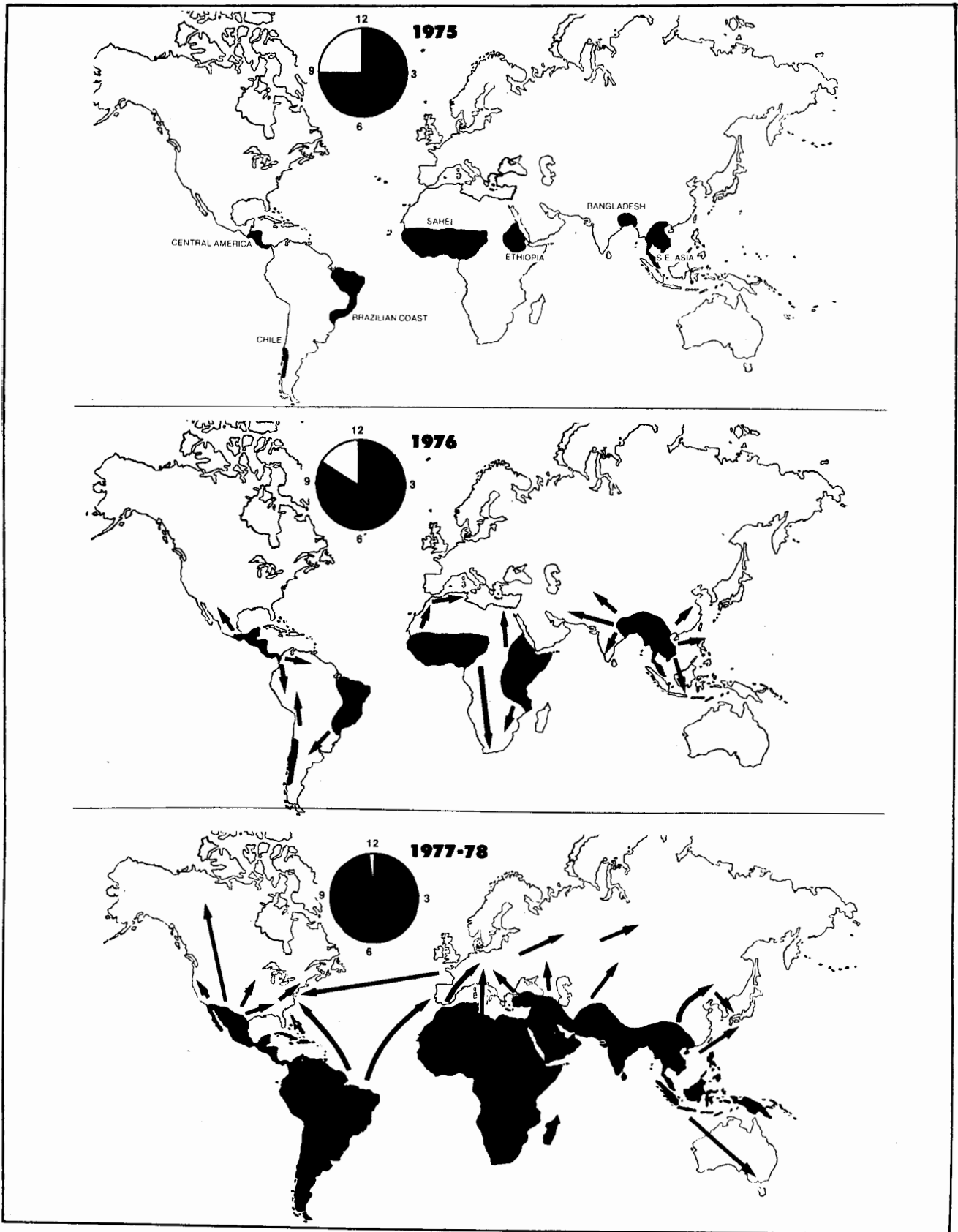


Special Feature:

Stopping The Holocaust



Part 1: The Approach of Ecological Holocaust

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In January 1975, the International Caucus of Labor Committees predicted that unless the current economic collapse was reversed, the world would suffer an ecological holocaust of irreversible momentum by 1979-80, a holocaust which would virtually wipe out the human race by 1990. The development of ecological destruction since that time has entirely confirmed the general import of that warning, and in fact showed that it was far too conservative. Today, we must say plainly that unless massive centralized investments to expand industrial and agricultural production along the lines of the International Development Bank are made, the process of ecological holocaust will be irreversible within two or three years.

The grim problem facing humanity at this time is that the growth of infectious disease and the general self-aggravating process of debilitation of the population cannot at any point be turned around merely by stabilizing or even increasing the standard of living. The Earth's ecology is now undergoing a process of **negative reproduction**. This is an exponentially accelerating cycle which not only increasingly destroys the very productive potentials available for stopping the holocaust, but continuously acquires a greater destructive momentum, increasing the amount of effort required to stop the destruction.

In broad outlines, this cycle of destruction, as described in January of this year and evidenced since then on a global scale is as follows: First, the looting of industrial production, agriculture and trade to feed the demands of a parasitic debt system leads to rapid contraction of production and consumption of all sorts, especially food consumption. Simultaneously, massive decreases in nutritional levels, the exhaustion of the population through speed-up and the collapse of municipal services such as hospitals and sanitation leads to rapid increases in disease levels.

The increase in numbers of diseased persons and the total mass of bacteria and viruses itself leads to an increase in the spread of disease, while the increasing debilitation of the diseased population increases the **rate** of exponential spread of disease. The working population's productivity is thus increasingly destroyed, leading to a further collapse of production, further collapse of nutrition, and so on.

From the standpoint of the ecology as a whole, the available free energy increasingly shifts from the process of the human-controlled and developed economy to the parasitic-destruction—ecological holocaust process and its mass of viruses, bacteria and pests. As this shift occurs, the amount of free energy necessary to reverse the ecological destruction increases, while the amount available decreases and the efficiency of use of this energy decreases even faster, until the point, or critical threshold, is reached where even the entire remaining economic potential of humanity, no matter how directed, is insufficient to stop the destruction. At that point the holocaust is irreversible.

The tremendous velocity with which a population can then collapse through the exponential spread of disease is illustrated by such catastrophes as the Black Death of the Fourteenth Century. Occuring at the end of a period of general decay of feudal society and the parasitic action of mercantile capitalism, the holocaust of that period took place in the space of a single decade. In 1339, the depression was triggered through the repudiation of debt by the English king, thus sending a wave of bankruptcies and collapse of trade throughout Europe. By 1343-45 the delivery of food to the overcrowded cities was disrupted by the mass bankruptcy of the feudal lords, resulting in famines in 1345 and 1346.

By the following year, the threshold of exponential holocaust was passed. Bubonic plague broke out in Sicily at the beginning of 1347, within months swept through Italy, and by the end of 1348, **more than half the population of Europe had died**. And this rapidity of spread occurred in a society far less integrated and with far poorer means of transportation than our own.

During the past year, the global ecology has rapidly approached that threshold. The "accident" of relatively good weather worldwide has led to a general stabilization, and even in a few cases, an improvement in the critical food situation globally, despite a drop of about 5 per cent in fertilizer consumption. But despite this relative stabilization, the past year has seen the breakdown of localized "weak links," such as Brazil and Bangladesh, where the threshold of exponential holocaust has already been crossed, either through local collapses in the standard of living or through the already accumulated momentum of the process. From these focal points, disease is spreading outwards, threatening to engulf within a year much broader surrounding areas. At the same time, in the advanced world, the killing speedup and destruction of services is rapidly preparing the preconditions for the spread of disease from the underdeveloped to the advanced sector and simultaneously destroying the advanced sector's vital productive capacity to reverse the process.

The Holocaust Focal Points

Two types of looting operations have directly led to the creation of the holocaust focal points—straightforward economic looting via debt service, as in Brazil, and the even more intense "Wallenstein's Army" phenomenon, of deliberate destruction through warfare of whole populations as a counterinsurgency tactic of Henry Kissinger and company.

Brazil is the worst example of the first process. Here the standard of living has reached such levels (40 per cent below that of 1964) that the ecology is undergoing a collapse which, if Brazil were left to itself, would be totally irreversible. The agricultural sector is so fragile that minor weather fluctuations have played havoc with food production and consumption. In July, a two-day frost was sufficient to wipe out large areas of pastureland for months, slashing milk production and destroying other crops. Food consumption dropped by 200 calories per capita. In a healthy ecology, recovery from such a frost would have taken a couple of weeks. But the Brazilian food-producing sector is already on its last legs. In the winter (July and August) this destruction was compounded by hail-storms in the South and flooding in the North.

Despite this further collapse of food consumption, the ruling Brazilian junta has used all available foreign exchange reserves for debt service rather than food imports. This disastrous drop in the already low food consumption, combined with a total lack of sanitation and killing speed-up has produced waves of epidemic disease spreading across the country. In March and April, meningitis previously at epidemic levels, rose to five times its 1974 rate in Sao Paulo and surrounding areas. The frightened government launched a massive vaccination campaign, managing to control the disease in Sao Paulo. But in Rio de Janeiro, meningitis then rose to double the year earlier rate. In the meantime, in the winter (July and August in the Southern Hemisphere) the North-east flooding brought with it a virulent outbreak of leptospirosis, a disease carried by the urine of rats. And over the last two months, the most horrendous epidemic of all, bubonic plague has rapidly spread out of its small endemic areas in the rural interior to within a few tens of kilometers of populated areas in the North-east such as Salvadore, the fourth largest city, with a population over one million. In one state alone, Bahia, the number of reported plague cases is more than that for the entire country last year.

The outbreak of plague is especially significant, both because the disease, spread by rats, generally occurs in epidemic form only among the most severely debilitated populations as the final phase of holocaust, and because of its tremendous mortality rates (up to 90 per cent in untreated patients). Wherever these epidemics have broken out, the feeble hospital system has broken down, unable to deal with the influx of patients into the already jammed facilities.

The creation of this focal point in Brazil threatens the rest of Latin America immediately, where the conditions are ripe for rapid expansion of the holocaust. To the South, in Argentina, real wages have dropped by 30 per cent in the last twelve months and industrial production has virtually shut down, dropping 70 per cent in auto. Chile, already devastated by the junta and quack economist Milton Friedman's austerity has likewise suffered a drop of 30 per cent in its standard of living. The government admits that major portions of the population subsist on less than 1500 calories per day. In Venezuela, the government has ended wheat supports, which will automatically price wheat, the main staple of the population, out of reach with a 425 per cent increase. To replace it, the government is concocting mixtures of manioc and platano, an extremely low protein combination compared to wheat.

Moving still closer to the U.S., the Central America-Caribbean area has been plagued by a drought for the past three years. Half a million people in the Dominican Republic are now starving, while President Balaguer is attempting to maintain international debt payments by stalling land reform and denying peasants farm credits. Epidemics of gastroenteritis and widespread tuberculosis have been reported in the press. The area of Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvadore, and Nicaragua has still not recovered from the devastation of hurricane Fifi last year, which destroyed the corn, rice, bean, and sorghum crops. Nearly three-

quarters of a million people are now facing famine. U.S. public health officials are warning that Mexican immigrants are threatening the U.S. population by bringing tuberculosis and other diseases across the border.

In the meantime, in Brazil itself, the junta this month slashed imports by 50 per cent to maintain debt service, an insane act which will only accelerate the destruction of the workforce and the population as a whole.

The second major focal spot has developed in Bangladesh. Here, despite the fact that there was good weather and a better crop than last year, disease levels have continued to rise. Cholera is now raging at a higher level than last year. The epidemic is expected to reach 150 fatalities per day at the cholera clinic in Dacca over the next three months. Since less than one-tenth of the actual number of deaths are seen at the clinic, the total deaths will number in the hundreds of thousands. The actual number of non-fatal but debilitating cases will number in the millions.

The Bangladesh epidemic directly threatens India, the traditional route of cholera out of Bangladesh. India now suffers the doubling of cases of malaria in the past year. Millions have been affected, again despite a good crop and relatively good food situation. According to Indian health officials the malaria is out of control because the government cannot afford simple mosquito eradication measures like insecticide. They estimate that an annual expenditure of only approximately \$20 million could halt the current epidemic.

Kissinger's Bands

Compounding this situation are the overlapping effects of the greatest and most direct threat of the ecology — Henry Kissinger. His wars are creating havoc world-wide. In Southeast Asia, in the after-math of the Indochina war, bubonic plague is spreading across Thailand toward the already disastrous situation in neighboring Bangladesh.

Waves of dengue hemorrhagic fever, a frequently lethal mosquito-borne disease of children, have inundated the area in the past year. Fulminant tuberculosis has increased enormously, as have the whole range of parasitic diseases, most notably malaria. Southeast Asia has traditionally been an origin of world-wide disease spread, as in the most recent cholera pandemic which began there in 1963 and has been rampaging over Asia, Africa, and parts of Europe ever since.

The same process is occurring in Africa and the Mideast.

In Angola, in the territory held by the CIA-created FNLA, municipalities are in complete chaos and there are no municipal services. The FNLA and the mercenaries sent from South Africa are living off the occupied population. In an attempt to export the destabilization to Portugal by relocating thousands of white workers, cholera has also been exported — 150 cases of the disease have hit the crowded refugee camps around Porto. Portugal, Spain, and Italy are all ideal breeding grounds for such diseases as cholera, shown clearly by the epidemics of the past two years in which thousands were hit by the disease, and will function, in a general holo-

caust situation, as the portals of entry and spread of disease throughout Europe.

In Lebanon, the deliberate chaos operation to cover for war on the left has resulted in the paralysis of Beirut for the past month: no municipal service, dead bodies commonly lying in the streets, breeding diseases, and warnings of cholera issued by health authorities. Water supplies are available for only several hours a day. Should a major war break out this will be the fate of the entire Middle East.

In Ethiopia, the much-touted World Health Organization campaign to eradicate smallpox has virtually been halted by a landlord's revolt against Fascism-With-A-Democratic-Face style land reform. The entire country is in chaos. Meanwhile, in the Ogaden desert area, the holocaust has already become irreversible. Last year's drought killed hundreds of thousands of people and destroyed 70 per cent of the cattle herd. This year's plentiful rains are having no effect; since there are so few cattle to graze, the population is still dying of starvation.

As in Latin America, the situation in Africa as a whole has been prepared for the rapid expansion of these pools of war-borne disease into entire oceans of holocaust. All of sub-Saharan Africa is malarious, affecting more than 100 million people. Virtually no control measures exist.

As in the Indian sub-continent and South America, a multitude of parasitic, bacterial, and viral diseases combine with malnutrition to produce a nightmare. The ease of oral-fecal disease transmission has been well demonstrated by the present cholera pandemic, which has spread over the entire continent. This year, Kenya and the Comorro Islands have been hit, with tens of thousands of cases reported. In Egypt, wracked by schistosomiasis, river blindness, and many other diseases, all staple foods are now rationed. A foreign visitor to Alexandria is allotted two pounds of meat per month! The rationing even extends to medication allotments for pharmacies.

The Advanced Sector

The advanced sector is rapidly approaching the same condition.

As was the case in 1348, Italy is a major portal of entry of epidemic disease into the advanced sector. The living conditions in Italy are hellish. In the past year unemployment has risen from 1 million to approximately 2.5 million, these workers coming predominately from the productive workforce of 8 million. In the impoverished southern region, the Mezzogiorno, the unemployment is over 70 per cent. Meat consumption for the country has fallen 25 per cent in the past year. The consumption of pasta, the staple of the diet, has fallen 35 per cent in Sicily. The worst drought in decades has resulted in water rationing in Naples, Palermo, and other cities.

The situation is exacerbated by the failure of the bankrupt cities to build aqueducts to take advantage of even the small amount of water available. Teachers are closing schools because they fear epidemics among the unbathed children. Twenty million rats now occupy Rome, five times the human population. The city employs a total of 70 people for pest eradication.

Nationwide, the hospital system is collapsing from bankruptcy and manpower shortages. In this context, salmonella, a diarrheal disease which can be life-threatening in untreated infants, is spreading at an increase of 35 per cent this year, affecting thousands. Fully 10 per cent of the population of Rome, or 300,000 people, are carriers of salmonella! One of the main sources of transmission is through the poorly maintained hospitals.

Epidemics of hepatitis and typhoid fever, associated with poor sanitation and sewerage facilities, have also been wracking the country. The rapid spread of the 1973 cholera epidemic through Italy only underlines the susceptibility of the entire area to enteric disease. Italy is now a Third World country.

Depressed conditions in the U.S. and Western Europe are now creating every necessary precondition for the massive importation of epidemic disease from the Third World. Real wages in the U.S. are down 22 per cent this year. In Europe they are down 25 per cent. A U.S. national nutrition study published recently showed that the average diet for persons over 45 is less than 2000 calories per day.

Workers in the U.S. and Western Europe are being unbelievably sped up. The New York Times happily reports that worker "productivity" is up 9 per cent this year. True speedup is much higher, due to wasted energy in inefficient overwork conditions. For example, if two workers are assigned to lift a 100 pound part off an assembly line, and the job is cut to one worker, he certainly works more than twice as hard!

Actual speedup is more than 25 per cent for this year alone. At the same time, many workers are working 60 to 70 hours per week, a return to conditions of 150 years ago. Precious leisure time for cultural development and education is becoming non-existent. In the auto industry, layoffs are outstripping production by a full 20 per cent. Industrial accidents, over one-half million this year, have risen at least 10 per cent since last year.

Municipal services are collapsing. A government report on water safety states that 25 per cent of water sampled nationally contains a "dangerous" number of bacteria, more than are permitted by government regulations. In New York City, even previous to the monstrous cuts now being contemplated to maintain the banks, rat control has been cut by 34 per cent, hospital beds by 14 per cent, child clinics by 15 per cent, and likewise for all other departments. Similar cutbacks are slated for Detroit, Boston, and other cities.

Immunization rates are incredibly low among children. Even the official statistics claiming 60 per cent unimmunized in the cities are low, because of large-scale non-reporting from ghetto schools to the surveys. The actual unimmunized rate in inner cities is 70 to 80 per cent. Epidemiologists are predicting outbreaks of whooping cough and diphtheria unless these conditions are reversed. The situation is even more advanced in Britain, France, and West Germany.

The rates of major infectious diseases in the U.S., such as tuberculosis, are showing a ten-

dency to level off after dramatic declines for more than a decade. The real potential threat of even indigenous disease was clearly shown by this year's encephalitis epidemic.

The epidemic actually affected hundreds of thousands, as shown by random blood samples drawn in areas of previous endemicity, yet only several thousand were diagnosed. These were predominately the old and the debilitated: in Mississippi, an area heavily hit, the average age of clinical cases was seventy. Others who typically succumbed to the disease were those with tuberculosis, diabetes, or other chronic conditions. In deeper depression conditions a high percentage of these hundreds of thousands from 19 states across the country, would have died or been severely ill.

Other diseases which are mild in healthy populations but killers in debilitated populations abound in the U.S. Infectious hepatitis, tuberculosis, influenza, even measles need not be imported from the Third World. Measles is the second greatest cause of the enormous infant mortality rate in South America.

But under conditions of worldwide economic collapse, it is far more likely that the advanced sector populations would succumb to the worst diseases rampaging through the underdeveloped sector, such as plague and typhus.

The Prognosis

The future development of the holocaust depends at this point entirely on political decisions. There are three courses ahead, depending on the actions taken by the working class, the socialist governments and by factions within the ruling class. First, the continued existence of the Rockefeller regime, in any form, will inevitably mean the continued collapse of production of all sorts through debt-parasitism. Second, a "compromise" policy of the type now beginning to be implemented by West European industrialists, an attempt to stabilize the situation through individual "three-way" trade deals and debt reschedulings. Third, the institution of massive centralized reconstruction through an International Development Bank.

In the first case, the food situation will deteriorate rapidly. A ratchet decline of the magnitude which must occur over the next six to eight months in advanced industry and trade if the current credit system continues to wreak havoc will lead to a drop of at least 30 per cent in the production of fertilizer and other inputs to agriculture. Under such conditions, per capita food production will fall by early 1977 by at least 15 per cent. This will bring over all per capita consumption to the levels of about the 1948-50 period and wipe out a large chunk of the nearly 35 per cent of all Third World food consumption which depends either on imports of food from the advanced sector or fertilizers and materials for fertilizer.

This would immediately push the entire world over the threshold of holocaust. The impact of such a drop can be partially judged by the last period in which food consumption collapsed to this level, in the late 1940s, when food consumption was 15 per cent below the depression level of 1938 (This is, incidentally, the same level we now enjoy after 40 years of capitalist "development.")

In that period in Britain, the death rate rose by 15 per cent while the birth rate fell by the same

amount in two years, putting the country on the verge of massive decreases in population. In India, caloric intake fell to 1700 calories a day, malaria swept the country and the net surplus of births over deaths fell by 30 per cent in a single year. While these areas hovered on the verge of collapse, actual genocide was already beginning in the more isolated areas of Africa. In Cape Verde, for example, the death rate rose in 1947-48 to 10.8 per cent yearly, with 20 per cent of the entire population dying in that period from famine and epidemics. Similar catastrophes hit Zanzibar and Madagascar.

Today, within a year, plague will be raging throughout Brazil and Bangladesh. Within another it will have spread into an unstoppable holocaust throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America (see map).

Cholera will spread from Bangladesh throughout the subcontinent and into Africa, followed by waves of plague from Southeast Asia. Plague and meningitis from Brazil will spread throughout Latin America. Typhus, malaria, and other diseases will combine in the onslaught. In the advanced sector debilitation from speedup and psychological demoralization will make the population more susceptible to tuberculosis, serious bouts of flu, etc. Municipal service collapse, especially sewage, will begin to make possible the mass spread of enteric disease.

At this rate, by the end of 1977, a general collapse of industrial production and the productivity of the labor force in the advanced sector will make the process as a whole irreversible, leading to massive epidemics in the advanced countries in 1978-79 and general devastation.

The second alternative, a stabilization of conditions through individual, decentralized trade deals, will provide only a grim future. Without massive centralized investment, production can at best be stabilized, since current industrial capacity is barely sufficient as presently organized to replace destroyed and worn out capital and machinery. World tractor production, for example, even at full capacity is barely enough to replace worn out tractors. Heavy capital investments are running enormously below that needed for replacement.

Under these conditions, the spread of disease will inevitably continue through its accumulated momentum, and at only a somewhat slower pace. Nonetheless, it can still be conservatively estimated that without massive increases in food production to rapidly increase resistance to disease, the merging of the present pools of disease into one global catastrophe, at least in the underdeveloped sector, will not take longer than three years. At that point, the subsequent collapse of the advanced countries, dependent on the Third World for all basic raw materials and fuels would be inevitable.

The only solution is the third course. If there is to be a humanity by the end of this decade, centralized development of world productive resources must be begun at once. A delay of even a few months will make the job much more difficult, since, at best, the real impact of such a program will not be fully felt for a year, by which time the flames of holocaust will have nearly engulfed such large regions as Brazil. A delay of a year will prove fatal. The critical period is now.