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Deutsches Institut für  
Entwicklungspolitik



German Development  
Institute



The Third

**Hans Singer Memorial Lecture  
on Global Development**



Monday, 7 November 2011  
17:00 h

German Development Institute /  
Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), Bonn

The Third

# **Hans Singer Memorial Lecture on Global Development**

Welcoming address and introduction:

**Prof. Dr. Dirk Messner**

Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), Bonn

**Sir Richard Jolly**

Institute of Development Studies (IDS),  
University of Sussex, UK

Keynote speaker:

**Professor Stephen Chan OBE,**

School of Oriental & African Studies,

University of London

**“Mercy and the Structures of the World”**



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The **Third Hans Singer Memorial Lecture on Global Development** by Professor Stephen Chan is an effort to sketch a moral equivalent to the broad thrust of the Singer-Prebisch approach to the economic universe. It cannot be as elegant or exact. There is no successful modelling of a moral universe that has been contentious since its first imagination. That last word is itself key: the economic universe has a conception, and the moral universe is imagined – even if afterwards rendered in conceptual languages.

The Lecture proceeds by way of four propositions:

1. What might, in this argument, be called 'poor' countries cannot assert the value of their philosophies, religious and political beliefs, or thought processes when, all the time, the response of 'rich' countries – 'rich' being applied to both economic and geopolitical structures of dominance – is to retain and expand the hegemonic nature of their own philosophies and beliefs.
2. There is an irony here in that, very often, the philosophies of 'poor' countries are richer in history, generations of re-imagination and refinement, with multiple paradigm shifts and complex contentions, than those of 'rich' countries – and have, in some cases, been the guardians and transmitters of what the 'rich' now take as their own. The philosophies of the 'poor' have more 'manufacture' within them than those of the 'rich' whose dominance is set within a project of increase.
3. However, even so, precisely because there is contention and identifiable histories – not sufficient to render the fabled 'clash of civilisations', but sufficient to render perceptible differences which require transaction by debate without the guarantee of agreement – it may be argued that the moral universe, albeit with one dominant structure, has within it several discrete and contentious structures.
4. The dominant structure nevertheless seeks to marshal differences according to its own preferences and convenience and, in a world of great economic and social inequalities, hegemonically rations mercy. The enlightened struggle of those within all structures is to work towards the equality of different philosophical and cultural structures, while seeking to 'manufacture' as many interim mercies of as comprehensive and unrationed a nature as possible.

What is profoundly required in views of the world, and actions in the world today is, therefore, the moral duty of imagination to seek equality without uniformity, commonality without universalism, and mercy without preconditions.

Background:

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. **Sir Hans Wolfgang Singer**

(born 29 November 1910 in Wuppertal, Germany; deceased 26 February 2006 in Brighton, United Kingdom),

a renowned international economist and one of the most influential development practitioners of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has studied in Bonn and graduated from the Economics Department of the University of Bonn in 1932. Being Jewish, he fled the Nazi terror in 1933 and settled in the United Kingdom.

After World War II, in 1947, he became an influential development scholar with the United Nations (UN) for two decades. During his time at the UN Hans Singer was a significant driver of establishing important organisations like UNDP, UNICEF and the World Food Programme. The main scientific finding of Hans Singer is the Singer-Prebisch Thesis, which states that the terms of trade for commodity exporting developing countries tend to deteriorate over time. From 1969 until his death he joined the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex.

In commemoration and in honour of Sir Hans Singer the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS, University of Sussex) have established the "Hans Singer Memorial Lecture on Global Development". The Lecture alternates between Bonn and Brighton on an annual basis. The first Memorial Lecture was given 2009 in Bonn by Prof. Dr. Paul Collier, CBE, University of Oxford on "**Hans Singer's Legacy: The Problem of Commodity Exporters Revisited**". The second Memorial Lecture took place 2010 in Brighton and was given by Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary General, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) on "**Hans Singer, Economic Development, Crisis, Recovery and the United Nations**".

Your directions to the German Development Institute /  
Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)

Tulpenfeld 6  
D - 53113 Bonn

From Bonn Central Station (*Hauptbahnhof*):

Take the U-Bahn U 16/ U 63 or U 66 to "Heussallee/Museumsmeile". Take the exit Heussallee. Turn right after 50 m onto the footpath towards the office complex 'Tulpenfeld'. Follow the signs across Tulpenfeld to the building of DIE at Tulpenfeld 6.

The buses No. 610 and 611 run from the train station Bonn *Hauptbahnhof* to the bus stop "Heussallee/Museumsmeile". Turn onto the footpath towards the office complex 'Tulpenfeld'. Follow the signs across Tulpenfeld to the building of DIE at Tulpenfeld 6.



## Organisers

The logo for the Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) consists of the lowercase letters 'd', 'i', and 'e' in a serif font, separated by dots.

Deutsches Institut für  
Entwicklungspolitik



German Development  
Institute

Tulpenfeld 6  
53113 Bonn

Contact: [Dr. Thomas Fues](#) or [Matthias Ruchser](#)

Telephone + 49 (0) 228 - 94 92 7 - 0

Fax + 49 (0) 228 - 94 92 7 - 130

[die@die-gdi.de](mailto:die@die-gdi.de) | [www.die-gdi.de](http://www.die-gdi.de) | [www.facebook.com/DIE.Bonn](https://www.facebook.com/DIE.Bonn)



Brighton  
UK - BN1 9RE

Telephone +44 (0) 1273 - 606261

Fax +44 (0)1273 - 621202

[ids@ids.ac.uk](mailto:ids@ids.ac.uk) | [www.ids.ac.uk](http://www.ids.ac.uk)