

EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES OF THE THIRD WORLD

- LES ECONOMIES DU TIERS-MONDE.* By DENIS-CLAIR LAMBERT. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1974. Pp. 411.)
- THE DISCOVERY OF THE THIRD WORLD.* By IGNACY SACHS. (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1976. Pp. 287. \$14.95.)
- DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DEPENDENCE.* By PIERRE URI. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976. Pp. 166.)
- EL PRIMER Y EL TERCER MUNDO: CONFRONTACIONES.* By MIGUEL S. WIONCZEK. (Mexico City: Sepsetentas, 1974. Pp. 223. \$10.00.)

The literature on Third World development is so vast and varied that no one can hope to know it comprehensively. Most of us, therefore, mine it selectively for our particular purposes in research and teaching; but occasionally, one takes the time to prospect in unfamiliar territory. Reading books in the field written by other than North American authors holds a certain promise of a different cultural perspective. However, while the four works reviewed here are interesting contributions, their merit lies more in their holistic view of the Third World than in a culturally unique view of development. While the North American academic community tends to analyze development in terms of periods, sectors, or problems, usually within the limits of a single discipline, European scholars—not unlike Latin American intellectuals (many of whom are of European descent)—typically think of development in more systemic terms.

In *Les Economies du Tiers-Monde*, Denis-Clair Lambert, professor of political economy at the University of Lyon, exhibits an appealing understanding of inherent divergences in Third World development. He begins by analyzing an initial condition of unequal backwardness, pointing to advantages and constraints that derive from differences in geographic, demographic, and cultural preconditions. From this base, he proceeds to categorize less developed countries into fifteen “great economic spaces,” referring to the few geographically expansive countries with large populations, and the remaining assortment of inherently less powerful smaller countries. His calculations indicate that the former category accounts for 70 percent of the Third World’s population and 67 percent of its combined “economic weight” by wealth, income, and other less tangible indices of social and political strength.

Thus, any preconception of the homogeneity of underdeveloped regions is dissolved. This theme is stressed throughout, eventually leading Lambert to the optimistic conclusion that “The Third World is not uniformly poor and backward; the economic progress accomplished has been considerable to which the emergence of new economic powers bears witness” (p. 392). Looking ahead to the twenty-first century, he expects the four most powerful countries of Latin America in terms of “economic weight”—Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Vene-

zuela—to decline in relative position with reference to China, Iran, and Rumania. India, currently in second place according to Lambert's ranking, would fall to tenth place. These are not conventional rankings and the projections of changes in relative position would not be intuitively obvious to most students of the available data.

In part, Lambert's reasoning is based on a rejection of theories of underdevelopment stressing imperialistic exploitation. Rather than viewing the economic importance of the Third World as a market for surplus production in the advanced capitalist countries, he contends that international economic relations are based on the importance of developing countries as sources of raw materials. When they can break the price domination of advanced nations, Third World nations will gain significantly in economic strength. Lambert's analysis predates the emergence of OPEC and it must thus be given some credit as being prophetic. Yet, he also sees the inability so far of developing countries to respond to changes in worldwide demand as a continuing constraint on their relative improvement vis-à-vis the capitalist countries.

Lambert goes on to argue that Third World dependence on the advanced nations is largely qualitative in nature. Having rejected the adverse terms-of-trade argument, he nevertheless maintains that technological transfer requirements and restrictive trade agreements combine to sustain economic and political dualism between these two worlds. He refers to this relationship as "stabilized dualism." Thus, for the future, Lambert foresees not only a continuing dominance of the advanced capitalist world, but also an emergent dualism within the Third World. Though he does not draw this conclusion himself, such a view of the future bodes ill for a realignment of international economic relations as envisioned by UNCTAD under the New International Economic Order. If Lambert is correct in his analysis, forces of friction in the Third World are likely to grow, undermining current efforts at fostering cohesion. His failure to draw this sort of forceful conclusion which his analysis would support, is the principal shortcoming of Lambert's otherwise thought-provoking book.

In comparison, Pierre Uri in *Development without Dependence* is far more forthright in his conclusions, which point in the same general direction. Uri, a long-time participant in the development of the European Economic Community, brings this perspective also to his analysis of the Third World. His first question concerns the apparent shattering of any bloc alignments in the north-south dialogue. His most poignant conclusion is that the equilibrium between rising costs of raw materials and rising prices of manufactured products, attained by the industrial world, "translates the whole surplus of oil producers into a deficit of the poorest countries" (p. 161). In his final chapter, Uri prescribes a formula for regional economic integration, drawing upon the European and Latin American experiences; the strength of his analysis, however, is more in its prognosis of chaos than in its prescriptions for escaping it.

The relatively short book is of the type that assumes the reader is already knowledgeable about the issues and facts underlying the analysis and can participate in their interpretation. Thus, this is neither a text nor an introductory work on development. Uri emphasizes the great diversity in conditions affecting

economic and social progress that one encounters in any serious study of the Third World. He offers no facile generalizations and yet he is—as his mentor Jean Monnet was always known to be—a perennial optimist who believes that somehow order will come out of chaos. Many readers will be less sanguine about the prospects of reducing international economic warfare (one cannot call it competition), i.e., in raising raw material and manufactured product prices roughly in tandem, in using foreign aid as leverage for the selfish political and economic interests of the so-called donor countries, and in failing to control the excesses of multinational enterprises.

Uri believes that solutions to pricing wars, aid manipulation, and exploitative investment can be found. He agrees that “united action is what is lacking today,” goes on to say that “it is absolutely necessary to regulate international concentrations” (p. 90), and identifies what he calls “bridgeheads” of constructive intervention and cooperation to clear tax jungles, reduce trade restrictions, and coordinate wage policies. The tentative steps, however, that are now being taken in Europe and the Andean Pact region to regulate competition—Uri’s sources of hope—do not strike one as very likely to be duplicated within the framework of the current north-south dialogue. This is the limitation of Uri’s analysis: he finds it “astonishing, even shocking and deplorable, that most of the responsibilities for the distribution of aid have not been entrusted to the developing countries themselves,” blithely contrasting this failure with the “statesmanlike” decision of the United States to let Europeans themselves under the Marshall Plan distribute the funds among the different countries (p. 57). Such facile comparisons between European reconstruction and Third World development have long been discredited as being superficial and misleading.

Perhaps the problem with Uri’s analysis lies in what Ignacy Sachs in *The Discovery of the Third World* calls “Europocentrism.” Sachs, a Polish emigrant, was educated in Brazil and India and is now a professor at the École Pratique des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales of the Sorbonne. He traces the concept of Europocentrism in a tour de force second chapter (28 pages and 114 footnotes) from its origins in Greek civilization to the colonial era, and views this historical experience as determining current European attitudes toward the Third World.

The European perspective, Sachs maintains, is most clearly represented in Joseph Conrad’s novels. In his particularly interesting third chapter, Sachs identifies a deep-seated racism in European art, and in his fourth chapter finds that this ethnic centrism on the part of Europeans is based on their fear of the unknown, a fear that remains a fundamental obstacle to learning what they would need to know in order to understand and work effectively in the Third World. A poignant summary of the author’s critique of what is wrong with the European perspective of the Third World is contained in a quote he attributes to J. J. Lee: “There will always be Eskimoes to instruct the inhabitants of the Belgian Congo on the best way to withstand hot weather” (p. 81).

After explaining some fundamental differences between politics in Europe and the Third World, including the distinction between populism in Latin America and fascism in Europe, Sachs traces the evolution (or the emancipation, as he calls it) of development economics from the deterministic models of Marx,

Schumpeter, and Harrod-Domar to the historical perspectives of such Latin American economists as Celso Furtado and Osvaldo Sunkel. While he admits that “the real work of putting the mechanisms of underdevelopment in historical perspectives is only begun . . . henceforth the simplistic hypothesis of the ‘development of underdevelopment’ solely through the action of capitalism will appear inadequate” (p. 149).

The second half of the book is devoted to Sachs’ own theoretical framework whose basic intent is to view economic development from the perspective of the Third World. While the intent is laudable, in its application the theory is still that of an outsider giving advice to the natives. With a moderate use of graphs and flow charts, Sachs dissects the concept of capital formation, ultimately rejecting it as lacking in analytical quality, when the basic question is what substantive goals a country seeks to pursue. The Keynesian aggregates of macro-economic policy and the determinants of economic growth, supply-oriented as they are, do not serve to identify consumer preferences. Thus Sachs’ model is one of first identifying national objectives in more specific terms than the reduction of unemployment and inflation and the acceleration of economic growth. He rejects the growth vs. welfare dichotomy and argues instead that general welfare-enhancing economic growth is possible if one begins with an explicit set of national goals, taking into consideration also the unique conditions of individual countries, regions in these countries, economic sectors, and population segments. The process of development then becomes a far more intricate one in theory than the simplistic growth models that dominated the field in the fifties and sixties. Unfortunately, despite copious footnoting of some of the earlier development literature, there are no references to the more recent welfare (income redistribution), basic needs, or food-first types of strategies that currently dominate the literature. Chapter 13, entitled “The Range of Policies,” specifically mentions only the need for agrarian reform and rejects family planning as a separate strategy, but otherwise disappoints the reader who somehow expected more from a book of great pretensions in its opening chapters. Like Uri, Sachs concludes with vague exhortations that things must change, but specific guidelines and priorities are missing.

Finally, in reviewing Wionczek’s book, *El Primer y el Tercer Mundo: confrontaciones*, one hopes to find the true Third World perspective that Sachs is advocating as the source of development policies. Yet, in this collection of fifty-two short essays—originally published in the popular press or given as speeches—the well-known Mexican economist is a mirror image of the three European authors reviewed above. Here one finds the same concern with the influence of Europe on the Third World, as well as with the need to find indigenous solutions to development problems.

Although lacking entirely in technical specificity, Wionczek nevertheless addresses himself more directly to specific problems and solutions than any of the other three authors. This undoubtedly reflects a long career of direct involvement as adviser to development projects in many parts of the Third World. His central theme in this collection is that “the future of the Third World depends entirely on its own efforts” (p. 15). This need for self-reliance is broadly

defined throughout as including also the gaining of control over their external economic relations. In fact, Wionczek's brief expositions are intended to stimulate his readers toward gaining self-reliance by instilling in them a sense of identity equal to but distinct from Europeans. The author sees himself and his work in this light (notwithstanding his European origins), very much in the tradition of Latin American liberalism.

To a North American reader, these four books are a useful reminder of a strong European interest in Third World development and of the existence of Europocentrism as Sachs calls it, which afflicts even Third World scholars such as Wionczek (as well as Furtado, Sunkel and others), and that—ultimately—the role of the United States does not loom as overwhelmingly in their thinking as one is likely to believe in reading our own and equally biased literature in the area of Third World development. While it is not heartening to be reminded that Europeans also suffer from cultural bias in their dealings with the Third World, one can be somewhat relieved to realize that Europeans share this villainy and do not consider the U.S. as the only source of misunderstandings and misdeeds with respect to developing countries.

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