

A JUSTICE AND PEACE MOVEMENT FOR THE FUTURE

I am happy to be able to meet so many of my old friends in the peace movement, and to reflect together with you on the lines of our activities for the future. I am not quite clear on the relation between this meeting and the Christian Peace Conference. I do not even know for certain whether that movement is still existing or whether another has taken its place. It does not matter too much. It is the future that really matters.

I am also happy to be meeting in this great city of Berlin, which has now been liberated from the occupying forces and begins to become the national capital of the reunited German state. I do believe that the future glory of Berlin will far outshine its majestic but tragic past.

I wish to speak here on three aspects of the future of a Christian sponsored world movement for the unity of humanity, for a new global society of peace with justice and a healthy environment, and for new and bold thinking and planning for a more humane way of living for human beings. I envisage a movement which will continue some of its classical as well as more recently acquired emphases such as :-

- a) a world without war or weapons of mass destruction;
 - b) a world community of nations struggling for justice both
within and among nations, and
 - c) a healthy global environment that is friendly to life.
- But I also wish to suggest a new and more comprehensive framework for pursuing a new way of human living which includes all these and yet goes beyond.

First I wish to attempt a personal analysis, very brief, of the emerging world order. Second I would like to suggest what is basically wrong with that world order. And third, I would like to point out some special lines of orientation for a new world order and therefore for a new movement for the unity of humanity and for promoting human dignity, peace with justice and a healthy life environment. I speak as a Christian, but elaborating the Christian basis for what I say will need another paper.

I. THE EMERGING WORLD ORDER

There is as yet no consensus in the analysis of the emerging world order. Much depends on where one stands and how much one knows and takes into account. I have severe limitations in my own understanding. But I offer it as a basis for discussion among people of goodwill.

In any analysis of the recent past two deve-

lopments stand out: (a) the collapse of Socialist Centralism in Central and Eastern Europe, and (b) the dazzling Western show of intimidating military-technological strength in the Gulf War of 1991.

I ask myself: What was that single decisive event which catalysed the unexpected developments of the last seven years of history? That history has certainly set in motion a whole new series of processes, the overthrow of old rivalries and the sudden abandonment of strongly held ideological positions. The formation of new power configurations and new ideological formulations takes time, and the air has to clear before humanity gets back its basic orientation.

We have been so stunned by the upheavals of history that we remain unable to arrive at any conclusive assessment of what has really happened, in one's own country as well as globally. My country, India, herself has entered a new period of history, where her own capitulation to the world market economy system has become more total and less hesitant. What has happened in India is certainly not unconnected with the global turn of history.

Most people would agree that Mikhail Gorbachev, the General Secretary of the now defunct CPSU, played a key role in inducing the big changes in the world picture. What exactly did he do? On that there exists considerable

disagreement.

I was privileged, a few months ago (Aug 91), to attend a conference of 75 ex-presidents and former prime ministers from about 40 of the nations of the world, held in Seoul, Korea, without attracting too much attention from the media. I was invited, as a sort of Chaplain. For me, it was a fascinating experience to look at a fair sample of the sort of people who run our world.

Ideologically most of these politicians were either centre or right of centre. So their keynote speaker was General Alexander Haig, former Commander of NATO and former U S Secretary of State. Haig, still very much of an unreconstructed hawk, proved nevertheless an eloquent and persuasive speaker. In his keynote address Haig acknowledged the place of Gorbachev in history, but suggested that we err grievously in giving him credit for promoting democracy or for his perestroika-glasnost. Gorbachov's great contribution was, according to Haig, military-strategic. He had the guts to realise the evident fact that the Soviet military machine was no match for western military might. It took a lot of courage and sagacity, not just to realise this fact, but also to take steps to work out its consequences. This is what Gorbachev did, and this is what History will eventually recognize him for, Haig thinks.

Could Haig be right? Up to a point, yes. I would of course put it differently. Gorbachev, along with the CPSU which he led, gave up the costly stance of confrontation against an exploitative and hegemonistic world market economy system; they, the Soviet Communist Party, simply capitulated and made peace with the enemy, admitting discomfiture and begging for bread. Gorbachev did this with the support of a few in the top leadership of the CPSU like Yakovlev and Shevernadze, but against the position of others like Ligachev, Kryutchkov, Marshall Akhromyov and General Yazov. Ligachev got thrown out and Akhromyov committed suicide(?). Yazov and Kryutchkov met their destiny in the aborted and disastrous coup, which tolled also the end of Gorbachov's leadership.

The Gorbachov strategy was noble and well intentioned, based on a vision that failed to come true. The basic philosophy, as I understand it, was something like this. Under conditions of military confrontation, the market economy has always the edge over a socialist economy; but under conditions of peaceful competition between the two systems, the socialist system would forge ahead leaving the market economy system obsolete and unattractive, doomed to disappearance. The reason why the socialist system cannot

provide sufficient consumer comforts to its people, is primarily that it spends disproportionately too much of its social production on defense and military confrontation. Once that burden is taken off the socialist system, it will blossom out, while without defence budgets and the armaments race, the market economy system would not be able to keep expanding its markets perennially, which constant expansion is essential for the capitalist system's survival.

We cannot really say that Gorbachev's ideological position has been proved by history to be untrue. To say so is to ignore other significant variables in the equation. The kind of command economy developed in the Soviet Union was neither socialist nor simply viable, under conditions of war or peace. Nor was the internal disintegration compatible with a viable society of any kind - the enormous and monstrously inhuman killing of dissenters, the erosion of mutual trust among people caused by a process of relentless invigilation into private lives, and a colossal and brutal system of espionage which was as inhuman as soul-destroying, and the dampening of creativity by a totalitarian system which left little room for personal freedom and initiative. A huge and largely corrupt bureaucratic edifice of officialdom managed the economy - production and distribution alike in all three sectors of the economy (agriculture, industry and

services). In that kind of undemocratic centralism, there is little room for exercise of any honest democracy or for people's training in it. Socialism cannot thrive in that kind of a setting.

The confrontationist, closed system sought to justify itself by the presence of a powerful, hostile and armed market economy system; but it was also the prop for the totalitarian social-economic structure. The prop was taken away when the confrontationist stance was abandoned and glasnost or openness was introduced into a closed society. No amount of perestroika could restore health to such a rotten socio-economic structure.

Gorbachov was not, however, the only actor on the scene. Others were waiting in the wings to take over the action. Since there was no script, those waiting in the wings could not be certain whether the taking away of the confrontationist prop was real or just a trick to trap them. They made every possible test from 1985 to 1989. Gorbachev had given his pledge to all that mattered - Bush, Thatcher, the Pope, Kohl, Mitterand and all the main players of the western alliance. Jim Baker was assured by Shevernadze that all international conflicts (South Africa, Middle East, Indo-China and so on) could be handled by the western alliance in accordance with its interests, in consultation with, but

without interference from, the Soviet Union.

The first test was to heighten the pace and intensity of the ongoing destabilisation programme within socialist countries. Occasionally there was a murmur of protest, from people like Akhromyov, Yazov and Kryutchkov, but no threat or use of force from the Soviet Union. Through visiting teams of sociologists, journalists, scientists, professors, trade unionists and others, as well as through locally recruited citizens, a massive destabilisation programme was set up in all socialist and socialist-sympathising countries. The socialist governments, even when they knew what was going on, were unable to call a halt to the process.

The second test was a series of visits from established hawks from the west to the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Towards the culmination of the process came U S Defense Secretary and Superhawk Frank Carlucci's Fourth Military Summit with Defense Minister General Yazov in Moscow in 1988. Ex-CIA Deputy Director Carlucci was a hard-nosed businessman (Chairman of Sears Roebuck, 1982-86), and confidante of the right wing. Yazov was able to give Carlucci conclusive and indubitable evidence that the Soviet Union had given up its stance of confrontation, and wanted to cooperate fully with the west. (See **New Times**, June 1988). Once Carlucci was convinced the massive clandestine machinery of

the west acted. An enormous programme of destabilisation, long on the boards, quickly went into operation all over central and eastern Europe.

The Polish elections in 1989 was entirely managed and financed from the west. Solidarity on its own could not have defeated the Polish United Workers' Party however corrupt and unpopular the latter may have been. As the U S Congress financed bodies like National Foundation for Democracy openly organised the Polish election, neither the U S S R nor Jaruzelski raised any objection. Soviet Foreign Minister Shevernadze had no hesitation in yielding to the pressure from the west - yet another test - demanding that the USSR apologize for the intervention in Afghanistan.

The Berlin Wall drama was quickly orchestrated and efficiently carried out, U S A and F R G being the main actors. Once Poland fell, the other five could easily be manipulated - Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and G D R. The whole operation could be completed by December 1989 because the plans had been well laid by the west. If there was the slightest possibility that the Soviet Union would interfere in any act of this drama, the west could not have dared execute it. Gorbachov had effectively removed all doubts in the west, and so the west could act without risk. There was some hope that somewhere along the way the Soviet

Union would try to intervene; this would have been partly welcomed; because that would have changed history by making USSR rather than Iraq the object upon which western military technological prowess would have been demonstrated; and in 1989 western military technology had not yet reached the stage which it had obviously reached in January 1991. The Gulf War was simply the capstone of a long programme for establishing western hegemony over the entire globe - though China and Japan still remain issues to be settled.

Despite all that, the world is by no means uni-polar. Germany has her own ideas, about which she thinks the less said the better, but she has given clear indications that she is not a permanent junior partner of the American team such as Britain seems to have agreed to be. Japan is growing increasingly restless and resentful about growing US pressure, and could one day react quite precipitately, were it not for the fact that Nagasaki, Hiroshima and Pearl Harbour are still fresh in the world's memory. The European Community is no pole, since its internal dissensions are too strong to let it act with a single will. The debt-ridden US economy is in bad shape and one of these days a persistent recession might bring on the final collapse, which even decisive control of world finance (which America does not have) can not prevent. The victory of the West in clobbering

the socialist enemy has not made western political economic hegemony as secure as some people seem to think. One enemy of the West has been liquidated, but there are others, both within and without the system. Pax Americana is still quite fragile.

What was the meaning of the Gulf War of 1991?

This asymmetric, short-duration, super-high-tech war has achieved much more than the eviction of the Iraqi aggressor from Kuwait. One can list seven other covert goals of USA and the Western Alliance achieved through that inhuman and unjustified war.

1. All the Middle East nations friendly to the west wanted the power of Iraq crushed. Israel could have done it on its own, but that would have made the Arabs unite again. America did the crushing for Israel and the Arab allies. The only way to crush Iraq was to refuse to negotiate, and stick to an ultimatum without conditions.
2. Ever since the collapse of "Soviet Threat", there was little reason for the USA maintaining an armed force abroad. The Gulf War provided a new justification for what is, after all, an imperial outpost.
3. USA and Allies have been looking for an opportunity to field-test and demonstrate the prowess of their new post-SDI

high-tech weapons; a successful sales pitch has been made for western armaments, and the Soviet Union and others can no longer compete in the arms market without updating their technology. The important thing is that the human cost of the field test was borne by the Two-third world people of Iraq and Kuwait.

4. The UN has been a major force in the world's resistance to Allied hegemony. It has now been captured and domesticated. The voice of the Two-third world in that august body has at least been temporarily muted.

5. A real boost has been given to the waning western rate of economic growth, and to the arms industry on which the market economy's health is now based. The big corporations, the "dealers in death", have now been rewarded enough so that they can continue to contribute quite liberally to the political process that sustains the market economy.

6. The USA has been enabled to assert its uncontested global leadership, to test friends, and to severely warn any would-be challengers to that global authority.

7. The cost of the operation has been largely paid by Japan, Germany, Saudi Arabia and others, and the new contracts for reconstruction of Kuwait and possibly of Iraq, along with a few mammoth arms sales already effected, will more than compensate for the rest of the expenditure. Over-all, the war

has been a "good deal" for the West; moneywise.

To conclude this section we can say

- a. history has most likely many more surprizes in store for us; it is risky to count the chickens before they hatch.
- b. there are three, perhaps more, trying to get to the top: Germany, Japan and China. Their chances are about in that order.
- c. there is a fourth, namely the dispossessed and marginalized of the world; one does not quite foresee how their power would be mobilised and made operant; but it would be foolish to count without them. They are in all lands, just as the privileged are in all lands.
- d. the organised power of women can be a major force in the struggle for shaping the future. Women's movements are slow in gaining maturity. But some of them could in the near future shed some of their petty quests and become effectively operative on the world scene. They have not yet developed either the strategy or the institutions for doing so. The divide between the rich women of the world and the less privileged will remain, and the former would continue to use the women's movement to stifle the cry of the victims of injustice who are both men and women. The less privileged women may soon wake up and see their emancipation as inseparable from the liberation of their menfolk as well.

e. The major factors in the incipient power struggle among USA, Germany and Japan, will be economic-military strength and technological and financial-organisational superiority. The USA can soon be surpassed by the others in the first; in the second the others are already way ahead.

f. Socialism in power has registered a dismal failure. But that is not the end of socialism. Its true role is first in the struggle for emancipation, and only second in holding on to state and economic power. Socialism will certainly come back to life with a new vitality and a new ideology and programme.

g. ^{Unjust} scientific-technological power at the expense of cultural power, but seeking to rely on military-political power to bolster and protect itself. Germany and Japan are on that path of bolstering unjust scientific-technological economic power with military-political power.