

INTRODUCTION

This bulletin is devoted to the work of the International Problem Area Group (INTERPAG), and is the last of four such bulletins reporting on problem area group research.

The first three articles cover the group's work on trade. The first, by Hans Singer, reports on the trade liberalization project which has been centred at IDS and whose first report argued the benefits of increasing trade between developed and under-developed countries. The second article, by Percy Selwyn, is a critique of this approach, principally for practical reasons. The third, by David Evans, presents an alternative theoretical approach for analysing trade relations — 'unequal exchange' — which questions among other things the orthodox theory on which proposals for trade liberalization are based.

The International Problem Area Group is attaching increasing importance to the development of the theoretical debate implicit in these papers. It has initiated a continuing workshop on new approaches to trade and development, focusing in the coming six months on neo-Ricardian, Marxist and structuralist approaches to the subject. Later, it is planned to work on the significance of various institutions for trade theory and policy (international firms, cartels, state trading, commodity agreements and other inter-country arrangements) on the relationship of trade and class, of trade and power, and the effect of international crisis on trade relations. We would be very pleased to hear from anyone else interested in such a re-assessment of trade theory and policy.

A second recent emphasis in the group's work concerns an approach rather than a subject. A 'cluster' within the group has been meeting regularly to discuss the development of a structuralist approach to the world system and development problems. One of the programmes of work to arise out of this is concerned with dominance and dependence in mass communications in underdeveloped countries. Rita Cruise O'Brien's paper which we print here summarizes the work so far and exemplifies an approach which the cluster is following in its analysis of international

dependence in legal and educational systems in underdeveloped countries, and in the international transmission of income inequalities.

There follows a piece by Helen Eisen and John White reporting research on the geographical distribution of aid by individual countries, one product of a substantial programme of work on aid which also resulted in John White's recent book on the subject. Finally, we include a brief paper by Raphie Kaplinsky on power and bargaining relations in technology transfer. The bulk of the group's work on technology transfer and international firms will, we hope, be reported in a later issue — this includes work on the choice of techniques, the Andean Pact, second hand machinery, channels and mechanisms of transfer, and mineral contracts. The details of research published so far are given in the bibliography. Raphie Kaplinsky's paper, though short, provides an example of the group's approach to this subject.

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