

**Jay R. Mandle.** *Globalisation and the Poor*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. x+157 pages. Paperback. £ 12.95.

The issue of globalisation of the world economy has taken centre-stage in discussions relating to the process of economic development and the distribution of income between the developed and developing countries. Although these are many current concerns, globalisation as such has occurred at different points in recorded human history of the past several thousand years. The Roman Empire, for instance, is quoted as one of the earlier examples of globalisation. More recently, the period leading up to World War I saw an increasingly integrated world economy under British Imperial rule. The most recent attempt at globalisation started in the late 1970s and continues to the present day.

Needless to say, the current wave of globalisation has its supporters, who see in the process the solution to all the economic ills that confront nation-states. Its opponents accuse globalisation of all the current ills that plague the world economy. This book by Jay Mandle is an attempt to confront both critics as well as supporters of globalisation to view the process in as dispassionate and objective a manner as possible.

The central thesis of the book can be divided into two parts. The first is that globalisation is necessary to promote economic growth, which in turn would help in reducing poverty levels. The second part is that there is a strong role for government to introduce such policies and regulations to protect groups that have been affected adversely by the globalisation process. In short, all segments of society must have economic justice. Deprived and marginalised groups need to be brought into the economic mainstream.

What makes the book readable is its provocative approach to the subject-matter. It is well-illustrated with tables that supplement the author's arguments in the text. The list of references cited is also impressive. Overall, the author's message is that globalisation should not be condemned but needs to be taken in its proper perspective. However, true globalisation of the world economy requires a number of conditions, one of the most important being the free movement of goods and labour across international borders. The movement of the former has increased steadily over the past fifty years largely due to large tariff reductions in the industrialised countries. However, as tariffs have been reduced, non-tariff barriers have proliferated, a matter of increasing concern to the developing countries. Labour mobility is affected by attempts to check the flow of migrants from low-income to high-income countries.

The second major condition for successful globalisation is the narrowing of the gap between the developed and developing countries. This gap has increased in the past several decades both economically and technologically. Economically and militarily, the developed western world, in particular the U.S.A., rules the world.

Other countries like China, Japan, and the European Union can act as counterweights to U.S. power, but this will still require some time. Future conflicts in the world will focus on two main areas: energy and water. The U.S.A. is in the process of acquiring as much cheap energy as possible through both military and non-military means. Other countries are no less concerned about their own energy requirements. Water availability, on the other hand, is also going to become a priority issue as supplies of potable water decrease and populations increase. The threat of such issues exploding to thwart the road to globalisation is something that the author may not have considered. Already, the U.S.A. has begun to take a number of restrictive measures to protect its economy from further increases in unemployment. These include the imposition of tariffs and other related policy measures. The free movement of labour also is being checked in the 'war or terror'. The greatest weakness of the present system is that, at the international level, there is no political infrastructure which can manage the political and economic concerns of widely diverging national interests in a fair manner. Such an infrastructure is necessary if the benefits of globalisation are to be distributed fairly.

This book in its own way adds to the literature on globalisation by highlighting the advantages of the process. The author reinforces his arguments by drawing on an extensive bibliography. However, in the long run, countries will only benefit from this process when they recognise and understand the stakes that are involved. Otherwise, the current push to globalisation will falter and ultimately terminate, as have a number of previous ones in the past.

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