

BULLETIN

Institute of Development Studies

**Growth —
but no jobs**



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Editor: Emanuel de Kadt

Assistant Editor: Barry Peters

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Address for correspondence: Editor, Bulletin, The Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9RE, Sussex, England.

Editorial

The Report of the Pearson Commission gave guarded expression to the growing uneasiness in the developed world over its own policies towards the developing countries, over the failure of per capita economic growth to become translated into "development", and over the persistence of 'the gap'. Although its approach to development problems did not basically differ from that which had resulted in the alarming situation at the beginning of the seventies (see Bulletin, Vol. 2:2), the Report did discuss many of the questions which remained blatantly unresolved at the end of the first 'development decade'. And it called the failure to create meaningful employment 'the most tragic failure of development.'

The present issue of the Bulletin focusses on that failure. Growth rates and statistics of incomes per capita have (suddenly) been found wanting as valid indicators of development. Till quite recently only scattered and isolated (though very insistent) voices were raised against the exclusion of large sectors of the population of ldc's from the benefits of those growth rates. Now these voices have swollen to something of an international chorus decriing development which forgets about the peasants and the urban poor. The lack of work and of income for a growing proportion of the labour force has been noticed at last; an employment-orientation is emerging in many quarters since the ILO formulated the World Employment Programme early in 1969. (This issue of the Bulletin appears only a few weeks after the Report of the pilot mission on Employment, sent to Colombia by ILO, was accepted by the Colombian President - see the article by Dudley Seers below - and while the first Study Seminar on such problems was being held at IDS. .We, too, have caught on).

The emphasis on jobs and well-spread incomes is very salutary indeed. No work, no income, no lessening of inequalities, no development: that seems to be the message of the new creed. But there is one danger against which, I believe, a warning is in order even at this very early hour. That is that 'employment' becomes a kind of new shibboleth, something which, rather like 'economic growth', can unite all who are for virtue and against sin. Let us make no mistake: in almost all ldc's the growth of the ranks of the jobless, and of those whose days consist of spending ever longer hours in making an ever decreasing living (the shoe-blacks waiting for customers, the petty traders hawking their wares) has profound structural causes.

Most people agree that they want more, and more productive, jobs in the ldc's and higher incomes for those who are poorest. But not all realise the consequences for employment and income distribution of archaic and unjust land tenure systems; of the vested interests of middle and upper classes oriented to consumption standards imported straight from the affluent societies; of international corporations importing capital-intensive technologies through their subsidiaries and stimulating tastes for products which have little employment effect; of donor countries under pressure to take the interests of their exporters into account when formulating aid policies; of government departments or planning agencies mesmerized by the latest technology from abroad, and oblivious to the fate of those who do not find jobs; of social and political structures in ldc's which give no effective voice to the very groups for whose welfare governments and international agencies now appear to be deeply concerned - all points that are taken up, directly or indirectly, in the following pages.

Perhaps the seventies will soon be declared the "employment decade". That would be splendid, because, as the following articles amply demonstrate, appropriate policies really could have an effect on the situation - as long as an intimate link is maintained between the fight against un- and underemployment and the need for a more, a much more equal income distribution in most ldc's. We shall have to remain alert to the possibility that the newly "discovered" issues of employment may be used to generate a smokescreen behind which deeper structural problems can be conveniently tucked out of sight.

The Bulletin welcomes approaches from other publications concerned with development, and will normally be happy to agree to the reproduction of articles.