

Visiting profs discuss world development

By GLEN ARGAN

On Sunday afternoon, UNB witnessed a discussion of some of the wide-ranging problems of development of the so-called Third World by a panel of distinguished visiting academics. Chaired by Professor Dennis Austin, a professor of Government at the University of Manchester, the discussion focused on the major areas of power disparity among nations, economic disparity and the maintenance of political stability within nations and in relations between them.

Dr. Saul Rose of New College, Oxford, emphasized that although there are certain interrelationships among these different factors, there is also a degree of independence. For instance, Japan and the nations of Western Europe are enjoying increasing economic power without vast increases in their military strength. Likewise, on the other hand, China has become a major military force without making a substantial impact on the economic scene.

There has been a significant change from the Cold War bipolar military system to one which has been somewhat confused with the addition of a new military giant, that is, China. The Third World countries have been able to use this confusion to their benefit, by playing one major power off against another in order to increase the amount of economic assistance they receive. As well, they have attained a collective consciousness of being a third force and have used this collective power to assert a united and significant role of their own in the "power game".

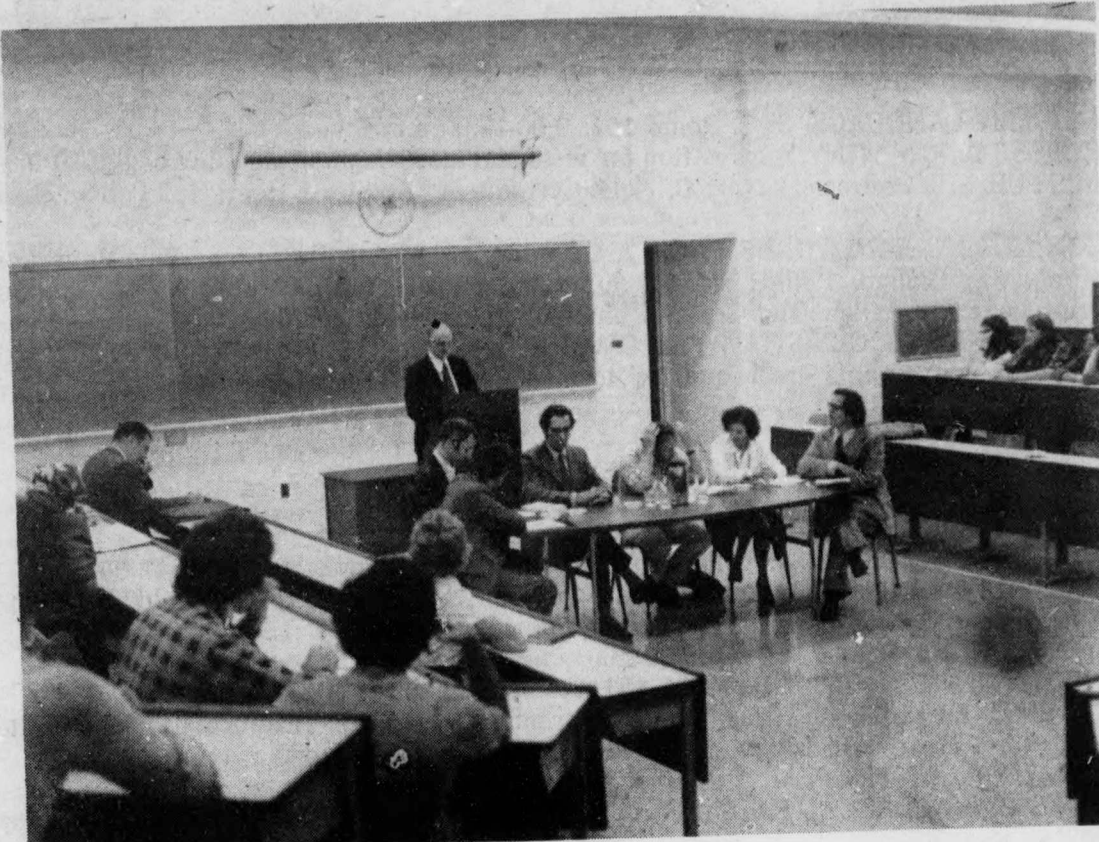
Valerie Bennett, from Boston University, went on to argue,

however, that the auction game mentioned by Rose is over. The American involvement in Vietnam taught the major powers that the costs of their involvement in the internal affairs of small nations may outweigh any possible projected benefits. Thus the developed world has a declining interest in the politics of the developing world. Consequently, the poorer nations do not have the same bargaining power with their rich beneficiaries now that they held in the sixties.

Dr. Bennett felt that although the U.S. probably would not tolerate a Communist Portugal, it could prove to be amazingly tolerant. Both the United States and the Soviet Union have come to feel that it does not particularly matter to them what type of government the underdeveloped nations wish to maintain.

John Essex raised a point which seems to challenge Ms. Bennett's thesis. The professor of Political Science from Northern Illinois University observed that at this point in time, the United States is much more dependent on imported raw materials than the Soviet Union. However, he spent much of his talk elaborating on investigations he has done which suggest that the Soviet Union cannot remain this autonomous forever and that they are at least beginning to seek resources in the Third World.

Furthermore he added that although the major powers may have a declining interest in chauvinistic sorts of military expansion, they are very intent indeed on keeping their lines of resource supply open.



Relations between developed and underdeveloped nations was the topic of a recent panel discussion at UNB. Distinguished academics from both sides of the Atlantic took part.

Donald Snodgrass, a Harvard economist, harked back to the earlier discussion by suggesting that if a new world order is emerging and the poorer countries are increasing their political clout, it is because power relations have been changing and not because there is a rising feeling of charity and brotherhood in the world today. He made the further point that issues such as aid, trade and investment cannot adequately be understood by economic analysis since they are essentially political

issues, issues having to do with power relationships. John Dunn, of King's College, Cambridge, attempted to show that the concept of 'political stability' has ideological roots. Political Science is essentially an American discipline and its key concept of 'political stability' "is an attempt to freeze world history through political analysis". When political scientists employ this concept they are not concerned with the stability that people feel in their daily lives but rather with

how to keep foreign government from "crossing the line" into Communism. And one of the factors in this sort of control has been the export of various "political fantasies" created by political science.

This highly-informative panel discussion moved into a more discursive vein with the question period where issues such as population control, American support of reactionary governments and other more specific questions were tackled.

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