

Reviews: Reports and Books

A Fair Globalization:

Creating Opportunities for All,

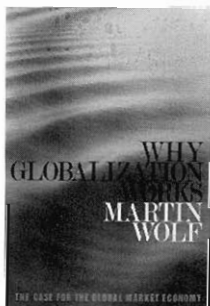
World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, Geneva: International Labour Organisation, paperback, xxii + 168 pp, 2004, npg



Why Globalization Works:

The Case for the Global Market Economy,

Martin Wolf, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, hardback, xvii + 398 pp, npg



The most striking feature of the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (WCSDG) is the range of its authors. For example, radical guru of the free market Hernando de Soto was a member of the Commission, as was Joseph Stiglitz, critic of market fundamentalism.

Perhaps not surprisingly, this results in a bland report that claims to set out a radical agenda for the governance of globalisation but, in reality, offers only insipid, catch-all rhetoric. The tone is set early on (pp.ix-x) with calls for: “A focus on people”, “a democratic and effective state”, “sustainable development”, “productive and equitable markets”, “fair rules”,

“Globalisation with solidarity”, “Greater accountability to people”, “Deeper partnerships”, and “An effective United Nations”. One only wonders why they did not add “world peace”, “eternal life” and “motherhood and apple pie” to the list.

The Report reads like the worst sort of New Labour-style, “Third Way” nonsense, in which there are no choices to be made and all agendas can be addressed simultaneously – a bloodless, depoliticised arena from which all questions of struggle and power have been excised in favour of problem-solving management carried out by well-meaning technocrats.¹

Martin Wolf’s *Why Globalization Works* is a much more interesting and provocative read, though the loss of insipidity is at the gain of some stunning wrong-headedness. As the title suggests, this is largely a hymn of praise to global economic integration, extolling the virtues of participation in the global economy and the liberalisation of market forces.

The book has a number of strengths. One is its placing of the subject in historical context, outlining the differences and similarities between current and earlier phases of globalisation (Chapter 7). A second strength is a very thorough and readable review of the literature on globalisation, poverty and inequality (Chapter 9). Many readers will probably disagree with Wolf’s sanguine conclusions in this regard, but he makes his case well.² Indeed, a recent article by Charles Kenny may strengthen Wolf’s case as it suggests that quality of life indicators – such as health and education – are converging globally even when income differentials are expanding.³

And, despite Wolf’s near-evangelical extolling of market forces, he acknowledges and partially accepts the arguments of writers such as Ha-Joon Chang, Alice Amsden and Dani Rodrik that some interference with free markets and free trade may play a positive role in economic development, as the East Asian experience has demonstrated. This leads him to a mildly heretical conclusion: “without endorsing the wisdom of infant industry protection as a general idea, the international community needs to consider whether developing countries should have greater freedom to introduce export conditions, export subsidization and other means to promote early stage industrialization” (p.212). The fact that the dominant forces within the “international community” have, for the most part, determinedly set their minds against developing countries doing any such thing might, however, have given the author some pause. Could this be because of ignorance, or could it be that the real agenda is only incidentally concerned with the development of poorer economies?

Similar questions arise from the author's treatment of concentration of market power in the global commodity trade, where he notes the example of half the market for roasted and instant coffee being accounted for by Nestlé and Philip Morris. He goes on to argue: "If competition is to be included in the current round of WTO negotiations, this would be a good place to start" (p.206). But how likely is it that private sector monopolies of this sort will be challenged by the WTO, or through other channels, such as the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements with developing countries? The focus of these agreements is overwhelmingly on the reining in, and elimination, of *public* sector restrictions on competition, not the challenging of corporate power.

Perhaps Wolf does not see this as a huge problem in the long run, because he is optimistic about the ability of markets to hold even the most powerful corporations to account, without public intervention. As evidence, he claims that "What the collapse of Enron demonstrated was that a company can fool its investors, its regulators, its accountants and its suppliers, but it cannot fool the market" (p.224). But before the market called Enron to account, what damage had already been done – to Californian energy consumers (victims of Enron-inspired power outages), for example, or to the US national energy strategy (written in part by Enron executives)? The inability to *publicly* check and control the exercise of corporate power is a more pressing problem than Wolf allows.

In a more general sense, Wolf underestimates the role of public authorities, despite being more alive to their significance than many of his neoliberal colleagues. As he notes, "the success of the economy depends on the quality of the state" (p.316) and "we will only have more and better globalization if we have better states" (p.320). True enough insofar as it goes, but it does not go far enough. And when push comes to shove, he falls back on a disingenuous market fundamentalism of his own. Referring to recent economic growth success stories (especially China), Wolf writes:

Critics are right to argue that success has not required adoption of the full range of so-called "neo-liberal" policies – privatisation, free trade and capital-account liberalization. But, in insisting upon this point, critics are wilfully mistaking individual policy trees for the market-oriented forest. What the successful countries all share is a move towards the market economy, one in which private property

rights, free enterprise and competition increasingly took the place of state ownership, planning and protection. They chose, however haltingly, the path of economic liberalization and international integration. This is the heart of the matter. All else is commentary. (pp.143-4)

Yet the fact that 68% of Chinese GDP is produced by the state-owned sector would suggest that state ownership and control has been less dramatically displaced than Wolf claims in the case of the most dramatic economic growth performer of recent times.⁴ That the state, as in China, may *drive* economic development, rather than merely *facilitate* it, is a fundamental challenge to Wolf's "heart of the matter" and renders problematic his claim that debates about economic development are effectively over (all else is *not* commentary, at least not yet).

Where the book becomes least satisfactory is in its attacks on so-called "anti-globalization" protestors, which are often close to hysterical and frequently misplaced. For example, he correctly points out that the absence of free movement of labour across the globe substantially increases poverty: "the simplest thing we can do to alleviate mass human poverty is to allow people to move freely or their labour services to be traded freely" (pp.85-6). In a remarkable shift, he then focuses his ire at this state of affairs on protestors: "This is not a cause [free movement of labour] critics of globalization have embraced", but an indication of "human hypocrisy" (p.86). But who is being hypocritical here? Many left-wing writers – including Bob Sutcliffe, Teresa Hayter and Nigel Harris – have argued the case for free movement of labour, but the governments of rich countries reject it and most mainstream economists simply ignore it. Samir Amin has pointed to the real hypocrisy at work here:

The litany of the market cure, invoked at every turn, comes to a dead halt here: to suggest that in a henceforth unified world, human beings, like commodities and capital, should be at home everywhere is quite simply unacceptable. The most fanatical partisans of the free market find at this point an argument for the protectionism they fustigate elsewhere as a matter of principle.⁵

It is not the critics of neoliberal globalisation who are the hypocrites.

Wolf also falls into the populist trap of claiming that the critics are guilty of trying to tell ordinary people what is best for them. For example, a footnote assures us that "The planner's arrogance

towards the desires of ordinary people runs like a blank thread through Naomi Klein's assault on brands", referring to Klein's most famous work *No Logo*.

But again, who is really guilty of arrogance here? Early on in the book, Wolf bewails "intellectuals who benefit from the freedom only liberal democracies provide, while doing everything they can to undermine it... spreading havoc upon the innocent young" (p.x). Poor old Jacques Derrida gets singled out here, which would probably surprise his enemies as much as his friends. Anti-globalisation protestors are later described as "spoiled children" (p.10), subject to the "dangerous" ideas of writers like Klein (p.227). To dismiss people as deluded dupes exudes more than a whiff of the arrogance and disdain for the ideas of others that Wolf rails against elsewhere.

And yet, for all this, there is something bracing about Wolf's book that the anaemic WCSDG Report entirely lacks. There is a sense of a debate to be engaged in and an argument to be won. And at a time when development studies sometimes seems at risk of being smothered in a neutral, technocratic discourse of planning, the reassertion of contesting visions and ideologies is to be welcomed.

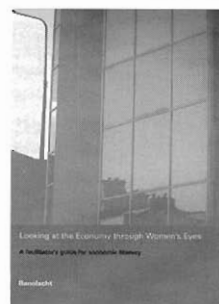
Andy Storey

Footnotes

- ¹ See Callinicos, A. (2001), *Against the Third Way*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- ² For a more sceptical perspective, see Kiely, R. (2004), "The World Bank and 'Global Poverty Reduction': Good policies or bad data?", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 34 (1)
- ³ Kenny, C. (2004), "Why are we worried about income? Nearly everything that matters is converging", *World Development*, 33 (1)
- ⁴ Harris, J. (2005), "Emerging Third World powers: China, India and Brazil", *Race and Class*, 46 (3), p. 9
- ⁵ Amin, S. (1988), *Eurocentrism*, London: Zed Books, pp.112-3

Looking at the Economy through Women's Eyes: A Facilitator's Guide for Economic Literacy,

Maeve Taylor, Banúlacht: Dublin, 2004, paperback, 126 pp. npg



Economic discussion over the past number of years in Ireland has been dominated by talk of the performance and impact of the Celtic Tiger and by extension the issue of competitiveness and internationalisation in a context of increasing globalisation. Globalisation is commonly used to refer to the increased internationalisation of trade, investment and production, finance and information technology. In a broader political economy context it refers to the global phenomenon of capitalism, the dominance of the neo-liberal model within it and also to the proliferation of western cultural values. It is no surprise therefore that the consultation process initiated by Banúlacht as a first step towards developing an economic literacy programme, identified the issues of globalisation and the Celtic Tiger as key themes. Banúlacht wanted to bring a global focus into its work with women's organisation and to specifically link locally based women's groups in the North, i.e. Ireland, with the experiences of women in the South and with national and international decision-making processes that address the political, economic and socio-cultural effects of globalisation.

The publication of *Looking at the Economy through Women's Eyes* is a very welcome addition to the burgeoning literature in the area of economic literacy. It has come about as a result of five years of practice and extensive training experience on the ground with over 35 workshops on economic literacy with 21 different women's organisations. The value of the background to this publication is obvious in its clarity of purpose and design and the compilation of material and activities that have been tried and

tested. The book is clearly elucidated, well presented and will be a very good resource for use in many sectors in Irish life. One question however that struck this reader is the positing of economic literacy as “contributing to women’s empowerment through a process of demystifying the economy”. Surely economic literacy which is about “facilitating discussions on the economy or facilitating participants who want to feel confident using economic terminology” (p.10) need not be restricted only to women?

The two sections in Part One provide an overview of the guide, its methodology and some of the basic concepts and analytical positions upon which the economic literacy project is founded. The politics of Banúlacht, and the author, are set out in Part One: this is a feminist analysis of the economy, grounded in an understanding of unequal power relations, it challenges existing norms and structures including inequalities between North and South, is committed to radical change and to advancing women’s issues in a global socio-economic context.

Part Two has five modules: Gender, care and the economy; Economic growth: a measure of well-being?; Gender budgeting; Globalisation and trade; and Challenging neo-liberalism: a human rights approach. The topics are discrete and thus lend themselves to different adaptations - for example, a trainer could use an individual module on a stand alone basis to a group or organisation that has identified a particular knowledge gap or training need. Each module is followed by an assortment of activities based on ice-breakers, group activities and discussion topics organised to let the participant start from their own specific experience, move into general economic principles and a broader assessment of particular economic issues, including a critique of abstract and analytical notions and a visioning of alternatives. The formulation of action plans takes the participants outwards into activism, lobbying or organisational work.

This is a multifaceted book comprising several functions and several aims. It is a source of resource material (with references and web addresses for further reading), analyses of different aspects of the economy and a participatory learning tool packed with activities for participants. The aims of the book, essentially a training manual for tutors and facilitators, include economic literacy training through a process of demystifying the economy; explaining key economic concepts and ideas; providing a critique of and challenge to the dominant economic model of neo-liberalism; and not least contributing to the empowerment of

women. This is a formidable challenge for any book and perhaps not surprisingly it succeeds better in some areas than in others.

As a trainers' manual it is a welcome and very helpful resource for use in various sectors and contexts. The background material is of a high enough standard to enable facilitators to train with confidence. The pitch and choice of concepts and analysis is well done and the exercises are imaginative and engaging (see for example – the activity which centres on discussing your earliest memory of money, p.41). On the other hand some activities raise concerns by categorising only women working in the paid labour market as “working women”.

The material presenting the main economic concepts and analyses is clearly written and easily accessible. The first module on gender, care and the economy is both interesting and thought-provoking and an excellent example of what it might mean to look at the economy through women's eyes. There is, however, a tendency throughout Section Two to oversimplify the issues. Little room is provided for nuance or contradictory examples which would allow the complexity of these issues to be explored more fully. For example, is privatisation always, and in every case, bad? Is there no room for privately run transportation services perhaps provided in conjunction with public sector provision? Are there not serious issues, not least for women, about the public provision of healthcare above and beyond funding issues? In Module 4 on Globalisation and trade, moves towards freer trade are not seen as desirable and yet for many people in the South the demand is for access to Northern markets and the removal of trade restrictions and of subsidies to agriculture in the EU, the US and elsewhere.

Another over-simplification is the book's assertion that “government intervention in the economy is minimal” (p.24). Total government spending in Ireland as a percentage of GNP was 42% in 2003; it was 48% for the EU-15 and even in the US which is often regarded as the bastion of the neo-liberal model total government spending was 35% in 2003. This does not take into account government intervention in the economy by means other than spending and taxation such as regulation. Moreover because of market failure almost all the economic literature argues for a very significant role for the state in, for example, education and health on both efficiency and equity grounds. It may be that the types of intervention involved are different from those that would serve the interests of women, but it is important not to reinforce the neo-liberal myth that contemporary capitalist economies are a government-free zone.

The presentation of the material on globalisation, trade, privatisation and government expenditure lays too little stress on the point that economic policies are formed in response to a particular place and time and in a specific political and institutional context. What is appropriate in one context may not be in another. So that sometimes it is not necessarily the size but the composition of government expenditure that matters or that measures such as privatisation or deregulation which might be beneficial in certain contexts will have a perversely damaging effect in others.

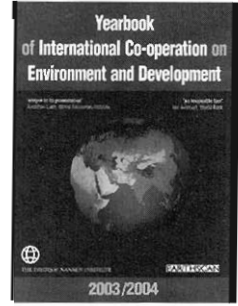
Finally, despite the considerable political attraction of linking women globally there is a limit to how much one can connect the lived experiences of women in the North and women in the South not least in relation to poverty, access to basic resources, and in the context of the ameliorating effects of social welfare provision.

It is of course difficult to judge the level of complexity that is appropriate to a resource specifically designed as an introduction to complex ideas and problems. In my view, it would have strengthened the book to address some of the complexities I have mentioned but I recognise that this is open to debate. Perhaps Banúlacht might consider a “Level 2” guide that would encourage participants to pursue some of the more difficult issues. As an introduction to economic literacy and as a resource manual I think it is a most useful book and one that will be widely used.

Sara Cantillon

Yearbook of International Co-operation on Environment and Development,

Olav Schram Stokke and
Øystein B. Thommessen, (Editors),
London and Sterling VA: Earthscan, 2003,
paperback, pp.362, npg



For the past twenty years or so, environmental sustainability has become an issue of central concern to theorists and practitioners of development. Though the issue is now firmly established on the development agenda, there is however no consensus on how development should take account of environmental concerns. Indeed, mainstream approaches to development, with their emphasis on increasing economic growth, appear much of the time to pay scant attention to how this impacts on the environment while attempts to take account of environmental issues range from the narrowly technical to far more radical approaches based on biorights and bioethics. In this context, the annual *Yearbook of International Co-operation on Environment and Development* published by the Fridtjof Nansen Institute in Norway, which used to be known as the *Green Global Yearbook*, offers a very useful survey of practical international efforts to combine development with environmental protection and sustainability.

The 2003-04 *Yearbook*, the 11th edition, contains both a wealth of information on the politics of environmental protection as well as six chapters of analysis on specific issues. The book's lengthy documentary sections cover three issues: firstly descriptions of a very wide range of international agreements on environment and development; secondly, profiles of the principal intergovernmental organisations concerned with the two issues, and, thirdly, profiles of leading NGOs (non-governmental organisations), including NGO networks, working on these issues. The section on international agreements covers issues such

as atmosphere, hazardous substances, marine environment and marine living resources, nature conservation, nuclear safety and freshwater resources. Coverage of each agreement is very comprehensive including its objectives, scope, affiliated instruments and organisations, secretariat, finance, rules and standards, monitoring and implementation, decision-making bodies, publications and internet sources.

A series of tables at the end of this section gives the degrees of participation by countries in each. The profiles of the main intergovernmental and non-governmental actors cover their objectives, organisation, secretariat, activities, decision-making bodies, finance, publications and website. These sections therefore offer a comprehensive range of information that is an invaluable source for students and practitioners who need to know more about what has actually been achieved, and who are the principal actors, in the practical politics of environmental sustainability.

While these documentary sections take up most of the book, it is the analytical case studies evaluating the achievements as well as the limitations of international efforts to manage specific environmental problems that offer the most insights into the challenges of combining environment and development. This *Yearbook* analyses six very different issues. The first looks at the multi-stakeholder partnerships launched as part of the preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. These emerged from a lack of confidence that traditional intergovernmental diplomacy was adequate to the complexity and range of issues relating to environment and development facing the international community and that a process that brought key stakeholders together (states, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, and the private business sector) on issues of concern to them was likely to produce more results. The chapter by Liliana B. Andonova and Marc A. Levy both describes the process and evaluates its outcomes. Overall, it is critical of the fact that, instead of providing a new approach to drawing in previously marginalised interests so as better to reach agreement on environmental issues, the partnership approach tends to reflect existing power structures and therefore offers “a future that will replicate rather than change the world order” (p.29). The authors conclude: “While the leadership by the rich and powerful may be understandable if we take into account the need to secure resources for the realization of these initiatives, it indicates that partnerships so far have failed to present a

significant challenge to traditional patterns of influence” (p.26). While NGOs are generally supportive of the partnership approach, the authors find that they have little power within it.

The second, third and fourth chapters examine different cases of environmental conservation and protection. In a chapter on protecting the Baltic Sea, Björn Hassler dissects the interaction of different national interests in relation to the Baltic and how these have evolved since the end of the Cold War in particular. He examines the first and second Helsinki Conventions and the joint action programmes that emerged from them. While his story is one of significant success, he does emphasise that the richer countries of the Baltic, in particular Sweden with its long coastline, have been key to this success. Regine Andersen examines the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation’s management of plant genetic resources and the tensions that exist between the attempts to protect patent ownership of plant resources particularly through the TRIPs (trade-related intellectual property rights) agreement championed by the World Trade Organisation and the objectives of conservation and benefit sharing as enshrined in the Convention on Biological Diversity, which the author says “was viewed as a victory for the South” (p.45). She sees the adoption of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in 2001 as a hopeful development though whether it succeeds in halting genetic erosion and providing access to genetic resources to enhance food security is far from certain, she writes.

The fourth chapter analyses the 1992 Water Convention drawn up by the UN’s Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Authors Patricia Wouters and Sergei Vinogradov ask whether it has had any impact on improving transboundary water-resource management in Europe or whether it is merely an instrument of “symbolic politics” (p.55). While they see it as an example of good practice and a “coherent and flexible legal framework”, they acknowledge that its actual impact in terms of improved water-resource management, reduced transboundary pollution, better quality of water, and increased access to safe drinking water and sanitation “is difficult to assess” due to insufficient data and information and to the lack of adequate indicators (p.61).

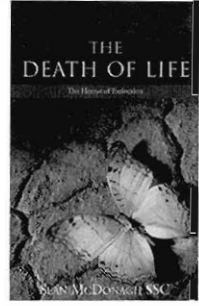
The two final chapters cover different aspects of the politics of environmental protection. John Vogler looks at the external environmental policy of the EU showing how it has emerged as a key actor in international environmental diplomacy (not unrelated to the lack of leadership being provided by the US) but

that “the acid test is its decision-making and negotiating capability” (p.69) since its cumbersome process of reaching consensus among member states can be a source of “intense frustration” to other states (p. 70). Finally, Graham K. Brown takes the Third World Network as his subject, describing the emergence and activities of this important developing world NGO and evaluating its achievements. He concludes that its “failure to provide a sustained alternative manifesto for the replacement, rather than just the reform, of the institutions of global governance” indicates that it “has become institutionalised into the very system of global governance that it seeks to condemn” (p.76).

Overall, then, this *Yearbook* is a very solid publication, offering high quality information and analysis on topics of major ongoing concern. In examining what is actually happening in the attempts to combine development with environmental sustainability, it draws attention to the potential that exists for addressing the huge challenges human society faces but it also reveals the major obstacles placed by existing power structures to realising this potential. It is both a hopeful but also a sobering read.

Peadar Kirby

**The Death of Life:
The Horror of Extinction,**
Sean McDonagh,
Dublin: Columba Press, 2004,
paperback, pp.152, €9.99



At first glance Sean McDonagh would seem to be reworking themes he has treated in previous books. As he has done in the past, McDonagh again starts from his own experience of what people have done to the environment in the places he has lived and worked, especially in the Philippines and Ireland. He then extrapolates from the destruction he has experienced to the overall damage that is being done to the earth and the response, or more often the lack of it, from the Christian Churches. I have noted that with each book McDonagh has become more and more pessimistic, so that the very title of this latest comes as no surprise.

After a general Introduction, Chapter 2, Conversion in the T'boli Hills, outlines some of the destruction of species which is relentlessly being carried on globally: "It is now estimated that 24% of large animals, 30% of the known fish species, 12% of the 10,000 bird species are now in danger of extinction" (p.18). McDonagh details how human activity is causing extinction in three ways: habitat destruction; the introduction of alien, exotic species into an ecosystem and human-created pollution. His examples of each of these activities from places as far apart as Hawaii and the Philippines, Australia and Ireland make for sober reading. He concludes that extinction not only of natural species but also of language and cultural diversity, which is also happening at an alarming rate, is a great tragedy for the human race and for the planet.

Chapter 3, An Adequate Creation Theology, takes an historical look at how creation has fared in Christian theology and spirituality down the centuries. McDonagh points out the ambivalence which emerged in Christianity from a

misunderstanding of the use of the words flesh (*sarx*) and spirit (*pneuma*) in the New Testament especially in the Pauline writings. In reality “for Paul *sarx* was not the body or material element but everything in our human make-up that is or can be opposed to the life of the Spirit. *Pneuma*, on the other hand is everything in our human nature that promotes the life of the Spirit” (p.59). In the section on the Church Fathers McDonagh makes a good case for the rehabilitation of Pelagius who saw nature and grace as complementary rather than in opposition.

The medieval Church was indeed blessed with the insights of Benedict and Francis but, in general, the development of a spirituality of shunning the world was exacerbated by the trauma of the Black Death in the middle of the 14th century. In later centuries with the rise of the Enlightenment there was a tendency for religion and science to go their separate ways while in spirituality the theology of creation was ignored, especially under the influence of Jansenism. Chapter 4, *Theology forgot Creation*, continues the theme of theology’s amnesia about creation. Even the documents of Vatican II are, on examination, largely anthropomorphic. There have been wonderful papal documents on the environment since then, notably the 1990 New Year letter, “Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all Creation” but, as McDonagh points out, “this teaching is arguably one of the best kept secrets in the Catholic Church” (p.80).

Chapter 5, *Theological Reflections in the light of this Mega-Extinction Spasm*, considers the horror of the present rate of extinction of species from a religious and theological perspective. The first part of the chapter does this by examining biblical texts on the value of all life, not only human. This is followed by a meditation of the incarnation as “the perfect union of the infinite and the finite” (p.90) and on the Spirit whose “companioning” of all life is disrupted by the threat of extinction. The chapter goes on to give theological and poetical reflections ranging from Aquinas to Michael Longley, taking in some fine examples of early Irish poetry on the way. The chapter ends with examples of new martyrs: those who have given their lives to defend the biodiversity of the earth.

The final chapters, Chapter 6, *The Need for an Appropriate Ethical Framework* and Chapter 7, *Called to Live Lightly on the Earth*, demand an urgent response, not only individually, but also especially as Churches. What we in the Western world call “the good life” is in fact destroying the world. “We have lived so long in a world where frontiers could be continuously breached” (p.121) that we find it difficult to accept limitations, even though we now recognise that we are living beyond the carrying capacity

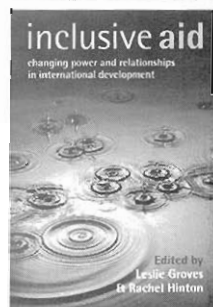
of the planet. The challenge is to raise the standard of living of those who are poor and have not contributed to the problem, while at the same time reducing the overall pressure we human beings make on the earth.

McDonagh has rightly been called an “eco-warrior” and we would do well to listen to his wake-up calls before it is too late.

Céline Mangan

Inclusive Aid: Changing Power and Relationships in International Development,

Leslie Groves and Rachel Hinton (Editors),
London and Sterling Va: Earthscan, 2004,
237 pp, paperback, npg



This book is about power relations inherent to international aid for the past five decades: the systems, mindsets and procedures that wittingly or unwittingly reinforce these relations and how these dynamics play out in the complex world of international development. How to get to a stage where those dominant power relations are turned on their head, where aid is truly inclusive and participatory and where the voices of the poor are actually taken into account, is the goal of this book.

Recent years have seen huge changes in international development reflected most strikingly through dramatic changes in the dominant rhetoric used by official government donors, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and non-governmental organisations alike, with words like participation, empowerment and ownership common to all policy documents and briefs relating to development. Yet *Inclusive Aid's* basic premise is that in spite of this rhetoric, practice shows that there are huge gaps between language used and the implementation of most aid programmes. The fifteen contributions examine why the gap exists and how it can be addressed.

The book has three main sections. The first is an historical overview and analysis of aid, bringing the reader to today's context and its complexities. In the second section contributions from practitioners, from the local development worker through to the bureaucrat, discuss these complexities and the realities of aid from their own experience through a range of different countries and aid programmes. Finally the third section sets out to determine some ways forward with

recommendations for aid agencies to try and narrow the gap between policy and practice.

While the section on the history of aid does not present anything new, what is striking is just how long it took for development thinking to take on board the myriad dimensions of poverty beyond economic dimensions, such as voicelessness, social exclusion and gender. It is hard to imagine programmes today that do not address these issues either as core or crosscutting, and yet they have really only been considered since the 1990s.

The second section, while in the main quite depressing in that it reinforces the main premise, that of unequal and entrenched power relations in favour of western donor countries with little room or political will for real participation, contains some rich and refreshingly honest and personal accounts which are well worth reading. One contribution, a letter from a Zimbabwean activist to her foreign donor friend, is so simple yet powerful that it leaves a lasting resonance through its sheer truthfulness and personal tone. What is remarkable is her reference to the meteoric speed at which her friend, whom she came to know as a fresh faced volunteer in Zimbabwe, filled with the ideals of her first development experience, within a few short years had become a development expert with a gender speciality. The most incisive line in the letter is: “You no longer have the questions; you have the answers.” While it may be easy to react with some cynicism to this letter, that life is not quite that simplistic, for any of us who have found ourselves drifting in the same direction, the uneasiness that sits with reading that letter is welcome.

The other contributions are on the whole worth reading for their direct hands-on insights and lessons learned. There is a short but insightful contribution from an official within a large government donor agency who appeals for more flexibility and risk-taking in aid programming to reflect the complexities of development in highly unequal societies. This call is common to most of the contributions, where inflexibility and in particular its physical manifestation—the log frame—come under sustained criticism throughout. There is, however, little suggestion about a replacement for this rigid instrument. Additional contributions proposing alternatives to the current flawed systems and procedures would be very welcome.

As in many collections of contributions, there is a trend towards stating the obvious and posing more questions than delivering answers, or posing more challenges than solutions. It is easy to wonder will things ever change and more importantly,

are there any tried and tested answers out there in relation to bringing about a more bottom-up, transparent and locally owned system of development?

The final section goes some way towards providing answers and some workable solutions. In particular, Action Aid's ALPS (Accountability, Learning and Planning System), shows real organisational commitment towards change (ironically introduced in a top-down centralised manner!) and is well worth noting. It stresses downwards accountability-transparency of budgets at all levels and a "no blueprint" approach to reporting formats allowing for diverse and possibly more culturally appropriate systems. A critical starting point must be acknowledging and naming the power dynamics within our own organisation and the system within which we operate and at times, reinforce. There is a simple lesson for all of us in that.

This book questions the basic concepts and notions that donors have about participation and ownership. It stresses that because these words are bandied about with such frequency they are increasingly losing their meaning and their credibility. The value in this book for those of us on the donor side of the aid system is that it sets out to shake any misguided complacency or feelings that things have changed, that things are more participatory, that we are listening to the voices of those who really matter, the poor. *Inclusive Aid* reminds the reader that there is still a huge way to go.

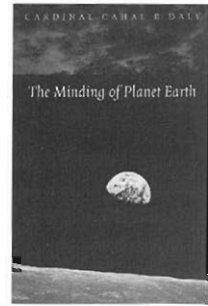
Sarah Mc Can

The Minding of Planet Earth,

Cardinal Cahal B. Daly,

Dublin: Veritas, 2004,

paperback, 254 pp, €19.95



I welcome this new book by Cardinal Cahal Daly for a number of reasons. In it he explores the teaching of the Catholic Church in the areas of human rights and social justice and the integrity of creation. There are many people within the Catholic Church who have championed human rights, social justice and the plight of the poor. During the past 40 years many leaders in the Church and Church-related development agencies have embraced liberation theology and a preferential option for the poor, though this may not always have found favour in Rome. But as far as I am aware Cardinal Daly is the first senior person within the Catholic Church to address the current environmental crisis in a coherent way. He is acutely aware of both the magnitude of the problem and the urgency with which it must be faced. For this reason alone this book is timely.

I am also impressed with the competent way in which he looks at the relationship between religion, science and technology. In the first part of the book he draws heavily on his training as a philosopher to critique many fallacies which have hampered authentic dialogue between the Church and the modern world. He points out that it is now taken for granted by many well-educated people that religion and, especially the Catholic Church, are an enemy of science and that faith is incompatible with reason and modernity. The Cardinal teases out many of the complex issues involved and argues that the relationship between science and religion is one of complementarity rather than hostility or apathy. This is the position espoused by Pope John Paul II in *Fides et Ratio*: "Faith and reason are like two wings on

which the human spirit rises to the completion of truth” (p.92).

Much of this skepticism about the Catholic Church’s relationship with empirical science stems from the condemnation of Galileo in 1633. The Cardinal is unequivocal in stating that the condemnation was wrong and that both Galileo’s cosmology and theology were superior to that of his censors. Galileo had argued that the goal of the sacred authors was not to teach us about astronomical questions but those truths which “were necessary for salvation” (p.67)

Cardinal Daly is very conscious of the damage which the condemnation of Galileo did to the Church’s reputation. He writes that “it was a bad day for the Church when Galileo was forced to declare: ‘I ...abandon completely the false opinion that the sun is the centre of the world and does not move, and the earth is not the centre of the world and moves’ ” (p.93). He knows that the humiliation of Galileo was used by enemies of the Church in the 18th and 19th centuries as an example of the Church’s opposition to empirical science, especially when it seemed to challenge orthodox theology or contradict the Bible. I was quite surprised that the Vatican’s battles with the ghost of Galileo continued right until the mid-1960s. For this reason readers will welcome the clarity and honesty with which he writes about the Galileo case in Chapter 2. He details how the work of the historian Monsignor Pio Pachini was sidelined by the Vatican in the 1940s and that when the book was eventually published in 1965, two years after the author’s death, his conclusions were altered because they portrayed Galileo in a favourable light.

The Cardinal believes that it is unlikely that a Galileo-like controversy will erupt in the future. He points to the apology by Pope John Paul II in 2000 when he expressed “profound regret for the weakness of so many of the Church’s sons and daughters”, in many instances including the Galileo affair (p.83) and the fact that the Vatican Press published a damning history of the affair (p.94).

I am not as convinced as the Cardinal about this, given the way the Vatican has treated many competent theologians in the past few years. My anxieties in this regards were heightened when I attended a recent conference in the Gregorian University in Rome co-sponsored by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the United States Embassy to the Holy See. The theme of the conference was “Feeding a Hungry World; the Moral Imperative of Biotechnology”. Unfortunately, only one side of the argument was aired which seemed a rather strange way for both the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Gregorian

University to assess where the truth might lie in such an important contemporary issue as feeding hungry people. We were subjected to one-sided presentations by people with close links to powerful agribusiness corporations who will make billions of dollars if genetically engineered foods are forced on the poor by mammoth institutions like the World Trade Organisation (WTO). For the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Gregorian University to lend support to such propaganda on such an important issue was disgraceful. Dialogue was not welcome in the Aula Maxima of the Gregorian University on 24 September 2004. I wonder what Galileo would have thought of such an event. Will it take 350 years for these institutions to apologise for colluding with powerful commercial interests whose bottom line is increased profits rather than feeding the poor? The incompetence of the conference was underlined by the fact that not a single representative from Catholic development agencies, like Trócaire or its equivalent from a Third World country was asked to speak. These are the people with expertise in poverty reduction, not geneticists or biotechnologists.

In the final chapters Cardinal Daly writes about a variety of social justice and environmental concerns. He is at his best when his insights on human rights and social justice are grounded in the body of Catholic Social Teaching evolved over the past 110 years. It is also obvious that his reflections on world poverty, Third World debt, overseas development aid and the arms trade have been sharpened by the work of development agencies like Trócaire. He acknowledges this on p.201.

However, when he reflects on the plight of the planet, there is unfortunately very little data or insights from the official Catholic tradition. The first document from the Papal Magisterium to address this issue was in 1990, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all Creation*. Two years earlier the Philippine Bishops had published a pastoral, *What is Happening to Our Beautiful Land?* Despite the huge damage which the Celtic Tiger has wreaked on the Irish environment the Irish Hierarchy has still not produced any reflection on this destruction. Almost all of the Cardinal's ecological data comes from two sources. The first is the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) programme of the World Council of Churches (WCC), especially the declaration from the Seoul Convocation in 1990. The Cardinal seems to be unaware that the Vatican was halfhearted in its support for the WCC's JPIC initiative. It used all sorts of nonsensical ecclesiological arguments to escape co-sponsoring this process with the WCC.

A case of Nero fiddling while Rome burns!

The second source the *Global 2000 Report to the President* was commissioned by President Jimmy Carter in the late 1970s. Unfortunately, its recommendations were discarded by all his successors. The current president George W. Bush pulled the US out of the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas immediately after he was elected in 2001.

While this is the most limited section of the book in terms of data and analysis the Cardinal is absolutely convinced that this generation is causing untold and often irreversible damage to our fragile world. He is to be congratulated for taking this step of highlighting environmental destruction as a moral and religious issue. It would be wonderful if this book acted as a catalyst to help other Church leaders to follow his example. Hopefully the book might encourage development agencies to educate themselves and their constituents about environmental issues like global warming, soil erosion, water pollution, the destruction of tropical forests, the extinction of species, over fishing of the oceans and a host of other environmental issues which will haunt future generations if this generation does not act. This book might help Trócaire to follow the example of CIIR (the Catholic Institute for International Relations) which in recent years moved from an exclusively human focus to address issues like global warming and genetically engineered crops.

Sean McDonagh

Conference Report: “Keeping our Word on the Millennium Development Goals: Addressing the EU’s Responsibilities”, Davenport Hotel, Dublin, 6 April 2004

During the Irish Presidency of the EU in 2004, Trócaire organised a conference to highlight the role of the EU in meeting the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals), particularly Goal 8. Around 160 delegates – including representatives from academic institutions, political parties, policymakers, NGOs (non-governmental organisations), Church leaders and communities, and students – attended the conference and deliberated on the implementation of the MDGs, and the responsibility of the EU in meeting these goals.

In the course of the day, salient points emerged in relation to the Goals, leading to a broad consensus on a number of issues. Firstly, the conference underscored the importance of the MDGs as political commitments to eradicating poverty throughout the world, and expressed the need to work to ensure their implementation, above all, through holding governments to account. They also emphasised the importance of interpreting the goals within a human rights framework, underscoring the indivisibility of social, economic, cultural, and political rights.

Particular emphasis was given to the gap between the rhetoric and practice on the part of donor governments in meeting the MDGs. There are worrying signals that they are not going to be met in most of Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular the goals on the eradication of poverty and the reversal of HIV/AIDS. A key challenge identified was that of ensuring “upward coherence” across all policies that impact on the developing world. This is particularly so in relation to trade policy, where commercial interests take precedence.

Whilst recognising the importance of ensuring improved governance within the developing world, the focus of the conference was to underline the need for the donor countries to take their obligations under Goal 8 seriously. Through presentations on the various dimensions of Goal 8 and the monitoring processes in place, the conference reached a number of key conclusions.

In terms of ODA (overseas development assistance), the conference concluded that EU governments who have not already done so, should set out timetables towards meeting the UN target of 0.7% of GNI (gross national income) to ODA, and to ensure that additional finance is directed towards meeting the MDGs through more untied aid directed towards basic services. Delegates expressed deep concern in relation to current measures to relate ODA to counter-terrorism measures. They urged governments to resist any moves in the OECD-DAC (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee), and within the European Union to re-define ODA as an instrument of strategic foreign policy, linked to the changing security environment.

Furthermore, there was an appeal to EU governments to speed up their measures to harmonise their aid programmes according to best practice, recognising the need to cut transaction costs through multiple aid mechanisms, and multiple reporting mechanisms. This is particularly important in view of EU enlargement. The conference also encouraged EU member states and the European Commission to increase the proportion of aid going to key MDG sectors in the poorest countries.

Delegates identified the resolution of the debt crisis as a key dimension of Goal 8 which requires further attention. There was recognition that the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) has provided some additional resources for poverty eradication but this is not enough. Many of the poorest countries are currently paying more or the same to service their debt than pre-HIPC. In this regard, there was a view that the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) process should be de-linked from debt conditionality. Furthermore, there was a request to governments to review the criteria for debt sustainability as a matter of priority so as to ensure that it is in line with the objective of meeting the MDGs.

In relation to trade and development, the contributors to the conference acknowledged the potential benefits of international trade to the developing world. Constraints due to prescriptive trade liberalisation policies underpinning donor aid programmes are currently undermining the capacity of developing countries to accrue the benefits of international trade. One key proposal was to increase policy flexibility for developing countries so they can pursue trade policies consistent with their development objectives and progress towards the MDGs. The policy objective of the EU's approach to European Partnership Agreements is currently led by commercial advantage, which often contradicts with their

commitments to the MDGs. The conference also agreed that government should ensure that the Doha Round of the World Trade Organisation is truly a development Round and focuses first and foremost on those issues central to developing countries, for example, addressing the commodity crisis.

There was further debate around the role of monitoring the MDGs in donor countries. There was agreement that effective monitoring of the MDGs is central to their achievement. This is critical not only for accountability and transparency, but also for ensuring that policies and structures are reformed so as to meet the MDGs. In this regard, monitoring the role of donor countries in honouring their commitments under MDG 8 is just as important, if not more so, than monitoring the achievements of developing countries in Goals 1-7. National parliaments should play a more active role in ensuring national scrutiny of policies including within MDG 8.

Finally the conference reflected on the commitment of the EU as a group of donor nations in relation to the MDGs. The participants agreed that the EU will play a critical role in leading the developed world in relation to the MDGs. They called for further action in order to ensure that the EU fulfils its part in what was agreed at the UN Millennium Summit and in Monterrey. This is especially true in view of preparations for the UN stocktake on the MDGs in 2005. If the EU is to make an impact at that event – which is generally seen as the litmus test on whether Northern countries are taking these goals seriously – major strides ahead are essential.

Lorna Gold