

Cranford Pratt (ed.): *Internationalism under Strain: The North-South Politics of Canada, The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989, 226 pp.

By the early 1980s the North-South dialogue came to a standstill. The publication in 1980 of the Brandt Commission Report, *North-South: A Programme for Survival*, symbolized the end of an era rather than the start of something. In the course of the 1980s the whole climate of opinion as far as North-South issues are concerned has changed from a humane concern paired with a certain amount of public guilt ('we have exploited them') to a position of detached moralism ('Third World regimes are corrupt and irresponsible'). The IMF and the World Bank now coordinate Western development policies in the direction of deregulation and monetarism. Humane internationalism has taken the back seat as a nice but impracticable ideology. 'Amateurism' is being replaced by 'professionalism', not only in the aid business but also in the field of academic development theory, in which a 'counter-revolution' has been anxious to explain underdevelopment by misconceived state intervention rather than by structural dependence.

This book, forming part of a larger research project, tries to analyze and explain the change by comparing the North-South policies of Canada, The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, i.e. the so-called 'like-minded' countries which have earned a special reputation for responsible internationalism and progressiveness in Third World issues. The basic question of why the response of industrialized states to the challenges of global poverty and international inequalities has been so limited and constrained should of course be addressed above all to countries which have traditionally taken North-South issues seriously. The more specific questions raised are: what are the sources of the humane internationalism showed by these countries?; in what way are these foundations now undergoing changes?; and what, finally, is the future of internationalism?

Firstly, the concept of internationalism needs some further exploration. Internationalism can contain different sets of values and be caused by different types of concerns. In the research project a comparative framework is built on the concept of internationalism and its various strands. To start with *humane internationalism*, the core of this concept is the principle that citizens of the industrialized countries have a moral obligation toward peoples beyond their borders. This outlook is contrasted with *realist internationalism*, the assumption that all states pursue their own national interests in international relations. In terms of this framework the changes referred to above can be described as an increasing predominance of realist internationalism and a corresponding decline in humane internationalism.

Within humane internationalism there are three strands; *liberal internationalism*, with a strong commitment to an open, multilateral trading system; *reform internationalism*, which is more interventionist, favoring a transfer of resources from North to South; and finally, *radical internationalism*, starting from the assumption that the relationship between North and South is basically exploitative and has to be fundamentally changed in the direction of more self-reliance for the Third World.

This simple framework is quite helpful in identifying the general outlook of not only the countries concerned, but also different actors on the respective national arenas. Reform internationalism (which is basically a social-democratic approach) is stronger in the European group than in Canada, where humane internationalism is of a more liberal brand. In Canada the Churches are less of a dominant social force and social-democratic ideas have attracted only minority support. In the European group these are the two main (but not the only) sources of reform

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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