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The Political Economy of East-West-South Co-operation

G. Adler-Karlsson

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Editor's Foreword

"The Political Economy of East-West-South Co-operation" by Professor Gunnar Adler-Karlsson is the seventh volume in the series of economic and systems studies: "*Studien über Wirtschafts- und Systemvergleiche*" published by the Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies. It deals with a highly topical subject which is certain to affect long term international economic and political developments.

Anyone seeking a strictly scientific, exhaustive survey of the extraordinarily complicated and virtually endless volume of material involved may be disappointed by this study. But the reader who appreciates ingenuity of thought and is undeterred by provocative and contradictory formulations will enjoy this eminently readable book to the last page, adding his own critical comments in the margin.

Committed readers of this kind are invited to send their criticisms and their own views to the author: Professor G. Adler-Karlsson, University of Roskilde, P.O. Box 260, DK-4000 Roskilde, Denmark. Professor Adler-Karlsson accepts sole responsibility for the views expressed in his book. The editor hopes sincerely that it will reach a wide public and initiate a constructive discussion on an international scale.

The book was written in the course of 1973 and 1974 at the Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies, where Professor Adler-Karlsson spent an extended period conducting research as a guest. During this time, he had the opportunity of discussing his work with colleagues from both East and West. In particular, the research director of the Vienna Institute, Dr. Friedrich *Levcik*, as well as Professor Kazimierz *Laski*, Professor Kurt *Rothschild*, both of the Johann Kepler University at Linz, and Dr. Theodor *Prager* of the Austrian Chamber of Labour, Vienna, had several thoroughgoing debates with the author.

The editor would like to thank the *Austrian National Bank* for supporting the project out of its *Jubilee Fund*.

Franz Nemschak

**“I was now to discover that the world has more than
one way of keeping you a nigger, has evolved more than
one way of skinning the cat**”

**James Baldwin
In “No Name in the Street.”**

Foreword

It is really not possible to write a book about economic co-operation – which is the reverse side of conflict – between the capitalist, the communist and the Third world. The subject is simply too vast. You cannot do it. But, of course, you can try. And here is one attempt.

The size of the subject compared to that of the book shows that nothing but a general survey or a tour d'horizon is aimed at. The resulting superficiality is aggravated by two factors. The book has been written under time constraints. I would myself have liked to give it a couple of years more, but various circumstances of life have prevented it. Secondly, the manuscript was finished in the first half of 1974. Much of it was written in 1973. Since then a number of events have taken place in the world economy. In rereading the manuscript at the end of 1975, and updating it on a few points, I have, however, come to the result that the main conclusions largely stand up to the test of passed events. In spite of internal Western contradictions and the oil crisis the multinational companies and their capitalist system, seen as power factors in the international economic system, still have seen no serious rival. The predictions of present "marxists" about the imminent fall of the capitalist system may be about as correct as when Marx and Engels foresaw the final break-down of the capitalist system within one year, year in and year out in the 1850's. Which may prove highly unfortunate for the poorest one third of humanity unless the West from within changes its priorities and its international economic policies. This is something I have tried to indicate at the end of this book and made somewhat more articulate in a volume called "Manual for the 1980's", just published in Swedish and largely written after this manuscript was finished in 1974.

This book is based on a wide reading. Every page could be covered to at least one third by foot-notes. But these have been kept to a minimum. Most readers don't use them anyway, or are even disturbed by them. Those who are professionally interested know how to find the sources.

Irrespective of which side of the ideological fence they are sitting on, most readers are likely to think that much of this book is highly debatable. But instead of getting angry, try to read it as a challenge for thinking or for rethinking about some of the "established truth". In his "American Images of Soviet Foreign Policy" 1) William Welch has showed how much of the established Western academic truth is utterly questionable when it comes to Soviet foreign policy. The same may well be the case

1) *An Inquiry into Recent Appraisals from the Academic Community*. Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1970.

in the field I am plowing. I have become greatly sceptical on the many high-sounding phrases that politicians are giving vent to both on East – West and on North – South problems. And as Welch and one of his critics, Samuel L. Sharp, have found, these phrases tend to be reinforced by the biases of academic authors catering “deliberately either to honestly perceived needs of this country or to expediently perceived marketability of certain views”, or, in other words, by “a willing stable of intellectual mercenaries”. 2)

Ever since I started my work for the book “Western Economic Warfare 1947 – 1967” soon fifteen years ago, I have met many an example of these individuals and their so-called scholarly contributions to the utterly controversial field of capitalist-communist relations and comparisons. In my implicit dialogue with them I am perhaps overreacting a bit. But even if that would be the case, the pages to follow represent an independent and honest attempt to form some basis for a judgement on some of the most crucial problems that mankind will have to face during the coming decades.

Finally, I want to express my warm gratitude to the Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies and its leader, Prof. Dr. Franz Nemschak, for having given me the opportunity to write this book.

Roskilde, Denmark, in December 1975

Gunnar Adler-Karlsson

2) *Newsletter on Comparative Studies of Communism*, Vol. 6, No. 2, February 1973, pp. 5 and 11.

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