

REFLECTIONS ON THE CANCUN CONFERENCE

R. Yürükođlu

Proletarians of all countries unite!

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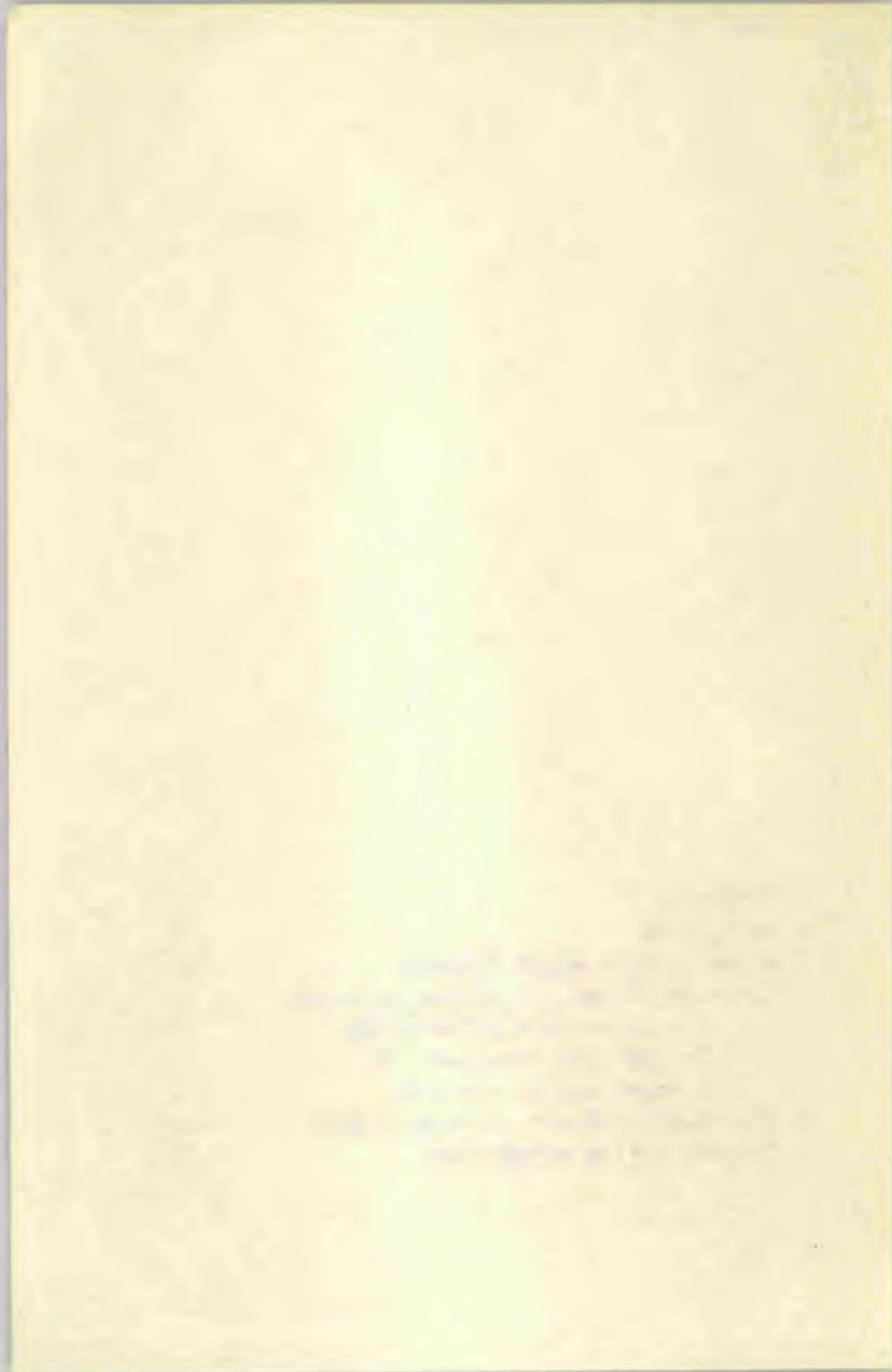
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Towards the end of October 1981 the island of Cancun in Mexico was the scene of a conference which brought together the leaders of the world's richest and poorest countries (In the Mayan language Cancun means "snakes nest"). For us, this conference was a striking platform wherein was crystallized the problems and possibilities of the world imperialist system and the historical tendency of capitalist development.

Before dealing with these questions brought to mind by the conference, and in order to understand them better, it will be helpful to give a bit of background information about the events leading up to the Cancun conference and about the conference itself.

1. Background

For some time the underdeveloped countries (the great majority of which are concentrated in the south) have been pressurising the United Nations on problems of economic reform, in particular on the questions of food, extensions on foreign debts and energy, and on the question of aid for the construction of infrastructural installations. The developed countries have been cool to these proposals. A series of meetings have been held in regard to them, the most important of which from the point of view of the underdeveloped countries was the Cancun conference.

The history of the dispute goes back to the 1950's. Those years witnessed the birth of the "*non-aligned movement*" among countries which had recently been liberated from colonialism and achieved independence. In 1964, 77 underdeveloped countries came together for the first time and formed the famous group known as the

“Group of 77” at the “Conference on International Trade and Development” organised by the United Nations. Another 10 years passed until, immediately following the rise in petrol prices in the early 70’s, the Group of 77 pushed through the United Nations a resolution entitled “*The New International Economic Order*”. This resolution, the content of which was not very clear, was adopted with a great clamour, but did not go beyond enthusiastic speeches. The conflict between the developed and underdeveloped countries intensified, particularly in the United Nations. Indeed, America began to think of leaving the United Nations. The view that the United Nations was a tool of the Soviet Union began to spread, particularly among the hardline sections of imperialism.

It was precisely with the aim of breaking this impasse that McNamara, president of the World Bank and former American Defence Secretary, commissioned Willy Brandt to conduct a study of “flaws in the world’s economic institutions since the Second World War”. The results of this investigation appeared in 1980 as the “Brandt Report”.

The title of the report is very striking: “*Programme for Survival*”. The report lists the steps that must be taken in order to “survive” (i.e., in order for capitalism to survive) as follows: 1. A large flow of credits and aid to the south (i.e., to the underdeveloped countries); 2. Reform of the international monetary system; 3. A north-south meeting to accelerate future negotiations.

Altogether, 22 countries participated in the Cancun conference called by the Presidents of Mexico and Austria on the basis of the proposals of the Brandt Report: 8 from the rich north and 14 from the poor south. The participants from the north were the USA, Japan, Canada, Sweden, France, Britain, Austria and Federal Germany.

Participants from the south were the Ivory Coast, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Brazil, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Guyana, India, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Mexico, Philippines, the People's Republic of China and Nigeria.

Italy and Australia were very angry at the fact that they were not invited to the Conference. The Soviet Union, however, refused to participate on the grounds that the poverty of these countries is the legacy of the colonialists and that it does not concern them in any respect.

Here we must make a brief digression. The argument advanced by the Soviet Union is inconsistent. Whatever the reason and whoever is responsible, the death of people from starvation is a matter which must be taken up by everyone. It is a problem that concerns mankind as a whole. The Soviet Union could have participated in the meeting and at it pointed out the connection between poverty and imperialism. It could have said that the blame lies with imperialism, but it is our duty as well. The Soviet Union itself is insisting on being one of the sides in the Middle East problem, another legacy of imperialism. In our opinion, the reason why the Soviet Union, while insisting on being a side in many questions left over from imperialism and colonialism in many parts of the world, does not want to get involved in this problem must be sought elsewhere: in the fact that the resources of the Soviet Union are limited and that they are stretched to the limit. Participation in such a meeting would have involved the danger of undertaking a considerable burden.

When we look at the aid which is being given to the poor countries, we see that that given by the socialist system amounts to one-tenth of the aid given by imperialism. Despite the fact that the figure is only one-tenth, this shows that the socialist countries are not opposed to aid to the poor countries in principle. The same

fact also shows the dearth of economic resources. As with everything else, imperialism will certainly use this in its propaganda, indeed it has already begun to use it.

The conference had no definite agenda, draft resolutions or concluding documents. Speeches were limited to seven minutes each. All of these were on the demand of America. The issues discussed were the questions of food, trade, foreign debts and energy.

2. A few points in regard to method

Such, briefly, is the background to the Cancun meeting. Below, we will also look at the differences among the countries which participated. In the end, everyone said something different, there was a perfect muddle, and the participants dispersed without having adopted a single concrete decision, agreeing only to “talk about talking again”. However, what concerns us is not any concrete decisions which were or were not adopted, but the historical significance of this meeting. In order to fully understand this latter, it is necessary to consider, carefully and together, the following three factors:

First, the existence of a very powerful working class in the advanced capitalist countries. *Second*, the existence in the world of an alternative, the world socialist system. *Third*, the scientific and technological revolution.

In the developed capitalist countries there is a well-

organised adversary with a long history and a high cultural level. This is something the imperialist bourgeoisie must take into careful account at every step it takes. There is a significant difference, a change for the worse, in the situation of the working class of the developed countries, compared with its situation of ten years before, for example. Discontent is increasing.

The socialist countries present the world with a socialist alternative. Having achieved significant successes, the present-day socialist system is a centre of attraction, particularly for the underdeveloped countries. Alongside this is the fact that Marxism-Leninism is genuinely the only path of emancipation and that it exerts a great ideological influence in the under-developed countries. Every movement which claims to represent renewal now appears with these concepts. No revolutionary movement is possible any longer divorced from the concepts of Marxism.

All of us know these first and second factors well. Here it is necessary to dwell essentially on the scientific and technological revolution.

3. The scientific and technological revolution

The scientific and technological revolution that Marx spoke of in *Capital* is today a reality. With this revolution, three main types of innovation appear. The first is the discovery of new *tools*. The second is the discovery of new *sources of energy*. The third is the discovery of new *techniques of automation and computerisation*.

We can enumerate the following main results of the scientific and technological revolution from the point of view of social development:

First, the necessary time that people must expend in social production is decreasing. A task that was formerly performed in eight hours can today be performed in four.

Nevertheless, since capitalism is a system which rests on private property, exploitation and the profit motive, the

practical result of this is not the shortening of the workday but, on the contrary, a growth in the mass of surplus-value. There is a paradox here. If, as the result of the development of machines, I can do in four hours the work I used to do in eight, then I'll work for four hours and go home. But that is not what happens. I still continue to work for eight hours; perhaps they increase my wages a little, but the mass of surplus-value which is transferred to the capitalist as profit increases.

Here it is necessary to remember one point. Despite the fact that it always happens like this, the historical tendency is towards the gradual shortening of the workday by the *class struggle*. However, this takes place, not at the rate made possible by technological advance at the given moment, but lagging behind it, very slowly. The workday began with 16 hours and has now fallen to 7 hours. It is expected that miners in Britain will go on strike this winter for a 5.5 hour workday.

The *second* result of the scientific and technological revolution is a decline in the need for living labour employed in social production. The need for workers declines while that for dead labour, i.e., machines, increases. The logical result of this must be as follows: If the work formerly done by ten people can now be done by five people, and if the resultant product is still going to suffice for at least ten people, then the workday must be shortened by the same ratio. This does not happen. Again, as a dilemma imposed by capitalism, by private property in the means of production, as the demand for labour-power decreases, *unemployment* increases. While there should be a development towards greater happiness, instead the ranks of the unemployed swell. Oppression and suffering increase.

Here we must make a brief digression. If new

technology and new machines create unemployment, what attitude should the trade unions adopt in this situation?

It is unfortunate that the trade unions are opposing new technology when they should do nothing of the kind. This is a reactionary attitude. You will remember the strike that took place last year when new computerized machinery was going to be introduced by the *Times* newspaper. The *Times* changed hands, the new machines could still not be introduced.

While advanced machinery should serve the happiness of man, under capitalism it functions against man. The development of one part of the forces of production works against man, the most important productive force! In the name of the struggle against unemployment, the working class, the most progressive class in history, is opposing new machines. At the beginning of the industrial revolution they smashed machines. But hundreds of years have passed since then. Today, something different must be done. One cannot become angry with the worker for this mistaken attitude, for that machine condemns him to hunger. We must show the causes for this situation in such a way that the worker will be angry at the capitalist, not at the machine. When he removes the capitalist, the same machine will make life a paradise. The trade unions must absolutely develop a programme which will not hinder technological development. Quite the contrary, they must come out with a programme which will *accelerate* technological development. They must wage a struggle for the *shortening of the workday* first and foremost and for opportunities to transfer into new professional spheres, etc.

To return to the results of the scientific and technological revolution, the *third* is a rise in the proportion of mental labour in the labour process. This

has two aspects. On the one hand, the proportion of those engaged in mental labour within the working class increases. On the other hand, various intellectual undertakings which formerly stood outside the process of production are today included in the concept “productive labour” and have become a part of the productive process.

These three results which we have enumerated, a decline in the amount of labour-time which must be expended, a decline in the amount of living labour which must be expended, and the change in the quality of labour, emphasize some concepts which we know very well as an historical trend:

Marx’s remark when defining communism in *The Critique of the Gotha Programme*: “*The carrying out of production with the minimum expenditure of energy*”. Again in the *Gotha Programme*, Marx’s words: “*production under conditions worthy of man*”. And a fundamental idea in the *Gotha Programme*, the *German Ideology* and *Capital*: “*the realm of genuine freedom*”. These three consequences of the scientific and technological revolution also show that development is objectively proceeding in that direction. If private ownership of the means of production, that yoke stifling the development of the productive forces, disappears, the workday will shorten at once; at once many people will be able to develop all their talents in the way they desire, and the contradiction between mental and manual labour will disappear much more rapidly.

The direction dictated by the productive forces is that which we define as communism. It is a direction which they dictate, impose against every manner of opposition...

The *fourth* result of the scientific and technological revolution is something we have very often referred as to the logic of the general development of state-monopoly capitalism. The increase in the social character of

production forces an *expansion of the social basis of property*. The scientific and technological revolution demands an expansion of the social basis of property and its gradual expansion to the whole society. When this demand does not receive a clearcut, consistent, and complete response via revolution, capitalism attempts to meet this demand within its own boundaries to the extent it can. The concept we call “solving from the negative” refers to this.

Every new stage of development of the productive forces demands a corresponding expansion of the property basis. The whole history of capitalism is an example of this. In *Capital*, Marx cites the birth of limited companies as an example of this. Later, the appearance of monopolies provides another example. State-monopoly capitalism indicates a much greater expansion of the property base.

History is working in this direction. It must definitely expand the property base of capitalism if that is not dissolved by revolutions. It does so in the manner most suited to itself. And it does it in such a way that it is now becoming difficult even to use the expression “private property” in relation to the advanced capitalist countries today. Perhaps it would be more correct to say “collective capitalist property” or simply “capitalist property” instead. In its essence, collective capitalist property too is private, but now companies have thousands and tens of thousands of shareholders. There are now few family companies. And this development will not stop here. The property base will expand further. The moment when the possibility of expanding the property base in the manner demanded by the productive forces comes up against the boundaries of capitalism, that will be the moment when there remains no other form of emancipation than revolution. For that moment will be the moment when the

relations of production become an *absolute* brake on the development of the productive forces.

The *fifth* great result of the scientific and technological revolution is as follows: The productive forces are growing to such an extent that, aside from a few countries the size of continents (the Soviet Union, the USA, Australia, Canada and Brazil), no country has sufficient resources to carry on production as demanded by the present-day level of productive forces.

As a consequence of this, *it is now necessary to plan production and distribution on a worldwide, not a national scale*. The development of the productive forces — and the scientific and technological revolution has, in 15-20 years, brought about a greater development than that achieved in all previous human history — necessitates such a planning of production and distribution on a world scale that will take into account at once raw materials, energy sources and the market.

Lenin said that monopoly capitalism, state-monopoly capitalism, is not an unplanned economy. We often say that capitalism is an unplanned economy while socialism is planned. This is fundamentally wrong. State-monopoly capitalism is a planned economy, but planned only to the extent possible under private property.

In connection with this fifth result, today *national borders are becoming thoroughly reactionary*. Just as private property poses an obstacle to the reduction of the workday, so too do borders represent an obstacle before the productive forces. Planning which will not halt at borders is necessary. From the point of view of both production and distribution, raw materials, energy and the market, the reactionism of borders has been thoroughly exposed.

3.1. Communism - a real imperative

From the five most important results of the scientific and technological revolution which we have mentioned briefly above, we can derive the following general conclusion: The world and, in particular, the advanced capitalist countries, demand socialism. This is the main idea presented by these five consequences. Given that we define socialism as *social ownership of the means of production and social planning of production in order that the productive forces may develop unhindered*, the world, and particularly the advanced capitalist countries, demand socialism.

As modern production technology develops and spreads and the productive forces grow at such a rate, their control by private property *gradually* becomes inefficient and unsuitable. The latter gradually becomes incapable of meeting the needs. As the contradiction between the social character of production and the private appropriation of its products grows, this, as we know, begins to hinder the development of the productive forces.

Many comrades find themselves stumped by the following question: If this is so, then how is it that the advanced capitalist countries are still developing and surpassing the socialist countries? The question reveals an error in method. One must not compare the development of the imperialist system with socialism as established in underdeveloped countries. The only correct criterion which we can use for purposes of comparison is the possibilities these countries have *themselves*. The question we must ask is this: If capitalism no longer existed in the advanced capitalist countries, what would be the level that could be achieved with the present-day productive forces? When we ask this question, we see how private property in the means of production hinders development. The

productive forces are always the determining factor; production relations can never permanently retard them. When the point is reached at which they are able to do so, it means that that system has completely exhausted its possibilities and it collapses as a system. This is not the question today. While the productive forces could develop much more rapidly if left to develop freely, because it presents an obstacle to them, they continue to advance in constant conflict with private property, constantly straining the latter and expanding property; i.e., they advance with much waste of time.

We can express the general conclusion to be derived from what we have said so far in another way: If we do not want the speed of the scientific and technological revolution to be reduced and obstructed, if we want it to continue at an ever greater speed, then the process of production must be subjected to what Marx called the *joint control of the collective producers*.

As will be understood from what we have said above, the great social changes brought about by the scientific and technological revolution have very important consequences from the point of view of communism.

On the one hand, communism can be grasped much more easily than before, it becomes a *practical possibility*. While previously communists could always be called “idealists”, “utopians”, “paradise-seekers”, “castle-builders”, etc., now it is said: “Development is heading in the direction these people said”. For the development of production and of the economy makes it possible to conceive communism as a practical possibility.

There is another side of the same coin: communism is at the same time becoming a *practical necessity* in order for the productive forces to be able to develop unceasingly. This necessity will eventually be accepted by the masses,

even by those most opposed to communism. For economic imperatives eventually and inevitably assert themselves and find their way into human consciousness.

3.2. The only viable strategy for the advanced capitalist countries

From what we have said so far, and bearing in mind that we are digressing somewhat from the subject, can we formulate a strategy for the working class of the advanced capitalist countries?

The only viable strategy for the working class of the advanced capitalist countries is one based on the scientific and technological revolution. If the conditions of detente are also taken into consideration, the question foremost on the agenda for the working class of Europe and North America is the drawing up of a *strategy which will ensure the broadest possible extension of the scientific and technological revolution, prevent the capitalist system from alleviating its dilemmas by recourse to war, and lead the peoples from the scientific and technological revolution to the socialist revolution.*

The programmes of the communist parties of these countries must be evaluated from this point of view. They must be said to be correct if they favour this end, wrong if they do not. Let us also not forget that the framework of the strategy proposed will also definitely have its revisionist, social-democratic and revolutionary interpretations as well.

What kind of perspectives can a strategy based on the widest possible extension of the scientific and technological revolution present?

Firstly, an advanced capitalist development will

spread more rapidly to the world in general. The advanced capitalist development in the imperialist countries must spread to the world in general. Borders are becoming reactionary. The productive forces are necessarily forcing the borders, they are necessarily striving to expand into the underdeveloped countries.

However, this is not something that will finish overnight; it is a process which proceeds slowly. As we will see with concrete figures below, the situation in the underdeveloped countries is really terrible. They need a great amount of money to meet even the most basic needs.

Secondly, to the extent that this is not the case, that is, to the extent that the demand for the spreading of the scientific and technological revolution and of advanced capitalist development, for the deepening of the market, is not realized, the result will be the sharpening of the class struggle in the developed countries. For, to the extent that it remains unsatisfied, this demand increases unemployment and inflation and aggravates the conditions of the working class in the developed countries.

A third consequence of the spreading of the scientific and technological revolution will be as follows: whatever the manner in which it proceeds, however it accomplishes it, its eventual result will be to further extend the property base and to make communism a practical necessity for the whole world.

Whichever way you look at it, the scientific and technological revolution is henceforth the key to all developments in the world. We must base everything on that conjuncture. It is such a conjuncture that, when turned to advantage, it bears within itself the possibilities of carrying out a revolution. Even when it is not taken advantage of, it can have no other result than that of moving the revolution up higher on the agenda and bringing communism closer.

4. Historical significance of the conference

First let us look briefly at the kind of world we live in today, the situation of the advanced capitalist countries and of the underdeveloped countries.

These figures include all the developed and underdeveloped countries. When looked at from the point of view of those countries which participated in the conference, however, the situation is much worse. The table below shows an unbelievable difference among the participants.

Comparison of Developed and Underdeveloped Countries		
	Developed countries	Underdeveloped countries
Population	1.1 billion	3.4 billion
Per capita GNP	\$6,468	\$597
Life expectancy	72 years	56 years
Literacy rate	99%	52%
Educational expenditures per capita	\$286	\$18
Military expenditures per capita	\$300	\$29
Health expenditures per capita	\$199	\$6.50

(From: *Newsweek*, 26 October 1981)

Comparison of the 22 countries which participated in the conference

NORTH

	Per capita GNP 1980 (\$)	Aid given 1980 (\$million)	Aid given as % of GNP
Federal Germany	13,422	3,512	0.43
France	12,137	1,041	0.62
Sweden	12,131	928	0.76
USA	11,536	7,091	0.27
Canada	10,268	1,035	0.42
Austria	10,081	174	0.22
Britain	9,280	1,766	0.34
Japan	8,903	3,300	0.32

SOUTH

	Per capita GNP 1979 (\$)		
Saudi Arabia	14,049	3,033	2.6
Venezuela	3,618.5	—	—
Yugoslavia	2,900	—	—
Brasil	1,758	—	—
Mexico	1,758	—	—
Algeria	1,650	—	—
Ivory Coast	1,170	—	—
Nigeria	750	—	—
Philippines	727	—	—
Guyana	510	—	—
China	510	—	—
Tanzania	253	—	—
India	184	—	—
Bangladesh	123	—	—

*1980 **1978 ***1977

(From: *Financial Times*, 22 October 1981)

We can draw conclusions from such a table immediately.

In the *south*, continuous crisis.... Constant hunger, poverty, shortages, narrow market... political instability... sharp struggles... and a revolutionary wave. The south is a continually boiling cauldron.

Coming to the *north*, there is a glut in the market, over-production. For this reason, unemployment and inflation are increasing rapidly.

For example, the rate of American exports to the underdeveloped countries is rising to the same extent that the European market is becoming glutted. In 1980, 39% of American exports went to the underdeveloped countries. This may not signify very much in itself, but when we consider that it exceeds American's total exports to the Common Market, Eastern Europe, Japan and Australia, we see that it is an important conclusion.

Both the north and the south have what each other wants but they cannot be easily made to coincide. This meeting was designed to make the two coincide.

The market of the developed countries cannot absorb their production. At the same time, millions of people are dying of hunger, too poor and too backward to be able to buy these goods. In fact, there is an enormous virgin field. This market is integrated into the capitalist market only on the surface. It is not integrated in depth.

We must consider China's participation in the Cancun conference in this context. China is a world market in itself. There it is, with its bicycles and sandals. The integration of China alone could give capitalism a long breathing space.

Let us also look briefly at the balance of forces and the contradictions that appeared at the meeting. France, Canada, Sweden and Australia, joined at the last minute

by Britain and Germany, call for greater aid to the poor countries. But here there is an interesting point. They want this aid to be provided, not by themselves, but by America.

The European countries are caught up in an interesting paradox. On the one hand, they call for increased aid to the poor countries. On the other hand, they restrict the entry into their market of those goods which the poor countries are best able to produce. Led by France, they are beginning to apply import restrictions left over from an earlier period, particularly in shipbuilding, textiles and steel, restrictions which completely contradict their own philosophy.

America is opposing Europe's attitude. On the one hand you call for aid, on the other you impose restrictions against them. America says, open your markets the way we have ours. Of course, there is little possibility of Europe doing this.

For example, if the Europeans lift their restrictions on textile imports, Turkish textiles could ruin the European textile industry. In the same way, it would be very difficult for Europe to compete with South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia in shipbuilding and steel.

Looking carefully, we see that none of these countries was invited to the Cancun meeting. And *Newsweek* explained the reason for this: the advanced capitalist countries want to aid the underdeveloped countries, but they do not want the development of the latter to reach a level that would threaten themselves.

As always and on every topic, America is here too speaking from a position of strength. Claiming that the south can recover through private investment, free enterprise and free trade, Reagan makes such arrogant comments as: "If you want to learn how development is achieved, study the history of America".

The Finance Minister of Bangladesh, Mohammad Saifur Rahman, gave a striking answer to this. It went like this:

“The Reagan administration has taken the stance that development should be done by private people in their private way. But that does not reflect the requirements and priorities of our economy. We need massive assistance for building up our country’s infrastructure — the water supply and irrigation system, power plants, ports, jetties and a railway system. Without such an infrastructure, there will be no environment for private investment to take place.”

They are speaking the same language. They all represent private property, they are all capitalist. But their interests differ. From what we have said thus far, it is clear that there is a serious difference of opinion between Europe and the USA. It can be summed up as follows: Europe calls for increased aid to the underdeveloped countries, America for “trade, not aid”.

The underdeveloped countries are not as one either. There are many differences among them. The most important, however, is that between the petrol producers and the remaining underdeveloped countries. On the one hand, America wants to shove the burden onto Europe’s shoulders. On the other hand, it is threatening the OPEC countries. They are so rich, moreover their countries are in that region, let them too join in giving aid. Confronted with this, however, the OPEC countries advance the following logic: Yes, today we have money. But we earn our money, not through any economic development on

our part, but by selling petrol, the only product of our soil. It is absolutely essential that we use this money to build our own infrastructural installations in order that our countries do not become the world's poorest countries again when the petrol runs out. That is, they do not want to undertake the role America is trying to assign to them. Thus, they are opposing proposals to establish an energy credit fund.

After having said all this, let us now stop and reflect a little. There is a red thread that runs through all these different interests and views at the conference. One billion people live in the developed countries, four billion people in the underdeveloped. If the underdeveloped countries "take off" a little, if their capitalist development accelerates and their markets expand, factories in the developed countries will be able to work at a capacity several times greater than that at which they work today. This constitutes a huge reserve for capitalism. If this reserve cannot be utilised, however, the existence of capitalism will be in danger. It was not for nothing that they called it the "Programme for Survival".

Farsighted representatives of the imperialist bourgeoisie understand very well that the end is near if this opportunity is not taken advantage of.

For example, Gaston Thorn, the president of the EEC, said as follows:

"If President Reagan's philosophy of 'trade, not aid' were applied, the majority of the third world would be flattened and Europe would be pushed onto the sidelines along with Africa and South Asia. Reagan's economic logic is the logic of the strongest. This philosophy is murderous for the weak,

murderous for the third world, and extremely harmful for the Common Market. Only countries the size of continents could profit as a result of this philosophy. (...) We cannot accept this. Europe is very close to the backward countries, it is closely connected with them and very dependent on them. (...) (If we apply this philosophy), it does not require much thinking to understand this, that before we see the end of this crisis, the poor countries will die. *Their death will mean the death of us.* Who in this day and age can believe that one part of the world, refusing to see the hunger, poverty and death in the other part, will be able to wallow in wealth?"

The comments of various leaders both during and after the conference are a striking testimony to capitalism's reserves.

The British Foreign Minister, Lord Carrington, explained the need for giving aid to the poor countries in three points. The first (one that appeared in the Brandt Report) is that aid to these countries is necessary because the world is *one world*. Second, it is "morally necessary". Third, and at least as striking as the first, he says, "*in order to aid ourselves*". He speaks very realistically. He says that this aid is necessary in order to relieve our own unemployment and inflation.

Mitterand too says, "Aid to the third world benefits the industrial countries for it creates demand for their goods". Yes, they speak openly.

On this point we must rid ourselves of a crude understanding which is quite widespread among all the left groups in Turkey. Yes, the world in general and the advanced capitalist countries in particular demand

socialism. Yes, our epoch is the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism. But this does not mean that the end of capitalism, of imperialism, has come *today*.

Every system enters into bottlenecks from time to time. If the bottlenecks into which capitalism enters from time to time are not resolved in a revolutionary way, a conscious manner, it means leaving the system to its own development in one way or another. And no system which is left to its own development can be destroyed before exhausting all its possibilities for development.

Herein lies the significance of the Cancun conference. The name of the Brandt Report tells it all: "Programme for Survival". This conference was a conference convened in order that world capitalism should be able to survive. But at the same time it confirms that all its possibilities are not exhausted. The fact that a conference could be convened in order to survive *also shows that capitalism has significant reserves enabling it to survive*. Left on its own, world capitalism has extensive reserves that it can use to survive and develop.

We must avoid every manner of simplification and vulgarisation and crude, schematic understanding. This is one of the afflictions from which revolutionaries of Turkey suffer most: "It has been destroyed, it is being destroyed...".

It is wrong to consider this historical tendency, this historical truth, as something that has been completed. This is nothing else but a reflection in this sphere as well of that schematic revolutionism which only results in alienating working people from socialism.

5. We must use the opportunities

The path that will be followed if the opportunities which will appear often in various parts of the world imperialist system are not made use of in a revolutionary manner, will definitely be the path of utilising the above-mentioned reserves. Reagan will go and Meagan will come, whichever way it goes, the eventual destination will be the same, for economic imperatives eventually force their way into people's minds.

Of course, this will not save capitalism forever. A new period of development will begin. The lifespan of capitalism will be extended, but the basic contradiction will not be resolved. It will only be temporarily alleviated. It will come to the fore again at a higher stage, under a new balance. Time will be lost from the point of view of conscious historical development and people continuing to live under exploitation, but, again, revolution and

communism will be victorious in the end.

The end of the world imperialist system has not come today but parts can be broken away by taking advantage of the opportunities that arise in various parts, and of the bottlenecks into which the system enters from time to time. This would have two important results.

First, it would shorten the period in which the world imperialist system would complete its lifespan. A development devoid of exploitation and brutality would come closer.

The second result is at least as important as this. It would gradually remove the world socialist system and all mankind from a dangerous possibility. This possibility is two-sided. One is the possibility of world war. The other is that of the liquidation, disintegration of the world socialist system from within. These two possibilities are closely related to each other.

Let us start with the second danger. As long as the world socialist system is not nourished by revolutions in other countries, it requires a long historical period for the existing socialist countries to surpass capitalism on their own. It is not a matter of two or three five - year plans. This arises, not from any weakness of socialism, but from the historical backwardness of the socialist countries themselves. Because they cannot secure for the peoples of their own countries the advantages enjoyed by the advanced capitalist countries, and as long as they are not able to do so, socialism faces the serious danger of liquidation.

The integration of China which we mentioned above is also connected with this point. China's complete integration with capitalism could mean the liquidation of the socialist system without the need for war. The appearance of such a situation would completely overturn

the entire world balance of forces. Lenin used to say that China's uniting with the Soviets would change the epoch. The contrary is also true. Perhaps it would not change the epoch, but it could set back development a few hundred years.

Coming to the danger of world war, if the process of world revolution is not nourished with new revolutions, world war is a real danger which no one should underestimate.

How will the breaking away of some parts prevent this danger? The fact that no world war has taken place for a long time is in any case due to the existence of working class states. The existence of the world socialist system compels the world bourgeoisie to resolve its own internal contradictions in different ways.

We recently heard a concrete example of this in an interview the BBC conducted with a Japanese businessman. In connection with the tariff barriers which are being raised against Japanese goods, the Japanese businessman said: "You know very well that the world wars took place because of these tariff walls, that is, because of opposition to the principle that anyone who wants should be able to sell his goods where he wants to. This road is very dangerous, it is the road that leads to war".

But because both of them are faced with the Soviet Union, they are forced to put this contradiction into second place. The Japanese businessman said this openly as well.

Nevertheless, the balance which the socialist system has been able to achieve against war is a very precarious one which trails behind imperialist strength. The most lasting guarantee of being able to prevent war is changing the world balance of forces in favour of socialism, nourishing the world socialist system with revolutions.

Breaking away parts from the world imperialist system is both necessary and possible. By its nature, the bourgeoisie is egotistic and selfish. This is not a subjective or psychological description; it is an objective truth arising from private ownership of the means of production. The bourgeoisie is not inclined to sacrifice its day-to-day interests for the sake of its long-term interests. It sees the need for such sacrifice, but they all try to unload the burden onto the others. No hero ever appears to say, "I'll do it".

Moreover, there are serious problems in the developed countries. Problems are not easily solved just by seeing what has to be done or even wanting it sincerely. It is very difficult for them to make the necessary response. This is confirmed by the results of the meeting. The name "snakes nest" is very appropriate. They all bit one another and came home.

But let us assume that they reached agreement, that they brought Reagan too into line, and began to build the infrastructures demanded by the poor countries. If a start on this is made today, it will yield results only after some years. It takes 5 to 6 years to build a harbour. Then it must be integrated into the economy; it is not just a question of building the harbour. A road to the harbour, a railway will be constructed. These too take time. On this basis, enterprises "relying on private property" will be established, trade and industry will benefit from these to begin functioning, employ workers, pay wages and increase their import capacity; lastly, a start will be made on buying goods from European factories. All this takes a long time. But the problems of the poor countries are urgent; they demand a solution today. It means that, even if they all reach an agreement and start giving the required aid immediately, the backward countries will still not

easily be rescued from their state as a keg of gunpowder.

Second, again let us assume that the aid requested by the underdeveloped countries is given at once. Its results will appear in the country receiving the aid some twenty years hence; but it will be felt in the donor country immediately. The bourgeoisie will deduct this aid from its own working class. Any money that is given as aid will aggravate the class struggle in the advanced capitalist countries. This will be a serious consequence that will take effect immediately. (An important point here is that the working class in the advanced countries will undoubtedly show a tendency to oppose this aid. The communist parties must wage a serious ideological struggle against this.)

Thus, the provision of aid will not immediately solve the problems of the underdeveloped countries which are like kegs of gunpowder; and at the same time it will create an immediate problem in the advanced countries giving the aid. This is the way in which the perspective of aid presents the possibility of breaking away parts from the world imperialist system.

If such parts cannot be torn out of the world imperialist system through revolutions, like it or not, the road that imperialism will follow will be that of integrating the world market as much as possible and bringing communism as close as possible. When we look at the past 25-30 years, the fact that the Cancun conference could even be convened shows how these countries are being impelled in this direction, willingly or unwillingly. Even though they had opposed the demands of the south for 25-30 years, because of both the shrinking of their own resources, and the fact that the underdeveloped countries have been inclining towards socialism, many imperialist countries participated in this conference and found the demands of the underdeveloped countries justified. It is

unlikely that this indicates that the imperialists are becoming “good samaritans”. It shows only that economic imperatives are forcing their way into people’s minds. The world must develop, communism is peering through an ever greater number of windows.

This is the direction in which history will go. The task of the revolutionary forces is to turn this drunken advance into a conscious one.

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE FUTURE

R. Yürükoğlu



İŞÇİNİN SESİ PUBLICATIONS

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TURKEY TODAY SUPPLEMENT

On Sunday, 13th of December, the Council for National Salvation seized power in Poland. Martial law was proclaimed. Assuming that everyone has closely followed the events, we will not here go into the details of the recent developments. Instead, we will evaluate the past year's developments in Poland, developments which have inaugurated a new period in the world socialist system, and consider our own political attitude towards the army's seizure of power in Poland.

Counter-revolution in Poland must be crushed

This special supplement of Turkey Today consists of the English translation of the special issue of İşçinin Sesi (Worker's Voice) published on 21st December 1981 (no:180) in which R. Yürükoğlu evaluates the past year's developments in Poland and sets out the attitude of İşçinin Sesi towards the army's seizure of power.

In relation to Poland, last year we arrived at the fundamental conclusion that the Polish United Workers' Party bore the main responsibility. If the workers in a socialist country come out against the state and the party, this is the fault of the party.

From that day to this, Polish society has been turned upside-down. Profound changes took place in the political structure, in the newborn trade union movement, and in the character of the party. In the end, the army seized power. Has our evaluation changed?

Change in the party

As discipline in the Polish United Workers' Party went to pieces, three main wings appeared. One of these (called the "horizontal" or "reform movement") is the extension

within the party of the Solidarity movement. The reason it is called a "horizontal movement" is its proposal that the various regional organisations of the party establish horizontal relations and work together, ignoring the party's vertical hierarchy.

The second section is the party's left wing. Calling itself "the party's Marxist-Leninist core", this section established large numbers of *idea clubs* in every part of the country. Party members of every rank became individual members of these clubs. Although our ideas do not completely coincide, we believe that this is the party's healthiest section. It stresses the absolute necessity of carrying out active mass work and does so itself. It issues statements, puts up posters in the cities and works among the people. This section is led by the *Katowice Group*.