

those who share Dr. Dommissé's perspective—will likely condemn any reform proposal that emanates from the government of South Africa. They seem resigned to the view that significant change can occur in South Africa only as the result of some Fanonesque cataclysm. So while Dr. Dommissé takes me to task for my hopeful inclinations and ascribes to me and to *Worldview* the role of being apologists for a pseudo-Christian regime, it is his view which is the more manifestly un-Christian in that it dismisses the possibility of redemption and forsakes the hope of the perfectibility of humankind.

As for Dr. Dommissé's odd characterization of Christianity as a stalking horse for socialism, I find that no easier to accept than that socialism, as first conceived, was a precursor for the ghastly totalitarian regimes that today commit unspeakable atrocities in its name. I find nothing in capitalism in its worst forms that is more admirable than socialism in its most despotic guises. But in either case, I would encourage, rather than rebuff, regimes of either persuasion when they evinced even the slightest sign of atonement.

FOREIGN AID & REVOLUTION

To the Editors: Sudhir Sen's "Farewell to Foreign Aid" (*Worldview*, July, August) starts out so brilliantly but ends ever so lamely. The net impression of the piece is that foreign aid programs have failed because of "technical reasons"—the failure to adequately promote food production, the haphazardness of technical assistance and the inability of foreign aid officials to persuade the recipient governments to follow appropriate policies. The real problem is far simpler and far more difficult to solve.

For some countries economic development may simply be impossible because the ratio of population to agricultural and other resources is too unfavorable and the features which have permitted other densely populated countries to succeed—high political integration and a powerful sense of community—don't exist and cannot be created. In other places development may be possible but not without a drastic reordering of economic and political power. One mustn't forget that in every impoverished country there is a small group of people who are extremely well

off, and in almost all cases these are the people running the country, including the foreign aid program. Unless faced with a credible threat of revolution, these groups have no interest in making any changes which would threaten their prosperity, and there is little outsiders can do about this. Ironically, those countries in which the leaders are not the representatives of the wealthy tend to be Marxist oriented and therefore ineligible for United States foreign aid programs and those of international agencies which the United States heavily influences.

If economic progress is to be made in many countries, it must be achieved through internal revolution. If such revolutions occur and result in governments truly committed to the economic welfare of the poor majority, other countries can stand ready to provide capital and technical assistance.

Thus, for me, the problem is simple and rather hopeless, at least hopeless with respect to what outsiders can do about it.

Robert L. Bard

*School of Law
The University of Connecticut
West Hartford, Conn.*

Sudhir Sen Replies:

Prof. Bard's comments are an example of too much rush to judgment with a hasty embrace of despair. They are also tainted by a suggestion of "triage." Surely the foremost concern of the social scientist must be to find ways and means to salvage even those nations that are in desperate straits today, not to write them off on a priori grounds. The answers to the points raised by Prof. Bard can be found easily in my article, although he has brushed them aside as "technical reasons"; instead, he has offered some cynical reasons to uphold his belief that little or nothing can be done in most developing nations. They err on several counts:

1. The conventional view of the resource-population ratio is too static for this dynamic age. Thanks to exploding science and technology, the same resource base—land, water, minerals, forests, sunlight, and air—can support many times more production, employment, and income.

2. The worst problems we face today stem above all from one single root cause: We have applied modern science and technology in the developing nations to lengthen life expectancy and

have unleashed a population explosion, but we forgot to apply them to their plants and animals, which alone can produce vastly more food needed to support the mounting population. A belated beginning has been made in that direction. And we have already caught exciting glimpses of the enormous potential that lies buried in tropical agriculture once it is rebuilt on the foundation of modern science. This Scientific Revolution in Tropical Agriculture (SRITA) is the best hope of the developing countries, the engine of their progress.

3. Science-based modern agriculture—with extremely high productivity—can flourish even where the holdings are very small. This has been demonstrated in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and also in the private plots of China, Russia, and other "socialist" countries of Eastern Europe. Densely populated countries of the Third World, especially of Asia, cannot afford *extensive* agriculture. To maximize output per acre along with jobs and income, they must turn farming into a kind of gardening, or horticulture, with great emphasis on poultry, fishery, and animal husbandry.

4. By far the biggest task before the aid givers and the aid receivers is to spread SRITA with the utmost possible speed. For this there are two prerequisites: liquidation of feudalism, establishing an army of land-owning peasant families; and all-weather rural roads linking farms to readily accessible markets. Once these two conditions are satisfied everything else will tend to fall in the right place.

The "revolution" Prof. Bard speaks of can, in fact, be equated with effective land reform, defined simply as a land-to-the-tiller program. Can it be carried out peacefully? I have not the slightest doubt that in most cases it can, but a great deal will depend on the U.S. attitude. The United States served as the midwife for land reform in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, where it was eminently successful. But as the cold war broke out, it quietly shelved further reform on this front, embraced the feudal regimes as allies, and helped perpetuate an oppressive status quo. (Today, after almost four decades, we are witnessing the same wrenching struggle, this time in Central America. The fate of the land-to-the-tiller program drawn up by Roy Prosterman and his colleagues for El Salvador still hangs in