

Hunger threatens village life of Third World nations

Development efforts in most Third World countries have helped large, rich farmers get larger and richer, while small farmers and the landless find themselves in an ever-tightening financial squeeze.

The rich farmers have been able to take advantage of mechanization, cheap credit and new methods of agriculture to increase their holdings. Small plots of land have been subdivided repeatedly over the centuries, leaving them too small to feed families. These farmers, still dependent on primitive farming methods and hand-made tools, are rapidly losing their land.

Millions of farmers have been forced to move onto land that was previously thought unfit for farming. In Tanzania, for example, they have gone to the steep mountain slopes and to the desert plains. In Central America, they have

pushed into the jungles.

Third World people who still live on farms and in rural villages are in a period of transition. Not only has rural life not improved during the 1970s, but the gap between rural and urban dwellers has increased.

Sociologists in Indonesia have designed a method to measure poverty, using food supply as the index. Their conclusion is that while the number of poor has been reduced and living conditions in Indonesia improved, the number of "very poor" rural people has increased from 34 million to almost 39 million in the last ten years.

The style of rural living also has changed, with the small farmer working longer hours on marginal land to feed himself. Many have turned to small-scale

handicrafts, trading and outside employment to supplement their incomes. Often children of six to eight years are sent to work to help support the families, so 40 per cent or more of the village children do not attend school.

Traditionally villages have been close-knit with strong social systems, people assisting each other, but economists and sociologists feel the village structure in the Third World is weakening.

Subsistence farming, once the way of life for millions of Third World people, is failing to provide enough food for rural and village people and they are moving to the cities where they live in slum conditions, drawing off the limited resources of the underdeveloped nations.

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The Kwanzaa celebration that took place in Portland (December 26th through January 1st) was enjoyed by everyone who attended. Each day's pro-

gram reflected one of the Seven Principles of Blackness and ended with lots of . . .



music . . .

and dancing . . .

(Photos: Richard J. Brown)

Gates files for City Council seat

Only "Jim" Gates has filed for City Council Position 1, now held by Mike Lindberg. Lindberg was appointed to the position by the City Council subsequent to Connie McCready's appointment as Mayor.

Gates is strongly in favor of realistic and meaningful citizen participation in city government. "I am concerned about the absence of citizen involvement in the City Council's decision making," he said. "In the past five years we have seen a change. Instead of planning from the roots up, we are experiencing a trickle-down phenomenon. When in past years many of the programs and policies that have been most successful were planned by citizens and public officials, both appointed and elected, served as helpers and enablers, not as road blocks and adversaries."

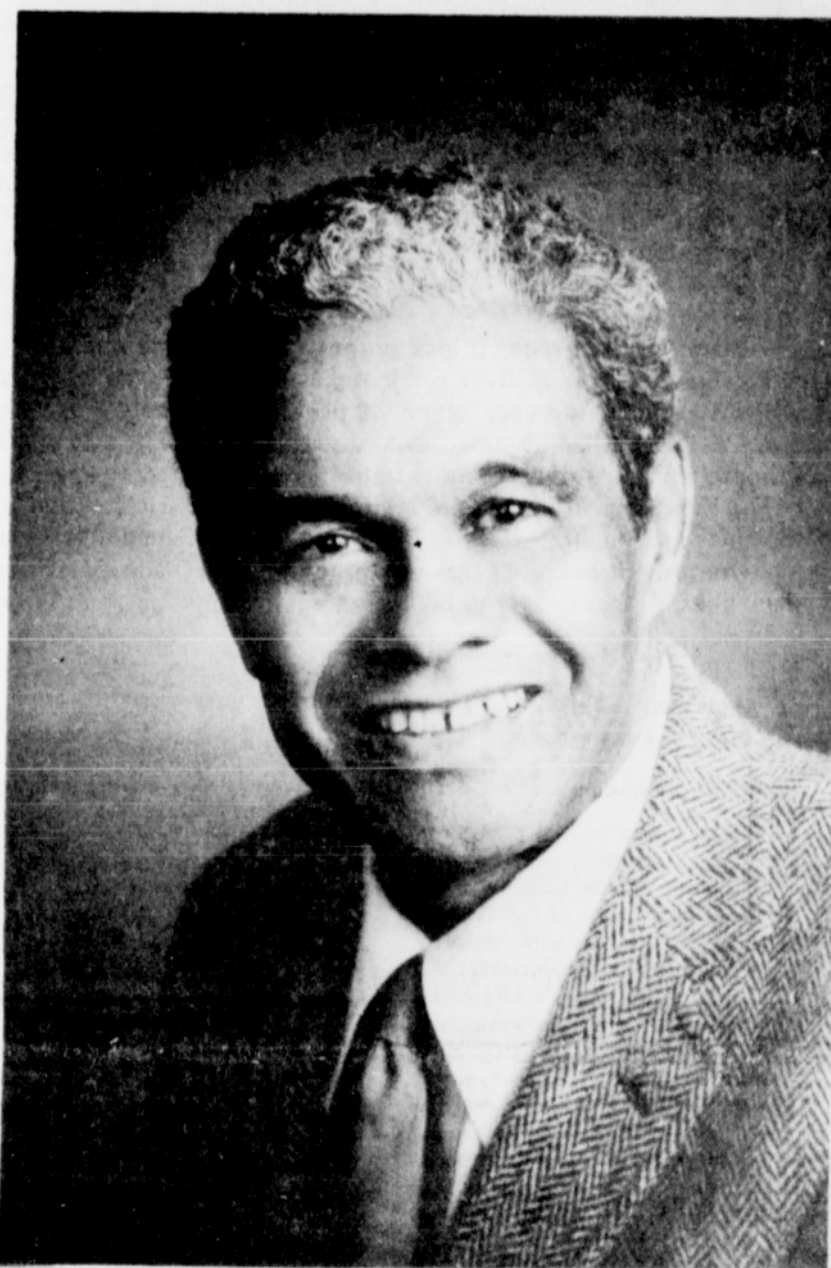
"Without true citizen participation, we have seen the size of bureaucracy explode, the cost of services skyrocket, while effectiveness has diminished proportionately. The city has become steeped in bureaucratic control and political indifference to the extent that it is virtually impossible to accomplish a routine task or solve a minor problem."

A prime example of the lack of citizen involvement is the \$100 million Cadillac Fairview Project which will take four city blocks in downtown Portland. "The City decided what to do, then asked citizens for advice on how to do it."

Another recent example is the shut-off of street lights. "In 1974 the people of Portland voted for Measure 53 which mandated the City to provide more street lighting for crime prevention and safety." Recently Lindberg proposed, and the Council adopted, a plan to shut off street lights to save electricity.

"This is a case where a vote by the people is being ignored. We all are for energy conservation, but the City must compare the advantages of conservation with the need for safety. At the same time, the Council voted to spend more money to hire more police to patrol the darkened streets."

"Once we reverse this trend then we can go about solving some of the problems and meeting some of the challenges that face us. There are short range and long range problems -- problems of the 80s and problems of the year 2000. We must revitalize our city's core area in keeping with community wishes and make it a more vital part of the city. There are other problems that deal with the quality of life and the livability of our community, such as health and safety, housing, transportation and



Only "Jim" Gates, executive director of the City/County Commission on Aging, has filed for election to Portland City Council Position One.

employment. We must concern ourselves with the financial stability of our city in light of inflation, the energy crisis, the retrenchment of public funds and other problems."

Gates favors the election of persons to fill vacancies on the Council. "With appointments we get people in office who are not selected by the citizens. Then it is hard to get them off. It is difficult to replace an incumbent."

Gates would like to see more cooperation between City and County agencies -- especially in the area of social services. "Overlapping services cause confusion and are ineffective and costly."

Affirmative action is another of Gates' strongest concerns. "There is a lot of talk and not a lot of action. I would like to see the people now in office put their records on the line.

How many minority people have they hired? I would like to know how many minority people my opponent has hired -- the bureau he has headed are among the worst in affirmative action."

Since 1965 Gates has been director of the City/County Commission on Aging and its predecessors.

Gates had previously been a caseworker and supervisor for the Oregon State Public Welfare Commission and Athletic Director for Fort Valley State College in Georgia and for the U.S. Civil Service in Japan. He received a bachelors degree from West Virginia State College and a masters degree from Columbia University in New York.

Gates is Vice President of the National Council on Aging as well as serving in a number of volunteer positions.

Modernization in developing countries topic

A two day symposium, "Culture and Economic Development in Developing Countries: The Impact of Modernization", will be held at Portland State University on January 10th and 11th.

Featured speakers include: Noel Brown, Environmentalist with the United Nations; Mazzi Kunene, UCLA Faculty; Robert Houdek, Director of the Center of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State;

and Dr. E.S. Atieno-Odhiambo, a Stanford University visiting scholar from Kenya.

The symposium is sponsored by Portland State University's Black (Please turn to page 2 col. 4)

New elitism emerges in American public education systems

by Sandy Close and Rasa Gustaitis

(PNS) Evidence is mounting that the American school system is in the process of a profound philosophical transition that reflects the economic face of the society as it moves into the 1980s.

Being abandoned is the long-held principle that the public schools' role is to provide an equal educational opportunity to all, in the service of an open democratic society.

Several separate but related developments reveal the shape of this new attitude:

--Programs for "mentally gifted" children are being expanded, while overall student performance, as measured by standardized tests, deteriorates.

--The high school dropout rate is at an unprecedented high in large cities with large minority populations, while programs to prevent dropouts shrink with funding cutbacks. Dropout rates have reached as high as 45 percent in New York City and 50 percent in Oakland, Ca.

--A movement to lower the maximum age for compulsory education is gaining ground among many educators and critics. Professor Robert Sipher at the State University of New York has gone even further, arguing that "the solution to the schools' problem is simple: abolish compulsory attendance laws and allow only those who are committed to getting an education to attend."

Such tendencies combine into an emerging "two track" school system

that separates children at an early age into those who will have a chance to pursue higher education and those consigned to a growing "under-economy" that requires little schooling.

All employment forecasts for what Herman Kahn has called "The Slobering 80s" indicate that the American economy will require a core of highly-skilled young people with the ability to handle complex systems and help the country maintain its technological edge.

But most future jobs, which will be in the service sector, will not demand much education or skill. Automation at the supermarket already makes it unnecessary for checkers to know how to add and multiply. At some fast-food restaurants, employees do not even

have to read: they punch cash register buttons marked with pictures of hamburgers, shakes and fries.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the fastest-growing categories in the years ahead will not require a college education. Clerks and office machine operators, lower-level health care and restaurant workers will be able to do the work expected of them with little more education than the basic 3Rs.

In that context, and in view of the citizens' reluctance to spend money on schools and children, the name of the game in educational policy is redistribution of resources: who gets what slice of the shrinking pie.

In New York City the Board of Education, faced with a deficit of \$35 million in its \$3 billion budget for this year, was told by Mayor Ed-

ward Koch that it would have to "eat its deficit."

School Chancellor Frank J. Macchiarola, reporting that 45 percent of the ninth-graders entering the city's high schools had left before graduation, said the problems was "staggering." He blamed the situation on lack of funds and the existence of an implicit "triage system" in which teachers tend to concentrate on helping those who have a reasonable chance of "making," rather than focusing on those who do not.

In California, when Proposition 13, the property tax initiative, hit the schools, remedial programs for potential dropouts were among the first services to be cut.

"We are increasingly becoming a stratified school society, with the af-

fluent going to private and select public schools," according to Samuel Halperin, director of the Institute of Educational Leadership at George Washington University. "You have stratification both by economics and by race," he added.

The shift in educational policy is illustrated by a recent book by Neil Postman, "Teaching As a Conserving Activity." Back in the 1960s, Postman and other critics stirred an intense debate on education by urging reforms for the sake of equal rights, freedom of expression, the right to individual and cultural differences, and improving options for the disadvantaged.

Now Postman claims in his new book, that he was one of those who had fallen into a utopian illusion by (Please turn to page 5 col. 3)