

Brandt Commission tries for momentum

It's now precisely a year since the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, known as the Brandt Commission, completed its first phase of work with the publication of its report, "North-South: A Program for Survival."

In its first months, the Brandt Report appeared to gain extraordinary force as the defining document of a revived North-South dialogue. Its "promising proposals" were hailed alike by the "Group of 24" caucus of Third World nations at the International Monetary Fund Interim Meeting in April and the Venice summit of Western heads of state in June.

Yet ask many international policymakers what the Brandt Commission proposals actually *are*, and the answers are something like those of the seven blind men asked to describe an elephant.

The Commission was put together for precisely this quick-change-artist capability. Its heavy Socialist International component, headed by Willy Brandt himself, plays up "radical" calls for "transfer of resources" from the industrialized North to the developing sector South. Its New York and London banking component reassures banker colleagues that it's all a con game to get Arab petrodollars recycled through their own banks and the IMF rather than the alternative structure taking form around the European Monetary System.

The methods proposed for "resource transfer"—variously a tax on world trade, a new World Development Fund, or depositing Arab petrodollars in the IMF—are instruments of a neo-Malthusian world order to be ruled from "one world" supranational headquarters.

The selling job in the Third World has been run through three channels: the United Nations "one world" octopus; the Socialist International and its West German think tank, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; and direct "Brandt Commission" forums. These last, in Latin America, included major meetings in Brazil in August 1980 and in Colombia in October (cosponsored by Colombia's drug-legalization lobby). In March a Socialist International summit in Santo Domingo deployed Michael Manley of Jamaica to Cuba to get Fidel Castro's green light for the Brandt Commission effort—which he

got. A similar Socialist International conclave in late May adopted a "small countries' initiative" to apply Brandt Commission con games to Africa.

In Europe, the entrenched Socialist International apparatus has taken the lead, at the same time piping the report through its channels into the Soviet Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO).

On the U.S. side, a Council on Foreign Relations offshoot called the Overseas Development Council (ODC) was given the job of officially distributing the report. When publicity lagged, an elite directorate drawn from the CFR, the Trilateral Commission, the German Marshall Fund, and the ODC met in May and June to consider new initiatives. One of those under consideration was to directly hand sponsorship to the CFR.

North-South summit

One of the key Brandt Commission proposals was for a world heads-of-state summit to implement the Brandt agenda. The first task was lining up respected leaders from North and South to cosponsor such an event. During Mexican President López Portillo's trip to Europe in May 1980, Brandt, Palme, Austria's Bruno Kreisky, and the Second International's "inside man" in the Mexican government, Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda, all pressured the Mexican president to sponsor it, with Kreisky as his "North" counterpart.

After López Portillo's conditional agreement, Brandt, Kreisky and Castañeda convened a meeting of foreign ministers from selected countries to plan the next step. Mexico, Canada, Sweden, Nigeria, India, West Germany, Yugoslavia, France, and Austria were represented at the November gathering in Vienna. Mexico was selected as the site for a full summit. The time was tentatively set for June 1981. A further foreign ministers meeting will take place in March 1981.

But as the momentum for a summit has built, Brandt Commission control of the process has been slipping. As underlined by the López Portillo-Gandhi talks, the question of whether there will in fact even be a summit—and who will determine its content—is very much up for grabs.

In a press conference in New Delhi on Jan. 29, López Portillo repeatedly made references to "if the meeting occurs" and "should it be held in Mexico." The Mexican president has also repeatedly specified that it is *he* who will make the final determination of who is invited. So far, Indira Gandhi, France's Giscard d'Estaing, and Germany's Schmidt have all accepted invitations, and U.S. President Reagan promised he would give close attention to the invitation extended to him by López Portillo Jan. 5 at their border meeting.

If a framework of major technology transfer can be agreed upon, then the Brandt control could be completely broken.