

The main solution to the problem of hunger and malnutrition in the underdeveloped areas lies in raising yields on land now under cultivation. This requires the introduction of modern technology, adapted to local requirements.

Increases in agricultural yields should take precedence over other considerations in Western assistance programs. Until these massive populations are able to feed themselves adequately, there will be little prospect for other improvement in their national economies. The West, in possession of the world's only significant surpluses of food and fiber, is in a position of strength and leverage.

Yet the West will not be able to provide enough food for the 300 million new members who will be added to the less developed societies in the next decade. Thus, the emphasis on Western assistance to these countries should be oriented to the development of agriculture and to an increasing interdependence of rural and urban areas. The alternative appears to be a continuing regression in the agricultural regions and arising opportunity for Communist inroads.

A critical factor in improving agriculture in the less developed area is the substantially expanded use of chemical fertilizers. To this end, large investments in chemical fertilizer plants throughout the area will be required. For example, the production of fertilizer in Africa and west Asia amounted only to 1.6 percent of the world's total in 1958; in Latin America, to 1.4 percent; and the Far East (excluding Japan), to 0.8 percent. In the same year, Communist Asia produced only 0.9 percent of the total although the U.S.S.R. and the Eastern European satellites did better with 20.2 percent of the total. This compares with fertilizer production in Western Europe amounting to 39.8 percent of the total; in the United States and Canada, 27.6 percent; and in Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, 7.7 percent.⁶

Transport and draft power also are critical factors. To meet these needs, the West would be well advised to develop an inexpensive, reliable, multipurpose, and multifuel vehicle. Such a vehicle not only would displace draft animals (releasing the land needed for their support), but also provide transport for the fertilizer and other requirements of a productive agriculture, as well as for marketing purposes. It would provide a sustaining economic relationship between the agricultural and urban areas.

⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, "The World Food Budget, 1962 and 1966," op. cit., table 24, p. 77.