

internationalism. Radical internationalism is found among the academic left but rarely among political decision makers. Thus, the real struggle goes on between realist and humane internationalism, and – within the latter – between the liberal and reformist varieties. On the whole, humane internationalism is weakened.

The decline of humane internationalism can be analyzed as a shifting balance in the different countries between the three strands. Generally the changing balance has been in favor of liberal internationalism. Many may have difficulties in seeing the difference between this strand and the position of realist internationalism, but a true liberal believes that a consistent free-trade regime benefits all participants in the long run, including the poor countries. A realist internationalist would, for instance, accept protective measures in support of declining domestic industrial sectors, whereas the liberal would accept national sacrifices in favor of a more open world economy.

Much could be said about the reality of humane internationalism and 'like-mindedness'. Are there not political advantages of humane internationalism which better explain the behavior of the like-minded, and is there really a common factor behind the behavior of this group of countries? In fact, the case-studies of and comparisons between the four countries indicate a strong element of 'realism' within humane internationalism as well as a certain elusiveness as far as the concept of like-mindedness is concerned. In spite of this the trends in these countries, which have proved to be comparatively sensitive to Third World demands, should be an important indicator of the future North–South policies of all Western countries.

The best the Third World can hope for today is that the industrial countries themselves respect the rules associated with an international free-trade regime. The time for even *discussing* (there never was any attempt at implementation) the New International Economic Order (NIEO) is definitely over. Humane internationalism is confined to liberal internationalism, now under siege in all industrial countries, including the like-minded, which, as a more or less distinct group, belong to history. To a large degree this is a result of the changing international political economy of the 1980s: the economic crisis, the emergence of the Newly Industrializing Countries, the rise of protectionism, the 'new Cold War', the erosion of the values of welfare statism and the uncertainties regarding the interdependent world order. In fairness it must be said (and the book does so) that the international policies recommended by reform internationalism were all badly conceived and unlikely to accomplish the objectives of humane internationalism. In the 1990s something better than the NIEO must be put on the agenda of international reform.

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Leif Lewin: *Det gemensamma bästa. Om egenintresset och allmänintresset i västerländsk politik*. Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag, 1988, 160 pp.

The incumbent professor of the old chair in 'politics and eloquence' at Uppsala University has once again produced a new book. It is well written and indeed very readable. The theme is public interest versus self-interest as motivating forces in political life; or, it could be argued, the harmful and deplorable effects of economic

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public-choice theory applied to political behavior. Public-choice theory has introduced an unwarranted sound of cynicism into political science.

The point of departure is the question of whether self-interest or public interest dominates political life. That question cannot be answered by simple assumptions and associated parsimonious theories; it must be answered through a number of empirical tests. Lewin's purpose is precisely to review the available empirical evidence.

The basic assumption of public-choice theory is that man is an egoistic, rational utility maximizer, and upon this foundation, theories of political behavior have been erected. Lewin is interested in the behaviors of voters, politicians and bureaucrats. The introductory chapter presents the various theories, and states the three core questions of the book. The three questions are: Do *voters* decide primarily according to economic self-interest or to a concern for the public interest?; Do *politicians* primarily attempt to maximize votes or to implement their programs?; Do *bureaucrats* primarily attempt to maximize their budgets or loyally to implement political decisions?

Chapters 2–4 then take a closer look at the empirical research findings pertaining to each of the three questions. The overall conclusions are fairly unequivocal: a large number of empirical studies show that the assumption ' . . . that voters primarily should be guided by their self-interest cannot be retained' (p. 80). The idea of politicians as being short-term vote maximizers ' . . . has just as limited empirical support as the idea that voters primarily vote according to the pocket-book' (p. 98). And finally: 'The budget-maximization hypothesis, in short, is not supported by the empirical research' (p. 125).

The conclusions are probably correct and appear to be well founded. Thus, Lewin has shown that elegant theories are actually wrong. If, as Anthony Downs maintained, theories should be tested primarily by the accuracy of their predictions, they have clearly failed the test. In addition, the theories often lack plausibility and realism. In sum, we need new and better theories that are not based on egoistic utility maximization.

Lewin does not reject rational-choice theory entirely, however. On the contrary, he assumes that voters and political leaders are rational beings who can rank order their preferences and act in order to achieve them (pp. 39, 136–142). His concept of rationality is broader than the narrow pursuit of egoistic interests. Human beings are capable of foreseeing unhappy consequences of egoistic behavior and of acting according to such insight. Lewin is also aware of the importance of organizations, such as parties and interest groups, intervening between citizens and collective decisions. Collective decision making is not just a matter of aggregation of individual preferences.

Lewin's arguments and evidence are usually convincing. However, in the final chapter the author tends to push his findings a bit too far. That egoistic public-choice theory is flawed does not necessarily mean that public-interest motivations prevail, but this seems to be Lewin's position (p. 126). How do we know that that public interest plays a larger role in politics than does selfishness? To answer that question may require yet another book.

Leif Lewin's contribution is primarily an eloquent antidote to narrow conceptions of rational-choice theory. As such it is highly useful and valuable.

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