
Argentina has long been in the vanguard of the movement to revise the world order in favor of the weaker nations, and recently its political writers have been among the most forceful advocates of the dependency thesis. This book, which in places reads like a series of lectures and could form a useful introduction to modern international relations for Spanish-speaking students, is in the tradition of the former and shares some of the assumptions of the latter.

Señor Lanús, who was for twelve years a member of the Argentine Foreign Service until 1974, has read widely and draws both on the works of the traditional political theorists such as Dante, Suárez, Grotius, Hobbes, and Kant, and on those of modern writers like Aron, Deutsch, Frankel, Holsti, Morgenthau, and Schwarzenberg. Beginning with a look at past systems of international relations, he devotes the first part of his book to an analysis of the main features of the international order as it has existed since 1945. In the second half, he criticizes the doctrine of power as a basis either for understanding or for practicing international politics. The pursuit of power by the state renders, he says, the goal of world peace unattainable. Interests, are the true end of international politics, and it is in the common pursuit of shared interests that the politics of cooperation can be attained.

Four principles are fundamental. States are equal and no state, or group of states, has a right to claim interests superior to others. States should have sovereignty and territorial integrity. Peoples have a right to self-determination and all forms of colonialism are to be condemned. Moreover, threats should be eliminated as instruments of foreign policy. If these four points are accepted, states could reformulate the present political and economic order on a basis of universal consensus, using negotiation as their means and, through the increase in contacts of all kinds, generating a positive movement toward a true world community.

Señor Lanús, then, is essentially a writer in the older European tradition who places the state at the center of his world organization, even though recognizing the existence and importance of non-state actors in today's world. Some would say that without much more attention to the role of non-state actors his picture is necessarily incomplete. Others would say that it is precisely the survival of the state, with its unregulated and uncontrollable sovereignty, that makes the goal of the attainment of world peace impossible.

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