

The non-aligned countries are deeply concerned about the prospect of a new division of the world. As President Nasser pointed out at the Cairo Conference last autumn, the pattern of division that is now emerging is between "a bloc of the poor and a bloc of the wealthy; a bloc of the advanced nations and a bloc of the developing nations; a bloc of the North with the rights of prosperity and a bloc of the South living in deprivation; a bloc of whites and a bloc of coloured". If we are honest with ourselves, as we must be, we are forced to acknowledge that this is something that is already in the process of happening. But it is a process which we cannot allow to go very much further.

Over the past 20 years, some 60 new countries have entered upon the world stage. We sometimes tend to assume that, when these new countries have achieved their independence, the international community can safely divest itself of responsibility for their well-being. This is a false assumption. It is false because independence does not in any perceptible way diminish the problems these countries are facing. On the contrary, more often than not, independence has accelerated the pressure for change and heightened impatience with the pace at which it is possible for the new countries to move forward.

Barbara Ward has put this point as well as it can be put:

"... let us have no doubt about this. So far, we have been living through the more comfortable phase of transformation in the under-developed areas; we have seen them during a time when their concentrated effort to get rid of colonialism gave them political unity and a sense of national purpose which they may well lack now that independence is achieved. Now that they are running their own affairs, all the grim problems of life face them in the raw: their bounding birth-rates, their lack of capital, their desperate poverty and, above all, the rising expectations of their own people. Every leader who has led his nation to the overthrow of Western influence or colonial rule is now faced with the stark problem: 'What next'?"

The main responsibility for providing an answer to that problem will, of course, continue to lie with the new countries themselves. But the international community also has an abiding responsibility to help these countries carry forward the process of development, to help close the widening gap between affluence and poverty. We have accepted that kind of responsibility in our own communities and societies and have devised the means for discharging it. Surely, in a contracting world, it makes good sense for us to accept an extension of that responsibility to those of our global neighbours who are in need of help.

This is something that is in our own enlightened self-interest. What we have to realize is that the development process in the new countries involves immense dislocations in the whole structure of society. We also have to realize that people in these countries are aware that conditions of life can be changed in this generation if the will and the resources to bring about those changes are effectively mobilized. In such a situation, failure to make visible progress will inevitably lead to frustration.