

# Dudley Seers (1920-1983): His Contributions to Development Perspectives, Policy and Studies

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An immediate difficulty faces anyone writing an overview of Dudley Seers' contributions to development studies. Dudley provided his own! His death on 21st March 1983 came only four months after he had completed the manuscript of a book which was originally intended to be no more than the reprinting of a number of his past papers, covering different aspects of his approach to economics and social problems. He had hoped thus to produce a true political economy, linking various fields of both theory and practice. In the preface to this book, Dudley explains that this early intention was over-simple, and that to achieve an integrated whole much more revision was required: 'It was only in doing this that I really discovered, with something of a shock, what my political economy had become. (I write therefore I think.) The connecting thread in my work has become nationalism' [Seers 1983:viii].

This book, *The Political Economy of Nationalism*, though selective in its themes, is still substantial enough to test Dudley's own conclusions about what his political economy had become. Indeed, in certain senses to be explored, it is true that Dudley strongly, and in my view successfully, argues the case that in analysing international actions and in making international policy, national interests have been and *should be* given much more attention and weight than economists have usually been inclined to do. In particular, Dudley concludes his book with three chapters entitled 'extended nationalism' in which he puts forward the case for reforming the neocolonial system, not with a New International Economic Order, but with a fundamentally different approach, built on 'partially self-sufficient regional blocs'. A united Europe, Western and Eastern, would be one such bloc, sufficient to enjoy the economic and political advantages of size, and to discourage the superpowers from the compulsion to meddle.

By making this European-centred declaration the final section of his book — and in terms of Dudley's previous writing the most novel section — the unwary reader is apt to see this as the climax, the conclusion not only of the book but also of Dudley's life work. I do not believe that this is a fair judgment, for reasons I give later in the concluding sections of this article. Dudley as a person and as a professional economist was always much more international in his values and

approach than his final chapters centred on European strategy might imply. But Dudley always enjoyed a tease — and one cannot help thinking that part of his final book involves some argument by provocation, or 'Dudley's last great tease', as Agatha Christie might have entitled it. The argument is, of course, much more than just this. The proposal for uniting East and West Europe was only a few years ahead of its time, as events of the last few months are showing. Dudley's whole perspective of a European centred role in a restructured, multi-polar world is thought-provoking, even if one does not accept it all. But it is not, in my view, the culmination of Dudley's life work.

I have organised this review of Dudley's contribution to development in four parts, each built on major areas of Dudley's work, with the first three parts closely following the main sections of Dudley's last book. The four parts are: I Structuralism; II National planning and statistics; III Underdeveloped Europe; IV Dudley Seers: pioneer of international development. This plan enables me to cover the significant areas of Dudley's writing and, in the final section, his major contributions in international leadership and institutional innovation. Dudley, like Maynard Keynes, changed his mind on many points over his professional career and I try to bring out some of the changes by referring back to major earlier articles not mentioned in the book.

## Structuralism

Methodologically, Dudley was a structuralist over most of his professional life. By this I mean that Dudley espoused, taught, defended and demonstrated a structural approach to analysis in most of his written work. This was focused on what he identified as key structural relationships in the countries or situations under review, with the key relationships generally related to the type of economy being analysed, the nature of its links with the international economy, and the phase or time-period in relation to broader world developments. This led to a multidisciplinary style of analysis that was, in many respects, situation-specific rather than universal. Dudley was at his best when he focused on the study of individual national economies and their links with the 'world economy', rather than on specific sectoral problems within them.

Dudley approached development, as he explains in his

book, with some basic questions that he owed to his original mentors — Joan Robinson (the teacher at Cambridge who made the greatest impression on him) and Michael Kalecki (in whose UN section Dudley worked from 1953-55) — as well as to close collaboration with Thomas Balogh and Paul Streeten in the first post-war decade and in many joint endeavours afterwards, including helping to set up the Ministry of Overseas Development (ODM) and, later, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex.

Dudley's early work was mostly on national income in Britain, though he undertook short assignments in Burma (1951), Ghana (1952) and Malta (1955). However, the foundations for Dudley's way of viewing development problems grew out of his work in ECLA from 1957-61, working under Raoul Prebisch and alongside Osvaldo Sunkel and other Latin American economists who were evolving the 'structuralist' and 'dependency' approaches. These experiences spurred an important piece by Dudley in 1963, 'The limitations of the special case', in which he analysed the dangers of naively transferring analytical models from the 'special case' of developed countries to the rest of the world. This article attracted much attention, probably more internationally than anything Dudley had written until then. It was reprinted in a number of places and became the basis, as Paul Streeten records, of a star-studded conference.

This article (perhaps more accurately, this perspective) laid the basis for much country specific work during the years ahead, indeed throughout the rest of Dudley's career until his final assignment in Fiji just before he died. Dudley undertook further consultancy missions to Zambia (1964), Colombia (1970), Sri Lanka (1971), Nigeria (1979) and Uganda (1978); produced a major study on post-revolutionary Cuba (1962) and led or joined in many other country analyses. In the preface to his 1983 book, Dudley lists some 35 countries where he had been involved in advisory work or research. These were mainly developing countries but included Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Portugal, Japan and Spain of the so-called developed countries, as well as Czechoslovakia and Poland. The list explains his special interest in small, dependent economies and, as he underlined, characteristically, with a self-awareness totally consistent with his structuralist position, the list reveals where he did *not* work:

If I had undertaken research mainly in, say China, India, the United States and the Soviet Union, my approach would, without doubt be very different. I would, for example, be less aware of the special problems of small countries (especially vis-a-vis the great powers) and more conscious of the importance of regional differences within countries — and of the economic, political and social costs of

central bureaucracies [Seers 1983:x].

Dudley added that the world was inconveniently large to cover all countries in one lifetime!

One of the self-imposed costs of structuralism and country specific analysis is that it limits the field over which generalisations can be made. Dudley, however, did try his hand in 1959 at 'An approach to the short-period analysis of primary-producing economies' [Seers 1959], 'A model of comparative rates of growth in the world economy [Seers 1962:45-78] and in 1969 at 'A step towards a political economy of development; illustrated by the case of Trinidad/Tobago' [Seers 1969:218-253]. The latter, after much reworking in Nigeria, was substantially revised to become 'The life cycle of a petroleum economy and its implications for development' [Seers 1981]. He also increasingly focused on a number of structural problems characteristic of different types of economy. From this emerged 'The tendency to financial irresponsibility of socialist governments and its political consequences' [Seers 1981], 'The new role of development planning, with special reference to small countries' [Seers 1982a] and the series of volumes on 'Underdeveloped Europe' in which he analysed core-periphery relationships in Europe, using the dependency frame of analysis developed earlier for analysing developing country relationships with industrial countries.

The ILO employment missions of the 1970s provided Dudley with the opportunity to apply structural analysis to internal problems and policy issues within particular countries. In Colombia the focus was on the problems of employment and income distribution; in Sri Lanka on the problems of unemployment and the mismatch between aspirations, skills and education; in Kenya, on employment, incomes and equality, with special attention to the informal sector and, over time, to redistribution with growth. In 1979, Dudley led a Commonwealth team on the Rehabilitation of Uganda after the destruction and wanton disregard of human life by Amin. In Nigeria, he led another ILO employment mission, which reviewed priorities for meeting basic human needs after the heady profligacy of the oil boom in the mid 1970s, and led to a report entitled *First Things First* [ILO/JASPA 1981].

Dudley drew on this wide experience in the first two sections of his final book, especially the sections on 'Coming to terms with nationalism' and the three chapters on constraints — economic and political realities, demographic and social realities and resources and technology. A reader, unaware of the original and substantive documents and analysis on which these chapters were based, might too easily dismiss them as casual empiricism or even as argument by anecdote — as indeed at least one critic of the book did. To someone acquainted with the range and depth of Dudley's knowledge and experience, they come

across more as specific examples used to explain general themes, much as a mature and well-established biologist might illustrate important points in evolution by selecting examples from the diversities of nature on which he has spent a lifetime working.

This said, one must regret that Dudley never throughout his life contributed a definitive piece on the 'structural theory of development'. Certainly his final book is not this, nor are any of his earlier pieces. In a substantial article for the *Economic Journal*, 'A model of comparative rates of growth in the world economy' [Seers 1962], Dudley went some way to construct a more formal, quantitative model of the economic relationships between industrial and primary producing and exporting economies. It is, in many respects, an impressive piece, gradually relaxing the restrictive assumptions of a simple model of the relative income of primary producers in a closed economy to introduce industrial countries (including, separately, a communist bloc), differential population growth rates, non-tradeables, non-linear determinants and flows between countries of profits, interest and capital. In developing each piece of the argument, Dudley refers to many of the structural characteristics within primary producing (and also industrial) countries. But the focus of the paper is on developments in the world economy, and domestic factors are introduced only in relation to their implications for factors affecting international change.<sup>1</sup> This may be the nearest Dudley got to spelling out a formal approach to structuralism, but this was early thinking for him, and while the article suggests several of the component parts of structural analysis of an economy, Dudley never shows exactly how they can and should be assembled into a working model of the whole. Nor does the article bring in the dimensions of political economy and conflict which Dudley emphasised in his later work on the oil exporting economies.

Dudley did later write a number of more theoretical pieces, including 'Patterns of dependence' [Seers 1979], 'Theoretical aspects of unequal development at different spatial levels' [Seers 1980] and 'Inflation: a sketch for a theory of world inflation' [Seers 1981]. But as in his final book, these did not add up to a coherent presentation of a more comprehensive theory or approach. To my mind, this is unfortunate and must be accepted as an important omission in

<sup>1</sup> I remember organising a seminar for Dudley to give in Cambridge in 1967 to the combined Faculty of Economics and the Department of Applied Economics. There was a good turnout but frankly the seminar was not a great success. (At that time, divisions over approach and methodology were so strong in Cambridge that it was difficult for any faculty seminar to be a great success.) Dudley presented an early version of what later became his article on the international transmission of inequality, with particular reference to the brain drain. But in an atmosphere of rigorous pre-occupation with over and under-determined models, especially growth models, the incompleteness of Dudley's model was only too apparent.

Dudley's otherwise wide-ranging contributions. Perhaps Dudley hoped his final book would provide this, but however insightful and forceful the different chapters, they do not provide the integrating theory one seeks.

It is possible, I think, to identify various reasons why Dudley never provided such a comprehensive theoretical statement of his structuralist position. In the first place, structuralism to Dudley was the antithesis of grand general theory. Thus, almost by definition, a rigidly enclosed, all encompassing presentation of structural theory is a contradiction in terms. Second, by inclination and by craftsmanship, he was at his best analysing real-life situations, integrating the work of a number of team members into a consolidated and convincing whole — pioneering, creative, powerful, often brilliant — but ultimately pragmatic. Finally, on more theoretical matters, Dudley was essentially the critic not the creator, the demolisher of theoretical structures which failed to fit the facts rather than the painstaking builder of alternatives. Dudley's wide experience and trenchant criticisms of other approaches left him with few building blocks for erecting alternative structures: statistical data on developing countries was, he had shown, so often misleading or meaningless; theories in the social sciences were usually too general or too partial, and often self-serving to the powers that be; and the relevant analyses of different countries were sufficiently diverse to make easy generalisations dangerous.

If this were all that could be said, Dudley's contribution to the study of development might seem partial and limited. It must be obvious that I — and many of Dudley's admirers and supporters — feel totally otherwise. It is as if a great historian with a string of impressive studies behind him should be dismissed simply because he never wrote a general theory of historical forces. Ultimately, I suppose, it all depends on one's basic thinking about economics and economists. Is the high point of the profession the construction of yet more theoretical models, or is it, as Maynard Keynes put it, 'obtaining a wide knowledge of *relevant* facts and exercising skill in the application of economic principles to them, (and) expounding the elements of (the economist's) method in a lucid, accurate and illuminating way, so that, through his instruction, the number of those who can think for themselves may be increased'.<sup>2</sup> There is no doubt where Dudley himself stood.

Before leaving this section on structuralism and dependency, it is important to refer to Dudley's criticisms of what he saw as the major alternative approaches to structuralism in the analysis of

<sup>2</sup> J. M. Keynes. 'Introduction to the Series', in the famous *Cambridge Economic Handbooks*. I am grateful to Hans Singer for identifying the source of this quotation for me.

development: neoclassical economics and Marxism. In general attitude, Dudley closely aligned himself with the position Joan Robinson set out in *Economic Philosophy*, in which economic philosophy in each period matches the interests of the ruling elites. Dudley followed this approach in arguing that both neoclassical economics and Marxism have provided self-justifying rationales for those holding power in, respectively, capitalist and communist countries. But he achieved a shock effect — and strong reactions in response — by underlining the *common* features of both neoclassical economics and Marxism in their analysis of development. ‘Both are in fact close relatives tracing their descent from the same European 19th century (classical economist) ancestors. And they share important common flaws:

- the assumption of linear progress (towards some ill-defined Utopia) which encourages optimism that continues to mislead, though it has frequently been dashed [Seers 1983:9];’
- they fail to take due account of non-material motives, especially nationalism;
- both doctrines appeal to malcontents in the other system more specifically on economic issues;
- both treat the quantity of money as the determinant of inflation;
- both emphasise capital investment as overwhelmingly the most important determinant of economic growth. Consequently the generation and allocation of savings are seen as the mainsprings of development.

Dudley was well aware from reactions from both sides to earlier versions of these articles that he would be accused of over-simplification. Some said, as he put it in his book, that what he was summarising as Marxism was not ‘true Marxism (which, by coincidence, was precisely the philosophy of whoever was speaking), but Stalinism’. Dudley adds, ‘As I said in the original article anticipating this criticism, Marxism is like a duck in a fairground shooting gallery: as soon as you score a hit, it disappears from view’.

Dudley might have made the same point about neoclassical defenders of the faith, though he also recognised some important differences between Marxists and neoclassical economists: the latter are characterised by a much greater belief in quantitative techniques and focus on variables which are quantifiable; and neoclassicals focus on equilibrium which for them is normative, while Marxists ‘focus attention on social crises due to class relations, study the internal contradictions in capitalist (but not socialist) modes of production and stress how ‘uneven development’ is linked to ‘imperialism’. Marxists therefore tend to emphasise the historic origins of problems, and long-term dynamics’ [Seers 1983:45].

A full and final assessment of this ‘critique of

competing theories’ of Dudley’s work is bound to be controversial. It would also require more time and space than is available — and John Toye, in his own book, has covered some of this ground very skilfully [Toye 1987].<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, let me restrict myself to two concluding comments. First, the essence of Dudley’s attack was empirical and practical. It was not the painstaking analysis of the scholar probing the logic and dissecting every linkage of massive theoretical structures — but the engineer-designer asking how they had measured up to past challenges in specific situations and whether they now matched the needs of the problems at hand.

Second, whether or not all the criticisms are accepted, Dudley makes some devastating points about the misconceived assumptions and issues overlooked in these general theories. The originality of his criticism was that it focused on the relevance of these theories to the problems of developing countries and of Europe in the latter part of the 20th century. He subjected the theories to the test of consistency with practice, an approach which in the physical sciences would be treated as basically scientific.<sup>4</sup>

Dudley’s critiques are important to an understanding of his radicalism and to make clear where he stood — or, as he might have put it, to make clear where he did *not* stand. Dudley took many positions critical of the *status quo*, whether of capitalism, of transnational corporations, of communism, of the establishment in general, of administrators and of bureaucracy. He never tried to be even-handed in these criticisms because his values were egalitarian, anti-establishment, strongly for human rights. He had life-long friendships with and loyalties to key persons in the radical wings of the Labour Party in Britain, (though probably we should qualify this by specifying the pre-Bennite radical wing of the 1950s and 1960s). But notwithstanding his Presidency of a Marxist Society in Cambridge as an undergraduate, his views throughout the period I knew him were anti-Marxist, and, as indicated, anti-dogmatic. This, I sensed, was never fully understood by many officials of the Ministry of Overseas Development, who retained a residual suspicion of Dudley and of his leadership, notwithstanding the offer — and Dudley’s acceptance — of the honour of becoming a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

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## National Planning and Statistics

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In the area of national planning and statistics, Dudley

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<sup>3</sup> Pages 33-41 discussed Dudley Seers’ critique of Keynesianism.

<sup>4</sup> In the social sciences, things are for the most part different. Theories are heavily value laden. They co-exist, and data and evidence are rarely sufficient ever to reject more than certain applied particulars of a theory, never the whole. Thus though many textbooks and much of the literature concentrate on elaborating theory (and theories), little time is spent testing the theory itself.

was masterly: creative and constructive, rigorous and professional, and at the same time, deeply radical, perhaps more constructively radical than in any other area of his work. Dudley was by training a statistician, and his early work in Oxford had been in statistical teaching and research. Two of his earliest papers, 'Changes in the Cost of Living and the Distribution of Income since 1938' [Seers 1949] and 'The Levelling of Incomes Since 1938' [Seers 1949]<sup>5</sup> are models of most careful statistical analysis, directed to issues of major political concern. Over the years which followed, Dudley never lost his statistical interests. He was always a trenchant critic of the unthinking use of statistics, taking delight in denouncing spurious precision in the presentation of data and in reminding model builders and practical analysts alike of the arbitrary and often misleading conventions used for the calculation of statistical constructs such as GNP. But in statistical matters he was also a builder.

In the late 1950s, he developed a modified (non-square) input-output table, adapted to the analytical needs and data availability of an export-oriented developing country. This was first applied to Jamaica, then used as the integrating frame for the UN/FAO/ECA mission report on the *Economic Development of Zambia*<sup>6</sup> and subsequently for Zambia's *First National Development Plan 1966-70*. It was for two or three years maintained in the statistical office in Zambia until put to death by an expert provided under UN technical assistance, who preferred the orthodoxy of constructing a vast square input-output matrix of largely empty cells to the construction of a table which concentrated on the inter-sectoral relationships of relevance to the structure and policy-making concerns of Zambia. (The essence of Dudley's construct was to compress the inter-industry cells internal to a developing economy when they were negligible and to expand those summarising external-internal relationships, so as to show separately by sector export/import duties, royalties, income and consumption taxes, etc.)

In 1969, as President of the Society of International Development, Dudley launched a devastating attack on GNP in his address, subsequently revised and published under the title 'What are we trying to measure?' [Seers 1972]. He asked: if over the last decade in a country, GNP had grown, but unemployment had risen, income inequalities had widened and poverty had increased, is this development or not? This speech and the article, ending with an outspoken denunciation of 'the obscene inequalities that disfigure the world', became a landmark in a succession of international initiatives and appeals to give more attention to inequality and poverty in

development strategy over the following decade: the ILO employment missions, McNamara's speeches at successive World Bank meetings, the IDS/World Bank study, *Redistribution with Growth* [Chenery *et al.* 1974] and the World Employment Conference of 1976. Although Dudley later expressed serious reservations about the 'basic needs' priorities<sup>7</sup> to which this international process led, his own part in the early phases of it is only too clear. Following his SID speech in Delhi, he led the first two ILO employment missions (to Colombia in 1970 and Sri Lanka in 1971), participated in the Kenya mission (in 1972) and helped originate the IDS/World Bank study on redistribution with growth, though later restricted his contribution to providing a short case study on Cuba<sup>8</sup> and declined to have his name listed as a co-author of the volume.

Dudley throughout his career maintained a special interest in improving the quality and relevance of statistical indicators and, in the late 1970s, embarked at IDS on a major project to test the feasibility of using life expectancy as an integrating concept for social and demographic analysis and planning. The project involved trial applications in several countries. Although unfinished at the time of his death, Dudley had completed in 1982 a comprehensive paper on his approach, entitled 'Active life profiles for different social groups: a contribution to demographic accounting, a frame for social indicators and a tool of social and economic analysis' [Seers 1982]. The essence of Dudley's approach was to express the life chances of different social groups with respect to

<sup>7</sup> 'Basic needs', Dudley used to say, 'are most perfectly met in a well-run zoo'. However justified this jibe as a response to some of the cruder versions of basic needs, it fails to recognise that there is nothing intrinsically paternalist in the basic needs approach. In the 1970s, participation was often emphasised to be an integral component of the basic needs approach, as was the achievement of basic needs through the expansion of employment, household incomes and productivity. In the early 1980s, A. K. Sen took the debate much further by focusing on 'the process of expanding the capabilities of people' (*Economic Journal*, Dec. 1983:755). This combines the operational priorities of the basic needs approach with a presentation more clearly rooted in the ideas of empowerment of individuals and communities. One could indeed take the argument one stage further and argue for the empowerment of nations as an integral element of national development and of a mature international system. This would have close links with the international position which Dudley espoused in his final book, beyond neocolonialism and certainly non-paternalist.

<sup>8</sup> *Redistribution with Growth* was not without interest from a statistical point of view. Dudley's own piece on Cuba drew attention to the remarkable decline in infant mortality rates in Cuba, well ahead of most of the rates elsewhere in Latin America. Dudley used this to suggest that as a social indicator, IMR was much superior to per capita income — a viewpoint well justified in the 1970s though ironically less justified today, after experience in the crisis-ridden 1980s has shown that it is possible to make widespread use of low-cost health interventions to reduce infant and under-5 mortality rates even while household poverty in other respects may be worsening. It was, however, left to Chenery and Ahluwalia to make the main contributions to statistical measurement in *Redistribution with Growth*.

<sup>5</sup> This work was cited with approval by R. H. Tawney in the third edition of *Equality* (Unwin Books, London, 1964:215-6).

<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately printed in Ndola, Zambia and not easily available.

schooling, unemployment, sickness, marriage, migration, etc. in relation to the expected life-span of that social group at a particular date, thereby achieving a standardised frame of reference which could be compared with that of other social groups or of another country or at a different date. Thus, for example, as Dudley's 1982 article showed, a male born in the UK in 1971 could look forward to 68.9 years of life, during which 12.2 years would be spent in school, 41.3 years employed or self-employed, 2.7 unemployed. Dudley compared this profile with profiles of those born in Brazil, Malaysia, Hong Kong — as well as with the profiles of the main social classes by sex in Britain.

How important a contribution is this to the methodology of constructing social indicators? Such an assessment can only be made in relation to other methodologies in the somewhat messy and unsatisfactory world of social indicators. In my view, in spite of many attempts over the last few decades, we are still far from showing that it is possible to build a comprehensive *standard system* for compiling or presenting a wide range of social indicators, as we have, Dudley's criticisms notwithstanding, for economic indicators by means of the SNA — the UN's system of national accounts.

In part, this is because of the intrinsic difficulty of reducing human and social situations to a standard frame of common indicators, let alone of expressing the links between these indicators and other economic and political variables in a few simple but meaningful relationships. In this respect, constructing an SNA was technically easier, because underlying most economic transactions in modern industrial economies is some form of micro accounting in prices expressed in a common currency and built on common principles of consistency and self-balancing relationships.

Dudley's system of active life profiles makes possible international and inter-social group comparisons by expressing in a standardised form whatever social indicators are or can be related to age or time use. This is a useful step forward and provides, as Dudley indicates in the title of his article, a frame for social indicators, a tool for social and economic analysis and a contribution to demographic accounting. It is demographic accounting, in itself, which to me is the weak element. Richard Stone, in the 1960s and 1970s, attempted to develop such accounting, building and exploring the relationships over time in 'PAMs and SAMs' — Population and Social Accounting Matrices. But in spite of considerable work and great ingenuity, the endeavour remains a pale reflection of the triumphant creation — for all its weaknesses — of the SNA. Instead, I incline to the view that the full range of social indicators will require handling in a more eclectic fashion. Publications such as *Social Trends and Statistics*<sup>9</sup> probably do more to illuminate

understanding and policy making of social indicators and relationships by putting the emphasis on a pragmatic selection of indicators, trends and relationships rather than by presenting a single standardised interlocking set of social accounts.

In his final book, Dudley returned to the issues of national accounting and set out what he considered would be the priorities and characteristics of a system adapted to policy needs and structural characteristics of a developing country in which 'the nature of institutional factors such as the links between foreign and local firms are what really matter' [Seers 1983:137]. Dudley elaborated a number of specific points, of which the following may give a feel for his approach:

- an 'end use' clarification of imports, distinguishing between consumer goods, capital goods and industrial inputs;
- 'energy and food balance sheets, of a higher level of accuracy and much more detail than would be necessary for other data in an input-output table, e.g. not merely value figures but also physical data in "tons of coal equivalent", proteins, etc.';
- social indicators, especially nutrition data such as at-birth weights, heights and weight of children, literacy data and trends;
- more precise data on 'unemployment' and 'under-employment', based on in-depth questionnaire analysis, to cover the extent of waste, causes of poverty and, in primarily peasant economies, time budgets.

As regards the SNA itself, Dudley, with an eye on key policy issues, suggested the need to present tabulations which distinguished between public and private sectors, within a framework which showed 'informal' and 'traditional' sectors separately. In many countries, he added, it would be helpful also to distinguish urban and rural areas or advanced and backward regions (such as São Paulo and the north-east of Brazil) — though he also emphasised the political sensitivity of much of this data and commented, 'whether to publish them is another matter!'

Instead of treating some expenditures as fixed capital formation, Dudley suggested relaxing the definition of savings and moving to estimates of 'surplus above subsistence available for various uses — luxury consumption, security, building food stocks, fixed capital formation, education, etc.'. He recognised the difficulties, 'because subsistence is a relative concept, but for highly significant categories, even order of magnitude estimates are worthwhile. (They would not in fact be all that arbitrary where there is an official poverty line.) This approach would yield an aggregate national income net of what should be considered the

<sup>9</sup> Central Statistical Office, London — and first developed under the Directorship of Claus Moser.

first charge on income, the cost of maintaining human (rather than physical) capital' [Seers 1983:140].

The crucial problem is not, however, one of devising a new and ideal system; it is to get official statisticians to think about what they are doing. Statistical needs for Dudley were a direct reflection of planning priorities. National development planning was a topic which stimulated Dudley's interest and creative thinking over the whole of his professional life. However much he might inveigh against the paternalism of Westerners presuming to tell Third Worlders what to do, Dudley could never resist a request to lead a mission to analyse yet another country situation and make recommendations for policy and action. Nor should he have resisted: he was at his most creative on such occasions, and produced to my mind some of his best work — notably the report on the Economic Development of Zambia in 1964, the employment mission reports on Colombia, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda in 1980. It was appropriate that he was working on a report on Fiji, writing feverishly in a hut in a hurricane, barely two weeks before he died.

Dudley believed that development planning should emphasise strategic planning — in much the same way that good political or military strategy identifies a core of essential issues and concentrates on their rapid realisation. This would, as Dudley wrote, mean moving 'to quite a different type of planning — longer term, less economic, not entirely quantitative. And the object would not be necessarily — certainly not mainly — publication. Indeed the very fact that a plan is published raises doubts as to whether it deals with issues important to the government' [Seers 1983:95].

Dudley indicated the type of issue that such planning would need to cover, the exact selection depending, of course, on the time and situation of the country concerned:

- the basic political-economic and social pattern of the developments desired — and how they can be achieved (including the mobilisation of 'an adequate coalition of diverse political forces in support');
- a strategy to ensure sufficient control over the national economy and resources to achieve the objectives, including military strategy and attention to key economic issues such as oil imports, food production and technology;
- distributional and social issues such as health policy, water, basic hygiene and information;
- education for manpower development but with attention also to the role of education and religion in relation to the knowledge, attitudes and motivation needed for a self-reliant strategy. As Dudley emphasised, patriotism, although unfashionable as a topic of concern for economic

planners, is an obvious part of this. So also is the cultural heritage of a country, linguistic policy, especially in countries where there are large linguistic minorities, etc.;

— population policy, as an issue of 'conscious choice in the light of national circumstances, and these alone, not ... (of) spurious internationalism'.

Here Dudley chose to emphasise the positive benefits of a larger population and the need for 'integration between military and development planning'. He, of course, recognised that in the short run, the pace at which population is growing can raise severe problems for education and the 'dependency ratio', though 'the rate of expansion of the teenage population is an especially important factor in economic and political flexibility'. Migration policy accordingly should be a key concern for planning.

This emphasis on the benefits of population growth runs so contrary to contemporary discussion that some may be tempted to dismiss this as yet another tease by Dudley. But note his emphasis on 'national circumstances': when the circumstances are right, Dudley's points can be of central importance, as I myself discovered in 1967 when, at his suggestion, I participated in a planning mission to Abu Dhabi. Abu Dhabi had then a population estimated at 30,000, a most rudimentary economy, an oasis of date palms, four miles of macadamised road — and the beginning of an oil operation destined to produce within five to ten years one of the highest per capita incomes in the world. The single most important planning question identified in our report was, how rapidly was the government prepared to allow Abu Dhabi's population to grow and thus, by direct implication, for foreigners to outnumber national citizens.

I was privileged to work with Dudley in a number of countries, and I think back to many occasions when Dudley was demonstrating in practice the free thinking, creative and unrestrained approach to planning and strategy-making which he outlined in his book. It is difficult to convey his special skills and insights to those who did not experience them directly, though perhaps by stressing what Dudley avoided one can best bring out his uniqueness. Dudley always managed to steer an effective and remarkably original course between the predictable professionalism of a (good) international economic mission and the fresh but ultimately formless originality of a week-long symposium of distinguished social scientists, discussing the problems and needs of a particular country. He somehow combined his own steady professionalism with a free-thinking creativity, and was also highly conscious of the mistakes which foreigners on a short-term assignment needed to avoid — many of which he had set out in his article, 'Why visiting economists fail'.<sup>10</sup> The impact of many of his reports, nationally and internationally — Zambia, Colombia, Sri Lanka,

Kenya, most notably — provide good evidence of what missions can achieve.

Missions with Dudley were always fun and he always gave fully of himself, ever more so as the final stages of completing the report were reached. At that point, Dudley's range of skills became evident. He skilfully wove the drafts together, dropping the silly or the misplaced, strengthening the good elements, integrating the whole into a coherent strategy, which usually brought out the significance of key elements in ways which had not been spotted earlier. Dudley prided himself on producing the final product in weeks rather than months, and with a style and directness of language far removed from the fudge and banality of too many international documents.<sup>11</sup>

The *Economic Development of Zambia* was, in my view, Dudley's best report — and, with hindsight, best illustrates the approach to development strategy which Dudley puts forward in his final book. If ever an international mission visited a country at a strategic moment, this was it. The country was in the final count-down of colonialism, with independence coming a few months after the mission was due to report, and the break-up of the highly unequal Federation with Nyasaland and Rhodesia taking place in the first few weeks of the mission. A new government had already been formed, with Dr Kenneth Kaunda as Prime Minister.

Dudley focused the mission's efforts on the strategic decisions facing the new government. What were the inherited patterns of Zambia's economy which would need to be changed with independence? What should be the guiding long-run objectives for Zambia's development, which Dudley set as the 15 years to 1980? What should be the medium term objectives, priorities and strategic issues over the medium term (1965-70) and what were the urgent priorities for the next crucial 18 months? All these were discussed and analysed over an intensive three months, issue by issue, sector by sector. The identification of what was

actually strategic, what the options were and the broad directions of what the report should recommend in each case was the outcome of a process of professional analysis and political interaction which is probably unique in the experience of international technical assistance missions. Four full-day discussions were held with the newly appointed cabinet. Prime Minister Kaunda was in the chair and Dudley, with selected members of the mission, made presentations, joined in discussion, sought guidance and ultimately obtained approval. The first meeting concentrated on the inherited structure of Zambia's economy and the basic problems this would present for an independent government. The second meeting, a month or so later, presented basic options overall and in the main sectors. The third meeting explored the implications of lines of action earlier identified and made further adjustments. The final meeting checked the specifics of key recommendations — including the wording of the recommendations on possible compensation when taking over the mining royalties from the British South Africa Company. This process produced a report focused on the need to narrow the inherited gaps between whites and blacks, urban and rural areas, the mining sector and the rest of the economy — and on ways to set Zambia on a new, more balanced and diversified path of development, with employment creation, education expansion and food production given high priority.

This is not the place to assess the wisdom of the report's recommendations, nor to evaluate how much was carried out or with what result. (I did undertake such as assessment six years later, published in *African Social Research*.) My purpose here is to give a glimpse of Dudley the planner in action and to illustrate something of how he went about the task. For someone like myself, barely 18 months away from the sterile abstractions of graduate school, it was an exciting apprenticeship in applied development.

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## Underdeveloped Europe

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In the mid 1970s, and for what turned out to be the last decade of his life, Dudley turned his professional interests to Europe. By then he had ceased to be Director of the Institute of Development Studies, having handed over the directorship to me in 1972, after a five-year term. In 1975, he was elected the first President of the European Association of Development Institutes (EADI). He had also taken on co-direction of the IDS's new graduate course in development studies, in which a historical perspective of the development of Britain and other industrial countries was an important part of the curriculum. Internationally, this was the period of the first oil price increases and the rise of OPEC as an important Third World bloc. Britain had entered the European Community, and there was growing awareness of the

<sup>10</sup> This article, published in the *Journal of Political Economy* in 1962 is still worth reading. Dudley not only warns against the many pitfalls when economists provide advice to governments in 'underdeveloped' countries but analyses with subtlety and insight the need to be clear about different roles of economic adviser in any situation: working as 'technical adviser', as 'statesman adviser' (political) 'party adviser' and 'personal adviser', e.g. to a particular politician. In stressing this need 'to find out how the economy works', he summarises key points of structure in which a developing economy may differ from an industrialised country. He added: 'Professional training inculcates distrust of the sort of intuitive appreciation that has to be made. (This is one reason why economists are in general unsuccessful as politicians.) The whole business may indeed seem to them slightly disreputable' (p.328).

<sup>11</sup> A condition of Dudley taking on the ILO employment missions was that he alone would be responsible for the final products. By doing this, he avoided endless arguments and compromises over individual and agency sensitivities, and enhanced the style and analytical clarity of the final reports. The UN would gain if more reports were prepared on this basis.



rise of the newly industrialising countries (NICs), and of de-industrialisation in Britain. International economic policy-making had been weakened by the collapse of the Smithsonian agreement and the post-war international financial regime based on fixed exchange rates.

There were three main phases to Dudley's work in Europe, each showing links with these international developments. First, he worked on 'underdeveloped Europe', analysing European problems and patterns of development with the same structural tools of analysis he had used earlier in developing countries, especially in Latin America. Core-periphery models and tendencies in Europe became a centrepiece of this work, with the core identified as the industrial heart of central France and Germany, and the periphery as Greece and Southern Italy, Spain and Portugal, Ireland, Northern Ireland, much of Wales, Scotland and the North of England. (Scandinavia was clearly part of the geographical periphery — though not so obviously part of the underdeveloped and underdeveloping regions.) With colleagues in IDS and of EADI, Dudley contributed to three books on these themes, entitled *Underdeveloped Europe: Studies in Core-Periphery Relations* [Seers et al. eds 1979], *Integration and Unequal Development: the Experience of the EEC* [Seers and Vaitos eds 1980] and *The Second Enlargement of the EEC: the Integration of Unequal Partners* [Seers and Vaitos eds 1982].

Dudley liked to present these studies and perspectives as an example of moving away from the paternalism of development studies in which Britishers and other Europeans concentrated on problems of 'other people's countries'. In his Presidential Address to EADI in 1975, he argued that with this shift of focus, development studies 'would finally have come home'. I would be the last to suggest that this was all smokescreen or self-rationalisation. It clearly had much more substance. Nevertheless, the distinguishing feature of this work on Europe was its methodology and perspectives drawn from earlier work on 'underdeveloped countries'. Dudley, and other colleagues in EADI, never — fortunately — abandoned development studies to join the mainstream of economists who concentrated on the problems of Britain or Europe. Indeed, over this period Dudley continued to take on assignments in developing countries, on occasion dashing off in the midst of intense and quite emotional arguments with Ron Dore, who used to state with equal passion that IDS should work only on the problems of developing countries — but who himself would be departing in the opposite direction to Bradford, where he was studying the rapidly underdeveloping textile industry in Britain! Meanwhile, Emanuel de Kadt, who had some years earlier at IDS first put the case for IDS doing some work on the development problems 'in our own

backyard', was left with Carlos Fortin and me to mind the IDS shop!

The second phase of Dudley's work on Europe may set the whole in clearer perspective. Just as the first phase focused on the core-periphery tendencies within Europe, the second phase returned to the global view and emphasised the forces at work within the international economy which made a tripartite division of the world increasingly misleading. (The full flowering of this view came in Dudley's third phase, when, in the *Political Economy of Nationalism*, he argued the case for a more Euro-centred strategy in a world divided into a number of regional economic blocs).

Dudley's second phase was expressed most sharply in the negative — as a strong critique of the Brandt Commission's report. *North-South: a Programme for Survival* stirred Dudley's ire and irony as few documents did. In his review 'Muddling morality and mutuality' [Seers 1980]. Dudley tore into the Commissioners — many were his friends — for what he argued was a long list of confusions over 'mutual interests', which the Brandt report had made a central point underlying its proposals. I thought at the time, and still do, that this was one of Dudley's least credible efforts, itself limited and illogical, at times bitter and sour, with little of that sense of humour and ironic touch which enlivens most of Dudley's writing. Instead we have a sledgehammer being used to smash a whole report, rather than to drive home some important points of criticism.

Dudley challenged the implicit model of the Brandt Commission. There was no real 'international community' and the North-South division of the world was politically meaningless. Experience had already demonstrated that OPEC solidarity with the non-oil exporting countries of the South was virtually without effect when it came to practical economic action. By 1980, countries were divided into other blocs, too, which made even a 'tripartite' view of the world dangerously misleading — as Dudley himself had written several years earlier in another article [Seers 1976]. More fundamentally, however, Dudley argued that a case based on mutuality of interests of countries was meaningless, because it failed to take account of the differing interests of key groups within each country. Moreover, the Brandt Commission ignored the *realpolitik* of industrial country policy at that time, in which monetarist ideas and priority for reducing inflation over reducing unemployment held sway.

One should recognise immediately Dudley's perceptive, well ahead of the time when a multi-polar world became a popular theme in development debate and almost a decade before the thawing of superpower relationships made the idea of a united Europe remotely realistic. This said, fundamental questions

must be raised about Dudley's view of a united Europe in a world of partly self-sufficient blocs — advanced as a desirable goal, not just as an emerging tendency. The replacement of the neocolonial system by regional blocs would produce a world with less compulsion for the superpowers to meddle. Delinking Europe, Dudley suggested, would also create conditions for the easing of poverty and oppression elsewhere. How desirable would this sort of world be? And in *The Political Economy of Nationalism* Dudley concentrated on Europe's self interest in this arrangement on the grounds that it was not for him, as a European, to prescribe for other parts of the world. How reasonable is that position?

In attempting to give some initial answers to these questions, let us first note some important differences from contemporary debate on this theme. Current discussion focuses as two track development within a multi-polar world, the second track being countries totally falling behind in the struggle for development. Dudley emphasised the virtues of a multi-polar world, including those of enforced self-reliance and greater freedom from outside political interference for poorer developing countries. But he gave little attention in his final book to the possibility that many of the poorer, smaller countries would slip into a stagnation from which there would be little chance of escape, without specific efforts of resource transfers from richer countries. Nor — except for action to tackle debt — did he recognise any argument in favour of aid 'likely to appeal to Northern interests now' [Seers 1983: 160].

All this was consistent with Dudley's view that aid for poor countries must be sharply distinguished from aid to poor people — and with his view that the time had come to put an end to the neoclassical structure of the world and to start to analyse international issues more frankly in terms of the national interests of nations (and regions). But Dudley pushed the argument much further than his premisses would either require or permit. Is it really so clear that richer blocs of countries have no interests in development in poorer countries?

If development makes for greater political stability and less environmental destruction, does this not provide the potential for gains by the richer countries? Does the fact that political leaders often ignore these gains make their existence or potential less real? The environment and the interests of all countries in a more stable and less disrupted world should surely be seen as areas which short-sighted political leaders have ignored — and that this is no reason for others to follow. Dudley argued that debt was the only area where rich country interests in financial stability gave them an interest in promoting Third World development. Ironically, by the test of what has actually happened over the 1980s, one can argue that

even with debt, the developed countries have consciously preferred to insist on a pattern of adjustment which has enforced severe deflation and underdevelopment in many of the Third World debtor countries.

But this is where, to me, the weakness of Dudley's *realpolitik* approach is laid bare. What actually happened is never a complete guide to what might have happened, as Dudley's own emphasis on room for manoeuvre makes clear. The debt problems of the 1980s might have been tackled with more determination to avoid economic decline in Africa and Latin America — even to sustain or stimulate growth in these regions. In such circumstances, exports from the main creditor countries could have grown considerably and not declined. Untold human suffering could have been avoided. All this is within the conceptual framework of the Brandt report, and consistent with its egalitarian values as well as with its internationalism.

By the late 1980s, as the financial threat to stability in the industrial countries fades, but the Third World debt mountain continues to grow, different approaches to the debt problem begin to be taken more seriously. And it is even clear that we are held back, not by lack of mutual economic interests between industrial and Third World countries, but by conflicts between differing interests *within* the industrial countries. Essentially, industrialists and exporters to developing countries have lost the best part of a decade of exports, while those in banking and the financial sector have gained — although arguably, less than they might have, had dynamic growth continued.

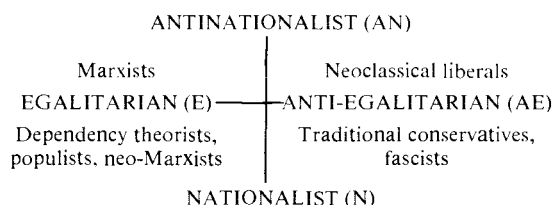
In other words, the critical constraints are, as Dudley argued, *within* countries. But, as Dudley played down in his critique of Brandt, there are groups of producers (and consumers) within DCs who have strong common interests with producers and consumers in LDCs. The issue is how to get such interests mobilised — a matter of political *values* and political leadership. It is clear that at the moment, such values and leadership do not characterise those in power in the main industrial countries. But surely this could change — just as the popular concern for the environment shows how earlier political attitudes on this issue could alter.

There is another dimension of political change, one already evident in the trends of the last two decades. Just as the dominance of the United States has been declining, so the importance of countries with more forward-looking views on international matters has been growing. This can be seen in support for aid and Third World development, for example. In 1965, aid from the US and the major former colonial powers, Britain and France, accounted for four-fifths of total world aid. By 1975, this fraction had fallen to well under half. At the same time, aid from the Nordic

countries, Canada and Netherlands has risen over twenty-fold and, with aid from the oil exporting producer countries, now accounts for over a quarter of all aid.

In his last book, Dudley argues that to analyse regimes in terms of their orientation along some 'old left-right axis . . . is not much use'. Rather he put the case for a two axis analysis, nationalist-anti-nationalist and egalitarian-anti-egalitarian. This produced a four-fold classification, reproduced below, which could be used to clarify not only the ideology and practice of regimes but analytical approaches. Neoclassical economic analysis would tend to be in the anti-nationalist, anti-egalitarian segment, neo-Marxist in the egalitarian, nationalist segment.

DIAGRAM 1



Dudley chose to stress in his book how he moved to a nationalist — or rather European nationalist — position, somewhat playing down the contradiction between being a nationalist and having *regional* affiliations, which seems to imply some residual internationalism. More importantly, Dudley did not emphasise where he stood on the second main axis of analysis — egalitarianism. Nothing Dudley wrote at this time suggested he had moved far from the concern with egalitarianism which had characterised so much of his professional work — from his statistical studies in Oxford in the 1940s to his call (with Myrdal) in the 1980s for aid to be entirely devoted to poverty alleviation. On human rights, his concern, if anything, strengthened. To me the connecting thread of Dudley's professional work over his lifetime is more clearly shown by this continuing focus on inequality and injustice than by the moves over his last decade from internationalism to a European-centred nationalism.

### Dudley Seers — Pioneer of Development

Ideas are the centre of an intellectual's contribution. But institutions often serve to generate and carry forward ideas — and the creation of an institution can thus be an important part of a person's contribution. One institution bears the marks of Dudley's leadership more clearly than any other — the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. Over the last 16 years of his life, Dudley was the dominant

figure of the IDS, first as its Director from 1967-72, afterwards as a Fellow, but always at the centre of new thinking, changing perspectives, taking new research initiatives, establishing contacts with outside groups.

Dudley would be the last to attribute an institution's creativity to one single personality. IDS's creativities flourished because of the participatory style of leadership which Dudley initiated and because of the qualities of the persons he initially sought and appointed. It was Dudley above all who set IDS on its path of committed but pragmatic radicalism, who put structural approaches at the centre of gravity of its analytical work and who showed how IDS needed to establish and extend operational links with countries in all parts of the Third World, to avoid falling into the trap of becoming simply a training institution for civil servants from 'newly independent countries' or a university research department concerned with developing countries.

The first ten years of IDS's life have been summarised elsewhere [IDS 1976:6-33] by Dudley and myself — and with time, others will no doubt document the later stages and re-interpret the beginnings. Let me here recall some examples of Dudley's leadership which set the IDS pattern.

I have already emphasised the ILO employment missions, which by involving a number of IDS Fellows in addition to Dudley, served as a focus for IDS work and a stimulus to develop an IDS viewpoint, in which issues of income distribution and employment were central. As a second example, in 1972 Dudley took IDS into the complexities of the revolutionary politics of Chile under Allende. Under his leadership, IDS joined with ODEPLAN to organise an international consultation in Santiago in March 1972, with a very wide participation including persons from the USSR and the World Bank. This established a number of new links with Chile, as well as strengthening old ones. A year and a half later, after Allende's fall, Dudley devoted much of his time to helping political refugees from Chile get out to safety and find employment in other countries. By being host to some of the refugees, IDS later became a beneficiary of these tragic events, and for much of the 1970s, several of the most distinguished development scholars of Latin America, and probably the strongest group in Europe working on Latin America, were to be found there.

Dudley was to have been the first director of the MPhil course, but at the crucial stage fell ill and Ron Dore took over. When Dudley became course director two years later, he firmly established the structure under which the course was taught in the perspectives of national development over the last five centuries or so, from the beginning of the modern colonial period to the present. It was also taught with reference to three main paradigms: the neoclassical, the structuralist and the neo-Marxist. Dudley involved the students in a

case study of Scotland and policy options for use of the revenues from Scottish oil, then in the early phases of the oil boom. Britain would have a stronger economy today if the conclusions of the study, published in 1977 [MPhil Faculty and Students 1977], had been applied and the oil revenues used for investment in restructuring and modernising technology in British industry.

Dudley's leadership and innovation was by no means confined to his years at IDS. In the 1950s and early 1960s, he had played an innovative role as Chief of the Survey Section in ECLA, and in ECA as Director of the Economic Development Division, also heading an economic Survey Project. His year and a half as a visiting Fellow at Yale coincided with discussion and debate laying the foundation for the Economic Growth Centre. From 1964 to 1968 he was, as Paul Streeten has described, part of the triumvirate with Barbara Castle and Sir Andrew Cohen which developed the Ministry of Overseas Development. Dudley, with Paul Streeten, led the Economic Planning Staff.

While at IDS, Dudley kept up many outside involvements. In 1969, he was elected President of the Society of International Development and exercised his own unique style of leadership by threatening to resign if the Society went ahead and held its World Conference in a particularly compromising Latin American country. The decision was changed and the conference held in Delhi!

Dudley's leadership and distinction was recognised in 1975, when he was elected the first President of the European Association of Development Institutes (EADI). As the direct involvement of IDS with the origins of both the Development Studies Association (DSA) and EADI is often not recalled, it may be useful to note this here. In Sussex in 1970 a national meeting on development research was held, inspired, as it happens, by my wife! As a biologist, she kept up with the research of her fellow biologists by participating in an annual meeting, informally known as the 'mannequin parade', in which each researcher was given eight to ten minutes to show off the latest novelty of his or her work. We initiated a parallel arrangement for development studies in Sussex in 1970, in East Anglia in 1971 and more or less annually thereafter. Thus was born the Development Studies Association of the United Kingdom — and as a by-product of the 1971 East Anglia meeting, the European Association of Development Institutes.

A key feature of Dudley's directorship of IDS was to ensure that leadership remained in the hands of those of us engaged full-time in development studies, rather

then a separate administration, let alone that part of the British establishment which would have encouraged a more conventional and less challenging approach to development. In a way I owe my own appointment as Dudley's successor to this, because once it was clear that Dudley was himself unwilling to continue, he, with other Fellows, strongly resisted any attempts to appoint a former Ambassador to the job.

These, and many more memories of Dudley, bring to mind the early years of IDS and many enlivening friendships and intellectual experiences of that time. But I think back with most warmth and satisfaction, professional and human, to the ILO employment missions undertaken while at IDS rather than in IDS — in Colombia, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Zambia.

My dominant memories of Dudley are of the final stages in preparing the reports, at which Dudley was at his most active and creative. While all of us were drafting our sections, Dudley would be sitting at a table somewhere, both drafting his own sections and, as leader and editor in chief, pulling it all together. He would sit, scribbling rapidly, often with a handkerchief wrapped around his left hand, like some long distance runner. His pace never flagged, and from his pen, once again, would emerge one of the stories which would shape the development thinking of the time.

His pace never flagged over his entire professional life, and especially not in the final months, when he was completing the *Political Economy of Nationalism* and taking on that last assignment in Fiji. He died too early — but he has left his unique and indelible mark on development studies.

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