

**Rich Against Poor: The Reality of Aid.** By C. R. Hensman. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971; Pelican Press, 1975; pp. 293; \$3.95).

C. R. Hensman is a freelance writer, broadcaster and lecturer. He was born in 1923 and graduated from the University of Ceylon. After four years as editor of the quarterly *Community*, he became Research Secretary of the Overseas Council of London. He has also worked for the B.B.C. as a producer.

In *Rich Against Poor: The Reality of Aid*, Hensman attempts to explain the ever-widening gulf between the have and have-not nations of the world. To accomplish this, he brings to bear a rich assortment of economic data laced with neo-Marxian polemics.

He begins by confronting the reader with Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Exponential increases in population will, by the turn of the century, bring the number of "backward peoples" of the world to four-fifths of the world's population. This, combined with diminishing food supplies, will result in an increased belligerence among the developing nations towards the affluent societies of the "northern" hemisphere (i.e., East and West Europe, North America, Australia and Japan).

The less amenable the hungry are to control by the powers of the "developed" world, and the better organized and diligent on their own account, the greater cause for "northern" anxiety. (5)

The inequitable allocation of resources among the people of the world is one of the primary deterrents to an improved standard of living for the poorer countries. The monopolization of 80% of the world's productive resources by 20% of its population is viewed by Hensman as an imbalance that must be corrected in order to further development of the Third World. He states, ". . . if the elimination of all that causes poverty is indeed the highest priority, one may have to be prepared to see the whole international order transformed and shaken up." (40)

Can the international economics be restructured along socialistic guidelines to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources? The prospects are dim according to Hensman, for the forces of anti-development are actively employed to guarantee the status quo. Thus, we arrive at the heart of the matter — anti-development — to which Hensman devotes over a third and the largest segment of this book.

Our discussion (of anti-development) is really about which group of persons does what in society, who rules, who is ruled over, what the system of production is, what it cannot be, what laws are in operation and whose laws they are, and whose values and interests prevail in practice. (86)

The disparity between affluent and poor societies is ever-increasing because an elite minority within both types of societies seeks to maintain that disparity. This is, to use Morgenthau's terminology, a "devil" theory of imperialism . . . a conspiracy of evil capitalists for the purpose of private gain."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace*. 5th ed. (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1973, pp. 48-49).

Hensman's inferences that the poor societies are naturally benign and the affluent societies naturally evil are absurd flights from a generally realistic approach. That ". . . the poor can make the withered life of the feudal, capitalist and imperialist wilderness bloom with new life and hope and perhaps, love" (203) is pure conjecture.

What then are the solutions Hensman proposes to alter the syndrome of increasing disparity between have and have-not nations? He proposes a three point program to eradicate poverty.

1. Confront or educate affluent masses as to the extent of poverty.
2. Refuse to cooperate with the machinery of terror, oppression and exploration.
3. Infiltrate the seats of power and restructure the development process.

Finally, "In the case of the United States in particular, complete isolation from the affairs of the Third World, which are properly the business of its people, would give a great boost to development." (286)

The complete isolation of the United States may not be feasible or desirable for the developing countries who are sorely in need of the exchange of technologies in order to advance at a more rapid pace.

The exhortations of this book detract from an otherwise hard-nosed, sensible evaluation of the economic realities of a world hard pressed for solutions to the seemingly unreconcilable disparities of "rich against poor."

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