

## DEVELOPMENT AND STRUCTURAL INJUSTICES\*

by Mr. Candido Mendes

If development is to be the new name for peace it must be primarily the social condition that can bring about the advent of Justice: a proportional relationship which ensures the "to be more" of all men and of the whole man. In the Third World this "to be more" is the result of an historical overcoming of what, in Latin America, Asia and Africa, appears to be a phenomenon of *structural marginality*. The establishment of this fact fixes the limits and reveals the obstacles that stand in the way of the "conversion of hearts" alone: it demands the recognition of the obstacles, of the vicious circles, of the distortion of the interactions which make underdevelopment a global *social fact*. This typical structure is fundamentally the result of the predominant role played by agricultural or mining activities in the so-called colonial systems of production, absorbing in the exports of "key products" the greater majority of the active population. The result is a nucleary occupation of land, the low income per capita of its communities and the fact that their populations do not have a significance as a real market.

What is the impact of such a structure upon the fulfillment of justice in the Third World? In the first place, it presupposes conditions of exploitation which, unlike at the beginning of the industrial civilization, do not suppose an effort of men but an economy of seasonal, abusive and waste employment, a basic lack of skilled work, the constant oscillation between the economy of subsistence and the economy of the market. It is the fate of a silent proletariat, which lacks social articulation or the effective power to assert its rights, and which characterizes as masses the majority of the people of the Third World who are not affected by the development and therefore whose conditions differ widely from those of the labour strata of the great society of the Nineteenth Century.

Such a system entails an unavoidable concentration of the wealth and advantages of traditional economic activity, which does not depend

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on the true assignment of profits to the various agents responsible for it. Due to the lack of productivity of economic activity, justice is wanting. Lacking are the functions of entrepreneur, the access of the labour potential to ownership, the rise of the middle classes. Profits become the results of what is pure accumulation — almost automatic — and which, furthermore emigrate. Thirdly, the structural conditions of injustice of these systems are the result of an excessive unbalance in the access of social services — from education to basic conditions of hygiene for housing. Such inequalities are due to the nucleary and intermittent occupation of the territory due to the classical expert oriented economy and to the lack of a real economic balance between the rural and urban sectors, experienced by the central regions of the West.

### FROM STRUCTURAL MARGINALITY TO PROMOTION

The elimination of structural marginality becomes therefore the "prios" of justice in the peripheral areas which underwent the world expansion of the great western societies. Development is the historical answer to this. It is thanks to the teaching of the Church that this overall policy of social change must be recognized as true promotion; as the condition of the redemption of the "to the more" of mankind from the mechanisms and systems, which have rendered essentially unequal the possibilities of personalization of man within his community. As redemption, development, represents a concrete and specific experience which depends upon the urgent implementing of certain tasks which as regards the economic, social and political order, can break with the structure that are responsible for the old system and bring to light the full interplay of social functions. It ties in with industrialization and with a new equilibrium in the distribution of the economically active population; with the social mobility caused by the deprolitarization of the community; with the glowing self-determination of political decision; with the feeling of group identity, which begins to perceive itself as the core of its destiny. In the same way all efforts for achieving development — from structural changes to education — become a regarding of the full content of its previous experience as now reprotagonized by the historical subject engendered by the ancient alienated community.

But the preliminary conditions that can bring about the advent of justice require, above all, in the greater part of the contemporary world, an assessment of the new challenges that the right to promotion faces.

In such an analysis it is particularly necessary to guard against the utopias and the myths that can distort the concept and the application of development, if this is still understood under the conventional category of "progress".

### DEVELOPMENT OF ALL MEN

Let us consider first of all the right to hope and to the real advent of a great structural change. The tragedy of the Seventies is the growing number of "non-viable" nations in the Third World. It is not only a matter of the widening gap between rich and poor nations. What is hypothetical today is the possibility of the internal and local forces to counteract the new systems of unequal relations within the planetary whole, which will be characteristic of the last twenty-five years of the century. The approach of the social teaching of the Church was still conditioned by the great hopes of the Fifties and by the possibilities of a predominantly spontaneous and evolutionary change. The real scene of the Third World today shows in the greatest successes of the last decade, cases in which national planning goes far beyond the framework of the classical State intervention. At the other extreme, the weight of the new international dependencies makes of development the result of an extreme effort on the part of a national will. Hence, it is easy to understand that the nationalism of the Third World does not bear the stigmas of a collective egoism but can in many instances, be the sole force that can mobilize a people whose demands for change will remain the only trump card in view of an effective change.

It would therefore be necessary to eliminate from the concept of "progress" all inherent faith concerning its unavoidable outcome. Hence also, the dilatory good-will of the rich nations, the delays and endless delays in international cooperation, on a plea of achieving greater effectiveness and perfection in planning. It is more the risk of the failure of development rather than its success that the signs of the times of the Seventies foreshadow. In order to respond to the right to hope, we should guard against that eschatological saturation that threatens the "to be more" message of man in the Third World.

Everything has been staked on the success of change. The struggle for justice requires however the possibility to be able to bring out from development, which is its normal support, the essential word of community personalization. This can be achieved — as the manifestation of an exemplary will — whatever the final outcome.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE WHOLE MAN

The right to hope; promotion of all men. What can be said of promotion as regards the right of the whole man "to be more"? The current experience of changes in the Third World warns us against the belief in the harmonious and simultaneous coming into being of the whole man, as implied by the concept of progress. The challenge that the Latin American, African and Asian countries must overcome is that of the new options which must be taken between the alternative price to be paid for their changes; economic development or participation; democracy resulting often in economic stagnation; localized development as opposed to an effective social mobility; enclaves of prosperity in long-term strategies, which rely on rendering exclusively dynamic a number of economic poles.

How can we bring back to development its full wholeness and settle the limited alternatives of change which, today, have curtailed man's possibility "to be more"? The myth of the necessary simultaneity of all the shades and areas of progress excludes all answers. It would be futile to attempt to solve the problem by defending the primacy of a cultural development, understood as a quest—escaping into the past—for a collective identity which would be the untouchable residue of beliefs and ways of life facing the process of modernization that destroys group personality.

From this standpoint, the great lesson of our era is that there is no protection—similar to that of the preservation of nature in ecology—against the spread of the cultural worlds. It is in the tension of this influx, it is in the opening to this civilization in order to reach out beyond it that a culture is gained: a vision of the world; an active scale of values; a social memory that mobilizes, particularly when permeated with Christian dramaturgies, which, more than any others, can provide the symbolism of the renewal of man in history.

In so far as development has become the Church's word for the "Gentiles" of the affluent societies, she, as the Spouse of Christ, is herself called upon to concretize the advent of promotion. She achieves this through education, which necessarily becomes liberating; through community action and the new patterns she sets as regards individual and collective destinies. But it is above all through an awakening of awareness and the practice of the critical and prophetic action of her magisterium and of her testimony that she will turn development into a will and a freedom.