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MEMORANDUM

Urbanization, Unemployment, and Unrest in the Poor Countries

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Urbanization, Unemployment, and Unrest in the Poor Countries*

SUMMARY

Cities are growing at unprecedented rates throughout the Third World. This process is fueled by twin phenomena: rapid population growth and strong rural-urban migration. The number of city dwellers is increasing much faster than the number of jobs available in the modern sector of city economies, hence unemployment (however it may be defined) is also rising. The most vocal, visible, and potentially destabilizing group of unemployed is the educated or semi-educated youth, whose expectations far outrun real opportunities.

For a variety of reasons, urban growth cannot be stopped or even much slowed. Agriculture (whether traditional, modern, or a mixture of both) cannot hope to absorb the growing number of people born to that sector; indeed there is mounting evidence that agricultural mechanization will greatly add to the numbers displaced from the land.

* This memorandum was prepared in the Office of National Estimates and discussed with appropriate offices in CIA, which are in agreement with its principal judgments.

What this inexorable urbanization will mean for governments, policies, and the socio-political balance in the poor countries is less certain.* It is likely to give rise to sporadic violence and to radical movements led by young, educated, and dissident revolutionaries. While such outbursts will be troublesome, and will absorb attention and resources, we think they will generally remain manageable at least through this decade. The speed and extent of urban growth, however, will probably unsettle social and political conditions more drastically over the longer term. We don't know whether there is a breaking point beyond which chaos ensues. If there is, the critical precipitating factors are more likely to be changes in attitudes and expectations than physical conditions of poverty and crowding.

* * * * *

* For the purposes of this paper the terms LDC's (less developed countries), poor countries, and Third World are used interchangeably to mean the non-Communist nations of Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Near East. We recognize that there are exceptions to every generalization made about such a large and heterogenous group. Unless such exceptions are deemed particularly significant, however, they are omitted for the sake of brevity. We also realize that many of the generalizations about the impact of rapid urbanization may apply to the developed countries too, but that is beyond the scope of this paper.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Cities have long been considered one of man's finest creations and one of the most unsettling and disturbing elements of the body politic. They have exerted considerable fascination for politicians and social scientists as the clearest expression of the personality and culture of a people, the nexus of political forces, and, since the industrial revolution at least, a mainspring of economic growth and development. In the past few years, the cities of the Third World have attracted the special attention of observers and planners concerned with the less-developed countries because they are not following the patterns accepted as "normal" in the now-developed countries.

2. For the past several decades cities of the Third World have been growing much faster than did most of the cities of the now-developed countries -- even in the heyday of their expansion. Partly because the number of people involved is so great and partly because of the poverty of resources available to support them, this unprecedented growth is worrisome. Some observers and planners concentrate on the extra burdens on social and physical services posed by the urban explosion; others on the problem of providing jobs for the growing number of city-dwellers; still others on the latent threat to social and political order raised

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by vast and expanding slums or shanty-towns filled with jobless and unhappy people.

3. The fact and causes of urbanization in the Third World are relatively clear, although statistics are notoriously unreliable.^{1/} Practically everywhere in the Third World, cities are growing 2 to 4 times as fast as the total population, even where a good part of the total population is already urbanized. City growth is fastest in Black Africa, the least urban of major areas, where annual increases over 10 percent are not uncommon.^{2/} Most Latin American cities are growing 5-8 percent a year, despite the fact that Latin America is already the most urbanized part of the Third World; less than half its people live in rural areas. Rates are similar in East Asia and North Africa; slightly lower in South Asia, especially in the very large cities. But overall, city populations are doubling every 10-15 years in the great majority of LDC's.

4. Such sustained and extraordinary growth rates are due to two interconnected factors: the population explosion in the poor

^{1/} Even the best of censuses should be considered only highly educated guesses, and good censuses are the exception. Most population and urbanization figures are based on spotty censuses, surveys, and estimates. The definition of city or urban area also varies widely. Nevertheless, the trend and general magnitude of urban growth are not in dispute.

^{2/} Estimated annual growth in the 1960's was over 11% for Kinshasa, Abidjan, and Niamey, for example, and over 17% for Lusaka.

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countries which began after World War II (see Table I) and widespread, apparently increasing, rural-urban migration. The natural growth of cities (i.e., excess of births over deaths) is not far from that of the total population: in some cases a bit higher because of the preponderance of young adults in the population and/or better health conditions; in other cases a bit lower because the sex ratio in some newer cities is skewed by large numbers of migrant males. In general, however, natural growth is 2-3 percent. Some small part of urban growth is accounted for by changes of city boundaries, e.g., a large suburb is suddenly included in the metropolitan count. But most of the remainder -- i.e., 2-7 percent is caused by in-migration.

TABLE I

ESTIMATED ANNUAL POPULATION GROWTH RATES
(per 1,000 per year)

	<u>1920-1930</u>	<u>1930-1940</u>	<u>1940-1950</u>	<u>1950-1960</u>	<u>1960-1970</u>
<u>World</u>	11	11	10	17	20
North America	14	8	14	18	14
Europe	9	8	0	7	11
Africa	10	10	15	23	24
Latin America	18	19	21	28	29
Asia	10	12	13	--	--
S. Asia				19	24
E. Asia				25	27
Near East				30	29

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II. MIGRATION TO THE CITIES

5. Historically, the developed countries also experienced prolonged and sizable movements of peasants to the cities, but the present Third World migration differs from earlier experience in several ways: the rates are faster; the numbers are much larger; and the economic transformation that helped absorb European migrants is not keeping pace. For example, population growth in Europe in the 19th century was under 1.5 percent a year, compared to 2-3 percent in the LDC's today. Thus growth of the labor force was slower* in practically all the developed countries at the time of their industrial revolutions, and the overall portion of the population in the labor force was considerably higher -- on the order of 40-55 percent of the total population -- partly because of the age structure

* *Estimated annual growth in labor force:*

<i>France</i>	<i>1820-1870</i>	<i>0.4%</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>1860-1890</i>	<i>1.4%</i>
	<i>1870-1920</i>	<i>0.4%</i>		<i>1890-1913</i>	<i>1.6%</i>
<i>Great Britain</i>	<i>1870-1890</i>	<i>1.4%</i>	<i>US</i>	<i>1850-1883</i>	<i>3.0%</i>
	<i>1890-1915</i>	<i>1.2%</i>		<i>1883-1914</i>	<i>2.3%</i>
<i>Japan</i>	<i>1913-1937</i>	<i>1.0%</i>			

Source: C. Clark Conditions of Economic Progress

of the population (which is heavily influenced by its rate of growth). That is, with relatively fewer children, there are proportionately more adults who can work, and the number dependent on each adult is less.

6. Still another, and perhaps the most significant, difference between the experience of the developed countries and the situation that now prevails in most LDC's is that, in the former, jobs for people in cities (especially in industry) pretty well kept pace with the inflow and increase in job-seekers. Where they did not, there were considerable opportunities for migration to the US and other lightly populated areas (Australia and Canada) where jobs and/or land were in better supply. These opportunities are not open to most of the people of today's poor countries.

7. Perhaps to oversimplify a bit -- today, in many LDC's, population growth is so rapid that (in comparison with 19th century experience) each worker must support more dependents, but has less of a chance at remunerative work. This situation prevails both in the cities and in the rural areas. The difference between the two, however, is such that vast and apparently increasing streams of people are moving from rural to urban areas.

8. Why do they migrate to cities which, to Western eyes, offer appalling conditions of life? Because, in their eyes, the alternatives seem worse. The city, even if it be a Calcutta, exerts a strong "pull" on the migrant. To this, in many cases, is added a strong "push" from rural areas where family plots grow smaller, landless laborers outnumber jobs available, or tenants are ousted in favor of consolidation of farms.

The "Pull" of Cities

9. A complex of factors constitutes the pull or attraction of urban areas for migrants. Perhaps the most obvious and one of the most important is income. Despite the rapidity of urban growth, there is nearly everywhere a considerable income differential in favor of the towns. Such data as are available indicate that the typical urban laborer probably receives an income two or three times as high as his cousin in traditional agriculture.* Scattered evidence plus widespread informed

* Clearly, direct comparisons are difficult to make and should be treated with caution. The number of dependents in each group is rarely known; the valuation of subsistence output raises difficult problems; the comparison of real incomes where life-styles differ considerably is open to objection. Nevertheless, the estimate of 2-3 times greater income for urban workers may be conservative; given the much higher differentials paid to skilled workers and professionals. Some country estimates are shown below: Rural per capita income in East Pakistan in 1963-1964 was estimated at 37% of urban per capita income; for Egypt in 1960, average income in urban areas was estimated at 4 times that of rural areas; estimates for India, Ceylon, Brazil, the Philippines, and Venezuela suggest it was 2-3 times as great in the early 1960's. One of the biggest disparities is found in French-speaking West Africa where in the mid-1960's, average wage earnings were around 10 times as high as average earnings in traditional agriculture.

opinion suggest that it is even widening in a number of LDC's. This income differential is widely sensed in rural areas. The migrant may be attracted to the town by it, even if he suspects he won't be able to get full employment, because even part time work can probably net him a higher real income than he had in the village.

10. Attractions, other than the hope of considerably higher income, play an important though still more difficult to measure role in the decision to migrate. They may be characterized as "bright lights and other amenities". They range from the general appeal of the bustle and movement of city streets, to greater (even though very low by Western standards) access to medical care and schools. Housing and water supplies in slums, though obviously dreadful, are often no worse and sometimes a great deal better than what the migrant left. Moreover, the very movement and change characteristic of the city sustains hope that conditions or opportunities will get better.

11. Finally, and of particular importance to a growing and increasingly volatile segment of rural-urban migrants, is the matter of status. Sample surveys of migrants in a wide variety of LDC's almost unanimously stress the low esteem accorded work on the land. This is multiplied many-fold in the case of those who have had some education.

Thus, almost everywhere in the poor world, people who have been through school expect, and are expected by their friends and families, to find non-agricultural work. All too often, in view of the jobs available, they expect white-collar work and are resistant to settling for anything else. But even among the illiterate and semi-schooled, farm work is usually considered (and quite accurately, too) hard and dirty work, with uncertain or precarious returns for much effort.

The "Push" from the Rural Areas

12. It should be emphasized that land hunger is not everywhere acute in the Third World. Where it is not, as in much of Africa and parts of Latin America, other factors, which are essentially the opposites of the "pull" factor outlined above, seem to constitute the push or repulsiveness of rural life, *viz.* income-differentials, the boredom and sameness of village life, the low-status and laboriousness of farming, the lack of modern amenities such as medical care, schools, entertainment, etc. These operate with particular force on the young and educated or semi-educated people of the villages whose schooling even if scanty has introduced them to city-oriented ideas. The focus of the schools is rarely or never on the joys of traditional farming or the simple bucolic

pleasures which prevail (if at all) only in the urban imagination. Thus, a huge proportion of boys and to an increasing extent of girls who have completed rural schools head for the city at their first opportunity.

13. Shortage of adequate land to support the growing population is probably one of the strongest (in some countries clearly the dominant) push factor in rural-urban migration. Despite the past and present exodus from agriculture of millions of people, in most of the Third World the number of people in rural areas continues to grow rapidly. Where little or no new land is available, the size of farms or the number of acres per head is falling and the number of landless peasants rising. This is particularly true for much of India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, which together account for a goodly share of Third World population, but is also true in Mexico, Egypt, and a number of other countries.

14. There is mounting evidence that the "Green Revolution" -- i.e., the modernizing of agriculture by using improved seeds, which require fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, and often additional water -- will, where accompanied by large-scale mechanization, constitute a strong additional push-factor in large parts of the Third

World. This is not surprising -- much the same thing happened in the developed countries -- but it could threaten the livelihood of millions who have no other skills and little hope of other work.

15. The overall impact of the Green Revolution is too complex a subject to explore here; suffice it to say that to the extent it stresses mechanization or labor-saving techniques at the same time that it promotes consolidation and enlargement of individual holdings, it will inevitably drive tenant-farmers and small-holders off the land. So far, the pattern is such that modernization of agriculture in the LDC's comes increasingly to resemble that of the labor-saving western model, even though in many cases labor is not scarce but over-abundant.^{1/} The western model works in the West, because it is shaped by notions of efficiency based on the implicit assumption that displaced labor can always find work elsewhere, and probably be more productive at it. Thus, to the extent that agricultural modernization adopts labor-saving methods, it will tend to push increasing numbers out of the rural areas in search of non-farm work.^{2/}

^{1/} One of the outstanding exceptions is Taiwan, whose agricultural modernization did not rest on mechanization but has nevertheless been very successful.

^{2/} On the other hand, if agricultural modernization is explicitly designed to avoid over-mechanization, it could increase the number of jobs and level of income in rural areas.

Outlook for Migration

16. Given the above -- rapid population growth, the enduring pull of the cities, and the likelihood of a much greater push from the countryside as and if the Green Revolution takes hold -- isn't the current wave of migration and resulting strain on the cities only a relatively temporary thing? Won't the rural areas soon be de-populated enough so that those remaining can be productively and happily absorbed by modernized farming? Unfortunately, no; at least not for several decades or more and not unless or until the growth of population slows markedly. The exodus is indeed likely to abate sooner in regions of considerable urbanization -- such as parts of Latin America. But where the proportion of urbanites is low, as in South Asia and Africa, and population is still growing rapidly, the number of job seekers outside the modern urban sector will continue to increase for a long time.*

* *Projections for Pakistan represent perhaps an extreme case: Pakistan (west) achieved a high rate of non-agricultural investment and output over the decade of the 1950's which allowed non-farm employment to grow more than 4% a year. If we assume it could continue to increase these jobs at this rate, and assume that population is growing at 3% a year (which is probably about right) even then the agricultural labor force would expand about as follows:*

1961	7.5 million
1975	10.1 million
1985	11.9 million
2000	13.7 million

Source: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics Research Report # 78, Karachi, 1969.

Put another way, for a fairly large sample of LDC's which had small industrial sectors, in the decade 1950-1960 industrial employment increased from 8 to 9.5 percent of those at work. If agriculture's share of employment continues to decrease at the same rate as it did between 1950-1960 in these countries, about two-thirds of the labor force would still be in agriculture in 50 years. Even in a country such as Mexico where less than half the population is classed as rural, even if one assumes fertility will decrease by 20 percent between 1970 and 1985, the rural population will still be growing in 1985 despite massive rural-urban migration.

17. Thus, continued rapid growth of most of the cities of the Third World seems inevitable for a long time. In theory, at least, the only things that could stop it (apart from one or more of the Four Horsemen) would be reduction of average income levels in the cities to rural standards; a rise in rural income and well-being sufficient to reduce or eliminate the attractions of the city; or possibly development of authoritarian rule sufficiently strong to prevent such movement. The first would imply serious deterioration in real income for most urbanites and, while possible, is likely to be resisted with every means the state can command. The second presumes an overall rate of economic development and

structural change far beyond what seems possible for most LDC's in this century. (In the developed countries, people are still being attracted to urban areas by considerably higher incomes there.) Even authoritarian governments like those of the USSR and South Africa have tried and failed to prevent rural-urban movement. Communist China may have succeeded more than others, if so, it is likely to attract much attention and emulation in this respect on the part of many LDC's in the next decades.

III. THE PROBLEM OF JOBS

18. Barring a major rise in the death rate, the labor force not only of the 1970's but also of the 80's is already born -- nothing that happens to birth rates in the 1970's will have a significant effect on the size of the labor force for 15 years or so.* A comprehensive projection of future growth of the labor force is shown below. These projections are if anything conservative, since estimated current participation rates were somewhat reduced to allow for more

* *The only variable is the rate of participation -- which varies widely according to censuses but probably would vary much less if the same definition of economically active person or members of the labor force were employed by all census takers.*

TABLE II

ESTIMATES OF GROWTH OF THE LABOR FORCE IN
 LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES: 1950-1980

(percentage rates)

	<u>Rates of Growth</u>		<u>Rates of Growth</u>		<u>Rates of Growth</u>	
	<u>1950-1965</u>		<u>1965-1980</u>		<u>1970-1980</u>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Annual</u>
Developed countries	17.6	1.1	15.8	1.0	10.0	1.0
Less developed countries	28.1	1.7	39.0	2.2	25.2	2.3
REGIONS:						
East Asia	30.7	1.8	56.5	3.0	35.3	3.1
South Asia ^{a/}	23.2	1.4	33.1	1.9	21.6	2.0
South East Asia ^{b/}	32.3	1.9	43.0	2.4	28.0	2.5
Middle East	31.8	1.9	50.4	2.8	31.3	2.8
West Africa	38.9	2.2	40.2	2.3	25.8	2.3
East Africa	21.1	1.3	30.8	1.8	19.8	1.8
Central Africa	16.0	1.0	19.4	1.2	12.9	1.2
North Africa	17.5	1.1	45.7	2.5	29.0	2.6
Tropical South America	48.3	2.7	55.6	3.0	34.7	3.0
Central America	52.0	2.8	62.7	3.3	39.1	3.4
Temperate South America	25.7	1.5	25.0	1.5	16.0	1.5
Caribbean	31.1	1.8	40.6	2.3	25.8	2.3

^{a/} Includes Ceylon, India, Iran, and Pakistan.

^{b/} Includes Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand.

NOTE: Excludes Sino-Soviet countries.

education and earlier retirement. But they illustrate forcefully the problem facing most LDC's. Their labor force will grow more than twice as fast as that of the developed countries, an overall increase of about 25 percent per decade. With the exception of temperate South America, the labor force in all regions will be growing considerably faster in the next decade than it has in the past two.

19. Where will this army of would-be workers find jobs to support themselves and their dependents? Clearly not in the modern, usually urban, sector of their economies. In most of the LDC's, this sector is so small that even if it achieved unprecedented growth rates it could not possibly absorb the additions to the labor force outlined above.* What is almost certain is a continuing and rapid growth of the under-employed and of workers in the traditional sectors -- farming, petty trade and services, for example -- where productivity and earnings are comparatively low. Income inequalities will widen, as in the past, and in each country the "rich" will get richer -- the poor in many cases will become even poorer.

* *By simple arithmetic, a modern sector (including industry and public utilities for example) employing 20% of the labor force would need to increase employment 10-15% a year to absorb the increase of a labor force growing at 3%; this sector would have to grow an additional 3% a year if productivity gains are taken into account.*

20. Urban unemployment is already worrisome to national leaders of the LDC's. Published estimates range up to 20-30 percent of the urban labor force in a few countries; 10-20 percent in many, but these figures are, at best, good guesses.* The relatively few surveys or censuses where unemployment in urban areas is fairly consistently defined are unanimous in finding a remarkable difference between unemployment in the young and in the total labor force as illustrated below:

URBAN UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

	Total labor force 15 and over		Total labor force 15 and over	
	Age 15-24	Age 15-24	Age 15-24	Age 15-24
Algeria - 1966	39.3	24.7	Venezuela - 1969	14.8
Ghana - 1960	21.9	11.6	Thailand - 1966	7.7
Colombia - 1968	23.1	13.6	Ceylon - 1968	39.0
Argentina - 1965	6.3	4.2	India - 1961/1962	8.0
Chile - 1968	12.0	6.0	Korea - 1966a/	16.3
Guyana - 1965	40.4	21.0	Malaya - 1965	21.0
Panama - 1963/1964	17.9	10.4	Philippines - 1965	20.6
Trinidad-Tobago - 1968	26.0	14.0	Singapore - 1966	15.7
Uruguay - 1963	18.5	11.8	Iran - 1966	9.4

a/ Non-farm households.

* Problems of measuring, defining, and checking unemployment figures are much greater than census taking. Definitions of "unemployed" may in extreme cases exclude any who have worked one hour the previous week, and usually exclude the discouraged who have given up looking for work. They would also exclude self-defined "students" or the idle, who may be numerous. In Puerto Rico, for example, a 1966 manpower survey found that the idle -- young men not at work, not in school, and not declaring themselves unemployed -- were numerous; i.e., of males 16-24, 106,000 were employed; 34,000 unemployed and 22,000 "idle". A sample survey in India found "students" accounted for 55% of males aged 16-17 and 26% of males aged 18-21, rates much higher than for Western Europe.

The young, in effect, can afford to be unemployed far better than can the older workers with dependents. In addition, in the few surveys where work experience was included, the proportion of "inexperienced" workers among the young unemployed was high -- in many cases over 50 percent.

21. Relative to the whole urban labor force, the unemployed tend to be better educated, especially where young and inexperienced people figure heavily in the total. The rate of unemployment seems particularly low among the illiterate urban workers -- only 1-2 percent in Asian surveys and rarely more than 4 and 5 percent elsewhere -- and among the highly educated. It is the middle group -- primary and secondary school leavers* -- whose unemployment rates seem to be highest. Similarly, the fragmentary evidence available indicates that this group tends to go the longest time before finding a job.

22. Only the young or the dependent can long be totally unemployed; those who have dependents must find something to do within a short time. It has generally been true that in the traditional sector some work is always available, if one is healthy enough to find it, either through job sharing or by accepting a lower income for a

* *Including both graduates and drop-outs who have had too much schooling to be content with low-status work.*

given effort. The armies of vendors, car guards, errand-runners, and beggars are earning something. They may work more than 60 hours a week for a pittance, but they are "at work". This helps explain the otherwise puzzling finding of some surveys that the migrants, including the young migrants, often have *lower* rates of unemployment than the city-born.

23. Thus, it would seem that the combination of a high-wage, high-status, modern sector in the towns which is the mecca of the young job seeker, with a level of family income high enough to maintain him in a prolonged search for suitable work, largely explains why open urban unemployment is so high. Further, such unemployment is likely to grow if these income differentials persist and if the number of school-leavers increases. Both seem likely.

24. Income differentials, especially in cities, are attributable more to government policy than to economic imperatives.* Governments everywhere in the Third World play a major role in determining

* *In this discussion, it must be remembered that with the exception of a few relatively rich Latin American countries, the number of wage earners in the modern sector is usually well below 15% of the total population. Thus, high wages have less of an overall impact on employment than on aspiration and popular perceptions of income disparities. To an economist, wage levels are "too high" where substantial open unemployment exists.*

wages, as major employers of labor and in setting minimum wages for the modern sector. Their policies, whether or not prompted by organized labor, are usually guided by some concept of "fair" or "living" wage high enough to meet minimum human need, much as the "poverty level" might be determined in a developed country as a guide to setting welfare or social security policy. Therefore, as prices rise minimum wages are usually increased. And since other wage rates in the modern sector are heavily influenced by minimum rates, they tend to rise too. Thus, the income differential between the modern sector jobs and those in the traditional sector is likely to persist, despite open unemployment.

25. It is almost certain that the number of school leavers will continue to increase rapidly in most LDC's. Nearly everywhere, great value is set on education; school enrollments are rising rapidly; adult literacy campaigns are also stressed. The number of educated people will thus outstrip the increase in white collar or other high-status jobs to which the school leaver aspires. Then, either the number of openly-unemployed will grow, especially in the cities, or a rising number of disappointed youth will be forced to take jobs they consider most unsuitable.

IV. THE EXPLODING CITIES

26. The rapid growth of cities can have far-reaching repercussions on the city dwellers themselves and eventually on government policies and organization. A large and growing portion of the urban population are relative newcomers, most of them young and more ambitious than their country cousins.^{1/} Many, probably most, live in squatter settlements -- slums or shanty towns that can spring up over night.^{2/} Pressure on urban services, schools, roads, transportation, utilities, etc., becomes intense.

27. The strongest concern about rapid urban growth and urban poverty is political rather than economic -- perhaps because raising the level of living of such masses of people is such an intractable problem. In any event, a number of observers^{3/} predict that chaos or violent revolution lurk in the streets of Calcutta, the favelas of Rio or the bidonvilles of North Africa. Some of these prophets stress

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- ^{1/} Throughout the Third World, rural-urban migrants are overwhelmingly young -- few seem to consider moving when they are over 40.
- ^{2/} For example in recent years, about 20-30% of the inhabitants of Mexico City, Lima, and Caracas lived in these shanty towns. Estimated rates are higher in cities growing even faster than these.
- ^{3/} Ranging from Franz Fanon to Barbara Ward and Robert McNamara.

the role of the migrants. Uprooted, frustrated, and hungry, they are seen as dry tinder for the sparks of rebellion and violence. Others see the newcomers to the cities as politically passive but expect that the longer-term urban dwellers or the second generation migrants will become so miserable and frustrated that they will eventually erupt and destroy their societies.

28. On the evidence of history and of present knowledge of cities -- these theories appear to be myths. In the first place, there is practically no evidence that migrants are especially violence-prone or politically radical.^{1/} More importantly, surveys of migrants as a group show they tend to be relatively satisfied. For one thing, their new life is usually more attractive than the one they left. This is particularly true for African migrants who, in most cases, could easily go back if dissatisfied. City life is usually not a shock to migrants; most have either visited the town or known someone who had. Most new arrivals are not isolated. Instead, very high proportions of migrants get help from family, friends, or employers in finding work or a place to live and in settling down.^{2/}

^{1/} *Indeed, what evidence there is seems to point in the opposite direction. In Calcutta, voting patterns in the migrant-dominated districts showed preference for Congress Party adherents in 1957 and 1962; similar "conservative" preferences appeared in Chilean elections. Studies of recent urban violence in the US showed migrants under-represented among the rioters.*

^{2/} *From 70 to 90% of surveyed migrants in Latin America; probably about as many in Africa, perhaps somewhat fewer in Asia.*

29. Even more startling, perhaps, is the fact that most migrants seem to find work quite quickly. A sample of recent migrants in Santiago, for example, showed that 40 percent got jobs within 2 days; 47 percent of squatters within the first week. Of course job finding is much more difficult for the educated young newcomer, as discussed above. But they tend to be supported, at least after a fashion, by family. In general, there seem to be lower rates of open unemployment among migrants, although they tend to get more of the lowest-level jobs and figure heavily in the marginal occupations like vending and domestic service.

30. As to migrants' reactions to housing, services, and the crowding and general squalor of the slums, most seem to find them at least tolerable.^{1/} Thus far, at least, there is little or no evidence of profound disillusionment or discontent among typical migrants to cities -- always excepting the well-educated young people in search of white-collar jobs.^{2/}

1/ From the burgeoning cities of Black Africa, to Buenos Aires and Baghdad, overwhelming percentages of migrants surveyed say conditions and opportunities in the cities are better.

2/ The often dramatic trials of this group tend to be well reported in the literature and this probably colors the general impression conveyed by many authors.

31. If migrants as a group show little tendency towards political radicalism or violent protest, what of the vast mass of longer-term city dwellers who eke out a highly tenuous existence in the traditional sector? If the migrant comes with low levels of political interest, considerable peasant conservatism or respect for authority, doesn't this fade after a long period in the city? There is little evidence one way or the other. Studies of voting patterns, urban violence, and the like do not yet include such detail. There are, however, a few studies which suggest that it is not the very poor or unskilled that are attracted to radical measures but groups a bit farther up the scale. Demonstrations in Calcutta are said to be much more likely to involve violence if they are based on the middle class rather than on the lower order of workers. A study of Parisian police records in the 19th century found that those involved in repeated incidents were mostly from the ranks of skilled workers.*

32. These findings, inconclusive as they are, tend to reinforce the general theory that trouble doesn't usually come from the very poor but

* *Studies cited by Joan Nelson in "The Urban Poor" from which much of this information is drawn.*

from those whose conditions are improving, albeit more slowly than their expectations. After all, the energies of the very poor tend to be fully absorbed with daily survival. Those at the bottom of the urban heap are so malnourished and sickly that they probably could not protest anything very strongly anyway. Moreover, existing studies of the urban poor indicate that most remain optimistic -- this seems to be true both for recent migrants and longer-term urban residents. Perhaps if conditions got steadily worse and the slum-dwellers finally lost hope of improvement, then their passivity would disappear. Within this decade there are likely to be a few cities in which such a deterioration of living conditions and loss of hope takes place.

33. Even then, it would require a demagogue of extraordinary skill to focus urban discontent on the government itself. The urban masses, like their rural cousins, tend to focus their anger and violence on local or immediate targets -- the bus conductor, the nearest policeman, etc. Rarely do they seem to connect national government policies with the misery they experience.*

* *For example, an Indian survey of urban opinion about a food shortage found that the poorest and most illiterate were least likely to blame the government. The best educated and best paid were the most likely to.*

V. SOME IMPLICATIONS OF URBANIZATION

34. But can we lean so heavily on past history and present evidence to predict that the burgeoning cities will not greatly affect political and social order in most of the poor countries? Probably yes, for the next few years. For the longer run, perhaps not.

35. On balance, we think that while Third World cities will continue to experience rapid growth -- in population, in unemployment, in misery and poverty -- they will not, at least through the remainder of this decade, give rise to revolutionary upheavals in political affairs. There will, however, almost certainly be sporadic riots and a number of reasonably well-organized radical movements designed to undo the existing order.

36. For example, numbers of discontented and educated young people will, at least at times, coalesce into political action. The Tupamaros of Uruguay and the rebels of Ceylon both tried to bring about social and political revolution although they got little or no support from the poor. While they failed, they had considerable impact on their governments and on their societies. Similar groups elsewhere are highly likely to emerge; some may be more successful.

37. It is the educated young, especially, who are apt to be most aware of income differentials in their society. They have the worst luck in finding acceptable work; their aspirations and expectations are far higher than their fathers' were. And if mass movements evolve to press for a bigger share of power and income, they are likely to be led by, or have a considerable infusion of, young activists.

38. The extra pressure on urban services that city growth will impose will raise problems for governments and induce many to focus on urban matters more than they have in the past. A few fortunate LDC's are likely to be able to improve the economic and social conditions of the bulk of their inhabitants, and achieve an agricultural/industrial revolution that gets them on the road to real development. Unless output and income grow far faster than expected, however, there is little indeed that most governments of poor countries can hope to do towards improving the lot of the inhabitants in the traditional sector of the cities.

39. Indeed, in a number of Third World cities, the condition of the urban poor is likely to deteriorate as ever more people seek to sustain themselves in odd jobs and marginal occupations. The result will be more crime and localized violence like that already present in Calcutta and a number of other cities. But such explosions

of misery and frustration tend to be turned inward, and to have the greatest impact on the slum-dwellers themselves.

40. The most likely government response both to unrest directed at political change and to the sporadic violence that spills out of the slums would be a marked improvement in existing means of repression. Police forces will be enlarged and made more efficient; ruthless measures will seem increasingly justified to the supporters of the existing order. In general, governments in the Third World will tend to become more authoritarian.

41. Such efforts as LDC governments make either to improve conditions in their cities or to suppress violent groups in them will of necessity divert funds, which may hinder constructive change in the direction of modernization. Yet, by and large, these measures are likely to keep the situation manageable and have relatively little impact on other government policies -- except perhaps to intensify the search for economic and technical aid.

42. But what of the longer run? Can we expect the Third World's cities to remain generally manageable? Or are the prophets of chaos, disintegration, and violent revolution on the right track? We simply

don't know if -- or when -- there is a breaking point. If there is, if at some level of misery things fall apart, the elements most likely to play a precipitating role are attitudes and expectations not physical conditions and poverty.

43. The most significant differences between the past-and-present urban situation, and that which is likely to evolve over the longer run, appear to be (1) the wider and more rapid spread of information -- only a small segment of the urban poor is entirely unreached by radio, for example -- which can unify opinion, raise aspirations, and induce politically oriented emotions; (2) the existence of an extraordinary number of educated and semi-educated young people who are finding a very wide gap between their aspirations and their real opportunities for status; and (3) the sheer weight of numbers themselves. When the size of cities and the number of the poor crowded into them passes some critical level, social reactions may change -- and change in unpredictable ways.

44. Evidence that any one of these differences between past and future developments is likely to bear out the prophets of chaos is scanty. We know very little, for example, about the impact of modern communications on urban masses (but authoritarian governments tend to

try to restrict and control the flow of information). Perhaps it serves entirely for entertainment and diversion, but it seems more likely that the level of awareness and sophistication about political events and governmental policies is higher in the city slums of today than it was in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Moreover, the notion that government is responsible for the welfare of the people is certainly more widespread now, even in the LDC's.

45. The spread of education which arouses expectations of change and improvement is already having an impact on the poor countries, especially on their city population, far greater than anything previously experienced. It seems unlikely that the increasing horde of frustrated, educated young people will remain amenable to tradition and customary authority. As and if they reject the social norms which have so far ensured a modicum of order and predictability even in the poorest and most crowded areas, the stability of the city could change drastically.

46. If the sheer increase in population leads to a considerable drop in individual income among the poorer segments of society, as it might, then the level of acceptance and optimism which has heretofore helped to preserve social and political stability could change. Where hope has gone, the unthinkable could follow. There

are a few intriguing studies of human and animal populations that have been subjected to great stress -- either from overcrowding or a radical change in their social environment -- which rapidly became asocial and whose whole way of acting changed. These populations generally disintegrated either into violent aggression or total inability to cooperate even within the family unit.* Such possible patterns of change may merit serious attention with regard to the longer run; it seems unlikely, however, that similar levels of stress will arise in Third World cities any time soon.

* See the recent study of the Ik in Uganda, The Mountain People by Colin M. Turnbull, 1972.

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