

logical trauma on a nation facing the uncertainties of major reform. Marples does not explore this broader impact of Chernobyl. Perhaps it is still too early to detect such effects or perhaps they will prove as difficult to assess as the long-term effects of the accident on health and mortality. Marples cannot be faulted much for avoiding such shaky terrain; his thorough depiction of the horrifying and immediate effects of the accident provide ample food for thought for us, the global companions of the Chernobyl victims.

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### Trading for keeps

by John English

*Limits on Middle Power Diplomacy: The Case of Commodities (No. 2 in the series Middle Powers in the International System) by Jock A. Finlayson. Ottawa: North-South Institute, 1988, 54 pages, \$10.50.*

*World Agricultural Trade: Building a Consensus edited by William M. Miner and Dale E. Hathaway. Halifax, N.S.: Institute for Research on Public Policy (with the Institute for International Economics of Washington, D.C.), 1988, 214 pages, \$19.95.*

In February 1944, as the shape of the postwar international system emerged from the wartime rubble, Lester Pearson warned his External Affairs colleagues that "states in between sometimes, it seems, get the worst of both worlds. We are necessary but not necessary enough!" From this fear that the great powers would dominate the postwar settlement, especially the United Nations, came the notion of functionalism that each nation's role in international organization should reflect the extent of its particular interest or contribution in any relevant area. Underlying this conception was the notion of common interests of the states "in between," a group that became known as middle powers.

Two generations later, it might well be argued that the states in between got the best of both worlds. Certainly the postwar years have been good to the nations origi-

nally conceived of as middle powers, such as the Netherlands, Sweden, Canada and India. The widely accepted concept of a "golden age" of Canadian diplomacy, a concept best reflected and analyzed in John Holmes's work, rests upon the assumption that Canada, a leading "middle power," worked in concert with other "states in between" to make postwar international organization more effective and to place some restraints upon superpower dominance.

Jock Finlayson's concise and clear study of commodities and "middle power diplomacy" is dedicated to the memory of John Holmes and is part of a broader study undertaken by the North-South Institute to discover whether the concept of a middle power grouping could be reinvigorated in the 1980s when, the book's foreword claims, "the management of the international system can no longer be left to great powers [which] have shown themselves more and more unwilling or unable to carry such a role." Finlayson's study, which is impressively argued and detailed, does not offer much encouragement for those who would seek to reinvigorate the middle power tradition at a time when the international system has four times as many actors as in 1945. Finlayson defines middle powers rather arbitrarily as those countries with 1982 GNPs between \$50 billion and \$500 billion — a list of thirty-three countries as diverse as Algeria, Iran, Romania, Sweden, Malaysia and Canada.

Did this middle group identify any common interests during the protracted negotiations of the 1970s to stabilize commodity markets through market regulation? Very few, it seems. For "middle power" developing countries, membership in the Group of 77 was, in most cases, the preeminent consideration. The UNCTAD group negotiating system intensified this effect, leading to an aggregation of various G77 demands into "ambitious, sweeping and vaguely formulated proposals" that invited "quick rejection by the major developed countries." Canada did in fact seek to play a mediating role in the 1975-77 period when it was co-chair of the Conference on International Economic Cooperation (CIEC). As with so many bursts of Canadian enthusiasm in recent times, interest waned quickly when the spotlight shifted.

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Successful middle power diplomacy depends upon consensus, and *World Agri-*

*cultural Trade: Building a Consensus* represents an attempt by Canada's Institute for Research on Public Policy and the Institute for International Economics in Washington to develop a program to deal with the agricultural crisis of the 1980s. The book incorporates and builds upon "Reforming World Agricultural Trade," which is "a policy statement by twenty-nine (agricultural) professionals from seventeen countries." In comparing Finlayson with *World Agricultural Trade*, one sees how the international atmosphere has changed. In the 1970s the focus was on management of trade, on the creation of increased inter-governmental regulation of trade in order to redistribute income. In the eighties, market redistribution is no longer intellectually fashionable.

The Statement attracted much attention when it was issued a year ago, but its impact on agricultural trade talks has been limited. Of the twenty-nine professionals included, five are Canadian, six are American, and nine are from the EC. Five are from Third World countries, including Argentina, a notable exporter. In many ways, the document reflects those which were produced in the forties. Functionalism, which Canadians urged upon international organizations, implied that special contributions or interests should receive recognition in the composition of international bodies. Wheat and uranium were examples in the Canadian case. In retrospect, we can see that it was the interest of the producer not the consumer that was emphasized. In the case of agriculture today, the crisis too often reflects the producer's predicament. A consensus and a solution must ultimately rest upon a broader base.

Despite recent claims that Canada is a foremost, principal or, most astonishingly, great, power, in the eyes of others, it sits, as Kim Nossal has said, "somewhere (however fuzzily) in the middle." States in between find their position less comfortable today: there are more chairs around the tables and the designs are not so similar. If there is a lesson from past successes, it is that it matters less where you sit than what you do. It is also a lesson that Jock Finlayson derives from the failure of the seventies. Consensus may be impossible; action is not.

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