

A NEW MAP OF THE WORLD by Ian Linden, *Darton Longman and Todd, London, 2003, Pp. xii + 164, £10.95 pbk.*

There is a new political and economic world order emerging, shaped by a variety of forces which appear to be irreversible. This new world order also offers an unprecedented opportunity to tackle the root causes of poverty and other injustices. What are the economic and political forces shaping this new world order? Which beliefs support them? Can they be harnessed to tackle poverty and injustice? Or, to use the language of catholic social teaching, can we use them to bring about a new universal common good? These are questions tackled by this book by the former head of the Catholic Institute of International Relations (CIIR), and now an academic. The CIIR is a distinguished organisation that punches well above its weight, and Ian Linden was its charismatic leader for many years.

The book charts Linden's own journey from a middle class, *Daily Telegraph* reading family in Southend to the world stage. Since leaving CIIR he can now 'step back' from the daily grind of campaigning on specific issues of injustice to look at the bigger picture. The book offers an excellent synthesis of the forces loosely called globalisation that are shaping the new world order. For Linden it is the complex interaction of a number of forces: the action of states, multinational corporations, financial markets, technology etc. Each of these is analysed in some detail, from its historical context to recent topical issues. Globalisation has created a complex interconnectedness that has linked many parts of the world's political and economic landscape but also alarmingly dis-connected some parts of the world, notably Africa. Linden is at his sharpest in dealing with lack of moral underpinning of many NGOs (non-governmental organisations) who take up specific issues but cannot offer a holistic vision of a new world order. The collapse of a common moral understanding over the last century suggests to Linden that a new universal common good needs to be defined. His inspirations range from Thomas Aquinas, in particular the cultivation of specific virtues, to Amartya Sen, for his insight on the need for certain poor countries to acquire key capabilities in the developmental process. There is also an overview of the 'dark underside' of globalisation in the culture of corruption, trade on drugs and in people. It also brings the reader up to date on recent topical issues like the switch in emphasis by the World Bank to dealing with market imperfections facing developing countries rather than merely imposing dogmatic economic programmes.

Ian Linden has provided a masterly synthesis of how the current global political economy has been formed. In a book attempting to synthesise such a vast array of issues it would be easy to find fault on

specific details but that would be pedantic. Instead I will concentrate on two areas of limitation: the first is almost an implicit ideological assumption of Linden's, and the second is a weakness in a key policy area.

The first area of limitation is that Linden is instinctively anti-business or at least not pro-business. For him multinationals (MNCs) can do no good. Hence the book never deals with how to harness the powerful economic forces to develop this universal common good. The fact that MNCs and business have played a significant positive role is overlooked. The implicit emphasis is that MNCs are bad. Most development economists will argue that the key to poverty reduction is economic growth; and utilising MNCs is an important way to get this done. There are 60,000 MNCs in the world with a turnover of US\$ 15.6 trillion and represent 50% of world GDP. These organisations have huge political influence and shape the global political economy. How has it been possible for Communist China to utilise, cunningly some may say, MNCs for its development? Today most of the world's manufacturing new investment is going to China. Or the astute way in which Lula, ex trade unionist and now the new Brazilian President, has driven a pro-business and social reformist agenda. Can African countries harness these MNCs for their development? It seems to me that it would be completely impractical to implement a better world order that does not make use of existing powerful global businesses.

The second limitation of the book is that it ignores some of the critically important current debates on world poverty. One of them concerns the definition and measurement of poverty, and is much harder than it looks. One former World Bank economist, Surjit Bhalla, stirred controversy by publishing a study documenting that world poverty actually fell from 44% of the global population to 13% in 2000 due to the positive impact of globalisation. Interestingly this 13% is below the 15% Millennium Development Goal that Kofi Annan has set the international community by 2015. This group of issues is regrettably ignored in the book. Another area not discussed is the direct link between bad government and poverty as exemplified in most parts of Africa. Political leaders who do not respect property laws and other legislation swiftly drive their nation to poverty, as is well demonstrated by Zimbabwe.

Overall, in spite of these limitations, Linden has raised our awareness to the new world order and the challenges of defining and implementing a new universal common good.

BEN ANDRADI