

DeMartino, G.F. (1999) *Global Economy, Global Justice* Routledge, London. xiv + 279 pp. 0-415-12427-1 Hardback £60. 0-415-16248- 3 Paperback £17.99.

George DeMartino has written an interesting book. Faced with a growing difference in standards of living between the richest and poorest in the world in recent decades, he attacks the free market and argues for a panoply of new international arrangements, designed to reward the virtuous, in part by taxing the successful. He does this by examining the norms that underlie neo-classical economic theory, contrasting them with some alternatives, especially that of the 'capabilities' approach of Amartya Sen. He then applies this approach to international trade, discussing 'free' and 'fair' trade, before concluding with what he calls 'global economic policies for the year 2025'. In this last section, he calls for new, world-wide agreements involving the imposition of tariffs on countries which do not adopt appropriate social and environmental standards or whose internal distribution of income is unacceptably skewed, new taxes on multinational firms, and restrictions on the right of well-educated and wealthy people to migrate, all with a view to achieving a distribution of income more closely related to the 'capabilities' of individuals and nations. He acknowledges that this utopia is unlikely to be realised in the foreseeable future, but holds out the hope that events - unspecified - across the world may conspire, with the help of the Internet, to make it possible. Meanwhile, he urges us to do what we can, 'you in your small corner, and I in mine', to bring this about.

What are we to make of this? Almost all the book is written without recourse to equations or the other technical paraphernalia of economic theory, though the style is somewhat laboured and repetitive, and there are several formatting errors. While much of the first half covers familiar ground, the author's starting points - the rejection of the 'end of history' hypothesis and concern for the poorest in the world - are well taken; and his analysis of the normative basis of some of the approaches to the management of international trade and the movement of capital and labour is illuminating. Moreover, the book's policy conclusions follow from its preceding analysis. However, the book takes it as read that the free market is responsible for poverty, when it is arguable that a truly free market, in which OECD countries opened their markets unconditionally to imports from those with the lowest standards of living, and the rich countries of the North, with ageing populations, substantially increased their numbers of immigrants, might go far to alleviating the problem. Nor does it review other, rather straightforward actions which governments are already taking, such as Jubilee 2000's idea of debt cancellation for the poorest countries. Or is that too simple? It is certainly much simpler, and more realistic, than DeMartino's proposals for the establishment of a 'social index tariff structure', a 'global corporate code of conduct' for multinational companies, both with associated taxation and redistribution mechanisms, and a 'global convention on international mobility', including restraints on the right of the best educate to migrate. While these novel proposals may cause second- and third-year undergraduates of economics, geography and politics to think about solutions to economic divergence in new ways, they would appear to be far removed from any likely course of international action in the near future. Perhaps, that is why DeMartino chooses 2025 as the target year for the implementation of his global policies. Unfortunately, he does not tell us.

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