

Third World, about 12 million will never reach their first birthday. They die of malnutrition or water-borne diseases compounded by lack of medical care. They will become part of our generation's record in history - in effect, the equivalent of two holocausts a year, even though we have the means in our world to end this disgrace and certainly cannot plead ignorance of what is happening.

As liberals, we know that such a situation cries out for reform. We know, too, that the problem is global and transcends national borders. That is why liberals of all nationalities have helped in building the framework of international institutions that are needed to tackle world-wide problems, and to allow countries to participate on a fair and open basis in the world's affairs. It is appropriate that one of the great liberal statements of this century is, in fact, the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, which sets out goals that should command our lifelong efforts: "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war; to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal right of men and women and of nations large and small; to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours".

From the continuing international issues, two relatively new questions have emerged as major challenges for the 1980s and beyond.

The most obvious is the search for a more just and equitable international economic order, one that will enable the developing countries to benefit from a larger share of the world's trade, technology and capital. Not surprisingly, the North has rejected the comprehensive blueprints for action presented by the developing countries, particularly the demand for establishment of a New International Economic Order.

It is not difficult to understand why the most economically powerful countries won't consent to radical restructuring of the international order - but as liberals we know that it is the law of life that conditions change, that institutions must evolve or perish, and that the international economic system, as set up after the Second World War, is not eternal and is not exempt from the need for reform. Indeed, we can see all too clearly that it is