*

31 *Ibid*

32 "Shanghai's Growth:At What Cost?", *FOCUS*, March, 1994, AIDAB, pp.26-7

33 Melville, T., "Planning from the Skies:Remote Sensing in the Philippines", *FOCUS*, June 1993, AIDAB, pp.20-21

34 In terms of staff numbers - AIDAB provided the salaries of two professional foresters, a seed collection officer, a training officer and a seed dispatcher

Himalayas. The project had a significant commercial spin-off for Australian seed exporters. CSIRO passed on requests for large seed quantities to commercial suppliers. It was a growing industry worth some $8 million in 1991.[35]

The acknowledgement by the multilateral and bilateral community of the concept of sustainable development, which integrated economic, ecological and social concerns, was a significant advance, especially where agencies such as AIDAB actively sought to apply sustainable techniques to aid policy and practice. A wide acceptance of the *Agenda 21* statement from the Conference on Environment and Development in Rio[36] had the potential to encourage the growth of a new development ethos. If sustainability was addressed in its fullest context (and not just used as another glib development phrase) sustainable development projects could now take into account the *complexity* of the cultures they were assisting, the *processes* of modernisation they were introducing and the *effects* of modernisation on recipient communities and environs. Aid projects with such qualities could thus act as an ally of the poor and as a watchdog to broader development practices. These were precisely the qualities that a growth-led aid ideology had lacked.

Despite obvious entrenched opposition from some interest groups to the international adoption of a just and equitable development system (as discussed below), the concept of sustainability did begin to be applied by both the bilateral and multilateral sectors with some positive results. A World Bank funded project for a proposed series of dams on the Narmada River in India's north-west, long the focus of mass demonstrations and protest, was a case in point.[37] Rigorous campaigning and lobbying by NGOs and the broader non-government sector led the World Bank to commission an independent review of the project - in itself a major advance. The so-called Morse report, which was released in 1992, was highly critical of both the Bank and project. The catalogue of issues raised, based on sustainable objectives, emphasised the importance of feasibility studies which considered the complexities and far-reaching consequences of "development" decisions. The report documented many potentially harmful social, cultural and ecological costs, among them inadequate resettlement provisions; inadequate afforestation programmes; inadequate considerations of sedimentation, salinity, waterlogging and the effects on down-stream communities; inadequate plans for improving drinking water supplies; lack of health safe-guards and a "huge gap

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[35] Trickett, P., "Forests for the World", *FOCUS*, April, 1991, Vol 5, No.1, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1991, pp.3-5

[36] Bilney, G., *Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth in Australia's Development Cooperation Program*, Ministerial Policy Paper and Fourth Annual report to Parliament on Australia's Overseas Development Cooperation Program, AIDAB, Nov., 1993, AGPS, Canberra, p.2

[37] One of the influential leaders of this mass protest was CAA's old friend from the 1950s, Amte.

between the Bank's assurances and reality on the ground".[38] Pressure at the site from NGOs world-wide and the negative Morse report, all had their impact. The World Bank voted in 1992 to continue the dam, but a "strong minority of shareholders" threatened to withdraw if certain conditions were not met in 1993. Australia voted to suspend funding the dam altogether.[39] In 1993, the World Bank withdrew from further funding of the project.[40] Despite the loss of international funds, activists in India had to continue to resist State government intentions to continue the project.

AIDAB's recognition of the strong links, in developing nations, between environmental degradation and poverty placed pressure on AIDAB, finally, to focus on and to examine the whole issue of poverty. For many years the NGO community in Australia had pressed the government to adopt a poverty focus in the bilateral programme. AIDAB conceded that poverty had not previously been a major theme in ODA policy discussions. But it accepted that because of the persistence of world poverty, the increasing focus on the issue internationally and Australian NGO concerns that the aid programme did not adequately address the issue, world poverty should be the theme of the 1990 annual AIDAB World Development Debate.[41]

Poverty and the Aid Programme

A working paper on "Poverty and the Australian Aid Program" was discussed and debated through a major public consultation process at the 1990 World Development Debate. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade's address at that occasion was titled "One Billion Poor: The Australian Response to World Poverty". Written submissions were invited after the forum - the two most extensive received being from ACFOA and WVA.[42] The outcome of this process was subsequently published in 1991 under the title *Poverty Alleviation Through Australian Development Cooperation* and was presented as the first step towards improving the poverty alleviation focus of Australian ODA.[43] A more sophisticated report on the issue of poverty was subsequently published in November 1993 by the Minister for Development Cooperation, Gordon Bilney, titled *Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth in Australia's Development Cooperation Program.*[44] Together with such papers as the 1990-91 and 1991-92 Budget papers, this

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38 Letter to Campaign Partners from CAA/FFHC, 1/12/92, Fitzroy, Victoria

39 *Ibid*

40 "Is There Anything to Celebrate: The World Bank Turns 50", *CAA Campaigner*, Winter, 1994

41 The 1990 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), for example, emphasised the necessity to address the causes of poverty. *Poverty Alleviation Through Australian Development Cooperation*, International Development Issues, No 15, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1991, pp. x, 1

42 *Ibid,* pp.iii, 1, 56

43 *Ibid*

44 Bilney, *op.cit.*

was the most focused response yet made by an Australian government to the issue of world poverty.[45]

The 1991 report conceded that AIDAB's programme objective did not provide any guidance on what part poverty alleviation should play in the aid programme.[46] The stated objective of the aid programme at that time was:

> To promote the economic and social advancement of the peoples of developing countries in response to Australia's humanitarian concerns, as well as Australia's foreign policy and commercial interests.[47]

In many respects the report's somewhat tentative attempts to analyse poverty issues reflected that lack of guidance. The report did, however, identify three key strategies to address poverty issues: "Policies directed towards economic growth; development activities directly targeting the poor; and transfers to the poor for emergency relief".[48] By 1993, the strategies had been refined to more readily address social sector development and to acknowledge the concept of sustainability: "Sustainable economic growth; investment in human resources through education, health, capacity building and social sector development; and safety nets and poverty targeting which includes emergency relief." The issues which were raised as contributing to world poverty had been discussed in various international development forums for many years. They included redistribution, land reform, pricing policies (particularly commodities), the environment, population increases, trade protectionism and institutional weaknesses. What was different in the emerging 1990s Australian aid programme was the increasing emphasis on and willingness to enter into dialogue with, and on behalf of, developing nations on the above issues. "Policy dialogue", which largely engaged the multilateral and bilateral sector and "participatory development", which engaged both the bilateral and the community sector, were a strong focus in AIDAB poverty analyses.

Policy Dialogue

As argued earlier in this chapter, the end of the Cold-War had opened up opportunities for the international community to cooperate on issues of mutual concern. The effects of acid rain; large-scale disasters - oil spillages and nuclear leaks; deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions which were attributed to global warming, crossed national borders. Whatever Australia's regulations on these issues, the negative effects of environmental degradation, the trade in narcotics and unregulated population

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45 Ibid, p.iii; "One Billion Poor: The Australian Response to World Poverty", an address to The World Development Debate, by Gareth Evans, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, 13 August 1990, Canberra; *Australia's Overseas Aid Program, 1990-91, op.cit*; *Australia's Overseas Aid Program, 1991-92, op.cit.*

46 *Poverty Alleviation..., op.cit.*, p.23

47 *Ibid*, p.22

48 *Poverty Alleviation Through Australian Development Cooperation*, International Development Issues, No 15, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1991, p.ix

movements, could all flow on to Australia. Their anticipated solutions had therefore frequently become global concerns.

Despite recent UN setbacks, a process of international cooperation had over the years facilitated the signing of Treaties, Conventions and Declarations on such issues as Antarctica, the sea, whaling, air and health controls. Recognising, with the collapse of the Cold War, the likelihood of the increased importance of the multilateral development banks[49] and the UN agencies, and therefore the necessity to restructure and strengthen the multilateral system, Australia had increased its contributions to the multilateral sector through the aid programme in 1990-91 by more than 40% over the 1980-81 figure.[50] AIDAB considered that the multilateral organisations provided an important forum for policy dialogue on development issues and that they could have a strong influence on the domestic policies of governments. A 1994 AIDAB report noted the unprecedented dialogue on global environmental issues currently being debated by the international community.[51] Through the multilateral system Australia was contributing, in 1994, $30m over a seven year period to assist developing nations to protect the environment. It had given a further $5.5m between 1990-1993 to assist developing nations to reduce ozone-damaging emissions.[52]

The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in dialogue with DAC members had been influential since 1990 in focusing on areas of direct poverty alleviation based on employment creation - often through micro-enterprise schemes - and on increasing direct social services to the poor.[53] Arising from these forums AIDAB noted the growing momentum of international debate on concepts such as "... good governance, democracy, participatory development and human rights, and their links with development."[54] There was therefore an increasingly receptive environment in which to discuss a range of issues which collectively were being linked to good development practices. The boundaries of what could acceptably be discussed under the development rubric were continuing to expand.

AIDAB representative, Peter McCawley, confirmed during his secondment to the Asian Development Bank that Asian nations were not sheltered from this debate. In 1993, the main issues on the development agenda in Asia involved:

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[49] Such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development

[50] 1980-81 $106.2m, 1990-91 $317.7m, *Second Annual Report to Parliament on Australia's Development Cooperation Program*, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1992; *Changing Aid For a Changing World, Key Issues for Australia's Aid Program in the 1990s*, Ministerial Policy Paper & Third Annual Report to Parliament on Australia's Overseas Development Cooperation Program, November, 1992, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1992

[51] *Towards a Sustainable Future: Ecological Sustainable Development Through Australia's Development Cooperation Program,* AIDAB, 1994, p.14

[52] Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth ..., *op.cit.*, pp.27-28

[53] *Ibid*

[54] *Towards a Sustainable Future ... , op.cit.*, pp.14,16.

> The relationship between the state and the private sector; the environment; the importance of growth (however defined) and its relationship to equity issues; poverty; population; human rights and good governance; and women in development.[55]

McCawley argued that while in practice there was often resistance to policy reform, the fact that a large number of policy-makers in Asia had now accepted the broad thrust that policy reform, both domestic and international was necessary, was "arguably, one of the most important changes in the approach to development policy in the region during the last two decades."[56] Moreover, McCawley believed that "development assistance agencies [had] contributed substantially in helping encourage adoption of the consensus."[57] The acceptance of the need to tackle the "brown" agenda, if not the "green" one, was a move in that direction. In 1995, the Western Mining company was obliged to reach agreement with the B'Laan indigenous peoples in Mindanao in the Philippines to promote health, educational and agricultural schemes before the company was allowed to mine.[58] This type of accommodation was unheard of 10 years previously. In another instance an alliance of developing nations supported by UNICEF, UNHCR, NGOs and various other nations blocked attempts by the International Association of Infant Food Manufacturers (representing 80% of the USA's baby food market) to reverse WHO policy on the distribution of infant formula. [59] Over sixty nations in 1994 agreed to stop donations of baby milk to all parts of the healthcare system.[60]

E. Luard has argued that the method of diplomatic discourse was in fact changing dramatically.[61] Nations were now more prepared to speak up in specific rather than general terms on various issues. An AIDAB report on the Zamboanga del Sur project in the Philippines, for example, pointed to the lack of land reform in the Philippines and the lack of political commitment to change:

> The ZDSDP began a development process in an economically backward province by providing a wide range of infrastructure facilities and, perhaps, a vision of what could be achieved in the long term. Unfortunately, institutional factors such as a poorly developed and highly skewed land-tenure

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55 McCawley, P., "Development Assistance in Asia:Who Benefits?", *FOCUS*, Dec., 1993, AIDAB, Canberra, 1993, p.11

56 *Ibid*

57 *Ibid*

58 Frith, D., "WMC Poised to Begin Mindanao Project", *The Australian*, 6/3/95, p.17

59 "Nestlé Faces the Fax", *CAA Campaigner*, Autumn, 1993

60 Preceding the1994 World Health Assembly, NGOs had waged a "FAX war" against manufacturers of infant formula which continued to give away free or low cost milk to hospitals and clinics in developing countries. The practice contravened a 1986 WHO Code which recognised that the distribution of low cost formula was frequently a marketing technique to undermine breast feeding. Together with NGOs from more than twenty countries, Australian NGOs bombarded one of the offenders - Nestlé - with protest faxes. Tele-conferencing, E Mail, Bulletin Boards and faxes proved powerful tools to link small and dispersed lobby groups world-wide. "Industry Defeated on Baby Food Code", *CAA Campaign Partners Update*, Winter, 1994

61 Luard, E., *The Globalization of Politics*, Macmillan, London, 1993

> system, and a lack of strong political commitment to broad-based economic and social development have largely prevented the vision from being realised in Zamboanga del Sur. [62]

Australia clearly considered that it had a constructive role to play (with echoes of Evatt in the 1940s) in "middle power diplomacy", which supported the principles of justice, equality and achievement over status and power. Evans and Grant wrote:

> We have come to appreciate, ... that when a country is of a size and weight of less than major power proportions, then it is very much better for the world to be governed ... by principles of justice, equality and achievement, rather than status and power.[63]

Policy dialogue aimed at strengthening these principles was one means of trying to effect such ends. AIDAB, with its increasing focus on such issues, was one obvious avenue to help carry them out.

For example, Australia's push into the Asian region gave AIDAB an opportunity, by example and training, to educate and sensitise Australian business to the sustainable development needs of developing countries. AIDAB could therefore perform a potentially important role in introducing Australian business to the evolving development ethos. There was little point in assisting Australian firms to make profits from environmentally sound technology if others continued to contribute to environmentally harmful practices, or if Australian NGOs had to continue to cushion communities from the negative aspects of "development".

A ministerial policy paper delivered by Bilney in February, 1995, stressing the linkages between development cooperation, human rights and good governance,[64] noted that support for open, transparent, accountable and equitable government did not necessarily mean promoting Western-style models of government.[65] Nevertheless, the paper outlined a number of strategies to be focused on through the aid programme which were clearly meant to facilitate systemic change in beneficiary nations to encourage more equitable development. The programmes included support to facilitate effective legal, electoral and media systems, to encourage more efficient and transparent government and to strengthen civil society through NGOs, community and women's groups and trade unions.[66]

Some programmes were already focused on such ends. AIDAB provided grants to assist developing nations to take part in and benefit from international initiatives such as

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[62] Aguda, V., *et al, The Zamboanga Del Sur Project: An Integrated Approach to Rural Development,* AIDAB Evaluation Series, No.9, AGPS, Canberra, 1990, p.2

[63] Evans and Grant, *op.cit.* Ed 1, p.332

[64] Bilney, G., *New Directions in Australia's Overseas Aid Program,* Ministerial Policy Paper and Fifth Annual Report to Parliament on Australia's Development Cooperation Program, AIDAB, Canberra, February, 1995, p.11

[65] *Ibid*

[66] *Ibid*

APEC.[67] Under an AIDAB/NGO training programme for Cambodian journalists, participants were tutored on the formation of the Constituent Assembly, the doctrine of the separation of powers, the elections, human rights and journalist ethics as well as "human" topics on land mines, HIV/AIDS, archives and record keeping. AIDAB increasingly funded officers from the Australian Electoral Commission to provide electoral assistance to other nations. A team of four provided assistance to Uganda in 1994, a larger team assisted the South African elections and Australia had strong involvement in the Cambodian elections. In a further initiative, a team of Australian lawyers secured a contract, under the bilateral programme to Vietnam, to develop and implement a national construction and urban planning law, to encourage "safe, cost-effective and socially acceptable development and construction" there. The new law was to cover all aspects of construction from demolition, planning, electricity and plumbing and included domestic as well as commercial construction.[68]

Such programmes, when delivered in conjunction with the full set of environmental, social and cultural concerns, were less likely to carry the Eurocentric biases of past years. Cambodian journalists were, for example, cautioned to adapt and modify concepts to suit local conditions. And projects which introduced concepts of ethical journalism, fair electoral practices, and appropriate legal infrastructure to protect workers, consumers and the environment had the potential to influence the political, legal and institutional culture of recipient nations.

As well as focusing on policy dialogue as a means to more effectively address poverty issues, AIDAB also undertook to increase its dialogue at the community level through a process of "participatory development".

Participatory Development

Development reports of the World Bank, DAC and communiques issued by forums such as UNCED's *Agenda 21* conceded that if poverty was to be addressed, rather than asking: "How much is a nation producing?" the question now had to be: "How are its people faring?"[69] The concept of encouraging broad public participation in decision making had been a strong focus of Agenda 21.[70] AIDAB acknowledged that together with "sustainability", "people's participation" had emerged as a central issue.[71] A variety of factors influenced AIDAB's growing involvement in participatory development

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[67] *Australia's Overseas Aid Program, 1995-96*, Budget Related Paper No.2, AGPS, Canberra, 1995, p.vii

[68] Given the number of industrial accidents occuring in places like South Korea due to too rapid modernisation such standards were critical. Wilson, T., "A Growing Demand for Australian Electoral Assistance", *FOCUS*, Mar., 1994, AIDAB, Canberra, 1994, p.9; "Australian Lawyers to Develop Vietnamese Construction Law", *FOCUS*, Mar., 1994, AIDAB, Canberra, 1994, p.8

[69] *Agenda 21* was endorsed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992; Human Development Report UNDP, 1991

[70] *Towards a Sustainable Future ... , op.cit.*, p.16

[71] *Australia's Development Co-operation Program 1993-94,* AGPS, Canberra, 1993, pp.5,7

including the on-going international UN forums. Another impetus centred around AIDAB's new project design requirements which focused on sustainability and hence a much greater involvement of communities affected by projects.

The importance of involving beneficiaries in every stage of the project process - planning, design and implementation - was now more readily acknowledged by AIDAB.[72] An evaluation in 1990 of the Zamboanga project revealed that 47% of the wells and 59% of the spring-fed systems were no longer in use.[73] Some required major imported parts others relatively simple maintenance. Yet the impact on communities of an on-hand clean water supply could be dramatic. By way of contrast, in AIDAB's Philippines' Samar project, where the community was involved in planning, construction and maintenance, all the rural water supply systems were found to be functioning. In Phase II of that project, a major effort had been made to involve people in the scheme with NGOs being enlisted to "... organise, train and encourage rural community organisations to engage in social betterment and livelihood activities."[74] It was one of the few projects deemed to have successfully incorporated a participatory approach.

In another instance, an AIDAB funded Nepal-Australia Community Forestry Project, located north-east of Kathmandu, which was originally conceived in 1978 to replant degraded common land,[75] was also deemed more successful once the project was extended to involve local communities in managing the resources of existing forests. In fact, consultation with villagers brought some surprises. The Australian forestry adviser reported: "Rather than being the culprits in forest destruction, local people were often found to be protectors of the remaining Himalayan forests. Under their watchful eyes the quality of forests was actually improving."[76]

Hundreds of forest user-groups were established with total responsibility for "the protection, management and sustained utilisation of the forests".[77] Forestry staff, once resented by the villagers, changed their role to work as extension workers providing technical and moral support to community forest management. Management incorporated both existing local systems and more sustainable harvesting mechanisms and operated on the basis of village consensus. The groups established seedling nurseries and plantations, protected native forests and harvested a range of forest products.[78] From the proceeds they built schools, water systems and roads.[79] In 1992,

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72 Chandra, S., Hewson, R., *Agriculture Projects Review*, *op.cit.*, p.21
73 Aguda, V., *et al*, *The Zamboanga Del Sur Project, op.cit.*, p.13
74 Hewson, R., *et al, Review of Integrated ..., op.cit.*, pp. 20-21
75 Bartlett, T., "Finding Solutions for Nepal's Forestry Problems", *FOCUS*, June, 1992, p.34
76 *Ibid*
77 *Ibid*, pp.34-5
78 *Ibid*
79 *Ibid*

the AIDAB project adviser concluded: "Village people are now considered to provide the solution, rather than cause the problems facing Nepal's forests."[80] Where AIDAB had participated somewhat reluctantly in the 1980s in a handful of community development projects through integrated rural development programmes such as Samar, AIDAB's new focus on poverty issues in the 1990s encouraged it to significantly embrace the participatory approach.

A 1994 AIDAB report titled *Towards a Sustainable Future*, demonstrated both a commitment to addressing poverty issues through a participatory process and increasing confidence and ability to carry the process out. The self-conscious adoption of development rhetoric, which had been such a strong feature of past government aid literature, began to give way to a new professionalism. Staff training - through workshops on women in development, environmental screening, micro-enterprise development, good governance and human rights - as well as moves to strengthen various sectors by employing, for example, health or WID professionals, appeared to be paying dividends.[81] The document was humane, practical, "people" and environment centred. It, for example, acknowledged the importance of indigenous people's historical and cultural relationship with the land and their knowledge of traditional practices which could provide "valuable models for sustainable management".[82] In many respects the report was all that the early Colombo Plan documents were not. It was multi-dimensional, inclusive, compassionate and committed to increasing government assistance to social sector development.

It was not that the models for community consultation and participation were not there prior to the end of the Cold War. NGOs had increasingly developed that process. It was rather that Australian governments were disinclined to utilise them. Though the Whitlam government began to focus aid rhetoric on community issues, Fraser quickly reverted to strategic priorities while Hawke (as the USSR and Eastern Europe underwent dramatic reform and as some Asia-Pacific economies strengthened), focused the aid programme on the new strategic priority - trade. It was only when, with the ending of the Cold War, AIDAB was encouraged to undertake a major reappraisal of the aid programme, that the stated third priority of ODA - the humanitarian aspect - was elevated above the level of rhetoric. Once the aid programme began to take on board the whole range of development issues, with the support of a more efficient and professional aid organisation, AIDAB's approach to aid and development issues changed significantly.

Near Medan, in Indonesia, an AIDAB funded flood protection and irrigation scheme, recognised local needs by routing canals well away from local cemeteries and by

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80 *Ibid*

81 *Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth ..., op.cit.*, pp.32-33

82 *Towards a Sustainable Future ... , op.cit.*, pp.19,20

installing washing steps at the sides of the canal.[83] The project was also careful to involve water user groups in the management and use of the canals.[84] An AIDAB funded veterinary project in the Indonesian province of Nusa Tenggara demonstrated a growing sensitivity to consult local communities about their specific requirements in an atmosphere conducive to local custom. An Australian vet describing the information gathering process said: "We're talking about face to face contact with the farmers, with everyone sitting around in the heat on traditional mats, not sterile interviews in cool white rooms."[85] In July 1993, AIDAB launched the Thailand-Australian Northern Provinces HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Program. It was a $3.2 million, five year programme to reduce the rate of transmission of HIV infection in northern Thailand and to foster a compassionate approach to the local treatment and care of HIV-AIDS infected people.[86] AIDAB worked through the extensive network of local NGOs which favoured "personalised, grass-roots messages delivered face-to-face".[87]

Of importance to AIDAB realising efficient participatory programmes was the availability of an active and experienced Australian NGO community keen to participate with the Australian government in focusing the aid programme more directly on poverty alleviation. AIDAB acknowledged that progress towards participatory development programmes had occurred partly because of the increased involvement of NGOs.[88] The Australian government conceded that NGOs had played an important role in "... convincing the major donor agencies of the merits of [participatory development]".[89] Government support was more than verbal - it provided a "dramatic increase" (AIDAB's words) in government funds to the NGO sector.[90] Australian government funding to NGOs increased from $9m in 1981-82 to around $92 million in 1993-94, representing some 7% of the aid programme. Projected funding to NGOs by 1995-96 was over $100m.[91]

The use of both Western and indigenous NGOs to increase participatory development continued to gather support at the multilateral level. The UNDP called for: "new patterns of national and global governance in which decentralisation of power and the role of NGOs are emphasised as instruments for increasing people's participation."[92] By

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83 "Community Participation Ensures Success for Bah Bolon Irrigation", *FOCUS*, June, 1992, pp.20-1
84 *Ibid*
85 "All Creatures Great and Small", *FOCUS*, June, 1992, p.21
86 McPhedran, I., "Thai Aids Fight Gaining Ground", *FOCUS*, June, 1993, AIDAB, Camberra, 1993, p.9
87 *Ibid*, pp.9-11
88 *Poverty Alleviation, op.cit.*, p.39
89 *Review of the Effectiveness of NGO Programs*, Australian Agency for International Development, Canberra, July, 1995, p.14
90 *Ibid*, pp.30-31
91 *Aid 93-94 Budget Summary*, AIDAB, nd; *Aid 95-96 Budget Summary*, AusAID, Australian Agency for International Development, nd
92 *Changing Aid For a Changing World..., op.cit.*, p.7

1995, a quarter of the budget of the UNHCR was channelled through some 300 NGOs mostly in the area of service delivery.[93] But NGOs were also acknowledged for their important role in policy dialogue. Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, Japan, the United States and the Asian Development Bank, all extended funds to Filipino NGOs in the late 1980s, after the fall of Marcos.[94] AIDAB clearly valued NGOs as a bridge into nations where an official government presence was difficult. AIDAB literature frequently alluded to the effectiveness of NGOs where "... official government-to-government assistance is inappropriate."[95] In the case of the Philippines, which was undergoing considerable political instability, AIDAB valued an NGO presence not only because of obvious pressing social need but also in the event of the reinstatement of authoritarian rule.[96] AIDAB's Philippines-Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP), provided community support through local NGOs. By 1992 AIDAB was distributing $1.5 million through 105 community projects and had extended a similar plan to Thai NGOs.[97]

This increasing focus on participatory development by the bilateral and multilateral sectors gave NGOs a growing potential to influence international development decisions. The NGO community was certainly displaying confidence in its ability to do so. Russell Rollason, Executive Director of ACFOA, remarked: "The 1990s may yet become the decade for NGOs."[98] John Clark from British OXFAM stated: "NGOs are at a crossroads. Never before have they been so powerful, not just in financial terms but also in their credibility with their decision makers at all levels."[99] AIDAB Director General, Philip Flood, expressed interest in a "close and cooperative relationship" with NGOs. Foreign Affairs Minister Evans affirmed the valuable contribution made by NGOs in problem solving, constructive dialogue between groups and, in what he termed, "preventive diplomacy". Evans acknowledged the role that NGOs played as watch-dogs and as early warning signals to threats, crises, hostilities, famine, human rights abuse and refugee flows.[100] Evans argued in an international context:

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[93] *Review of the Effectiveness of NGO Programs, op.cit.*, p.7

[94] Wong, S., "Trends and Issues Facing the Philippine Community", pp.21-26, *CENDHRRA*, Manila, 1990

[95] *Poverty Alleviation ..., op.cit.*, pp.30-31

[96] Conversation with AIDAB officer, Australian Embassy, Manila, 2/1/89

[97] "Supporting the Work of Non-Government Organisations", *Cooperation: Australia's Overseas Aid Program 1993-94*, AIDAB, Canberra, Feb., 1994, p.29; CIDA sought to build links between Canadian and Philippine NGOs, working through a committee of prominent NGOs in each country. NGOs supported about 10% of the project cost and CIDA provided the remaining funds. CIDA was described by CENDHRRA as "one of the more flexible donors", Wong, S., "Trends and Issues Facing the Philippine Community", *op.cit.*, pp..21-22

[98] Russell Rollason, Executive Director, ACFOA, World Development Forum, 1991

[99] Clark, J., *Democratising Development:The Role of Voluntary Organizations,* Earthscan Publications, London, 1991

[100] Evans, G., *Cooperating for Peace: The Global Agenda for the 1990s and Beyond*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1993, pp.34-5, 80

> Groups like OXFAM, Save the Children, Community Aid Abroad and Médecins sans Frontières, ... have played a useful role not only in supplying humanitarian relief and development assistance, but also in alerting the world community to diverse humanitarian crises....[101]

But more than that, as this thesis has argued, activist NGOs had been strongly instrumental in focusing on poverty issues and in devising measures in conjunction with poor communities to alleviate poverty. Activist NGOs had helped evolve grassroots practices in such areas as primary health care, WID, non-formal education, appropriate technology, micro-credit schemes and advocacy work to empower the poor. Such issues had previously been granted only lip-service by many governments. The Australian government *Review of the Effectiveness of NGO Programs* conceded that direct poverty alleviation had been the primary goal of many NGOs whose small scale enterprises lent themselves "... to working directly with the poor".[102] Poverty alleviation in bilateral assistance, on the other hand, while assumed or implied, had not been a primary goal. With the changing focus of Australian aid AIDAB acknowledged the role that NGOs were contributing to "... the development of policies in areas such as women in development, the environment, participatory development, good governance and human rights."[103] In other words, NGOs had helped to both create the climate where the above issues were accepted as vital development issues and also to influence and evolve multilateral and bilateral policy and practice based on activist NGO experiences.

In July 1993, the government revised the concept (introduced by Whitlam's Government and abolished by Fraser's), of an Advisory Council on Aid Policy of non-government personnel to provide advice to the Minister on aid policy and development issues.[104] NGOs were represented on the Council by the Executive Director of ACFOA. Bill Armstrong, who held that position in 1994, acknowledged that the forum increased NGO/Government dialogue and granted NGOs more formal opportunities to contribute to Government policy formulation than the NGOs' usual channels of education activities and lobbying allowed.[105] Not that NGO lobbying went unnoticed. Evans remarked of NGO lobbying activity:

> The most formidable external lobbyists - certainly the noisiest, especially around Budget time - are the non-government aid organisations like the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) and its member bodies....[106]

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101 *Ibid*, pp.34-5

102 *Review of the Effectiveness of NGO Programs, op.cit.*, p.13

103 *Ibid*, p.38

104 Advisory Council on Aid Policy, Summary of Key Points, Meeting of 10 November 1993, Parliament House, Canberra

105 "Bill Armstrong", *FOCUS*, Mar., 1994, AIDAB, Canberra, 1994, pp.4-5

106 Evans, G., Grant, B., *Australia's Foreign Relations In the World of the 1990s*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1991, p.50

Historically there had often been tension between the activist NGO sector and AIDAB. The government frequently viewed NGOs as an irritation - especially in their role as government critic. In the 1970s, ACFOA had complained that ADAA treated NGOs "... with a degree of suspicion", and that the Advisory Board of non-government personnel was viewed by ADAA "... as a quarterly interference [in ADAA's] work".[107] In 1995 AIDAB continued to complain that the "... sometimes trenchant, and on occasion, poorly informed criticism of the official program by NGOs can cause considerable discomfort for [AIDAB]". It added that the relationship was "... fraught at times by disputes over NGO criticism of the official program...".[108] While the NGOs' role as critic was always likely to create a degree of tension between the two sectors, the increasing professionalism of both sectors as well as AIDAB's increasing focus on grassroots issues provided the two with the growing potential for productive policy dialogue. A recommendation by the NGO Review to give more teeth to an AIDAB/NGO forum - the Committee for Development Cooperation - so that it could become "the major forum for policy dialogue with NGOs"[109] promised to further strengthen the mechanisms for dialogue between the two sectors.

Nevertheless, some NGOs harboured strong reservations about NGO/Government co-operation. While Australian NGOs worked increasingly with AIDAB, because they felt they had something to offer the bilateral programme, they found that the process could be time-consuming and unreliable. AIDAB could, for example, reduce promised monetary commitments because of budget constraints. And the process of liaison could be unwieldy involving a large network of government agencies in the recipient country.[110]

Cooperation with government also continued to raise the question of NGO independence which larger organisations, like WVA and CAA, sought to protect by limiting their receipt of government funds. The first government review on the effectiveness of NGOs undertaken in 1995 acknowledged that NGOs represented a valuable 'third sector' in society independent of government and private industry:

> NGOs are not simply convenient implementers of development programs, but play a broader role in the development process that cannot be played by either government or business, and which, by definition, would be compromised if NGOs lost their independence.[111]

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107 "Draft Editorial", *DND*, nd, c.1975, p.2

108 *Review of the Effectiveness of NGOs ..., op.cit.*, p.38

109 *Review of the Effectiveness of NGOs ..., op.cit*, pp.38-39

110 Interview Ian Curtis, World Vision, Melbourne, May 16, 1991; Zivetz, L., Ryan, A, "Australian NGOs and Developing Countries: A Study of Sixteen NGOs", in *Doing Good, op.cit.*; Blackburn, S., *op.cit.*, p.121

111 *Review of the Effectiveness of NGO ..., op.cit.*, pp.44-45

The Review concluded that the government "at a strategic policy level, has a long-term interest in the independence of NGOs."[112] The NGOs' role in contributing to policy, strategies, in generating community funds and in bringing community views and concerns to government attention (AIDAB cited issues such as gender, environment and HIV/AIDS),[113] were considered critical by the government despite the sometimes trenchant criticism by NGOs of government aid policy. In other words, the tension between the two communities, (however irritating at times to AIDAB) was regarded as a "creative tension" which helped strengthen aid policy and practice. Critically, activist NGOs had to avoid being neutralised so that their larger purpose, to persuade the multilateral and bilateral sectors to transform their emerging poverty and grassroots rhetoric into constructive action, could be realised.

The increasing profile and larger budgets enjoyed by NGOs demanded that they acquire higher levels of professionalism. WVA had adopted strong and sophisticated management practices from its inception. (Its technique for receiving a large volume of donations by telephone during peak marketing campaigns, for example, incorporated state of the art technology.[114]) When NGOs were required to submit proposals to apply for bilateral funds, WVA worked with AIDAB staff to perfect the process. WVA's professional marketing approach had gained for it high public recognition. It claimed something like 95% name recognition for the 40 hour famine, which it could capitalise on when it needed to expedite funds in an emergency. While WVA was the market leader in terms of numbers of dollars raised, it gauged that it could not expand further without increased competition from other agencies.

CAA, meanwhile, while resolving at its 1988 national conference to become a "house-hold word" by the year 2000, was having trouble in finding a formula to do so. Tensions existed between those members who supported an increasingly professional image and those who clung to the voluntary, lean budget style of the past.[115] For the latter, voluntarism and professionalism were mutually exclusive. In the event, professionalism won the day assisted by an increase in specialist staff, a Media Unit, a corporate plan and the modern-day appurtenances of fax machines and computers. A Public Policy unit and a part-time lobbyist in Canberra were added in 1991 and 1992. A merger with the Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign in 1992 considerably enlarged and strengthened the organisation.

CAA income after its merger was almost A$17m in 1992-93. WVA income was A$89m. The number of NGOs belonging to ACFOA had by 1990 increased to around ninety members. Active membership in ACFOA had raised the credibility of the

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112 *Ibid*
113 *Ibid*
114 WVA had gained advice from the betting specialists - TAB
115 *CAA into the Year 2000 Conference,* August, 1988, Victoria

Australian NGO community in the eyes of government. As well, NGO/NGO interaction had exposed that community to new and creative development practices and challenged it to question and understand larger international development issues. Involvement with the Australian NGO community had, for example, arguably had a significant impact on WVA's development practices. (Certainly WVA and WV New Zealand were considered the most progressive organisations within the wider international WV group.) WVA had considerably modified both its development practices and its style of advertising, although it did continue to seek funds for community development projects using a child sponsorship theme.[116] The Australian NGO community had changed dramatically in forty years, much of it transforming from the "do-gooder" image, with a handful of helpers in the 1950s and 1960s, to large, professional organisations in the 1990s. A WVA spokesperson remarked that WVA in 1990s was no longer in the business of the "charity dollar" or the "tin can" but rather it sought disposable income to be managed professionally on business lines, in order to impact on an increasing number of people.

Despite the growing professionalism of NGOs and the increasing emphasis on grassroots projects nationally and internationally, "dry" economists - the staunch proponents of market-oriented economics - were highly critical of this trend. Helen Hughes, in 1989, had been firmly of the view that a grassroots approach to development had been "very costly to developing countries in the past ten years."[117] At a retrospective on Australian aid held in 1993 Hughes (member of the Jackson Committee, Executive Director of the National Centre for Development Studies 1983-93 and employee of the World Bank - 1968 to 1983) with Ruel Abello, reiterated that "'grass roots' schemes have little or no positive impact on people's well being." They were of the opinion that sustained rapid growth was the only vehicle that delivered marked poverty alleviation.[118] Their opinion was clearly at odds with the multilateral and bilateral agencies and even the development banks which were beginning to support policies directly focused at poverty reduction.

Hughes and Abello acknowledged the highly active lobby in Australia pressing for the relief of poverty "... 'here and now' through assistance at the 'grass roots' level to poor people, particularly to women and children."[119] They acknowledged strong parliamentary support for this stance, noting:

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[116] In 1989 child sponsorship represented well over 50% of its donations, *Annual Report, 1989,* World Vision Australia, p.18

[117] Professor Hughes Submission pS689 to Review of the International Development Assistance Bureau and Australia's Aid Program, *op.cit.*, pp.17, 29

[118] Hughes, H, with Abello, R, "10 Years After 'Jackson': Wither Aid Policy in the 1990s?", in *Retrospective on Australian Aid: Looking Back to Improve the Future,* Australian Development Studies Network, Canberra, 1994, p.56

[119] *Ibid*

> ... the volumes of aid going to 'grass roots' projects within AIDAB programmes and in support of non-government organisations engaged in these activities is growing. Australian lobbyists are not alone. The movement is worldwide."[120]

It was a trend with which Hughes and Abello were clearly uncomfortable. Yet the focus on greatest need by the NGO community was not an argument for a return to welfare aid, to the one-off projects which continued to marginalise the poor. Criticism of grassroots activities ignored the considerable changes which had been effected by both the bilateral and NGO sector. There was now a much greater accommodation between government aid and NGO assistance, and a much increased sophistication of delivery and purpose, than was recognised in an exclusive growth only/poverty focus only argument. Clearly, also, AIDAB had not abandoned its commitment to economic growth, its importance was reiterated frequently by successive ministers. Sustainable economic growth remained one of the three major focuses of the aid programme. But AIDAB did now accept that the development process was diverse and complex, that sustainable development could not be achieved by focusing solely on economic growth, that equitable development was multifaceted. An AIDAB spokesperson outlined in 1993 the:

> ... bewildering variety of objectives ... the environment, support for women, population policies, democratic and human rights, support for the private sector, good governance, as well as many specific issues and concerns of activist groups" [which surrounded aid policy]. [He added], It is hardly surprising that those unfamiliar with the foreign aid industry sometimes wonder what sort of policy zoo they have strayed into when they first encounter discussions about aid programs.[121]

These issues, however untidy and inconvenient compared with the abstract economic growth focus, represented the fabric of development matters. They had been embraced in AIDAB's 1994 policy statement - *Towards a Sustainable Future* - in which the government acknowledged: "... development is not just about meeting economic goals - it is about building quality of life through the integration of economic, environmental and social objectives within a long-term perspective."[122]

Some multilateral and bilateral aid had benefitted the poor. Where assistance had been directly focused on specific social concerns as in a malaria eradication programme in Sri Lanka, a leprosy treatment programme in India, and the provision of a years extra schooling for women in Pakistan - the World Bank had been able to measure direct gains to the community.[123] In other cases, the FAO Food for Work scheme had provided employment to large numbers of landless peasants in Bangladesh.[124] Even the international NGO community (usually the bilateral and multilateral sectors' strongest

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120 Hughes, H, with Abello, R, *op.cit.*, p.55

121 McCawley, P., "Development Assistance in Asia:Who Benefits?", *FOCUS*, Dec., 1993, AIDAB, Canberra, 1993, p.11

122 *Towards a Sustainable Future, op.cit.*, p.4

123 *"Enhancing Women's Participation in Economic Development"*, World Bank, Washington DC, 1994, quoted in *The Reality of Aid 95*, Action Aid, 1995, pp.9, 18

124 *The Reality of Aid 94* Action Aid, 1994, p.29

critics) conceded in 1995 that some infrastructure aid, like rural feeder roads, could provide poor communities with access to markets, education and health services.[125] In the case of Bangladesh, Rehman Sobhan, Professor in the Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka,[126] acknowledged the peripheral advantages of infrastructure aid which had filtered through to the community, such as the benefits of electricity and fertilisers to farmers and consumers.

However, Sobhan also affirmed in 1994 that, in the case of Bangladesh, the benefits of "top down" assistance to the "overwhelming majority" of the people had been low, and in most cases it had not even provided basic needs.[127] As discussed in Chapter Ten, many NGOs in developing nations had corroborated that view. Equally, while NGOs had countless examples of locally focused projects which had enhanced the "well being" of poor individuals and groups by helping them to become self-reliant, in the context of universal, widespread, sustained poverty alleviation, the impact of such grassroots schemes had as yet been small.

Patently, the type and volume of grassroots assistance as well as the context within which grassroots assistance was delivered, had to change. The new focus on sustainable development recognised the flaws in relying on Western derived Eurocentric assistance which did not respect environment, gender and social and cultural issues. AIDAB's new sustainable and participatory approach, as well as its policy to significantly increase the volume of assistance to social initiatives, acknowledged the need to focus on poverty issues.[128] The increasing reach and type of AIDAB's projects also recognised the importance of influencing the political and economic context against which aid was received, especially where recipient nations were reluctant to introduce strong redistributive mechanisms.

AIDAB's policy on Women in Development (WID), for example, became a strong focus for participatory methods. WID policy supported the participation of women in the design and implementation of projects covering the areas of primary health care, water and sanitation, agriculture, forestry, small-scale credit schemes and environmental management.[129] But AIDAB also now accepted that the participatory process had to take place on a wide range of levels if systemic changes were to be seriously addressed. To further this end AIDAB provided funds to strengthen women's decision-making and advocacy roles in the development process in developing nations, through "national

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125 *The Reality of Aid 95*, Action Aid, 1995, p.8

126 Sobhan R., Ed., *Aid and Self Reliance*, BIDS-UPL, Dhaka, 1990, quoted in "Who Benefits From Aid", *The Reality of Aid 94*, Action Aid, London, 1994, p..29

127 *Ibid*

128 See 1994-95 and 1995-96 Budget Related Papers No 2, *op.cit.* ; "Projects Which Tackle Broader Issues", Community Aid Abroad, *Annual Review,* 1989-90, p.8

129 *Towards a Sustainable Future ... , op.cit.*, p.19

women's machineries", women's NGOs and by encouraging the growth of networks of women in decision-making positions.[130]

For policy dialogue and participatory development to be effective, however, they had to be received into an environment which was willing to effect change. Even in the case of environmental reform, as AIDAB Deputy Director General, Peter McCawley (on secondment as the Australian Executive Director to the Asia Development Bank in Manila), argued, despite immense environmental problems in the region, the self-interest of an entrenched private sector frequently resisted change.[131] NGOs particularly recognised this problem. Adam Schwarz in his book, *A Nation in Waiting:Indonesia in the 1990s*, reported the Indonesian Vice-President and former Armed Forces Commander General Try Sutrisno's opinions in 1992 of the type of advocacy work undertaken by NGOs. Schwarz reported that the Commander "... described Indonesian advocates of civil liberties, democratisation and environmental protection as a 'new generation of communists' who require close watching by the military."[132] What was at stake here was the reluctance of ruling elites to give up their privileges. That was corroborated by the actions of the Chinese communist government's equally repressive attitude to NGO activity. During the United Nations World Conference on Women in September 1995, the Chinese government deliberately attempted to undermine the effectiveness of the NGO presence (which represented some 35,000 delegates), by locating the NGO meeting 50 kilometres from the main UN forum and harassing some delegates.[133] The ABC's Lateline, reporting on a banished Bangladeshi writer and activist, also reported that "conservative groups" in Bangladesh were pressing for NGOs to be banned in that country.[134] Such reactions suggested that NGO activity was becoming sufficiently widespread and sufficiently effective to be considered a threat to current power structures in authoritarian Asian regimes.

Barriers to Poverty Alleviation

Authoritarianism continued to mark some Asian nations and issues such as good governance and human rights especially were frequently areas of contention between donors and recipients. Many Asian governments continued to argue that human rights

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130 *Ibid*

131 McCawley, P., Development Assistance in Asia: Who Benefits?", *FOCUS*, Dec., 1993, AIDAB, Canberra, 1993, pp.10-13

132 Schwarz, A., *A Nation in Waiting:Indonesia in the 1990s*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1994, p.254

133 These included raiding and confiscating materials from an Australian NGO venue which was sponsored by the Westpac banking group to facilitate discussion among women's groups. "Beijing Police Break Up Australian Gathering", *SMH*, Friday, Sept., 1st, 1995, p.1

134 Lateline, ABC, 18 May, 1995

were a luxury that developing nations could not afford. Such rights could only be addressed when "development" was well advanced.[135] As Schwarz reported in 1994:

> The Asian view - put forward strongly by Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, China and Burma - states that each country has the sovereign right to tailor civil liberties to its own cultural traditions and it flatly rejects the linking of political or economic aid from abroad with human rights concerns.[136]

In such an environment the maintenance of a "development" focus premised strongly on economic growth considerations rather than on growth with equity concerns, gave little support to concepts such as freedom of expression, a free and open press or the rights of workers to organise. Dialogue in such circumstances - as the Beijing experience had confirmed - was not welcome.

Yet from the point of view of some sectors of Western society, the tenets which had underpinned Western aid to the Asian region had been substantially achieved. The defeat of communism and the triumph of market forces was celebrated in 1989 by conservative Western economists.[137] Based purely on measurements of economic growth, the Asian region was now gauged dynamic and vibrant with enviable growth rates. The Australian 1995-96 budget announced the winding down of "project and training" assistance to Malaysia in reflection of that nation's strong growth and development achievements.[138]

The fact remained, however, that in 1995 some 800 million people were living in poverty in the Asian region. A mixture of pragmatic capitalist development and authoritarian government had helped produce the increasingly anomalous divide between a large wealthy middle class and the poor.[139] For one stated tenet of the Colombo Plan had not been substantially assimilated into Asian cultures (as it had frequently not been integrated into the culture of capitalism). Communism had been curtailed, sustained economic growth in a large number of Asian nations had been achieved, but what External Affairs Minister Spender had identified as the best practices of Western democracy, including liberal institutions and principles of economic equality[140] - had frequently been ignored. While the interests of "crony" capitalism,

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135 See on this issue Scobie, H.; Wiseberg, L., Ed., *Access to Justice:The Struggle for Human Rights in South East Asia*, Zed, London, 1985, pp.3-4

136 Schwarz, *op.cit.*, p.250

137 One of the assembled remarked: "Those under the poverty line now in the US have much more money than those living in poverty 20 years ago. The problem of measuring poverty is that we keep on raising the poverty level"."It's Great to be Right, Say Gurus of Capitalism", *SMH*, July 10, 1989, p.7

138 *Australia's Overseas Aid Program 1995-96, op.cit.*, p.34

139 A visit to many Asian cities immediately focused the anomalies: stretch limosines, guarded mansions, exclusive shopping malls, private hospitals, silks and jewellry against rag pickers, inhabitants of rubbish dumps and pavement dwellers.

140 "Partnership with Asia", *op.cit.*, pp.15,23

military capitalism, state capitalism or transnational capitalism[141] continued to ignore such principles the economic divide between the wealthy and poor was likely to continue. If the economic rationalist trend of the 1980s prevailed, with its focus on restructuring and non-unionised labour in a global environment where increasing numbers jostled for fewer resources, then self-interest and pragmatism would command a higher priority than considerations of global equity. Ultimately, political and economic authoritarianism which maintained and added to inequality represented the most formidable barriers faced by groups working to reduce world poverty.

For example, high defence spending to maintain and protect the status quo in Asian states deflected monies from more social pursuits.[142] Internationally, authoritarianism - sometimes in the name of "ethnic cleansing" - was creating a rapid increase in the numbers of refugees. The UNHCR reported, at the end of 1993, an increase of ten thousand refugees every day. 18.2 million refugees had fled to other countries, a further 24 million refugees were displaced within their own countries.[143] Quite apart from the poverty and distress experienced by such groups, the situation required that an increasing proportion of the aid budget of nations be directed towards emergency and relief assistance. In 1992, eight donors directed more than 10% of their aid budget to humanitarian assistance[144] which diverted resources otherwise earmarked for more permanent development solutions. The 1994/95 Australian Budget recognised the unprecedented demand on the international community to provide humanitarian assistance, and the increasing "frequency, complexity and duration" of such emergencies.[145] In response, Australian emergency and refugee assistance was increased to total more than $70 million.[146]

Internationally, debt and inequitable trading remained considerable barriers to poverty alleviation. There were strong arguments for the Australian government to push for debt rescheduling if only out of self-interest. AIDAB's evaluation of the Asia-Pacific region had now taken on a new realism when it conceded that Asia-Pacific debt was perceived as a potentially destabilising presence in the region. AIDAB reported:

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141 David, A., Wheelwright, T., *The Third Wave:Australia and Asian Capitalism*, Left Book Club, Sutherland, 1989, p.219; Schwarz, *op.cit.*, pp.60-61; Cragg, C., *The New Taipans*, Century, London, 1995

142 The estimated percentages of GDP spent on defence for the following Asian nations in 1993/94 were: Burma 10.8%; Laos, 8.1%; China, 5.4%; Vietnam, 4.5%; Taiwan, 4.9%; Malaysia, 3.6%; Thailand, 2.7%; Philippines, 2.3% and Indonesia, 1.6% (US$2.3bil). "The Balance of Power", *The Bulletin with Newsweek,* July, 18, 1995, p.46. The estimates for China, Laos and Burma were 1993 figures, the rest 1994

143 Bilney, G., *Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth in Australia's Development Cooperation Program*, Ministerial Policy Paper and Fourth Annual Report to Parliament on Australia's Overseas Development Cooperation Program, Minister for Development Cooperation and Pacific Island Affairs, Nov., 1993, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, November, 1993, p.28

144 "The Militarisation of Aid", in *The Reality of Aid 94*, Action Aid, London, 1994, p.30

145 *Ibid*, pp.38-9

146 *Ibid*, p.vi

> The success of East Asia's newly industrialised economies [the NICs] has encouraged some observers to see the whole East Asia and Pacific region as a development success story. But this is far from true. The trend of debt growth outstripping income growth, and of rising debt burden is, in some cases, as pressing in our region as it is in Africa or Latin America. Indeed, the East Asia and the Pacific region - excluding the four [NICs] has experienced the fastest debt burden of any region.[147]

It was not enough to simply identify debt as a threat. Since the connections between debt and poverty were well known, the rhetoric needed to be translated into action. In the area of trade, for example, it was the responsibility of wealthier nations to ensure that the initiatives of the last GATT round and of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) really benefitted poor countries. The Uruguay Round had at last included textiles and agriculture promising some positive outcomes for export commodity producing nations - Thailand, the Philippines and Australia among them. However, CAA analyses in 1994 argued that the weakest nations, especially the food-importing African nations, but also nations such as Bangladesh were likely to lose considerably from the Uruguay Round. As well, under new Intellectual Property Rights, many developing nations would have to stop the local production of numerous medicines which would inevitably force up prices.[148] CAA's list of recommendations, especially that Australia support the establishment of on-going mechanisms to monitor the effects of the Uruguay Round on developing nations, highlighted the importance of the bilateral and multilateral sector (and for that matter the NGO sector too) being aware and accountable for their policy decisions. The increasing focus of international ODA on commercial activities was a case in point.

DAC now argued for aid policies which were:

> ... internally consistent, internationally coordinated, integrated with policies on trade, investment and debt, and coherent with responses on the environment, narcotics, AIDS, human rights and migration.[149]

To meet such multifaceted aims required strong international will, a consensus that the objective of aid was indeed to alleviate poverty, and increased mechanisms to ensure that development assistance directly achieved these ends. Yet many of the practices of the international institutions ostensibly established to help alleviate poverty had frequently been criticised, especially by the NGO sector, for being inconsistent with these DAC aims. It had been very common, for example, for institutions to impose economic advice on developing nations without due regard for the impact of that advice on local communities. For example, World Bank structural adjustment programmes had

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147 "Third World Debt and Development", AIDAB Submission to the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, AIDAB, May, 1989, in *Debt and the Developing World: The Treasury and AIDAB Submissions to the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade*, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, July, 1989, p.96

148 See Atkinson, J., *GATT: What do the Poor Get?*, Community Aid Abroad, Fitzroy, Sept., 1994; *Trade-Offs, The Impact of the new Trade Rules on Developing Countries*, Community Aid Abroad, Fitzroy, 1994

149 *Australia's Development Co-operation Program 1993-94, AGPS, Canberra, 1993*, p.6

strongly affected all facets of Bangladesh economic life[150] - a heavily aid dependent nation. But Bangladesh research reported an increase in the numbers of people living in extreme poverty between 1990 and 1992, suggesting that the restructuring programmes had not established sufficient "safety nets" to protect the poor. The *Reality of Aid 94* report concluded "... macro-policies need to be tested in advance for their probable impact on these most vulnerable groups."[151]

The practice of tying bilateral aid could also disadvantage nations by limiting competition and increasing costs. Conservative estimates indicated that on average tying aid increased costs by at least 15%, representing an ODA total of some US$2,672 billion between 1988 and 1991.[152] Australian tied aid as a percentage of total ODA in 1991 was 55.3% - which was among the highest of the DAC members. Canadian tied aid represented 23% of its ODA and the Netherlands only 3.2%.[153]

A further significant barrier to effective poverty alleviation was the sharp decline in ODA contributions - in 1994 the decline amounted to 6% in real terms - with fourteen of twenty-one donors cutting their aid contributions.[154] In 1995 as a percentage of GNP, ODA now represented 0.30% - the lowest level for 20 years.[155] So much for the 1% target mooted in the early 1960s or the later 0.7% target agreed by ODA contributing nations. Australia was in fact one of the few nations to increase its ODA in the budget years 1994-95 and 1995-96, by A$80m and A$83m respectively, representing 0.34% and 0.33% of ODA.[156] While this was above the ODA average, for which the government was to be commended, the decline in real terms in 1995-96 meant that the government was not progressing towards its 0.4% interim target by the year 2000.[157] The prognosis for increased international ODA was gloomy according to the 1995 *Reality of Aid* report. It argued that the nations most likely to increase aid contributions - Ireland, Luxembourg, Australia and New Zealand - represented only 2.1% of total ODA. Of the large donors, the USA, Germany, Italy and Canada were likely to cut aid, some, such as the USA "drastically".[158] Among the most generous donors, Sweden had frozen its aid commitments although the Netherlands had set a target to restore its 0.9% contribution. Denmark and Norway alone contributed over 1% of GDP. Set against this

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150 "Official Aid:A Southern Perspective", in *The Reality of Aid 94*, Action Aid, London, 1994, p.22
151 *op.cit.*
152 "The Costs of Tied Aid", in *The Reality of Aid 94*, Action Aid, London, 1994, p.28
153 *Ibid*
154 *The Reality of Aid 95*, Action Aid, 1995, p.vi
155 *Ibid*, p.3
156 *Australia's Overseas Aid Program 1994-95*, Budget Related Paper No.2, AGPS, Canberra, 1995, p.iii; *Australia's Overseas Aid Program 1995-96*, Budget Related Paper No.2, AGPS, Canberra, 1995, p.v
157 *The Reality of Aid 95*, Action Aid, 1995, p.29
158 *Ibid*, p.3

scenario, the World Bank estimated that by the year 2000 a further 200 million people would be added to the current 1.3 billion people living in absolute poverty.[159]

Reshaping Destiny?

Despite this catalogue of negatives which were formidable barriers to alleviating world poverty, a substantial process of reform and review of aid policy by both the multilateral and bilateral sector had become clearly apparent by 1995. The World Bank and many UN agencies had become active in analysing poverty issues and in focusing on strategies which might appropriately reduce world poverty.[160] Most bilateral and multilateral agencies had accepted the 1990 World Bank Development Report recommendations to adopt a "twin track" development focus supporting labour intensive growth - especially through micro-enterprise projects - and investment in human development which also provided social safety nets. AIDAB's evolving policy objectives outlined above were modelled along these lines. Attempts were also being made by bilateral agencies to evolve international standards to measure and report on methods of poverty alleviation.[161] As well, UNICEF and UNDP had mooted the idea of introducing an international 20/20 compact. 20% of ODA and 20% of the recipient government's budget would be targeted to social services or "human priority areas".[162] By 1995, there was a much more focused attempt by donor governments to ensure that ODA directly benefitted the poor. AIDAB, for example, had joined the World Bank's, Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest, which aimed to expand microfinancing opportunities to the poor.[163]

Australia's actions to increase the poverty focus in the aid programme manifested in several ways. These included: increased funding to health programmes; the inclusion for the first time of funding to non-formal, primary and vocational education projects; increased aid to poor nations - Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam; a focus on micro-enterprise development; increased funding to population programmes; research into child labour in South Asia and Southeast Asia; increased funding for WID and environmental projects and increased funding to NGOs for community development

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159 *Ibid*

160 *The Reality of Aid 94*, Action Aid, 1994, p.17

161 "Progress on Poverty and Measurement", *The Reality of Aid 95*, pp.6-7, Action Aid, 1995; *World Development Report 1990: Poverty,* Published for the World Bank by OUP, New York, 1990

162 Initial reactions to the proposal differed. The Dutch NGO, NOVIB, argued the amount should be raised to 50%. The Australian government, opposed a formula approach in case it restricted aid policy. *New Directions in Australia's Overses Aid Program,* Ministerial Policy Paper and Fifth Annual report to Parliament on Australia's Development Cooperation Program, Gordon Bilney, Minister for Development Cooperation and Pacific Island Affairs, Feb., 1995, AIDAB, Canberra, p.23; *The Reality of Aid 95, op.cit.,* p.4

163 *Global Change and Australia's Overseas Aid Program,* Ministerial Policy Paper and Sixth Annual report to Parliament on Australia's Cooperation Program, AusAID, Canberra, Nov., 1995

projects.[164] The Government had also established a Tripartite Working party on Labour Standards to examine ways for Australia to promote core labour standards in the Asia-Pacific.[165] And in response to pressure from the non-government sector, including NGOs and environment groups, trade and environmental issues were being examined through a Working Group on Trade and Environment.[166]

For such projects to be effective, major changes were required to the corporate culture of assistance agencies, a point acknowledged in AIDAB's new *Corporate Plan 1994 to 1996.* A Ministerial policy paper delivered in February 1995 stated:

> The Corporate Plan is based on the recognition that AIDAB's operating environment is more dynamic, demanding and resource-conscious than ever, and requires all AIDAB staff to apply new standards of excellence and see change as opportunity.[167]

To facilitate a change in corporate culture, AIDAB continued to hold regular training courses and workshops to improve staff knowledge of aid and development issues.[168] Various branches within AIDAB focused on developing policy and reviewing specific development issues and sectoral policy such as environment, health, gender, education, population and social development. As well, the evaluation and review process of projects continued to be refined. For example, an environmental audit undertaken in 1993 prompted AIDAB to seek to further improve ways to integrate environmental considerations into project design and appraisal.[169] In what AIDAB described as a major change to project evaluation in 1995, many projects were now evaluated in clusters to increase the numbers of projects evaluated and to allow more rapid feedback of lessons learned. A "lessons learned" database collated the data and informed future project design.[170] The results of evaluations and reviews were to be published annually from 1995 to more rapidly publicise common lessons learned.[171]

Besides attending to its own corporate culture, AIDAB was concerned to more thoroughly review the NGO and the multilateral sectors especially as AIDAB was increasing its funds to both of these areas. The Minister for Development Co-operation established a Code of Practice Advisory Committee to propose a practical set of standards for NGOs involved in overseas development.[172] These standards were expected to give the public: "...a transparent view of NGO operations (particularly fund

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164 *Australia's Overseas Aid Program 1994-95*, Budget Related Paper No.2, AGPS, Canberra, 1994, p.vii; *Australia's Overseas Aid Program 1995-96*, Budget Related Paper No.2, AGPS, Canberra, 1995

165 *Global Change ..., op.cit.*, p.42

166 Caswell, T., "Australia and Asia - the environmental challenge", in Sheridan, G., Ed., *Living With Dragons: Australia Confronts its Asian Destiny,* Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1995, p.79

167 *New Directions in Australia's Overses Aid Program, op.cit*, pp.12

168 *Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth ..., op.cit.*, pp.32-33

169 *Towards a Sustainable Future, op.cit.*, p.35

170 *Ibid; New Directions ..., op.cit.*, p.12

171 *Ibid*

172 Budget papers 1995-96, p.53

raising) and enable the public to make informed choices among organisations seeking public donations."[173] AIDAB was also engaged in a programme of reviews of multilateral agencies (some with other donors) to monitor their effectiveness in applying sustainable principles.

The 1992 Wapenhans Report, commissioned to assess the World Bank, also recommended a fundamental change of World Bank institutional culture. The report judged that Bank staff required much stronger project analysis and appraisal methods to fully assess the impact of World Bank assistance.[174] In 1994 AIDAB acknowledged the policy and organisational changes introduced by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank aimed at increasing their focus on environmental and social issues.[175] The World Bank's withdrawal from the Narmada River project in India, in 1993, was one indication that the Bank was beginning to respond to pressure - bilateral, NGO and from its own commissioned Morse Report - to back away from policy decisions which were clearly deleterious to poor communities. The growing success of a CAA initiative to actively engage bilateral and multilateral organisations - including the World Bank - in participatory grassroots methods, was another sign that these institutions were making some efforts to adapt their cultural identity to facilitate the growing emphasis on poverty issues.

Scaling-up NGO Practice

In the early 1980s, CAA had been critical of the Australian government's use of private consultants to implement projects, where their focus was limited to technical matters. In 1982, deciding to do more than just criticise, it questioned:

> Why not get in there and prove that consultants dedicated to social as well as economic development can help the poor more effectively - and more cheaply? After all, we have considerable practical experience.... We are being drawn into closer association with the Australian Development Assistance Bureau. Why not formalize some of our activities by establishing a separate consulting agency...? [176]

The International Development Support Services (IDSS) was the result. IDSS was the first commercial consulting firm known to have been created by an NGO.[177] In the 1980s, AIDAB still equated the NGO sector with small-scale projects and "voluntarism". These circumstances made it difficult for IDSS to make an impact on the bilateral programme. However, an Asian Development Bank (ADB) contract won in 1989 - for a study titled, *Cooperation with NGOs in Agriculture and Rural Development:A Study in Seven Developing Member Countries* - launched the

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173 *Ibid*

174 *The Reality of Aid 94*, Action Aid, 1994, p.19

175 Towards A Sustainable Future, *op.cit.*, p.28

176 "Should CAA Run a Consultancy?", CAA *REVIEW*, Dec., 1982, p.1

177 International Development Support Services, "Overview of Activities", nd, c 1994

organisation internationally.[178] Its proven professionalism and its distinctive approach to development issues, which the multilateral and bilateral sectors were now more actively seeking, subsequently won IDSS project work with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, AIDAB, FAO, UNDP, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and major international NGOs.[179]

The IDSS mandate was specifically focused on a people-centred approach to be applied to all aspects of large-scale development projects. It sought to implement that approach by training bilateral and multilateral agencies - "policy makers, bureaucrats and practitioners" - and to demonstrate the model's effectiveness by bidding for contracts.[180] IDSS was keen that the old "blueprint" approach of the past forty years, where outside experts arrived with ready-made solutions, was eschewed for a process-oriented approach. Government-NGO collaboration, institutional training and grassroots participation were all essential to the process. The process also encompassed the methodologies of activist NGOs which promoted community participation in project preparation and design and community management in implementing, evaluating and monitoring projects.[181] The familiar NGO commitment to appropriate technology, credit facilities, environmental conservation and WID issues also prevailed.[182]

In the Laos Upland Agricultural Development Project, where IDSS was part of a consortium hired by AIDAB, IDSS reported in 1994 that it had provided, "... the community development, gender and credit specialist inputs to ensure that target communities are motivated, organised and educated before any attempt is made to make technical inputs." The project was to assist 14,000 small-holder households to improve their agricultural practices.[183]

By 1994, IDSS had won independently two major five year projects with AIDAB in PNG and Western Samoa, as well as a number of AIDAB projects in the Asia-Pacific to which it was providing short-term services.[184] Yet IDSS still found difficulty in regularly winning major AIDAB contracts. IDSS' experiences highlighted the state of flux that existed in the bilateral programme. Within AIDAB there was a recognition that consultants needed to update their approaches. AIDAB instituted changes to consultancy selection in 1994 to promote international best practices, to open consultancies to larger numbers of Australian companies and to encourage younger

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178 Ingram, R., "International Development Support Services Background and Lessons Learned", Paper delivered by Executive Director IDSS in May 1994, to OXFAM International Directors in Hong Kong
179 International Development Support Services, "Overview of Activities", *op.cit.*
180 Ingram, *op.cit.*, pp.1
181 *Ibid*, p.3; International Development..., *op.cit.*, pp.2-3
182 *Ibid*, pp.2,4; Ingram, *op.cit.*, p.10
183 International Development, *op.cit.*, p.4
184 Ingram, *op.cit.*, p.4

consultants into the field.[185] Nevertheless, IDSS suggested that the traditional major consulting firms[186] continued to win contracts based on experience and a purely technical approach to projects which lingered on in AIDAB.

In other instances, as AIDAB became more receptive to environmental, poverty and WID issues and sought the services of IDSS, it was not always able to assist because of a shortage of people skilled in large community-managed projects.[187] Demand prompted IDSS' rivals to begin to employ staff with sociology and other social science degrees and to "... use the same language as IDSS in preparing project proposals".[188] In a positive move in 1996, for example, a staff member of ACFOA was employed to become the Gender and Development Specialist for the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation.[189] While IDSS welcomed any real changes to the practices of development professionals, it noted, as other NGOs had noted over the years, the tendency for some organisations to co-opt social issues as a "marketing exercise to win contracts". IDSS added (echoing criticisms of a decade previously), "... and regrettably AIDAB does not have a good reputation in either rewarding good performance or criticising poor performance."[190] Part of the problem, in the view of one IDSS spokesperson, was that AIDAB continued to lack a clear overall policy process for community development. It had one-off policies to improve, for example, maternal and child health, but not a clear overall community development framework.[191] This view was corroborated by AIDAB's NGO Review, which concluded that there was a tendency:

> ... to focus primarily on what NGOs can do for the particular program, rather than the more strategic reasons why AusAID[192] as a whole might choose to support the work of NGOs in the broader context. There is, as a result, no overriding or consolidated policy statement setting out AusAID's objective's and principles for the involvement of NGOs in the official program.[193]

The wavering displayed by AIDAB between innovation and tradition showed itself in other ways. For some eighteen months AIDAB supported an AIDAB shop in Canberra managed by the NGO - The Ideas Centre. The shop brought the spectrum of development materials, both NGO and Government, together and was welcomed by development researchers. It was however closed by the new Director.[194]

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185 *New Directions in Australia's Overses Aid Program, op.cit.*
186 Such as the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation; McGowans International and Coffey and Partners
187 Ingram *op.cit*
188 *Ibid*
189 ACFOA *NEWS*, No.46, Feb., 1996, p.8
190 *Ibid*
191 Telephone interview, Ingram, R., Executive Director, IDSS, 12/8/94
192 AIDAB was renamed AusAID in March 1995
193 *Review of the Effectiveness of NGOs ..., op.cit.*, p.36
194 "AIDAB Shop Opens Doors", *FOCUS*, June, 1992, AIDAB, Canberra, 1992, p.38; "AIDAB Shop Closes", *FOCUS*, Sept., 1993, AIDAB, Canberra, p.5

Forty years of development practices focused on technical issues had left a deep impression on AIDAB and development consultants, hence the strong emphasis placed on institutional training by IDSS. A "people focus" was still comparatively alien to the development banks and multilateral and bilateral sectors which were used to a top-down approach. However, IDSS claimed considerable success in its efforts to change the corporate culture of the Asian Development Bank and an evolving success with the World Bank. Social Analysis Guidelines prepared by IDSS were, by 1994, mandatory in the preparation of ADB projects.[195] IDSS worked closely with ADB staff to train them in applying the guidelines, and implemented several projects throughout Asia. These included employment generation for landless women in Bangladesh, an environment conservation project in Thailand, an integrated rural development project in China, rural credit schemes in the Philippines and Sri Lanka and an assessment of The Role and Impact of NGOs in Bangladesh.[196] The latter project involved a dialogue between NGOs, the Bangladesh Government and the ADB to assess the potential for Bilateral/NGO cooperation on ADB funded projects. IDSS subsequently recommended that ADB:

> ...place pressure on the GOB [Government of Bangladesh] to reduce the constraints placed upon the operations of NGOs and to recognise the distinct comparative advantage which NGOs have in working with the rural (and urban) poor.[197]

In 1994 IDSS was hopeful that many of the themes it had focused on in training and in practice, since 1989, would become entrenched in ADB policy.[198]

In accordance with World Bank measures to respond to pressures to improve the social impact of its projects, IDSS was contracted by the World Bank to: "[P]rovide technical services to assist the [government of Sri Lanka] to design and implement a pilot project for community water supply and sanitation to benefit approximately 650,000 families...".[199] The project was driven, managed and implemented by villagers. Regarded by the World Bank as a model for Asia, IDSS was asked to apply it to urban slum development in Colombo.[200] Forty years after the founding fathers had gathered in Colombo to create the Colombo Plan, a progeny of the infant Food for Peace Campaign was influencing in a small but significant way the development initiatives there of one of the world's most powerful institutions. The challenge for organisations like IDSS in the future was to influence multilateral and bilateral policy on a significant scale to give real substance to effective, widespread poverty alleviation.

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195 *Ibid*, p. 2
196 *Ibid*, pp.2-3
197 International Development, *op.cit.*, p.5
198 *Ibid*, p.3
199 *Ibid*, p.4; Ingram, *op.cit.*, p.5, Telephone interview with R. Ingram, *op.cit*
200 *Ibid*

Of some support for NGO objectives was a growing emphasis by multilateral and Western bilateral donors on the importance of strengthening "civil society" internationally, in order, in Development Minister Bilney's words: "... to keep governments honest and accountable." Bilney acknowledged, for example, that community pressure on environmental issues "...time and time again [was] the chief catalyst for government action."[201] Increasingly, individuals and groups were speaking out as it became possible and reasonably commonplace for them to take their cases to international arbiters. They were in effect holding national governments responsible to international conventions - if not by law at least morally. Such international exposure placed pressure on governments to change. In Australia, members of the Aboriginal, homosexual and environmental communities used these avenues, commonly networking with like-minded groups internationally to benefit from their experience and support. Australia's Aboriginal community, for example, sought land rights' information from Maori, North American Indian and Inuit communities. In 1994, AIDAB helped facilitate discussions between indigenous groups by funding (in collaboration with Scandinavian Government aid agencies) a meeting of Australian Aborigines and indigenous peoples from Namibia and from northern Scandinavia.[202]

Both Juan Somavia, spokesperson for the 1995 UN World Summit on Social Development, and UN Secretary-General Boutrous Boutrous-Ghali, stressed the increasing importance of the civil society, especially people's organisations and non-governmental organisations. They were described as the new actors in international relations, the creative thinkers who could play an important role in democratisation within countries and within the international relations system.[203] Non government organisation potential was also being recognised outside of development circles. Hillary Clinton addressed the UN World Summit on Social Development, to the effect that governments should hand over power to citizens and voluntary organisations, and even *Vogue Australia* ran an article in March, 1995, on the "unprecedented public profile" of NGOs.[204] Noam Chomsky has argued:

> The ferment of the '60s reached much wider circles in the years that followed, eliciting new sensitivity to racist and sexist oppression, concern for the environment, respect for other cultures and for human rights. ... One of the most striking examples is the Third World solidarity movements of the 1980s, with their unprecedented engagement in the lives and fate of the victims. This process of democratization and concern for social justice could have large significance.[205]

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201 *Global Change ..., op.cit.*, p.41

202 "A Meeting of Three Cultures", *FOCUS*, June, 1994, AIDAB, Canberra, 1994, pp.35-6

203 Somavia, J. interviewed by Hill, D., on "The Poverty Trap", Lateline, ABC Television, 1/3/95; *ACFOA News*, No. 43, June, 1995, p.1

204 Holloway, R., "UN Poised for Clash with Big Business", *The Australian,* 8/3/95, p.16; Heathwood, G., "Trouble Shooters", *Vogue Australia*, Mar., 1995, pp.192-199

205 Chomsky, N., *Year 501:The Conquest Continues*, p.288, Verso, London, 1993

In Australia, there was now an increasing cross-fertilisation of ideas and exchanges between NGOs and others in the non-government sector - environmental groups, trade unions, human rights' and women's groups. Together, they were placing pressure on government to change, including, for example, lobbying for inclusion in official delegations to APEC, OECD and the WTO.[206]

In Asia, despite government restrictions on NGOs, many of them determined to continue to challenge the domestic and international structures, policies and tenets which marginalised the poor. A gathering of Asian NGOs in Chiangmai, Thailand in 1988, for example, refuted the claims of some Asian governments that the concept of "rights" was alien to Asian cultures. Rather, they argued:"To build a new society that respects social justice, human rights and traditional values of Asian people, irrespective of nation, religion and race remains a central agenda of NGOs and citizen movements."[207] The executive director of Asia Watch confirmed those views after attending a human rights conference in Bangkok in 1993. The conference comprised government officials and some 240 delegates representing 110 Asian NGOs. Schwarz reported: "Sidney Jones explains:"

> No one had expected so many non-government organisations to be there; no one could have imagined that by precisely the democratic methods that their governments find 'un-Asian', such a diverse group of people ... would hammer out a consensus declaration that refuted or contested every major premise of the 'Asian concept' of human rights ...Governments were forced to recognise that their definition of what is 'Asian' is not necessarily shared by their own citizens, that economic growth is not the be-all and end-all for everyone in the region, and that Asians do not want their political and civil rights traded away in the name of development.[208]

In Australia, the government acknowledged the need to continue to explore ways through the bilateral programme to strengthen civil society in recipient nations. The Development Minister noted, in 1995, the degree to which the recipients of Australian ODA and NGO aid, at the community level, were now determining the character and operation of Australian assistance.[209] The expectation was that communities so engaged might place pressure on local governments to change - to effect good governance practices. Yet despite government support to strengthen civil society in developing nations through the bilateral programme and through Australian and indigenous NGOs, the government remained less enthusiastic to strengthen "civil society" in Australia by contributing to a robust national development education programme.

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206 Caswell, T., "Australia and Asia - the environmental challenge", in Sheridan, G., Ed., *Living With Dragons: Australia Confronts its Asian Destiny,* Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1995, p.

207 "Asian NGOs Task Force Meeting Report", 23-30 Jan., 1988, Chiangmai, Thailand, p.5

208 Jones, S., "Asians Deserve Their Rights, Like Everyone Else", *International Herald Tribune*, 21 April, 1993, quoted in Schwarz, *op.cit.*, p.253

209 *Ibid*

In a meeting with Australian NGOs in April 1995, Boutrous-Ghali, stressed that media and NGO pressure was critical to persuade UN member states to act. Many NGOs in Australia now had the professional capacity to represent complex development issues to any of the three development sectors - multilateral, bilateral and NGO. Even AIDAB, which had been judged by the Jackson Committee in 1984 incapable of producing anything but the most basic information had, by 1995, improved its publications to more readily reflect its emerging professionalism.[210] The quarterly magazine, *FOCUS,* for example, introduced a range of articles on alternative trading, sex tourism, ecologically sustainable development, crisis prevention, land mines, aquaculture, WID, peoples' theatre, community development programmes, micro enterprises and the work of NGOs.[211] Though rarely in depth, the articles at least represented the plurality of development issues. And the many visual images which peppered the pages of *FOCUS,* promoting engagement, empowerment and the industriousness of poor communities, were a refreshing departure from past government literature with its preoccupation with infrastructure and technology.

The readership of *FOCUS,* was, however, mainly confined to people with a professional interest in aid issues.[212] In fact, informed public or media support to assist Australian NGOs to scale-up national and international advocacy on development issues was not well developed. An ACFOA "One World or ... None" campaign, launched in 1989 to educate Australians on development issues, had concluded:

> ... one of our major shortcomings - our lack of an informed and active national constituency for the fight against poverty, the fight for the social, political, economic and cultural rights of all people. ... We need people's participation in development at home as well as in the Third World.[213]

Various surveys conducted on Australian attitudes to aid, by WVA in 1983, ACFOA in 1989 and AIDAB in 1989 and 1994,[214] confirmed that while a majority of Australians supported the continuation of aid to poorer nations, very few knew much about development issues. The Kelley survey found that "hardly anyone" knew very much about aid, and that the respondents' assessment of aid was tied to their values and feelings. Kelley concluded: "knowing little, they are guided by their hunches and

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210 *Report of the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program, op.cit.,* p.113

211 See issues of *FOCUS* 1992-1995, *FOCUS, op.cit*

212 50% were from the academic or government sector, the remainder from industry, the NGO sector or the student population. *FOCUS,* September, 1993, AIDAB, Canberra, 1993, p.5

213 Emphasis in text. Ross, N. Chairman's Report, *1989 Annual Report,* ACFOA, Canberra, pp.2-3

214 *Overseas Aid What Australians Think,* Development Dossier No.13, ACFOA, Canberra, Sept., 1983; "Australian Attitudes to the Third World", Axia Research for ACFOA quoted in *ACFOA News,* No.24, July, 1989, p.1; Kelley, J., *Australians' Attitudes to Overseas Aid:Report from the National Social Science Survey,* AIDAB, International Development Issues, No.8, AGPS, Canberra, 1989; *What Do Australians Think About Aid?,* Key findings of the survey of public attitudes to Overseas Aid, AIDAB, Canberra, May, 1994

emotions."[215] And those "hunches" indicated that 45% of respondents were not in favour of aid being channelled through foreign government and that the majority favoured giving aid to the poorest people. Aid was strongly seen as a moral imperative rather than a question of "foreign policy, alliances and defence... a present to secure friendship of foreigners, [or] a bribe to get their trade."[216]

The 1994 AIDAB survey found limited public awareness about the bilateral programme.[217] 90% of Australians had not heard of AIDAB. 98% of Australians did not know the meaning of the acronym.[218] Moreover, public perceptions of the reasons for continuing poverty in developing nations centred on negative assumptions - poor government, poor management of resources and over-population.[219] As Kelley had concluded, "In the public mind, foreign aid appears in essence to be welfare for foreigners, charity for the poor in other lands."[220]

The spectacular rise of a newcomer to the Australian NGO scene, CARE Australia (in 1987), supported that conclusion. A large international NGO experienced in relief aid CARE gained quick exposure to the Australian public through emotive television advertising. By 1992-93 CARE's income had already risen to $51m.[221] The "older" Australian NGO community had failed to create sufficient awareness among the Australian public or media to make the use of emotive, degrading and misleading images to raise funds, an issue in itself, rather than the successful marketing technique that CARE Australia's rapid progress in Australia suggested. Since CARE Australia elected not to become a member of ACFOA it promised to remain aloof from the Australian NGO community and its advocacy, lobbying and educational activities. (The fact that CARE Australia's Chairman was ex-Prime Minister Fraser, whose government had been critical of ACFOA's educational lobbying in the 1970s, was probably not unconnected with that decision.) In terms of contributing to public information about poverty and development issues, CARE's upbeat arrival in Australia might, then, be viewed as something of a set-back.

The Code of Practice Advisory Committee, newly established by the Minister for Development Co-operation, was expected to assist the public to make an "informed choice" about NGOs.[222] That was not to say that the public would necessarily avail itself of the information or that the "informed choices" would assist the public to

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215 Kelley, *op.cit.*, p.75
216 *Ibid*, p.79
217 *What Do...*, *op.cit*, p.20
218 *Ibid*, p.21
219 *Ibid*, p.17
220 *Ibid*, p.67
221 Annual Report, 1992-93, CARE Australia, p.15
222 Budget papers 1995-96, p.53

differentiate various types of assistance. A more rigorous development campaign focused on development issues was necessary for that to be the case.

There were three major potential advantages, in terms of reducing world poverty, to a nation supporting a strong national development education campaign - to its strengthening civil society to engage in development issues. Firstly, it could help place pressure on donors to improve the quality and quantity of assistance. Secondly, it would put pressure on the media to report development issues and poor communities, responsibly. Thirdly, it would help place pressure on nations to act as good global citizens in such matters as trade, ecological degradation and human rights.

In the 1980s, the Jackson Committee had stressed the importance of a government funded development education programme:

> ... to enhance community awareness of development issues; to encourage a more informed debate on what Australia should do to assist developing countries; to counteract community prejudices including racist and sexist prejudices; and to educate people on aid and development.[223]

Judging Australia's development education efforts "poor by international standards", the Jackson Committee recommended an initial allocation of $1m to upgrade education activities. However, contributions of $100,000 in 1984-85 increasing to $400,000 in 1988, and $1.9m in 1995-96, were still decidedly modest compared with some other nations.[224]

That expenditure on development education had a positive impact on bilateral aid programmes was suggested by the *Reality of Aid 95* report which asked rhetorically:

> Is it a coincidence that the countries which have invested in development education have generous aid programs which are widely acknowledged as high quality?[225]

The nations in question included the Netherlands with development education expenditure of US$15,161m, Canada US$12,248m and Sweden US$10,654m. SIDA's programme was described as "ambitious", going beyond "traditional information on Swedish aid policy and includ[ing] development issues in their broader sense."[226] Understanding development issues in their broader sense was the critical issue, not a knowledge of the numbers of bridges or roads supplied by assistance programmes.

Yet Australian government information about aid had traditionally fallen firmly into the category of "public information" rather than "development education".

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223 *Report of the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program, op.cit.*, p.p.110, 112

224 *Australia's Overseas Aid, 1983-88, Submission to the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Review of the Operations of AIDAB*, February, 1988, AIDAB, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, pp.38-39; *Australia's Development Cooperation Program 1994-1995*, Budget Related Paper No.2, *op.cit.*, pp.46-47

225 *Reality of Aid 95, op.cit.*, p.115

226 *Ibid*, p.88

Governments had not sought to engage the public in development issues. That initiative had been almost entirely the preserve of the NGO sector and it had struggled with that role against lack of funds and inter-NGO and constituent opposition.[227]

In March 1995 AIDAB changed its name to the Australian Assistance Agency for International Development or to the more readily identifiable - AusAID. It also adopted a new corporate logo which depicted two intersecting arcs. These represented:

> ... the partnership and the links the aid program helps to build between the people of Australia and the people of developing countries. The outer arc represents the bridge the program builds with people of developing countries, while the inner arc represents growth and the positive contribution of development assistance.[228]

Forty-five years on from the instigation of the Colombo Plan the North still talked of building its metaphoric bridges to the South. Aid was still perceived by some as "welfare for foreigners, charity for the poor in other lands."[229] And there remained, frequently, a demonstrable gap between public perceptions of developing nations and actuality.

Yet there were also signs, as demonstrated in significant changes to the aid programme in the 1990s, that past assumptions and attitudes were changing sufficiently to impact positively on many areas of Australian government policy. The process of decolonisation, multilateral forums, non-government agitation and in Australia, multiculturalism, had all worked to challenge and soften the assumptions and beliefs which had held such a strong influence over Western policy-makers since WW II: Man's idea of progress, a belief in man's dominion over nature, the influences of social Darwinism, a strong Christian Eurocentricism. Australian Prime Minister Keating's address to launch the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, in December 1992, in which he acknowledged the wrongs visited on Aboriginal people, and his efforts and support for Native Title legislation, were indications that these beliefs were losing currency.

In international affairs, Australia's conscious adoption of a fresh approach to Southeast Asia, which it defined as "a mutual commitment between equals", was another indication that the barriers of racism and Eurocentricism were softening.[230] This support for cooperation and dialogue, rather than suspicion and combativeness, was a dramatically changed mind-set from previous decades.

More generally, Australia continued to accommodate to the Asian region in a number of ways as witnessed in its changing education, immigration and trade policies. Australian school children in the 1990s were now to routinely learn about the region and

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227 *Australia's Overseas Aid, 1983-88 ..., op.cit.*, pp.38-39
228 *FOCUS*,, March, 1995, AusAID, Canberra, 1995
229 Kelley, *op.cit.*, p.67
230 Evans and Grant, 2nd Ed., *op.cit.*, pp.200-1

there were plans in place for them to study at least one of six Asian languages.[231] Australian immigration policy (now clear of the damaging White Australia policy), was offering a more positive contribution to Australia's integration into the region. Through Asian immigration Australians of Asian birth represented some 4.5 per cent of the population in 1995, and were projected to rise to about 7 per cent by 2010.[232] From 1991, Australia's exports to ASEAN now exceeded those to the European Union.[233] A rapidly growing range of literature became available in Australia to support demands from businessmen and women for information on Asian customs, business practices and ethics.[234]

As Industry Minister in the 1980s, John Button affirmed that Asia and the Pacific were no longer viewed as "[s]imple matters of foreign policy, handled by the Minister for Foreign Affairs." In recognition of the greater complexity and sophistication of the relationship he, as Industry Minister, had adopted the habit of "dropping in on the neighbours".[235] Strong friendships had been made between some Australian ministers and their Asian counterparts, notable among them, Gareth Evans and his Indonesian Foreign Affairs counterpart, Ali Alatas.[236] Through various Australian-Asian Business Councils many useful alliances had been forged, often with Asians educated in Australia, some under the Colombo Plan scheme.[237]

Certainly, all of this activity carried with it aspects of pragmatism and self-interest. And, as the prickly relationship between Australian Prime Minister, Keating, and the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir, attested, the Australian-Asian relationship could be difficult. Yet Australia's relationship with the Asian region stood in marked contrast to the days when the Food for Peace Campaign had complained of the British history

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231 *Ibid*, p.350

232 *Ibid*

233 *Ibid*, p.122

234 The following titles were on the business section of a Sydney suburban bookshop in mid 1995: Sheridan, G., *Living with Dragons:Australia Confronts its Asian Future*, Allen and Unwin, St. Leonards, 1995; P. Church, *Focus on Southeast Asia*, Allen and Unwin, St. Leonards, 1995; *Asia-Australian Briefing Papers* published by the Asia-Australia Institute, University of New South Wales in 1993 included titles on the Philippines, Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Cambodia, Indonesia, China and South Korea; Byrne, M., *Australia and the Asia Game,* Allen and Unwin, St. Leonards, 1994; Thorow, L., *Head to Head, The Coming Economic Battle Among Japan, Europe and America*, Allen and Unwin, St. Leonards, 1995; Japan Business, *The Portable Encyclopedia for Doing Business with Japan*, World Trade Press, California, 1994 - this series also incorporated China, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan; Encarnation, D., *Rivals Beyond Trade:America Versus Japan in Global Competition*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1993; Hamabata, M., *Crested Kimono, Power and Love in the Japanese Business Family*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1990; Shebra, T., Ed., *Japanese Social Organisation,* University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1992; Goldman, A., *Doing Business with the Japanese*, State University of NY Press, Albany, 1994

235 Button, J., *Flying the Kite, Travels of an Australian Politician*, Random House, Australia, 1994, p.218

236 Evans has described the relationship as "warm and enduring", Evans and Grant, *op.cit.*, p.200

237 *Ibid.*, pp.234-241

bias in Australian curriculum and of the lack of Ministerial contact with Asia.[238] And Button's reference to "dropping in on the neighbours", now signified a more genuine, equal and comfortable familiarity with the region than that typified by the patronising "Friends and Neighbours" rhetoric of the past. Unlike External Affairs Minister Casey's "Friends and Neighbours" attempt to forge relations with the region, the Australian government no longer carried the "British/Australian" demeanour of the past, which supported unequivocally major Western power status and accredited Britain with "a real vision", a "true consciousness of destiny", of "... what the world need[ed] for the prosperity and happiness of its people".[239] Rather, Australia now saw its destiny tied firmly to the Asia-Pacific region, with a strong role to be played as a middle-level power.

The Australian government had now accepted that different kinds of problems could no longer be quarantined from each other. Equal importance had to be placed on diplomatic initiatives, defence policy, economic strategies, development assistance, immigration policy, cultural-relations, information activities, and human contacts generally.[240] A multi-dimensional approach which recognised diversity and honoured difference, was helpful in promoting and building more equal relations between nations. Alliances of middle-level powers with widening perceptions and tolerance for diverse views, as well as alliances of activist NGOs worldwide, provided a potential countervailing pressure for change to the negative forces which perpetuated poverty.

Evans and Grant outlined a range of attributes which they considered were necessary for a nation to be an effective middle power. These were identified as persistence, energy, stamina, creativity, imagination and credibility.[241] Although activist NGOs were only now gaining international credibility, they had displayed the other qualities in strong measure over more than forty years, as they ignored the unidimensionalism of the Cold War mentality and adopted a mindset of equality, inclusion and mutuality. With these qualities now being more broadly accepted internationally as the most appropriate to guide nation states, the Australian government and its activist NGO community had the potential to share an active part in "bring[ing] the dispossessed out of the shadows".[242]

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238 "Too Little Attention by Far...", *op.cit.*, 1958; Webb, J., "A New Approach to Asia", *FFPN*, Sept., 1958, p.6

239 Menzies, *op.cit.*, p.261

240 Evans and Grant, *op.cit.*, pp.350,354

241 Evans *op.cit,* p.347

242 Paul Keating's speech, Dec., 1992, "Out of the Shadows", printed in *Mabo Its Meaning in Australia, Background Report No. 4,* CAA, August, 1993

Conclusion

The various groups engaged in aid and development issues from the 1950s to the 1990s - multilateral, bilateral and NGO - represented a plurality of competing interests and values. While all three sectors tended to adopt the moral high ground in terms of their commitment to the alleviation of poverty in so-called underdeveloped nations, their actions often revealed contradictions which were inconsistent with achieving that end. Australia's formal aid policy, for example, had to reconcile three objectives - strategic, trade and humanitarian. The most persistent contradiction in Australian government aid policy, before the late 1980s, was the inference that humanitarian objectives had equal status with other initiatives. The thesis demonstrates that while Australian governments (like agents from all development sectors) frequently co-opted state-of-the-art development rhetoric, it was less inclined to introduce programmes which focused directly on "humanitarian" issues such as basic needs, equity, justice, participation or sustainability.

Rather, the thesis concludes that the Australian government's preoccupation in the 1950s to 1970s with strategic and geopolitical issues, and later in the 1980s with trade concerns, relegated the issue of poverty alleviation to a back seat until the end of the Cold War. Further, it concludes that the model of economic growth which embraced Western ideas of "progress" and which tended to dominate and drive the aid policy of Western donors - Australia among them - frequently ignored the diversity and complexity of under-developed nations and the impact of modernisation programmes on their communities and environs. This economic model assisted developing nations to build their infrastructures - roads, water, transport, power. But it was subsequently demonstrated (particularly by activist NGOs) to have had a negative impact on many of the poorest groups in developing nations.

Inconsistency and duality, in terms of the commitment of governments - whether Western or "underdeveloped" - to seriously tackle poverty issues, was also evident in areas of international trade and in the domestic policies of the governments of many developing nations. Western governments frequently expressed concern about the extent of world poverty and hunger, yet they supported restrictive trade practices which impeded the economic progress of developing nations. And while these unfair trade practices were criticised by developing nations, many of their governments were reluctant to introduce redistributive measures domestically - such as land reform, minimum wages, capped rents or security of land tenure - to ease the burden of poverty on their own communities.

Governments of both the West and developing nations, in other words, frequently placed self-interest before the interests of the poor. In terms of aid policy and the focus of this thesis - Australia and the Asian region -Western modernisation principles, Cold War politics, deeply institutionalised and embedded prejudices and lack of political will, were frequently the issues which shaped the aid and development practices of Australian governments and of its Asian bilateral aid recipients, rather than the issue of sustained poverty alleviation in the interests of poor communities.

Apart from the short-lived Whitlam government, until the mid-1980s, successive Australian governments showed little impetus to change the thrust of these policies. The institutions responsible for administering Australia's aid programme underwent only minimal changes.[1] As a consequence, they had little incentive or mandate to radically alter the aid programme. The response of Australian governments to the Basic Human Needs agenda which was widely aired in international development forums in the 1970s, for example, represented an *ad hoc* and ineffective "add-on" approach. It grafted a few social programmes on to existing projects rather than embracing substantial change.

If there was little pressure from within government to change the focus of the aid programme, pressure from outside government was made less effective by the absence of a strong, national aid constituency. Monitoring and criticism of Australian ODA relied mainly on the NGO community. As it expanded and became more aware of development issues, from the late 1970s, NGOs placed pressure on governments to improve the quality of ODA. Some NGOs also sought to engage the public in the underlying structural causes of poverty in developing nations. However, lack of funds and inter-NGO and constituent opposition and resistance made it difficult for NGOs to engage the Australian public, on a national level, in aid and development matters.

Australian governments, meanwhile, refused to support an ongoing national Development Education programme despite such recommendations in the early 1970s, from the UN, and in 1984, from Australia's own Jackson Committee. Had this been achieved, there might have been increased pressure over time at the multilateral, bilateral and NGO levels to improve the quality and quantity of development assistance. Pressure might also have been put on the Australian media and on NGOs to represent poor communities with a measure of sophistication.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Australian aid discourses - both government and NGO - routinely portrayed Asia as backward, passive and poor. Such discourses reinforced Cold War stereotypes and continued to breath life into "White Australia" prejudices. They also undermined other government rhetoric at the time which asserted the need to strengthen Australia-Asia relations. But even when the use of exaggerated images of

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[1] Initially aid administration was the shared responsibility of a conglomerate of departments. It was subsequently administered variously by ADAA, ADAB, AIDAB and AusAID.

Asia's fearful "starving millions" had diminished, a few high profile Australian NGOs continued to draw on passive, "skeletal" images to represent poor communities into the 1980s and 1990s. Communities affected by natural disasters - which afforded aid activities an especially public face - were frequently depicted in this way. To shock rather than to inform, to opt for the simple image rather than the complex explanation, undoubtedly drew in funds, but that approach did not assist the public to understand complex development issues. It belied the extent, nature and increasing complexity of development activities. And it ignored the involvement of many Asian individuals and groups which worked with, and for, poor communities often in partnership with groups from Australia. It remained a paradox, in the 1990s, that much of the Australian development community had adopted, in liaison with poor communities in the field, more complex and dynamic practices than were widely known to the Australian public.

While the official aid program remained fairly static before the mid 1980s, the more activist sectors of the Australian NGO community were immensely creative and dynamic. The work of groups, such as the Australian NGO CAA, was pioneering in this regard and was of great significance. With other activist NGOs from the North and South, it played a critical role in challenging Western aid and development practices. From about the 1970s, activist NGOs worked to resist, negotiate and transform aid and development interventions by the gradual empowerment of people and community agents and agencies in developing nations. When the Cold War ended, encouraging Western governments to revise aid policy, practices of activist NGOs were embraced by the multilateral and bilateral sectors. This process started to elevate poverty alleviation to the centre of aid projects and programmes and promised more informed, equitable, sustainable and participatory interactions between donors and recipients.

Activist NGOs challenged the assumptions underpinning multilateral, bilateral and NGO assistance. They questioned aid practices which endorsed a "top-down" economic growth/modernisation paradigm and explored more social development alternatives. They transmitted critiques of modernisation and post-colonialism and discourses of empowerment and agency to poor communities. Where Western governments in the 1970s gave only brief attention to rhetoric based on Basic Human Needs, NGO assistance was generally focused on meeting those needs. And when they introduced the notion of wider civil rights for marginalised groups, NGOs were exposed to the dynamics of poor communities and to the myriad obstacles which caused Third World poverty at the national and international level. From the 1980s, activist NGO development projects were examined for their ability to alleviate poverty and new practices were evolved focusing on those ends. The differing development needs of various groups were also recognised. The needs of women, for example, were addressed through Women in Development analyses and practices. One of the great changes from

the 1950s to the 1990s was the growing sense of agency experienced by marginalised groups. Poor people were encouraged to work together to demand greater equality and justice, in both the domestic and international spheres. An increasingly sophisticated and inter-locking web of NGOs and POs worked at the local, national and international levels to achieve greater equity for poor communities. NGOs drew on methods of advocacy, lobbying, collective action, political representation and large-scale protest. Structural change became the major issue, not one-off micro projects.

Many Australian NGOs were actively engaged in this process of change both in the field and in Australia. Yet until the late 1980s, their policies and practices made only minimal impact on Australia's formal aid programme. In fact, while NGOs referred to the 1980s as the "lost decade" and pointed to the extent of chronic poverty in parts of Asia, Australian governments were lauding the economic rise of the Asian region and were swinging their support behind conservative economic rationalist policies. In that economic environment, pressure was placed on the aid programme to increase its trade interests and ODA was decreased from 0.51% of GNP in 1983-84 to 0.36% in 1988-89.[2]

Yet, paradoxically, the tenets of activist NGOs were not completely diminished by economic rationalist policies. Its support for smaller government actually favoured non-government groups like NGOs. Partly as a function of this, the multilateral sector in particular increased its interest and support for NGOs during the 1980s. In Australia, the economic rationalist environment also placed pressure on government departments to increase their level of efficiency and professionalism. As a consequence, the government took up many of the recommendations of the 1984 Jackson Committee's thorough review of the aid programme, which included restructuring ADAB. That process proved to be of great importance. When the Cold War ended, the government was encouraged to substantially review aid policy and to subsequently change the focus of the aid programme to emphasise poverty issues. "Non-military threats" - poverty, human rights abuse, endemic disease, environmental degradation, humanitarian emergencies and trade wars - long the issues which had engaged the development community - were now identified by the government as the major causes of international instability. Pressure from multilateral forums to adopt "twin track" development emphasising, equally, human development and economic growth; the presence of an experienced activist NGO sector long focused on poverty alleviation; and the growing ability of the official aid agency to meet the demands for policy reform, all helped to move (if slowly) the new poverty-focused rhetoric into effective aid practices.

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[2] *A Review of the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau, op.cit.*, p.94; *Australia's Overseas Aid Program, 1988-1989,* Budget Related Paper No 4, AGPS, Canberra, 1990, p.13

In the 1990s, the Labor government, therefore, adopted some aspects of liberal/progressive policy when it marginally increased aid contributions and initiated policies to improve the quality of Australian aid. It recognised the need to change the corporate culture of the bilateral and multilateral sectors to more readily focus on poverty issues. It addressed some key development problems in aid policy, including poverty, the environment, the position of women, human rights, non-formal and vocational education, micro-enterprises and child labour. It also increased NGO and community recipient involvement in bilateral programmes, and it supported attempts by the NGO sector to apply grassroots initiatives to bilateral and multilateral programmes. Tensions remained between NGOs and the bilateral and multilateral sectors, as witnessed by the vigour and extent of NGO protest at bilateral and multilateral forums. But a certain converging and commonality of interests took place, between the three sectors, especially when grassroots principles of participation, sustainability and equity were adopted by multilateral and bilateral programmes and by the development banks.

In some respects, the post-Cold War international environment of the 1990s was more favourable to the resolution of world poverty. The bilateral and multilateral sectors had conceded the importance of cultural and social development in achieving broader economic development. There was now a greater emphasis on strengthening civil society, which included poor communities, and nations such as Australia, argued the validity and potential of middle power diplomacy, now that political bipolarism had been broken. Some of the initiatives of the Uruguay Round, such as the inclusion of agriculture and the stress on free trade, also promised to advantage developing nations.

On the other hand, many governments and transnational enterprises continued to ignore principles of economic equality. As well, the culture of economic rationalism, stressing smaller government, individualism and a smaller tax base, remained influential in the West. That environment could reduce the capacity or will of governments to negotiate increased aid donations. Australia was one of only a handful of ODA contributors which had not reduced its aid in the 1990s, yet its donations as a percentage of GNP had fallen over time from a high of 0.65% in 1975 to 0.33% in 1996.

In Australia, political pragmatism and national interest continued to dictate foreign policy. For example, while government aid rhetoric was strongly supportive of human rights' issues, political pragmatism - most obviously in relation to Indonesia and East Timor - continued to rule foreign policy. To the extent that Australian foreign policy ignored or played down issues such as human rights' abuse, which encompassed a range of development issues, in favour of strengthening trading or political ties, foreign policy was inconsistent with, and compromised, aid policy. The Australian NGO community also repeatedly pointed out the contradiction in using the government aid

programme for trade purposes since the objectives of trade and poverty alleviation could conflict.

Despite such NGO criticism, at the beginning of 1996, AusAID was more solidly equipped than any of its predecessors[3] to make the alleviation of poverty the centre of aid policy. Administrative reform and the beginnings of cultural and ideological reform of AusAID had significantly strengthened that organisation's ability and willingness to address the plethora of issues now embraced under the rubric of "development". Whether that focus would and could be sustained following a change of government, was yet to be tested. AusAID lacked the advantage of a strong, informed national constituency to help pressure the government to maintain the focus and pace of change to the aid programme which had been initiated in the first part of the 1990s. On the other hand, AusAID's increasing professionalism made it well equipped to argue a strong and informed case to government for an aid programme focused on equity, sustainability, and participatory development. And in this, AusAID was supported by an active, dynamic and increasingly professional NGO sector. Also in AusAID's favour was the growing international support among the multilateral and bilateral sector, and even among the development banks, for aid programmes which genuinely addressed poverty issues.

The Labor Minister for Development, Bilney, had remarked in 1993:

> ... in the last decade of the twentieth century, poverty remains a problem of shocking dimensions. The stark facts are ... almost 1.3 billion people live in absolute poverty on less than $US370 a year. Three-quarters of these - about 805 million people - live in Asia, particularly in South and East Asia.[4]

The need for all nations to cooperate to address the reality of that statement was urgent. Otherwise, the UN's designated International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, in 1996, would be but a hollow gesture.

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[3] ADAA, ADAB, AIDAB

[4] Bilney, G., *Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth in Australia's Development Cooperation Program,* Fourth Annual Report, AIDAB, Canberra, Nov., 1993, p.1

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