

BIOS AND DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

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We can perhaps define Biopolitics as the science underlying the policies to be implemented in order to maintain the continuity of life on earth. In this context, environment should be regarded as the most important subset of Biopolitics. With the emergence of the International University for the Bio-Environment (I.U.B.E.) and in developing prospective methods for this organisation, interest should now be concentrated on affecting early levels of education: primary and secondary schools where students are much more sensitive to the environment, life and the future. In fact, each individual at that level forges his or her character and determines one's ultimate priorities. I will therefore attempt to delineate the relationship between environmental issues and the business world.

At the beginning of the 1990s, we are witnessing the emergence of a new era of environmentalism. Rather than confronting the political decision-makers and the business world, this new form of environmentalism is eager to work with business and is seeking the best kind of cooperation. At the same time, we are also witnessing the rise of corporate leaders as the chief environmentalists of their companies. In fact, all of us are convinced that in the 21st century one measure of the degree of socio-economic development of nations will be their performance in conserving their renewable and non-renewable natural resources, in other words, in terms of their respect for their environment. I believe that the next century will be the era of highly qualified, well educated men and women who will be the architects of economical and technological developments, ensuring the rise of environment-friendly technologies and lifestyles. These men and women will not campaign for an industrialisation movement at any price. They will consider the environmental aspects in calculating the return on their investment. But I hope that they will be realistic enough to understand that a perfect world cannot be achieved, and that they will not hesitate to settle for trade-offs. Anyway, I am sure that their minimum standards will be much tougher than ours. On our way to this new era, we should not be obsessed with the idea that man is the absolute master of the universe. Instead, we should put at the centre of our philosophy the ideal of eternal reconciliation of humanity with nature, and with its long-standing equilibrium.

Since the beginning of humanity, the aim of man has always been to master nature. In the 19th and 20th centuries, following the industrial revolution, we had the impression that this struggle was over. However, our experience in the 60s and 70s has shown us that what we had actually won was a pyrrhic victory. Now we know that the struggle should be not to master nature but to protect and develop our natural resources and environment so that continuity of life on the earth can be maintained. Early explorers of this reality were the pioneers of environmentalism. But it took two decades for this movement to emerge in its present global and cooperative form. Furthermore, during the 60s and 70s, as far as the industrially developed countries were concerned, environmental protection was meant to protect the environment in their own countries. The solution was to export pollution in various forms to developing countries. In other words, they were trying to shift the burden of their environmental problems to developing countries where the public was not as concerned about environmental issues.

The 1980s was a decade of transformation. The egoistic tendency on the part of the richer countries is now slowly disappearing, thanks to two reasons—firstly, although developing nations are facing important economic problems and serious public education issues, they have become more aware of their natural resources and environment. However, the higher cost of building environment-friendly production units is now the dilemma of developing countries. The second reason has more to do with the influence of changing attitudes. With the possibilities offered by the information revolution of the 80s, "The World", as opposed to individual countries, is now the battlefield of environmentalism. The public in leading economies is now much more conscious of pollution in other countries. The success of multi-nations in environmental issues is evaluated in terms of their global achievements. Having environment-friendly production units at home, but not respecting natural resources and environment abroad, no longer saves companies from public pressure. "Track records" in this area are now kept globally rather than nationally.

As pollution problems abate in leading economies, the issue of developing economies will be more frequently on the agenda. I believe that in this decade we should seriously start talking of direct transfer of funds from leading economies to developing countries to cover the additional costs of environment-friendly production units. Business leaders of developing economies, who have benefited more from the communication revolution, should also try to influence the public of leading economies to create pressure for the transfer of funds on a project-by-project basis. In fact, it is not fair to suggest that developing economies sacrifice their campaign for a new sub-movement to influence public pressure groups in leading economies to exercise their power on their governments to ensure the direct transfer of funds to developing countries to cover the additional costs of environment-friendly production units on a project-by-project basis.

All of us know that the degree of industrialisation and the existing level of socio-economic development in leading economies is the outcome of the global colonisation of nations and their natural resources all over the world. The global environment problem is the outcome of industrialisation. Therefore, leading economies should accept responsibility and, in terms of the transfer of funds on a project-by-project basis,

should assist developing nations in their efforts to protect their natural resources and their environment. Business leaders of developing economies should assess the additional cost of environment-friendly production units and should insist on receiving the financial cooperation of leading economies, emphasizing the fact that this cooperation is an obligation of the leading economies. In other words, the business world of developing economies should accept the responsibility of procuring funds and should be at the centre of this new sub-movement. In fact, this sub-movement is in line with new tendencies of environmentalism in the 1990s.

If we evaluate the past performance of the environmental movement, we may conclude that at the end of the 80s, this movement is taking off. Business magazines and newspapers in leading economies are full of advertisements and articles concerning companies and even mutual funds trying to prove that they are "the greenest ones". A strong feeling that companies having sound environmental policies will be the best performers is becoming prevalent in the American business world. On Wall Street, environmental issues are no longer considered as just additional cost creating items, but regarded as issues showing some potential for profit generation. What we are faced with is an era of new environmentalism; more global than ever and in active cooperation with business.

In closing, I would like to conclude with a joke from the Eastern Black Sea region of Turkey. One day, a man from our region was condemned to die. Just before the execution he was asked to express his last thoughts. He quietly said: "This should be a good lesson for me."

References

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