

Guns vs. Butter

Like disarmament, the issue of development has preoccupied the United Nations. A continuing series of conferences, declarations, strategies and programmes of action have carried out the pledge in Article 55 of the Charter to "promote higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development."

While it is true that a great deal has been accomplished to improve the lives of millions of people, it is equally true that deprivation and suffering are still widespread throughout the developing countries, which contain an ever higher percentage of the world's population. Behind the statistical shadow of income disparities, inflation and retarded growth, are hundreds of millions of individuals trapped by shocking neglect. Almost one-quarter of mankind lives in conditions of dire poverty.

The crisis of development has lasted so long that it has been blunted, despite the warnings from experts that international development cooperation is a prerequisite for peace and stability. The international commission headed by Willy Brandt, former Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, said that re-shaping world-wide North-South relations will be the "greatest challenge to mankind for the remainder of the century." Yet, in the North, we continue to be consumed by our domestic problems and regard with suspicion the global strategies advanced by the United Nations. Those strategies deal not just with the volume of aid but, more importantly, with the structural changes that must be made in the monetary and trading systems of the world.

It is the U.N. that has pioneered the study of the linkage between disarmament and development. In a three-year study by 27 experts from every area of the world, the U.N. demonstrated its breadth of vision in converting the arms of war into the machinery of peace. Headed by Inga Thorsson, Under-Secretary of State of Sweden, the group concluded: