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## English Files, Part 1

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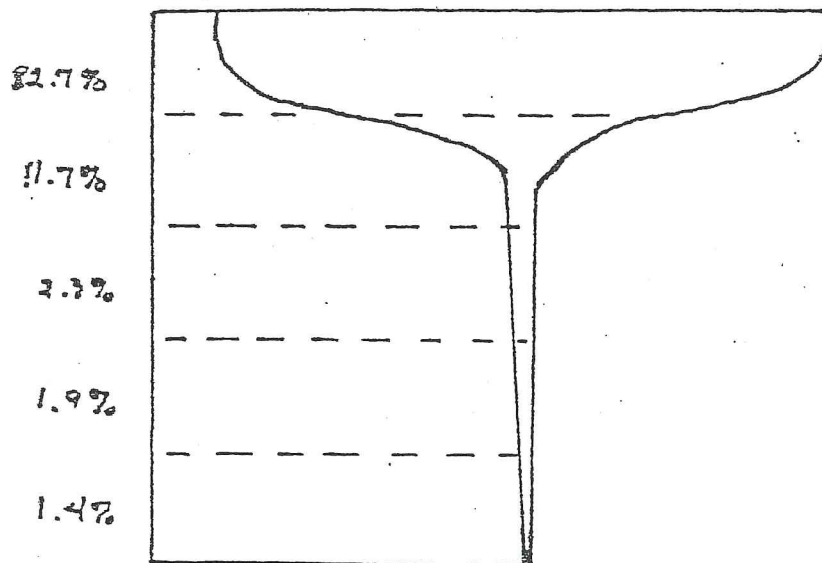
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## ACCELERATING POLARIZATION BETWEEN RICH AND POOR

The 1992 Human Development Report of United Nations Program on Development captured the attention of many through a visual analogy, a champagne glass. For many years the UNPD had been tracing the distribution of the prodigious productivity of the planet. A formula was devised to calculate the average income of the richest 20% of the world's population, the next richest 20%, on down to the poorest 20%. That year, 1992, the richest 20% received 82.7% of total income, and the poorest 20% received 1.4%. The richest 20% received four times as much as the other 80%. The champagne glass demonstrates this polarization, as those at the top consume or accumulate most of the champagne, and just a few drops get to the bottom, the poorest.



According to these figures, in 1992 the richest 20% received 60 times as much as the poorest 20%. The Human Development Report (Oxford University Press) for 1999 offers more current data and also comparative data back to 1820. The results indicate that basic inequality has been accelerating and continues to accelerate. This inequality means devastating deprivation for the poorest and increasing poverty for the majority of the world's population. The following figures are taken from that report (page 3).

In 1820 the richest 20% of the world's population received 3 times as much as the poorest 20%.

1870	7
1913	11
1960	30
1990	60
1997	74
1998	86

An additional note from the 1999 Human Development Report (page 38) indicates that the 200 richest people received in 1998 a total income of \$1,042,000,000,000, more than twice as much as in 1994. And this amount was equivalent to the total income of 41% of the world's population, i.e. about 2,400,000,000 people. In order to relate these data to real needs, the Report indicates that just 1% of the annual income of the richest 200 people would be enough to provide universal primary education to the entire world's population. It also states that the three richest persons have a total income greater than all the least developed countries together.