

A Few Key Dates

- 1928 Ernesto "Che" Guevara born to a middle class family in Argentina
- 1946-1955 "Peronism" in Argentina
- 1952 Che and Alberto go on their road trip
- 1952 Batista launches a US-backed military coup in Cuba, cedes most of its national industry (sugar) to US corporations
- 1953/4 Che transcribes his notes on his road trip
- 1953-1959 Cuban Revolution
- 1955 Peron overthrown in a military coup
- 1955 Che meets Fidel Castro and joins the Cuban Revolution in 1956
- 1967 Che Guevara captured and executed by CIA-backed Bolivian forces
- 1993 *Motorcycle Diaries* finally published

"Fourth, we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and skill to relieve the suffering of these people. The United States is pre-eminent among nations in the development of industrial and scientific techniques. [...] Our aim should be to help the free peoples of the world, through their own efforts, to produce more food, more clothing, more materials for housing, and more mechanical power to lighten their burdens. [...] With the cooperation of business, private capital, agriculture, and labor in this country, this program can greatly increase the industrial activity in other nations and can raise substantially their standards of living. Such new economic developments must be devised and controlled to the benefit of the peoples of the areas in which they are established. Guarantees to the investor must be balanced by guarantees in the interest of the people whose resources and whose labor go into these developments. The old imperialism-exploitation for foreign profit-has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair-dealing. [...] Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge."

(Harry Truman Inaugural Speech, January 1949)

"In contrast with the surging growth of the countries in our socialist camp and the development taking place, albeit much more slowly, in the majority of the capitalist countries, is the unquestionable fact that a large proportion of the so-called underdeveloped countries are in total stagnation, and that in some of them the rate of economic growth is lower than that of population increase. These characteristics are not fortuitous; they correspond strictly to the nature of the capitalist system in full expansion, which transfers to the dependent countries the most abusive and barefaced forms of exploitation. It must be clearly understood that the only way to solve the questions now besetting mankind is to eliminate completely the exploitation of dependent countries by developed capitalist countries, with all the consequences that this implies"

(Che Guevara, "On Development" 1964)

“Poverty on a global scale was a discovery of the post-World War II period [...] The treatment of poverty allowed society to conquer new domains. More perhaps than on industrial and technological might, the nascent order of capitalism and modernity relied on a politics of poverty the aim of which was not only to create consumers but to transform society by turning the poor into objects of knowledge and management [...] The management of poverty called for interventions in education, health, hygiene, morality, and employment and the instilling of food habits of association, savings, child rearing, and so on [...] Thus poverty became an organizing concept and the object of a new problematization. As in the case of any problematization, that of poverty brought into existence new discourses [developmentalism] and practices that shaped the reality to which they referred. That the essential trait of the Third World was its poverty and that the solution was economic growth and development became self-evidence, necessary, and universal truths”

(Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, 1994, 22-24)

“Development brings the light, that is, the possibility to meet ‘scientifically ascertained social requirements.’ The country must thus awake from its lethargic past and follow the one way to salvation, which is, undoubtedly, ‘an opportunity unique in its long history’ (of darkness, one might add). [...] Yet although couched in terms of humanitarian goals and the preservation of freedom, the new strategy sought to provide a new hold on countries and their resources. A type of development was promoted which conformed to the ideas and expectations of the affluent West, to what the Western countries judged to be a normal course of evolution and progress” (26)

“The representation of the Third World as a child in need of adult guidance was not an uncommon metaphor and lent itself perfectly to the development discourse. The infantilization of the Third World was integral to development as a ‘secular theory of salvation.’” (30)

“Development fostered a way of conceiving of social life as a technical problem, as a matter of rational decision and management to be entrusted to that group of people – the development professionals – whose specialized knowledge allegedly qualified them for the task. Instead of seeing change as a process rooted in the interpretation of each society’s history and cultural tradition – as a number of intellectuals in various parts of the Third World had attempted to do in the 1920s and 1930 (Gandhi being the best known of them) – these professionals sought to devise mechanisms and procedures to make societies fit a pre-existing model that embodied the structures and functions of modernity. Like sorcerers’ apprentices, the development professionals awakened once again the dream of reason that, in their hands, as in earlier instances, produced a troubling reality” (52)

Questions:

- How does Truman represent developmentalism? Why, according to him, is developmentalism necessary and how does it work?
- What are the critiques of developmentalism articulated by Che Guevara?
- How does Escobar explain developmentalism?
 - What is developmentalism and what problems does it attempt to solve?
 - What were the factors that led to developmentalism?
 - What does it mean the developmentalism is both a set of policies and a discourse or way of seeing?
 - How is development like and unlike colonialism?