

BASIC HUMAN NEEDS . A STRATEGIC CONCEPTUALIZATION TOWARD

ANOTHER DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: 'Basic human needs' is presented as a concept of another development in contrast to the, until recently, prevailing concept contred on maximizing accumulation, fixed investment, growth of output and 'modernization'. BHN does not reject accumulation or growth, but it rejects their enthronement as overriding goals over socially determined needs. The paper also describes historical antecedents and rejected strands of the BHN strategy. It concludes that the essence of BHN is about needs and mobilization of workers and peasants as they perceive them. The BHN strategy rests on pre-existing national experiences. In refining it as a global concept greater analysis and understanding of actual practical national experiences is required. BHN is a politically viable strategy in some places at sometimes, but what the conditions of viability are and how they evolve over time and economic structural change is not clear. BHN should be articulated and promoted in specific national contexts where workers and peasants and their organizations/movements show interest in it.

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BASIC HUMAN NEEDS: A STRATEGIC CONCEPTUALIZATION TOWARD ANOTHER DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of society is man. . . to serve man there must be a social organization of economic activities. . . conducive to the greater production of things useful for the material and spiritual welfare of man. It may well be a function of society to organize and sustain efficient economic organizations and production techniques, even when. . . unpleasant and restrictive. Production is important to the extent it serves man and his interests as he currently sees them.

But production is not the purpose of society. . . When demands of "efficiency" and "production" override man's need for a full and good life, then society is no longer serving man, it is using him.

- Julius K. Nyerere

The state will not collapse because a planned quantity target has not been fulfilled.

- Mao Tse Tung

Development means liberation. Any action that gives (the people) more control of their own affairs is an action for development, even if it does not offer them better health or more bread. Any action that reduces their say in determining their own affairs or running their own lives is not development and retards them. . . it is of first importance to place a lot of emphasis on improving (the people's) conditions. . . The inherited economic structure which has kept many people out of the economic main stream must be replaced immediately.

- Mwongozo (Guidelines), TANU
(Tanzania Party)

I Basic Human Needs: Stratgic Ends and Means

Basic human needs as presented in this paper is a concept of development. "Another development" in contrast to the 1945-1970 concept of development centred on maximizing accumulation, fixed investment, growth of output and modernization.

As an organizing concept for a development strategy, basic human needs centres on human (primary community and individual) needs. It gives primacy of place to moving toward the satisfaction of those needs as perceived by workers and peasants. It rejects maximizing the rate of growth of productive forces, therefore denying primacy to accumulation. The sacrifice of a minimum decent (socially determined) standard of life for workers and peasants, either to provide the "incentive" for capitalist accumulation or the means to socialist reconstruction for the putative benefit of rather vaguely identified future generations at unspecific dates, is rejected.

BHN as a strategy turns on five broad target clusters:

- (a) basic personal consumer "goods" - food, clothing, housing, basic furnishings, other socially defined necessities, whether these are "material" or not (as, for example, a decent burial in the Chinese Six Guarantees.);
- (b) universal access to basic services, e.g. primary and adult education, pure water, preventitive and curative health programmes, habitat (environmental sanitation, urban and rural community infrastructure), communications (in both senses));
- (c) the right to, and reality of, productive employment (including self-employment) yielding both high enough productivity and equitable enough remuneration for each household with an able-bodied adult member to meet its basic personal consumer goods needs out of its own income;
- (d) an infrastructure - physical, human, technical, institutional - capable both of producing the goods and services required (whether directly via home production or indirectly through foreign trade) and of generating surplus flows adequate to finance the basic communal services and to provide for investment to sustain increases in productive forces needed to advance toward BHN fulfilment;
- (e) mass participation in decision-taking and review and in strategy formulation and control of leaders, as well as in implementation of projects and carrying out of decisions.

BHN is production oriented. Consumption transfer payments are very much secondary, not central. Emphasis is on primary redistribution - on income, assets, power. Separation of production and distribution is perceived as both theoretically unsound and practically non-operational. The productive employment need is therefore both an end and a central means. Without higher productive forces the goods needed to meet BHN will not exist. Unless they are involved in production, workers and peasants will not have the power to enforce a BHN strategy.

Indeed a characteristic of the "model" is that each of the main ends is also a means. In the case of participation, the end centres on overcoming alienation but the critical role played as a means is power. Mobilization to enforce the strategy and mobilization to release resources not otherwise utilisable because their central or centralized exploitation is impracticable (on technical or production relations grounds) are essential if a BHN strategy is to survive.

Similarly the production of basic goods is a means because it interlocks with full employment and participatory power. The evident way for rural communities/peasants to meet basic food needs (achieve an operational right to an adequate diet) is to produce it themselves.

Peasant households' and primary communities' ability to feed themselves increases their power vis a vis employers and bureaucrats. However, it often requires power either to enforce initial land reform and/or to prevent large landholder/bureaucratic demobilization and diversion of peasant efforts. The degree of reduction of inequality - and of what types of inequality - vital to the concept is not quite clear. For practical reasons relating to resource limits, as well as a belief that unlimited acquisition and unlimited inequality are wrong, ceilings as well as floors are needed. How wide the acceptable floor/ceiling range would be appears likely to be specific to country-culture-time-production relation contexts. Total equality and the present degrees of inequality of most economies are limiting cases rather than likely actual targets.

BHN embodies socially determined needs - the attainment or near attainment of one set of specific targets would be the cause for another, not for a feeling of arrival. Exclusion, inequality, comparative (not only absolute) poverty, are the basic "targets." This is a major divide from the "minimum material needs" school. It is to date obscured by the lack even of a hypothetical detailed BHN trajectory for a middle or high level of productive forces polity/economy (e.g. Mexico, Singapore, Sweden).

BHN is not - either in principle, in the conceptual formulations nor in the national praxes drawn upon - limited to material needs. A decent burial has little to do with production; universal adult education including consciousness raising is neither easily fed into a growth model nor self evidently politically stabilizing. The employment goal, at least to some proponents, rests on a belief that creative activity includes work and is not limited to leisure (and especially not "enforced leisure"!). Non-material goals pose difficulties in general presentations - quantitative parameters for participation are yet to be devised in any serious sense, the particular non-material needs of any society/class are unlikely to be plausibly aggregated at a global level except in terms of platitudes or of input costs.

Therefore BHN interacts positively and integrally with human rights in a way growth, modernization and accumulation maximization does not. Socially determined needs (of human beings individually and collectively) lead to rights to pursue and obligations to act in support of those needs.

BHN may offer a route to transcending the sterile dichotomy between "traditional" ("negative", "low cost", "individual") human rights freedom from torture - and "broader" ("positive"), "high cost", collective human rights - e.g. right to eat. The division at present obfuscates and obscures. The right not to starve is surely individual as well as collective. It can be stated negatively. In India (or Chile) with an overall food surplus it is arguable that fulfilling it would have a low real resource cost. The right to communicate is surely communal class and collective as well as individual. It is a positive formulation of "freedom" from censorship". The cost even in direct real resource terms (and much more in power and thus resource allocation impact) is far from negligible.

Human beings are human as individuals within a context of social relationships. Any need or right has both communal and individual aspects. Postive/negative is largely a matter of formulation. Cost is very much in the eye of the beholder or pocket of the payer. The traditional human rights add up to "freedom from repression." To argue that they cost no real resources is to abstract from political-economic reality. In Chile the cost of assured freedom from repression for workers, peasants, trade unions, peasant associations, the church would be total. To tell a regime or a class that its own demise is costless is a way to mystify the speaker not to convince the auditor.

BHN/human rights interaction has not been thoroughly examined. What dialogue there has been has tended to be in the context of basic material or minimum consumption needs strategies. Their failure to encompass the whole body of human rights (traditional or socio-economic) is clear enough, but so too is their inadequacy as a strategic embodiment of BHN.

The global inequality implications of BHN have usually been glossed over or set aside - particularly in papers emanating from international organizations - because they are so strikingly at variance with the status quo and with any plausible trajectory. Further many of the national experiences drawn upon have been operated rather separately from the international economic strategies of the states concerned. The international strategies of states committed to BHN domestically have concentrated on selective delinking (or more positively, national economic integration), exploitation of specific possibilities for marginal gains in the present international economic context, participation in NIEO type coalitions of states formed along international distribution of surplus (not national inter-personal or inter-class distribution) lines.

II BHN, Accumulation, Growth

BHN does not reject accumulation or growth. What it rejects is their enthronement as overriding goals. At one level this is simple realism. No set of national decision takers - capitalist or socialist - has ever literally viewed maximum growth or accumulation as a key goal. Certainly none has been indifferent to who controlled accumulation, what in particular was produced, how it was produced and distributed, who got how much. The maximum growth of GDP model always was a rather abstracted clerk's view of decision taking, not a worker's, a peasant's, a manager's, a bureaucrat's or a politician's.

However, the BHN strategic conceptualization goes further than this. It views GDP as an inadequate measure of human welfare because human nature is not such that full humanity can be achieved simply through material goods and services. Further BHN places a high priority on progress toward meeting the basic human needs of workers and peasants - especially those in absolute poverty - more fully today and on setting in motion a steady movement upward in BHN satisfaction even if this does reduce present growth and the possible consumption of future generations.

"Man does not live by bread alone" is a position consistent with a BHN strategy. Among the things needed is bread and the means to make it available more abundantly to more people. Therefore, in low or medium productive force level countries BHN does include growth - of particular goods and services, in particular ways for particular classes, communities, persons - as a crucial means.

In fact, many BHN national practitioners would contend that concentration on basic needs will increase, not decrease, growth. The empirical evidence does not refute them. There is no relation between inequality and savings or growth. While there is a statistical relation between investment and growth it is not a very close one. In many countries small farms yield more per acre than large and utilize surplus more efficiently in building up agricultural potential. Changing production relations and beneficiaries (as in some land reforms) can unlock productive forces previously unusable. Therefore, it seems unreasonable to argue that a BHN strategy would be likely to cause a radical decline in output growth overall or would be unable to sustain a more rapid growth of goods and services critical to meeting BHN goals.

The case of overdeveloped countries would be different. Change is clearly needed for transition to BHN. Equally the gaps - in participation, equality, productive employment, access to basic services and for not unconsiderable numbers, basic personal consumption - between reality and even approximate BHN fulfilment are large. Whether these can be bridged at present total output per capita levels by altering production and distribution has both political and time dimensions.

Politically imposing ceilings is easier if these do not require absolute reductions for large numbers. Therefore, while growth alone will never achieve transition, it may make it easier, even in economies with high initial levels of achieved productive forces per capita.

A failed growth strategy - what one has had in rich capitalist countries since 1974 - is not an acceptable "stable state" and in practice moves away from BHN. A transition to BHN at stable overall non renewable resource use and physical output levels must be planned and phased. Therefore, it may be that interim recovery to 4-5% growth in OECD economies is needed to allow the beginning of transition to "another development". To date no serious BHN articulation for a rich country exists - the "stable state" and ecology models are not articulated, do not face equality (or political power) issues squarely and have little worker or peasant support or appeal as now formulated. Even in their progressive forms, they are upper middle class intellectual constructs of a return to a neo-Arcadia that never was; in the "limits to growth" variants they are objectively "what we have we hold" rationalizations.

III Historical Antecedents: Intellectual and Operational

Basic Human Needs as a concept was not invented in a vacuum by the technical paper writers and consultants for the ILO's World Employment Conference, even though that Conference was one of the first occasions at which the concept was discussed in its present terminology in a major forum. Like any other concept, it represents reordering existing elements in a new pattern as well as adding newer ones. Main strands influencing the emergence of BHN strategic or strategic component conceptualization included:

1. The Indian (e.g. K. N. Raj, B. Minhas) basic and minimum needs work of the 1960's, including the studies of differences in needs fulfillment not directly correlated to average levels of productive forces and of attempts to design state action packages to enable communities to meet these needs as a central aspect in development strategy, plus related South Asian studies (e.g. those of K. Griffin, A. Rahman, P. Wignaraja).
2. The attempt to articulate an economic and pricing calculus more relevant to a socialist society's aims (associated with Kalecki and I. Sachs), i.e. what Minhas has termed the rejection of the Benthamite expansion of neo-classical marginalist economics into a general social model.
3. The "mass needs" debate, particularly in its Mahgrebin Egyptian form aspects centred on examining the limits of socio-economic reconstruction under Nasser and of those imposed by the initial (de Bernis) heavy industry centred Algerian strategy.
4. The Latin American thinking flowing from perceptions of the limitations and failures as well as insights of the basic ECLA "gapmanship" model (e.g. E. Cardoso) and the disaggregation of the dependence models to study detailed impacts on exploited and excluded groups as a foundation for constructing dynamic formulations (e.g. R. Stavenhagen, C. Furtado).
5. The interaction or contradiction of the New International Economic Order dialogue with that of Self-Reliance. Especially relevant was the perceived inadequacy of changes at international level without parallel or prior national strategic changes. In their absence, while interterritorial gain divisions might be altered, the excluded, exploited and oppressed in the periphery would be unlikely to be the principal beneficiaries.
6. The reaction against arguments based on Limits to Growth that world resource constraints required continued inequality (or even the aseptic genocide advocated by the "triage" theorists) and in particular the work of the Bariloche Foundation in creating a Latin American model to demonstrate the feasibility of meeting basic material needs in a brief time period if that goal were to receive top priority.

7. The attempt by the United Nations Environment Programme (and particularly by Maurice Strong) to develop an "inner limit" of minimum human needs as a co-constraint with the ecological "outer limit" in the development of environmental policy.
8. The World Bank's (and particularly Robert McNamara's) growing concern from 1969 on that the old development model excluded at least 40% of the World's population from its benefits, a concern leading to the "absolute poverty eradication" and "redistribution with growth" themes in IBRD with their associated thinking, speeches, analysis and - more modestly - programming.
9. The International Labour Organization's World Employment Programme, and the conversion of those most involved in it from a wage employment to a working poor, full productive employment (including self employment), equitable distribution focus.
10. A general revolt - especially by periphery participants but not limited to them - against intellectual overcentralism. One branch was a "revolt of the periphery" against Eurocentric intellectual paradigms, another a questioning of top down analysis which related only to central decision takers' and associated intellectuals' perceptions of reality, a third a rejection of economic reductionism.
11. The experience of several nations which did pursue strategies markedly unlike that of the old paradigm. China, Tanzania were central for the BHN advocates, Taiwan, South Korea for the more conservative Basic Needs, (or minimum needs) modellers. Sri Lanka has been a source of fascination but doubt for both, because its basic needs approach was largely non-participatory, curiously random intellectually, only peripherally linked to primary (as opposed to secondary fiscal and subsidy) redistribution and neither economically nor socially self-sustaining. These experiences were felt partly as experienced or observed by the other analysts. Like any such use the elements selected were not the whole of national experience and, on occasion, may have been based on misperceptions.

Of these influences, the last - actual practice - was, and is, probably the most important intellectually, and certainly operationally. However, the UNEP-IBRD-ILO strands occasioned much of the particular analysis and writing leading to the present form of the BHN dialogue. Because national terminologies are quite diverse whereas the international organizations/associated intellectual terminology is, or appeared to be, "stranded", the debate appears more international, European and global organization centred than it is. Tanzania, for example, has a complex ongoing dialogue on the nature and trajectory of its BHN strategy but largely in Swahili and, even when in English, using different terminology.

Rejected Strands

Three influences, often asserted to have been critical, almost certainly have not been (whether for better or for worse). Indeed, they were positively rejected by a majority of those involved in the early stages of the dialogue:

- a) the old European late colonial export model "community development" movement of the 1950s-60s, an approach seen as offending both against freedom (paternalism and Eurocentrism) and necessity (inadequate attention to the basic need of poor people to produce more);
- b) the social statistics movement - including "social cost/benefit" analysis. This has been seen as usually economic, always in danger of "black boxing" experts' value judgements as objective truth and usually ignoring needs as perceived by workers and peasants. "In fact measuring poverty in detail can often be a substitute for, or an excuse for not, acting in respect of perfectly visible needs.
- c) the more austere "alternative life style", "minimum throughput", "zero growth" forms of First World Environmentalism. They are seen in the Third World as relating to totally different objective conditions and as embodying some values (e.g. austerity for its own sake) the Third World and Third World oriented participants do not share.

A tension or a rejection is an influence. In that sense the foregoing trio were influences, but not in the more usual sense of having been accepted models.

IV Basic Human Needs and its Asserted Kinsmen

Before looking at variants of BHN as a strategic approach three self asserted kinsmen require mention:

1. "Minimum material needs" ("absolute poverty eradication") is an approach to limiting potential explosive pressures from the excluded; a means to satisfying conscience by technically programmed, means tested global charity; and/or a modern statement of the Ricardian-Marxian condition for maximum sustainable exploitation in the service of rapid and sustainable expanded reproduction. One variant is Nobel Laureate Friedman's negative income tax for a guaranteed minimum income, not that practicing Friedmaniacs seem to set much store by that device.
2. Technocratic "basic needs" models assume that the problems are largely management gaps within the elite decision taking groups interacting with lack of ability to grasp opportunities by "the poor". These may go beyond "minimum material needs" in a production/distribution sense but only on a "welfare state" basis. Politically they are naive: elite decision takers do not develop management for meeting basic needs because they perceive them as opposed to their (personal

and subclass) interests rather more than because they are unable to understand what is proposed. Workers and peasants lack power to enforce strategy on decision takers not so much because they lack consciousness to perceive that its elements can - in an altered context - serve them, but from an inability to break the repressive forces sustaining the existing context.

3. Social democratic "basic needs" models (e.g. Redistribution With Growth in its more radical moments) do begin to grapple with asset and power distribution but in a rather hesitant, incremental and individual case manner quite atypical of serious political economic paradigms or historic political economic structural transformations. This is true even of the more radical models - e.g. Bariloche - if they are conceived of as proto-plans rather than as destructive polemics against the present paradigm. Asset, institutional, income distribution, class power and state role elements are not built into these models. Their initial assumptions do not make clear what is assumed about these critical variables. The most rigorous reading of such models might be that of a call for "global Fabianism" (i.e. the ultimate strategic victory over revolution to be won by a series of planned tactical defeats on specific reform measures). That is unworkable vide Sri Lanka and Jamaica as national cases of the limits and costs of a BN by consumption transfers approach and actual global resource transfer levels as a comment on the international "welfare system's" inadequacy.

"Not everyone who saith Lord, Lord shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" and not everyone who says "Basic Needs, Basic Needs" supports the strategic conceptualization set out in this paper. The Roman emperors provided "bread and circuses" for the masses. Authoritarian regimes present "basic needs" programmes which seem modern variants, say "football stadia and black beans", "basketball courts and rice". Basic needs defined in material terms, delivered by a bureaucracy and planned by an elite can create client groups, demobilize mass groups, create new patterns of dependence. Brazil's public services programmes are an example as, from some points of view, is South Korea's relatively equal but highly regulated and outside programmed peasant sector.

V BHN and NIEO: Contradiction or Complementarity

BHN has been attacked as an attempt to deflect attention from the necessity of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) and advocated as the New National Economic Order base without which NIEO is probably unattainable and, even to the extent achieved, likely to reinforce national and transnational hierarchies and hegemonies even if it redistributes power among them. Equally NIEO has been denounced as an elite power game rooted in the growth, modernization, accumulation paradigm, and therefore inimical to BHN and advocated as offering a minimally just and equitable framework within which societies/states committed to BHN could more safely and easily pursue national and collective strategies and programmes. Part of the conflict is real, part is ambiguous, part results from lack of clarity as to what the participants perceive BHN, NIEO, NNEO, self reliance as being and encompassing.

Inherently BHN is consistent with - indeed a logical national base for - the NIEO embodied in the Charter of the Economic Rights and Duties of States. It is, however, probably inconsistent with the TNC led global integration model underlying the RIO Report. The minimum material and basic needs variants may well be purveyed as alternatives to NIEO. To do so in respect of BHN is hardly plausible given its emphasis on relative as well as absolute deprivation and ceilings as well as floors.

In the ILO/World Employment Programme context, a relatively full blooded BN approach has tended to attract progressive backing and a combination of lip service and critical comment from defenders of the status quo - not necessarily on strict North/South lines. In the UNCTAD context, attempts by Group B (capitalist industrialized economies) to raise basic/minimal/material needs issues have been challenged (not least by South BHN advocates) as deliberate divisive or diversive tactics. This is evidently correct in many negotiating contexts, e.g. a hard fibres agreement may be critical for NIEO (and for BHN in Mozambique and Tanzania); to assert that Brazil and Kenya (and perhaps India) do not place adequate stress on meeting minimum needs is either an irrelevance or a not very subtle effort to divide and rule. The latter interpretation is strengthened when Mozambican and Tanzanian BHN policies are criticized by the same states in other forums, indeed are contrasted unfavourably to "devil take the hindmost" type "competitive" incentive centred strategies in Brazil and Kenya!

The BHN critique of NIEO - particularly at the Manila UNCTAD - is based on a perception (which may be correct) that the majority of the 77 are interested in redistribution internationally more to prevent than to facilitate basic socio-economic- power structure changes nationally. To the extent that the means of redistribution sought include dependent integration - almost certainly integrally and inherently inconsistent with BHN - a real contradiction exists. Otherwise two counter arguments can be made. First, international redistribution tends to make any national or collective Third World strategy easier to pursue - including BHN. Second, more resources (and even more intensive dependent integration) do not self evidently bolster repressive, hierarchical, elitist politics (capitalist or other). Certainly OPEC did not save the Shah (nor destroy the Algerian revolution) and there is little reason to suppose the 1979 price increases will save the "Imam" Khomeini (or weaken progressive efforts to achieve social democracy in Venezuela and Ecuador).

BHN's International Economic Model

Neither the Old International Economic Order (now about a decade in its grave) nor the virulent New International Economic Disorder are contexts conducive to achieving BHN strategies. More equity, more resources, more participation, more room to manoeuvre internationally are clearly not sufficient conditions for BHN nationally. Nor are they always necessary conditions. But they are likely to be facilitating conditions for the success of BHN strategies in poor, peripheral economies and polities.

As the group of economic advisers to the World Council of Churches Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development put it at their 1979 Oaxtepec meeting:

it is not possible to consider the two spheres independently. The internationalization of capital and production, the expansion of the transnational corporations, the reinforcing of bilateralism and protectionism are only a few of the factors which are now remodelling international relations and imposing styles of development more connected to the needs of these relationships than to those of the respective peoples. The urgency of action toward the establishment of a NIEO is critical to national economic restructuring.

Similarly a commitment to BHN has definite implications for types of international economic relations sought. This is likely to be particularly true (as argued by Oteiza, Rahman, Flotto and others) in respect of South/South collective self reliance initiatives. If this perception is correct, it poses two problems and offers two potential advantages.

First, commitment to BHN is not conveniently clustered in adjacent states. That raises problems in articulating regional economic coordination which, on other grounds, is one of the more promising avenues of South/South interaction. Even the most progressive of the regional bodies - the Andean Pact - can hardly be described as a BHN venture; albeit, unlike laissez faire common markets, it has the potential to be supportive of national BHN commitments. Second, not all useful South/South bodies require a broad range of common national interests; OPEC is an obvious example. To test all coordination efforts solely on direct BHN promotion criteria would tend to obscurantism or mystification serving the status quo.

On the other hand, because BHN is rooted at the levels of production and distribution - not exchange - it should help overcome the faulty emphasis on exchange as an end in itself which has bedevilled economic cooperation theory and practice in the Third World. National and European integration has been based on production (validated by exchange) and its contradictions rooted in distribution (symptomized by exchange). Common market theory appears on reflection to have chosen the worst possible starting point for understanding or influencing the process (a mistake the great integrationist writers such as Liszt, Hamilton, Smith, Ricardo and Marx notably did not make).

Further, a BHN focus would concentrate South/South cooperation on concrete mutual interests more effectively pursued in common and probably on ones less dependent on TNC knowledge and physical products than either imitations of the EEC or "labour intensive, export led growth through integration" models. To quote Chairman Quett Masire of the Southern Africa Development Co-ordination Conference (sponsored by the Front Line States):

The Front Line States will identify areas in which, working in harmony, we can gear national development to provide goods and services presently coming from the Republic of South Africa and thereby weave a fabric of regional cooperation and development. . . We must ensure that the efforts of our people to achieve development, to meet their basic human needs, are in a setting which gives them the greatest chance of success. That setting is Southern African regional development coordination.

VI Problems, Possibilities, Potential

A conceptual frame and strategic focus for "another development" is needed. The old growth and modernisation paradigm is almost dead intellectually, and most of its operational supporters use it in the absence of an alternative, not from conviction. The last unreconstructed growthmen seem to be the official political economists of the Soviet Union.

Unless one is willing to accept a technocratic development paradigm centred on efficiency defined in physical output, distribution defined by a capitalist or a socialist corporate state, organisation defined in terms of hierarchical pyramids of "expertise" and participation defined as isolated individuals implementing directives from, and receiving benefits through, externally controlled institutions, then a concept and strategy akin to BHN are needed. This is not to argue that BHN as presently presented or understood is adequate.

First the concepts are still somewhat vague. This does not create a case for statistical poverty mapping at global levels as a way to elaborate BHN theory. BHN if it is anything is contextual nationally and pluralist in embodiment globally. Detailed, uniform physical targets at global level would deny that reality. Further - whether intentionally or not - they drain out the conflict of interest, struggle, production relations, class and equity elements which are at the core of actual national BHN efforts whether by Chairman Mao and Premier Chao, Mwalimu Nyerere, the late President Boumediene, Prime Minister Manley or the late Minister Pereira. They do not clarify, but mystify; they do not mobilize, but manipulate.

Indeed the next steps in refining the general global concept, should be greater analysis of actual, partial national experiences and articulation of coherent potential scenarios for states - e.g. Sweden, Poland, Jamaica, Venezuela, Namibia - whose decision takers, workers and peasants, show some real interest in a BHN alternative. Only with that data and experience can the general theoretical framework be made more consistent, relevant and intellectually rigorous.

Second, technical feasibility conditions have not been studied carefully either in general or in the states pursuing a BHN variant. One need not endorse a straight line growth path nor

deny that participation results in mistakes as well as successes to suggest that some of the details of Tanzania's villageization strategy or of China's cultural revolution - or least from 1972 on - were unnecessarily wasteful and damaging in BHN terms.

It is relatively easy to demonstrate that BHN strategies can make progress toward each of the main five goals and toward all at once. Defining limits, conditions, cumulative interaction, substitution among goals is much harder. In one sense it depends on context. For example, what is possible in China with a 3,000 year tradition and an equally long, albeit often interrupted, experience of a strong central state with an efficient, merit selected, decentralized bureaucracy is not possible in a much newer nation with a weak and short public service tradition and experience (and that a very centralised one) like Tanzania. What could be done by transforming production and redistributing existing capacity to earn income by changing production relations in a rich economy like Sweden is very different from what may be possible in a middle level of productive forces one like Namibia or a very poor one like Mozambique. Or as Amilgar Cabral of Guinea Bissau put it:

Our own reality - however fine and attractive the reality of others may be - can only be transformed by detailed knowledge of it, by our own efforts, by our own sacrifices. . .

Again serious study as to what technical, policy and resource possibilities limits are in actual national contexts is the precondition for more detailed general articulation and conclusions. Importing efficiency analysis from growth models will be useful only to a limited extent and in other cases may be positively harmful. Efficiency is dependent on goals - e.g. if one agricultural technology maximizes incomes of rich peasants and marketed surplus while another maximizes poor peasant income and food consumption, the real choice between them is on political, class and power values not on which shows a slightly higher rate of growth of total marketed and producer consumed output.

Third, political practicability and requirements are still very vaguely understood. Too many economists among the conceptualizers and too many international organizations who seek to take the politics out of political economy and political choice to avoid discord or conflict have achieved that. Fairly clearly a complete, violent revolution is neither necessary to embark on a BHN strategy (e.g. Tanzania), sufficient to guarantee one (e.g. Kampuchea), nor adequate to spell out the course of non-violent struggle once power has been secured (e.g. China). On the other hand, to seek to create BHN villages in a growth and modernization national economy or to create a subordinated BHN sector in parallel with a dominant capitalist one is unlikely to succeed in doing more than offering some social welfare unless there is a byproduct of increased open contrast and contradiction and of worker and peasant mobilisation leading to a broader revolutionary change (whether violent or otherwise).

Study at national level has been hampered by secrecy and public relations style optimism in official work, somewhat naive initial enthusiasm by sympathetic outside observers and apocalyptic criticism by other outside analysts who measure only the gap between goals and present realities without serious historical or dialectical study of trends and trajectories. This has costs to analysts and, more important, to national strategy implementation. In Tanzania the caution - e.g. in the 1964-76 reduction of the proto-capitalist farmer power base in relation to local officials and through cooperatives - used to avoid high levels of open class struggle clearly limited the ability to mobilize workers and peasants and also the speed with which resources could be redeployed toward BHN. On the other hand, in China after 1965, the levels and nature of political struggle - and especially their duration - would appear to have been not only unnecessary but counterproductive either for fulfilling the Six Guarantees or broadening the worker/peasant base. Such questions do merit serious analysis by participants and by outsiders.

Fairly clearly BHN - at least in part - is a politically viable strategy in some places at some times. Even post-Mao China has a strategy much more influenced by BHN than by orthodox Soviet growthmanship. Tanzania's Party held on to the BHN aspects of policy over the 1974-77 crisis at the known risk of national economic collapse either because it believed traditional economic salvation was as bad as collapse and/or because it perceived a retreat to inegalitarian growthmanship as political suicide. But what the conditions - both necessary and sufficient - are and how they evolve over time and economic structural change is not at all clear.

The full BHN strategy is one of struggle and not an easy unity of interests. It centres on a class and community based interpretation of human society not on an isolated individual one. In that respect it is in the Marxist and the revolutionary traditions.

On the other hand, the stress on present welfare of the excluded, exploited and oppressed and the dethronement of accumulation and growth from primacy among goals is anti-economistic in a way as challenging to Marxist as to Bourgeois economic orthodoxy. This challenge within the BHN strategy is not a romantic one - quite clear political, technical and economic thought and action are spelled out. Neither China nor Tanzania, Algeria nor Vietnam is a soft state. The African poet David Diop's reflection is appropriate to the formulation and achievement of BHN strategies:

That tree grows
There splendidly alone. . .
Is Africa, your Africa. It puts forth new shoots
With patience and stubbornness puts forth new shoots
Slowly its fruits grow to have
The harsh, strong taste of liberty.

Basic Human Needs is a conceptual advance toward understanding what Another Development would be and identifying the strategic tools for moving toward it. Ultimately it rests on pre-existing national experiences - in all of which politics not technical expertise, goal achievement not abstract "efficiency" is in command - and on their ability to survive, develop and be joined by others. Conceptualization can help as can identifying technical and political degrees of freedom and necessity but only in a secondary way. If BHN is about anything it is about the needs and mobilization of workers and peasants as they perceive them, certainly not about creating a playground for technocratic model builders or a new utopia for managerial, academic or bureaucratic Platonic Guardians. President Nyerere's Keynote Speech to the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development sums up the danger and the need:

If the people are to develop, they must have power. They must be able to control their own activities within the framework of their village communities. . . . At present the best intentioned governments - my own included - too readily move from a conviction of the need for rural development into acting as if the people had no ideas of their own. This is quite wrong. . . . people do know what their basic needs are. . . . if they have sufficient freedom they can be relied upon to determine their own priorities of development.

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