

TURNING TO THE FUTURE

A quick look at our globe
today and tomorrow

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By way of a brief introduction to our Globalism II consultation in Prague, I wish to deal cursorily with four areas:

- I. Disarmament, Global Development and Global Common Security
- II. The Global Economic Crisis - Its Meaning and Significance
- III. The Developments in Global Science/Technology
- IV. New Thinking, Restructuring and Socialist Renewal

I. Disarmament, Global Development and Global Common Security

If all goes well, the epoch-making first step should be behind us by mid-December. The auguries are good for the signing of the first major treaty for the reduction of nuclear weapons. The Washington Summit meeting between President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev begins on December 9th. The intermediate-range and short-range nuclear weapons of the USA and the USSR will be totally eliminated if the treaty is signed. This applies to all ground-launched missile systems of the two leading nuclear powers - Perhings, Cruise Missiles, SS-4s, SS-12s, SS-20s and Pershing 1-As - everything ground-launched between 500 and 5000 km range. We hope that in less than a year from December 1987, the treaty will be ratified and implemented. The hope is that the 7a aging Pershing missiles owned by the USA and deployed in the FRG, would also be included.

All those intermediate and shorter range weapons together constitute about 4% of the total nuclear arsenals. Negotiations must advance for an agreement to scrap 50% of the strategic missiles also during 1988. There will still be enough left over - about 48% of present arsenals - to destroy our planet several times over. We cannot rest in security until all nuclear weapons of all nuclear powers are totally eliminated - including tactical or battlefield nuclear weapons; but the trend today is to strengthen the navies, that is, ships, aircraft-carriers and submarines with more and more nuclear weapons. The struggle for total elimination has therefore to be unrelenting. The time for peace movements to rest on our oars is still very far in the future. Especially as land-based nuclear weapons gradually yield place to water-based weapons and as new technologies of naval battles are being evolved, we have to

focus on making the oceans and seas free from nuclear weapons.

It should be a matter of some concern for all of us that the intermediate and short-range nuclear missiles now planned to be eliminated, including cruise missiles, are the ones that a space-based ABM defense system cannot cope with because of their shorter acceleration path or low altitude. It could very well be the strategy of those who depend more on space-based ABM to eliminate those nuclear weapons it cannot easily cope with. And the partial reduction of nuclear weapons may be only a step towards perfecting a pre-emptive first attack strategy. The elimination of these weapons increases the "security" of the one who can pull the trigger first. The refusal of the USA to discontinue SDI research is an indication that a winnable nuclear war fighting strategy is not yet abandoned. And since there is no nuclear freeze, new and more deadly weapons continue to be added to the stockpiles. Most of the work for peace will still be ahead of us after the Summit.

In this connection I need to say a word about the recent UN International Conference on the Relation between Development and Disarmament, held at the UN headquarters in New York from August 24th to September 11th, in accordance with a UN General Assembly resolution (39/151-C) of December 17th, 1984. The proposal originally came from President François Mitterand of France. His idea seems to have been based on proposals before the UN since at least 1987 to create an International Disarmament Fund for Development. The General Assembly has adopted several resolutions (in 1980, 81, 82, 83 and 84) appealing to all states to reduce military budgets and reallocate resources to development. President Mitterand had envisioned a future in which resources saved by disarmament would be channelled into development, particularly development in the developing countries. There must have been the hope that, once such a fund was set up, the developing countries would become more interested in disarmament, since they would stand to benefit from it directly. The UN Conference this year did not adopt a resolution to create the International Disarmament Fund for Development. What it did, however, has turned out to be even more significant. The consensus document produced by the 150 nations participating in the Conference has been called a landmark. The USA did not participate, on the plea that disarmament and development are two independent processes and should not be considered together in a conference - a point of view the 150 nations unanimously repudiated. The document becomes a landmark for the following reasons:

a) It not only officially and politically recognized the inseparable relation between disarmament and development. It pointed out that global military expenditures were a major cause of distorted and unjust global development; that we have to choose between continuing the arms race and the growing militarization on the one hand, and a more equitable global development on the other.

b) It recognized officially the "non-military threats to security" - in hunger and poverty, ill-health and illiteracy. It thus enlarged the concept of security to involve North-South relations which are always a factor in East-West relations.

So long as some people remained victims of oppression, exploitation and injustice, there could be no final peace or security. Economic security for all is an essential part of global common security.

c) It recognized the triangular relationship between Disarmament, Development and Common Security. We have seen more clearly that among nations is an essential aspect of just and equitable development in the world. International Security must not be dependent on the force of arms or on the threat to use force. Common Security, Development and Disarmament are thus integrally related to each other. Long-term equitable global development, as well as general and complete disarmament are both dependent on devising and setting up a system of international, global, common security.

II. The Global Economic Crisis

October 19th, 1987, marks the beginning of the end of the military-industrial complex. On that day, now called Black Monday, the value of stocks in the Market Economy world crashed dramatically. In one day, shareholders worldwide lost 500 billion dollars - about the amount of the total of two-third world debt. The Dow Jones index climbed down 508 points in one day - something unprecedented in Market Economy history.

Even the last Great Depression did not see such a dramatic fall. In the three years from September 1st, 1929 to July 1st, 1932, the value of shares in the New York Stock Exchange fell by 74 billion dollars only - from a total of \$90 billion to \$16 billion. Granting that the purchasing power of the dollar was many times higher and the volume of stocks much smaller in the 20s, the crash then was less abrupt. The loss of Market Economy Wealth worldwide in the month of October 1987 alone is estimated at 2 trillion dollars - about the equivalent of the national debt of the largest debtor nation in the world today, the USA.

Mr. Donald R. Regan, formerly Treasury Secretary and Chief of Staff of President Ronald Reagan, in a Washington Post article (25th October 1987) entitled "No More Business as Usual", warned that the so-called "economic recovery" of the last 5 years is now in jeopardy. In this article Mr. Regan does not acknowledge his own share of responsibility in initiating the policies that led to the present crash. But Mr. Regan recognized seven factors that have led to the recent stock market crash:

- a) Deficit budgeting in USA
- b) Unfavorable Trade Balance for the USA
- c) Proposed trade tax bill that would adversely affect US traders
- d) Non-Productive expenditures like excessive military spending
- e) The Federal Government's fiscal policy of tight money and high interest rates
- f) Unreliability and instability of dollar as international and national currency
- g) Talks about increasing budget deficit, rather than reducing it.

It is clear now that Reaganomics, which artificially and temporarily boosted the markets through heavy military expenditure and by greater export of arms to other countries, was a colossal failure in solving the problems of capitalism. In fact it has turned out to be a disaster.

What has happened to the global economy during the 70s, when we were close to an East-West détente, can now lead us to global catastrophe, unless we take some resolute actions.

There was a measure of military-strategic parity between the USA and the USSR in the early 70s. It was at that time that both the Treaty on the Limitation of ABM systems (May 26, 1972) and the SALT-I agreement were signed (1972). The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe could have led to remarkable progress in détente, if all the three baskets of the Helsinki Agreement could have been implemented.

The vested interests of the market economy world were frightened by the possibility of a real détente, a freeze in nuclear weapons, and a reduction of arms manufacture and trade. The market economy world had by that time invested a great deal of money in arms production. Especially Western economies were heavily militarized, giving comparatively less attention to civilian production and to research on genuine human needs like health, education, culture, shelter, pollution control, and ecobalance. Something similar was happening also in the Soviet Union, where the pressures on military spending and research acted as a constraint on raising the standards of civilian consumption and existence. If the détente had actually progressed, the people of the Soviet Union stood to gain directly. Since all military and civilian production in that country are centrally planned and centrally implemented, it would have been comparatively easier for the military sector of the Soviet economy to be converted to civilian use.

In the market economy world on the other hand, the bulk of military-related production was in private hands, though military production had created a large public sector in capitalist countries (one of the many contradictions of capitalism). The other contradiction was the growing conflict between US and West-European capitalist interests. The US share of world capitalist output stood at 55.8% in 1948. It dwindled to 40.4% by 1970. Meanwhile Western Europe's share rose to 34.3%, coming close to the US share by 1970. Today Europe (East+West) accounts for 55% of world industrial output, according to 1985 figures. Much of this was military production, and a large share of it in private hands. An East-West détente was perceived to be inimical to the interests of the market economy industrial barons, and they developed a strategy, in cooperation with the military structures, to undermine the détente. NATO deployment of Pershing-II missiles and ground-based cruise missiles was a major step in this strategy of undermining the détente.

What changed the whole picture was the influx of petro-dollars into the Western economy. The Arab strategy to use an increase in oil prices as a pressure tactic on the West to force it to

settle the Middle East problem actually back-fired. While increased oil prices created considerable strain on the Western industrial system, it was more than compensated by Arab beneficiaries of the price increase being naively willing to plough back most of the money into the Western economy, through investments, through purchase of expensive weapons, and through an inordinate rise in Arab tourism in the West.

This actually played into the hands of the military-industrial complex. On the one hand the West had more money to invest in arms production, and the market was readily provided by a few Arab nations. Liquid cash was still bulging the pockets of Western banks, and they persuaded other Two-Third world nations to take easy loans and to spend it on buying military and civilian goods from the Western industrial-military system. Two-Third world debt thus arose from \$90 billion in 1971 to \$274 billion by 1977. By the 80s about \$100 billion was being paid out every year by the poor nations to the rich nations by way of debt service including interest.

The petrodollars did a double damage to the developing countries:

- a) it led to accelerated militarization of the Third World and artificially boosting the market economy; and
- b) it dragged many countries into a Shylockian deadlock where the debt burden became a new way of sucking the poor countries' wealth into the rich countries of the market economy world.

Another factor which helped the capitalist economy to go on for some time were regional wars in the Two-Third world, principally the Iraq-Iran war, the Middle East conflict, the military equipping of Pakistan and the Afghan Mujahiddeen, the Central American conflicts, the Malvinas war between Britain and Argentina, and the Southern Africa conflicts. The Iraq-Iran war alone to which more than 35 nations seem to have contributed or sold weapons, cost 500 billion dollars, most of which went to boost military production and military trade in the market economy world.

But all these temporary and artificial means of bolstering up capitalism have now been demonstrated to be ineffective in rescuing capitalism from collapse.

We can say that while the October 19th crash does not immediately lead to a worldwide depression, it must at least lead to the insight that the military expenditures, which are non-productive, cannot indefinitely bolster up the market economy world. The market economy world will have to think in terms of better solutions than military manufactures and military trade to increase its stability and its capacity to sustain itself. It also has another consequence which we are still reluctant to recognize: namely, that military solutions to world problems cannot be final. Let me cite to you some statements made, first from the US News and World Report. In 1950, this journal said: "Business will not go to pot so long as war is a threat." That is, business depends on the threat of war

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remaining in the world. "So long as every alarm can step up spending, lending for defence at home and aid abroad, so long as that can happen, our economy is safe". So long as new wars can be created, the economy is safe. That's what the journal said 37 years ago. It's a fantastic way of thinking to assume that the Cold War was the best way to bolster up the economy. That was not simply the US News and World Report which said that. A very liberal friend of mine, Jerome Wiesner, the President of MIT, made a similar statement. He is not a rightist; he was scientific advisor to Kennedy and Johnson; "the armaments industry has provided a sort of automatic stabilizer for the whole economy, for the American economy." A more left-oriented man, Herbert Gintis wrote in the Review of Radical Political Economics: "The military industrial complex has eliminated the spectre of secular stagnation". Stagnation in the market economy was avoided by the military industrial complex. This was stated even by a leftist. We are now moving beyond that stage. We are coming to a new stage where we can no longer prop up the economy by military expenditures. That is the lesson which comes from Oct. 19 crash, I would say that crash is one of the healthiest things that has happened to us recently.

III. The Developments in Global Science/Technology

On the third issue I must say two things very briefly. I could say many more things about new developments in world science and technology. Here I can only illustrate, by mentioning two new developments, leaving aside others like information technology, technology as a commodity, new super-computer technology and so on.

One of the most frightening developments in global science/technology is the division of the scientific community into two parts. In the world scientific community, researchers and technologists are now engaged in serving the military industrial complex. They are in the service of defence production and the scientific development of defence production is becoming more and more of a secret business. And these scientists are sworn to a kind of secrecy. They are not supposed to share their scientific knowledge with their scientific colleagues. This is something new in science. Science was always regarded as public knowledge, which can be shared, discussed, disputed, experimented, tried wherever necessary, this is no longer the case. Military knowledge is becoming more and more a secret property and in the scientific community there is a new polarization. A large number of scientists are now turning towards opposition to nuclear and other military developments in science and technology. A large number of scientists are saying that we must liberate science and technology from its captivity to the military-industrial complex and re-deploy it to solve the problems of humanity as a whole. That number of scientists - thank God - is increasing constantly. At the same time, a large number of scientists are being clubbed together into a scientific secret pact. They do not want to look at the moral issues at all. They are concerned only about the higher salaries and better facilities, for their research work which the ordinary

academy or university cannot provide but which the military industry provides. This polarization is one major development in the global scientific community which we have to watch. I would also like to say that within that military-scientific community there are two foci: one is that of directed energy weapons, that is, laser beams, particle beams and other directed energy weapons with complex electronic guidance systems. This is the new secret knowledge that they are building up. And we have to worry about this development of new weapons while nuclear weapons are becoming obsolete, new weapons are being created. We should demand that science and technology be accountable to the public about what they are doing and not pledged to this kind of immoral secrecy. They must be accountable to the total scientific community but also to the common public. That is the demand that the peace movements have to make.

There is another development that I am not even competent to discuss adequately. I will just mention it, that is the developments in super-conductivity. This is a major breakthrough which has happened this year. We have been researching to find a conducting medium without any resistance at normal temperature. All the previously known conducting mediums which have no resistance can be so only at extremely low temperatures, which are very expensive to maintain. We have the possibility now of getting ceramics, synthetic ceramics, which can conduct electricity without any loss, without creating heat or resistance in the conducting medium. This can have many positive consequences, but it can also have one negative consequence. That is fusion technology, which has been at a standstill for some time, making a few occasional jumps. Fusion of atoms is dependent on a medium which can contain the very high heat produced by fusion without itself melting. And they have been trying to build a plasma case which will contain the excessive heat produced by fusion. Now superconductivity produces the possibility that there may be solid containers, for this high fusion temperature. We are not there yet, but the breakthrough made this year in superconductivity can lead to the possibility of solid containers for high temperatures produced by fusion. This can be exceedingly problematic for us. It has some positive effects - it makes the magnetic cushion effect easier and more economic - you know these hovercraft which just sail on a magnetic cushion - there would not be any heat produced by that process so that it would be made a little easier. It can also make it possible to develop huge multikilometre long particle accelerators. You know that the accelerator in Geneva at CERN is many kilometres long and already it is underground, the huge particle accelerator. Now with the new fusion technology, with the new superconductivity technology, we are in a position to create huge particle accelerators with which we might make more experiments and research about thermonuclear fusion, and there is a big danger in that. It also can help in space travel, because loss-free energy accumulators can now be created. This means that space travel may be made easier by this new discovery.

Well, what I am saying is that there are new discoveries, and like all discoveries in science they are capable of positive and negative results, but we as the public have a responsibility to watch these things. That is the first thing I wanted to say.

IV. New Thinking

Now, finally, I come to the point which is the easiest, probably, to do and about which most of you already know more than I do. I will still try to look at this new thinking and the concept of socialist reconstruction. I don't want to describe perestroika and glasnost, technically, I have been trying, however, to look at the literature arising on the subject in various parts of the socialist world. I see the following six or seven points in this new thinking. The most important first point apart from the radically humanist moral framework, is the expansion of democracy and selfmanagement. That is the major primary element that is being stressed in the practical aspect of this new thinking. It is actually an old idea in Marxism, but it had been suppressed in favor of a heavily centralized economy and administration. This has been the norm within socialism for some time, which is a violation of an original affirmation of Marx. Now they are coming back to this intrinsic principle of Marxism in order to create local self-government, local responsibility within the economic production units, and a certain amount of pluralism within the economic and political structure. That's the first idea, self-administration; it almost reminds one of the French idea of the late 60s of "autogestion", which is also a Marxist idea which the French leftists picked up in the 60s, but now it is being dusted and brought back by official Socialism itself. It is a very interesting development which has many possibilities for the future development of socialism.

Secondly, the idea that the assets of the economic unit belong to the people has so far been only in the text-books. It has not always been realized. The people even in the socialist countries have never felt that "this factory belongs to us". A new law has been passed by the Soviet parliament in June 87 which says that the assets of an economic unit belong to its personnel or workers. That's the new law, that the workers own the factory and I don't know what this really means. There have been a number of surveys made by Pravda to see to what extent this is becoming real. Izvestia had made another survey of the workers in several factories and they discovered that 85% of those polled stated that the workers are not yet in control. That survey has been published within the Soviet Union itself; the Izvestia study shows that even though the law is passed by the Soviet government, its implementation has not proceeded very far. The open publication of this survey by Izvestia is itself a very new development. These facts are now openly available to the public; the public can discuss these questions, that a law passed by the Soviet Union is not yet implemented in the factories; that is already something. They are saying that public property does not mean that it is a no-man's-land, but that the workers are co-

owners, therefore directly responsible for the performance of the local economic unit. To what extent that will become real, I do not know. The third element, which is interesting to me is a new motto which reminds me of the old capitalist motto which said "What is good for General Motors is good for America". There is a new version of that in the socialist countries, which says "what is good for the people is good for socialism". This is a very interesting motto. It means that issues need not be handled on an ideologically dogmatic basis, trying to force a kind of class analysis on every phenomenon; but authorities have to see that what is good for the people in each particular situation is ultimately good for socialism. This is a bold new step, away from the ideological dogmatic sterility, and I think this is a very important attempt to implement Lenin's dictum that "genuine socialism is a system of civilized cooperators", it is not simply a system of centralized control.

Fourth, the role of the market is now recognized but not in an absolute way, as if the market can look after itself. The market goes with central planning and control. Along with central planning and controlling the market can also function, which means the assessment of the market forces is not totally negative anymore. You have to take the reality of market forces and take that into account in your planning and regulating of the economy. Again it is a very interesting assessment of the dialectic between central planning and market forces. It is a bold new step. The new perestroika also wants to emphasize that the social guarantees to the people can never be revoked. Whatever reconstruction you do, the socialist guarantees to the people cannot be revoked. The social guarantees of employment, housing, old-age pension, education, health, etc. cannot be revoked, but they also say that this should not lead to parasitism. Sometimes, the social guarantees are leading to parasitism, people living on the economy without producing anything. That can no longer be accepted.

Fifth, the four points of Lenin are now being reemphasized. Industrialization must go at the highest possible speed, farming must become cooperative. The four main points of Lenin's vision are (a) farming cooperatives, (b) fast industrialization, (c) cultural revolution, i.e. constantly new cultural forces being generated without which the human factor cannot operate effectively, and (d) ethnic harmony. These four principles of Lenin, are being reemphasized in the new revolution, in the new reconstruction. But as I said, these reforms are not yet 100% successful. Izvestia which sells 8 million copies made a sample survey of its readers, and 85% of those who responded to the poll said that formalism and red tape are still evident in the economy. Another survey reveals that only 25% agreed that there is some improvement in the bureaucracy, 75% still think there is no improvement in the bureaucratic weight in the economy. Another survey, more positive, says that 63% of those polled believe that there is more glasnost, more openness in discussion, and in corporate tackling of problems within the economic unit. But still only 33% believe that ordinary workers are taking a larger role in management. These

are interesting figures which are now published for general discussion, and I want to conclude by saying that in this vision which is behind socialist reconstruction now, there are two basic insights. One is the vision of a new world - a new world in which people of different ideologies can live together, and cooperate together without having only adversary relations. This vision has to be regenerated and fostered because it underlies everything. Tomorrow we won't have a world where all nations are socialist. In the world of tomorrow, it is now generally accepted, we will have socialist nations as well as market economy nations. But people with different ideologies and economic systems must learn to live together in that world and not wait until everybody becomes socialist, to have that peaceful world. The peaceful world must come now, and whatever antagonistic and negative images socialism may have had in the past, it must now receive a more humanist image and reality; and that, I think, is the central vision of perestroika.

The second aspect of that vision is one which should make us all rejoice. It is the aspect of glasnost or openness. Openness means that truth must be faced and not covered up. This has again two faces - one that of correctly understanding and recognizing the present in terms of a clear and unambiguous assessment of the past which has led to the present. This means recognizing past mistakes of socialism and making amends. There is no doubt that personality cult, arbitrary authority, and cruelty and deceit in dealing with fellow-human beings were failures of the Stalinist period. These should not only be acknowledged, but also be purged from socialist practice. The second face is open creative discussion of all problems among the people, and also between authorities and peoples, among workers and managers in an economic production unit, amongst nationalities in the Soviet Union, among artists, intellectuals and the people - at all levels. This means that socialism is achieving a new maturity. This glasnost will have to be responsibly exercised by a mature people. If anyone misuses this openness for personal ambition and careerism, such persons will have to be reprimanded and restrained.

Conclusion

I have touched upon four significant trends in the global situation. I have not tried to give a comprehensive picture, but only to point to some. The four trends I have touched upon lead to some clear conclusions.

- (a) Nuclear disarmament, with a comprehensive test ban treaty, a freeze, and total elimination of all nuclear weapons by all nations with a ban on research and development of new weapons remains a first priority.
- (b) The development of Global Common Security through international trust and cooperation, without resort to weapons and with full attention given to economic and cultural insecurity of the majority of the world's people should receive more attention from peace movements.

- (c) The one world which we are to build is inescapably one of cultural, ideological and social plurality; in it science/technology has to be liberated from its present bondage to war and profit; science/technology should not only be responsible to the people, but must be reoriented to serve the genuine interests and cultural creativity of different peoples in their own ways. The religions of the world have to be taken seriously by Socialism, since 80% of the world population have varying degrees of adherence to various religions. The religions on the other hand should abandon their uninformed anti-communism and should both take socialism seriously, and help creatively in the evolving of a new moral order in a pluralistic world acceptable to religionists and secularists.
- (d) The new thinking and new reconstruction in socialist countries should be welcomed by all peace forces, not only because they can lead us to relaxation of tensions, and to peace, but also because it can lead us to the vision of a new world where all of us can live together in freedom and dignity in just and peaceful societies.

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