THE POLITICS OF SELF-RELIANCE *

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Introduction

It should be emphasized from the very beginning that to talk about the politics of self-reliance is not to talk about a strategy of transition to something utopian, but to talk about a process very much alive that takes place in the world today for everybody to watch, talk about and participate in - or fight against as many do and more will do as it gains momentum. Roughly speaking it may already be a process that involves around one billion human beings; a quarter of humankind in the active, forerunner phase with the remaining three quarters on the sidelines being apathetic or talking about developmental processes of yeateryear. . 7-800 million would be Of this one billion human beings Chinese: (1) followed by many of the peoples in former Indochina; large parts of India and Sri Lanka still touched by Gandhi's sarvodaya theory and practice; the juche of the Poople's Republic of Korea (although more at the national than the local (2) levels); the start in Madagascar; similar attempts in Ethiopia; the important development in Albania; efforts at increased local selfroliance many places in Western Europe, particularly in the Nordic countries; 3) and others scattered all over the world, unknown to us . because nobody has been trained to count this way - yet. Hence, the politics of self-reliance is an important part of the contemporary history - an effort to undo five centuries of decendency on the West, to turn . the tide started when Columbus travelled West and Vacco da Gama East, and to work for a world where each part is a center (4)

2. An image of a world of self-reliance

If self-reliance is the antithesis of dependence, as just stated, then there is something to gain in understanding using the English language as a guide. For "dependence" has two negations in English, both of them implicit in the idea of self-reliance: independence and interdependence. The meaning of independence is autonomy, that invaluable combination of self-confidence, a high

hevel of self-sufficiency and fcarlessness out of which invulnerability is forged. The meaning of interdependence is equity, which means a style of cooperation that does not engender new patterns of dependence. Very often this can best be done by cooperating with one's geographical neighbor - but there may be social neighbors further out in space. Thus, one might envisage a future pattern whereby what today is called a "developing" country would cooperate directly with "developing" districts in rich countries - the benefits being shared equally as is the case in any equitable relation. However that may be: the truly autonomous will never fear to cooperate with others, knowing there is something to fall back upon in case the ties turn out to become so vertical that a decoupling has to take place again before recoupling can be put on the political agenda because there has been sufficient system change. This is in no sense unproblematic: the world has much experience with autonomy, and with dependence - but very little; with the type of interdependence that can be referred to as truly equitable simply because the world went so quickly from autonomy to dependency on the self-appointed Western center, and only now is evolving patterns of autonomy in a context of a highly interconnected world. We all have to learn, through practice. (5)

Imagine now that the wave of solf-reliance continues, not unabated (nothing ever does in human affairs) but at an even quicker pace than during the last 25 years and at all levels: local, national, regional. What kind of world would we get? It would be a world with very many centers, but no "center" in the Western sense of controlling a periphery dependent on it, but in the Chinese sense of being the center of concern. Each would be largely self-sufficient in food - assuming a population distribution on the world geography consonant with this . After fundamental restructuring of patterns of ownership in the "countryside" has taken place this would, above all, be a problem for the metropolitan cities, some of which would have to de-develop. Each would be self-reliant in the production of what is needed for the other basic material needs: clothes, shelter, educational and modical equipment and personnel. Each would have an energy system compatible with the production for these needs, on a non-luxury basis. Beyond this Unore would be patterns of exchange, but not only centered on goods, also on experience, and always on a reciprocal basis. And for all of this there would be several levels of

self-reliance, starting with individuals and small groups like families (magnitude 10°-2), via the local(magnitude 10°-4) (6) and the national levels (magnitude 10⁵⁻⁷) to the regional level (magnitude 10⁸⁻¹⁰). (8) On top there is the planet itself which so far has to be self-reliant whether "it" likes it or not.

Roughly speaking this would be a world almost the opposite of the one we have today with chains of dependency radiating from the metropoles in the capitalist (and to some extent also the socialist West through a system of inter-nesting regions, nations and districts down and out to the most remote rural village, usually ending with an old, underfed, underclad, unsheltered, illiterate, perennially dis-eased woman, exploited by everybody in circles near and remote. Just as the basic key to the politics of dependency is to tap the periphery of resources, through mechanisms of capital-drain, resourcedrain, body-drain and brain-drain, the key to the politics of selfreliance is to regain control over resources - over capital, raw material labor and the most precious of them all: human creativity. The whole theory of self-reliance hinges on one fundamental hypothesis: that together these resources constitute a reservoir, partly drained away, partly misdirected, largely underutilized, that is sufficient for the satisfaction of human basic material needs all over the world - even after a short time-span of, say, five to twenty-five years. The necessary condition for this, though, is local control and mass participation, conditions that at the same time give one of the keys to the satisfaction of basic non-material needs: by being the subject of one's own need-satisfaction; not an object, a client at the end of a new dependency chain, topped by managers of various kinds. In short - a very different world - as different from the world of today as that world is from the world prior to Columbus and da Gama.

Self-reliance means struggle.

This latter statement has one implication at the same time trivial and terrifyingly important: the politics of self-reliance has been and will continue to be resisted. It will be a politics of struggle because of the vested interest in the present world order for those at the top. This should not only be interpreted materially, in terms of how the periphery is treated as a vast reservoir siphoned off in the direction of the minor and major centers, but also non-materially in terms of power as a bene per Se. If the resources of the peripheries of the world were really controlled by

them an released for their own purposes, a major restructuring of the world would take place. (9) Nowhere is this seen so clearly as in the case of China: in 1948-49 a part of the slum generated mainly by the Western onslaught; twenty-five years later a center in its own right, a place no leader from the center could afford to miss, and not only to try to sell but to learn, in an efforts to understand why and how a non-Western center in the world could become a possibility. No wonder there is such an agreement that the only factors used to explain the Chinese achievement are "the Chinese culture" and "the five thousand years of history" or "more than two thousand as a unified state" - and little or nothing to the generalizable elements in the struggle for local, national and regional selfreliance. (10) The prospect of a Latin American, an African, an Arab, a South Asian and a Southeast Asian center - to mention some of the regional ones - in addition to China must be less than heartwarming for people used to thinking in terms of Washington, London, Paris, Boss Moscow and Tokyo (with sub-Centers), singly or combined, as the centers of it all, almost by law of nature.

Given this it is to be expected that the struggle for self-reliance, initiated with the decolonization struggles and processes after the Second World war, will continue to be a bitter one. This does not mean that all phases will be violent. But as important as some notions of the strategies of self-reliance are images of likely counter-strategies from the enemies of self-reliance, so as to be better prepared to meet them. The following is written with this double purpose in mind, with a particular view of elucidating the dialectic between strategy and counter-strategy as the struggle gains momentum - a dialectic which we shall assume will have its ups and downs. We are not heading for a nice linear, even exponential, growth in the phenomenon of self-reliance around the world: the resistance will also gain increasing momentum.

Self-reliance needs a multi-level ideology.

In the following we shall assume that politics is a phenomenon with phases, not necessarily temporal, that can be described in terms of five components: consciousness-formation, mobilization, confrontation, struggle proper and transcendence, (11) where many political offensives get stuck after number one, two, three or four and never come to the crwoning achievement. We shall, further, make use of the distinction between the individual and collective (local, national, regional) lovels of self-reliance, keeping in mind that non-territorial.

units (associations, organizations) may also act more or less self-reliantly. And the first problem to be dealt with is conscious-ness-formation: how does the prise de conscience, the inner awakening, take place?

At this point let me switch to first person singular rather than the editorial "we": I can give my own formula of how I see my ideology, one among numerous, of self-reliance. I see it as a combi+ nation of some vision of human beings; of local organization, particularly in its relation to the state; of the structure of social interaction in general and economic production/consumption in particular, and of international relations. The ideology of my vision encompasses some insights about inner man found in buddhist thinking in the East and existentialist thinking in the West; anarchist thinking on the significance of local autonomy; liberal thinking on freedom and outer man in general - man in society; . markist thinking on social structure; anti-imperialist theory and practice from recent years; all of it tied together in ways that would draw upon modern versions of federalism with strong emphasis on decision-making at the lowest possible level, and tempered with ecological considerations of respect for the environment; in solidarity with present and future generations. Thus, it is more than the ideas contained in the United Nations Environmental Programme, of satisfying the inner limits of man (the basic needs) without transgressing the outer limits (set by our finite earth) (12) . Amy ideblogy of self-reliance would also have to fill in the big inbetween with views on what to produce and how, how to distribute it and the kind of structure most likely to yield these results. Thus, my ideology is a multi-level ideology. I think it has 1t is inspired to be - for reasons to be spelt out below. by, but also richer than any kind of neo-marxism with which it is sometimes confused. At the global level SR ideology would today have much in common with the stance taken by the Third World in favor of restructuring international relations, and not only the economic relations. At the domestic level there would be much similarity with standard socialist thinking: nationalization of some of the key components in economic life in order to assure that the first priority in production, and in the utilization of surplus, is given to the satisfaction of basic material needs for those most in need. And at the local level there might be much similarity with

anarchist thinking, but also with liberal and even with some capitalist practice. Thus, it is basic to the whole ida of self-reliance that the local community is in command of its own resources; that creativity, initiative - one might even say entrepreneurship - are encouraged. This can only happen in an atmosphere of freedom, particularly freedom of expression (13) sp that people may fetch ideas and insights and convert them . through discussions into something that can be used locally, in a unit that may be like a federation of villages, a city ward, anything with some promise of viability, providing a setting for participation and identification. It might even be similar to capitalism in its emphasis on creativity and initiative, but highly dissimilar in its emphasis on mass participation (thus, the "entrepreneur" would not be a private individual or the top management in a private or state corporation, but the participants in the community), and its emphasis on an equitable relation with other units. To produce one would not start by creating a periphery from which capital, resources and human labor, skilled and unskilled could be drawn (either by moving it all to the center, or by letting standardized forms of production take place in the periphery). One would start with what is available locally and build from there in circles of equitable exchange.

To many an ideological stance of this type would look as "colecticism", meaning that there is a cortain newness to he combination. If "eclectic" is a pejorative term, it should stand for some sort of unintegrated combination of ideological clements with no real world viability or feasibility when translated into practice. Given the Chinese experience it would be hard to level such accusations at ideologies of this kind. it is a confusing combination for minds trained on considerably narrower bands in the ideological spectrum is another, but hardly so interesting matter. This has something to do with certain habits in Western thought: the tendency to single out for attention a very limited range of variables and build an ideology around them - to the exclusion of all others - assuming that changes in these variables will have large-scale repercussions throughout the system. Thus, markist thinking has been as mesmerized by the idea of collective ownership of the means of production as liberal thinking by the opposite - private, balanced competitive ownership - neither of them able to see how the system they promulgate have both been put at the disposal of the state system that matured in the world after the "peace" of Westphalia in 1648, making them in fact very similar. Both of them have assumed that the local and international levels will somehow take care of themselves once the national levels are set right. Both are essentially single-level ideologies.

In the present version of self-reliance thinking there is no such assumption. Rather, one may be impressed by the extent to which the local, national and international levels of action can work at cross-purposes with each other if the development of human beings is the yardstick and not, for instance, national aggrandizement. More particularly, self-reliance theory and practice should never be referred to as such if it degenerates into single level self-reliance only. This point will now be spelt out, as an antedote to truncated self-reliance thinking.

5. Higher level self-reliance not sufficient for lower level self-reliance.

Imagine regional self-reliance is implemented at the level of the Third World as a whole, at some continental lavel or at sub -regional levels. In practice this would mean full control over Third world factors, and production for and by Third world groups, But which groups? Given the present world structure the center-periphery gradients are all there to be used by the strongest among today's poorer (on the average) countries. Thus, regional self-reliance wight protect the Third World against. dependence on the first and second worlds (and for that reason be strongly resented by them), but would not offer any protection against penetration by the Braiks, the Irans and the Indias, and (still to come) the Nigerias. The sub-imperial connections of today may become the raw material for forging the imperial connections of tomorrow; the logic would be the same, so would the basic mechanisms - in some cases including visions of a mission civilisatrice, eg., based on mythe or realities about empires of the past (as in the Iranian case).

Correspondingly, national self-reliance, if implemented, would not meet the bill either. In fact, this is what many nationalist regimes have practiced, eg. or the basis of the

theoretical rationale given by the physiocrats, today in the form of "economic nationalism". Whether they are regimes purportedly to the right or to the left, the result is often the same: increased centralization. The argument above may be repeated one level lower down: national self-reliance may. serve as a protective shield against penetration from other countries, but at the same time leaves the domestic scene as open to explotation of the masses by the national elites as before. In some cases they may also use the dependency chains set up in colonial (yesterday) and neo-colonial (today) times as raw material out of which solid exploitative structures may be forged for tomorrow. National self-reliance as an ideology, for instance, is compatible with exchange with others at the same level of technical development (whatever that may mean in procise terms). But, there will be the temptation to have the population produce for exports rather than for their own needs-satisfaction, partly because it is easier to control economic supplus in the form of money (and other financial instruments) passing through the national tanks than in the form of goods produced locally, partly because the surplus is more easily converted in ways decided by national elites.

. The difference between rightist and leftist regimes in this connection would mainly be theoretical and measurable in the frequency of statements to the effect that this is all in the true interest of the masses. It is usually the rural population that will suffer most because they are least able to fight back: they are less organized due to their settlement pattern and the way they are tied to some minimum production of their own food (one reason why it is in the interest of the national clites to keep this residual production), and because the clites may save the cities through imported foodst ffs, thereby protecting themselves against delivery strikes on the part of the rural population. It is also generally wrong to believe that it is easier to fight one's own elite than foreign-based imperialism, for in the latter case the national bourgeoisic may side with the masses in a war of national liberation. The same applies to local self-reliance: we know too much about villages and groups of villeges to assume, gullibly, that the village left to itself will be a place where human needs are automatically satisfied. local self-reliance may protect the village against the para sitic elements in the nation, today perhaps above all politional planning elites who plan "for the country as a whole" and "not for parochial interests", (14) sifting surplus towards the urban, industrialized, commercialized and bureaucratized center. But this would at the same time leave the village open for exploitation of the weak by the strong, the strong being those who control two basic production factors: capital (goods) and land (in the age of slavery they even controlled human labor, but discovered that there are advantages in relaxing control a little, just as they later discovered that they could also give up the control over land as long as they keep the control of means of production). Hence we are thrown back at the bottom level: mass participation and individual self-reliance, and the obvious socialist conclusion that there has to be local control of all local factors of production.

No doubt the politics of mass participation ultimately means that the masses take the power in their own hands, including the means of production, and start producing for their own needs. This may not require a revolution strictu sensu; often some form of cooperative movement would be both necessary and sufficient to gain sufficient control. But it would imply a provision for local decision-making on the basis of direct democracy. The: unit to which this decision-making would apply would be one which contains a sufficient amount of economic life to offer a guzranteed minimum material basis in terms of basic material needs. This is (16) where local self-reliance differs fundamentally from self-management (auto-gestion). The latter implies general participation, and direct democracy in decision-making in a unit of production (a farm, a factory, a firm); self-reliance implies control, including decision-making, over the entire economic cycle. On that basis - and here we regognize the marxist concern with an adequate material basis - a whole edifice of activities and institutions in other social fields can be constructed, eg. for culture and what today is called "leisure", but more profoundly integrated with work, not kept in separate compartments as in our sectorially, organized, segmented societies.

6. Jower level self-reliance not sufficient for higher level self-reliance.

We can now repeat the argumentation against single level self-reliance, this time working upwards. Thus, local self-reliance is not enough. Even if each community would have the idyllic character attributed to it in utopian literature in general and the anarchist literature in particular, integrating farm and Actory for instance, (17) at least two problems are not solved.

In a future world consisting of 150.000 such communities rather than 150 states as at present, about equal in power, a system based only on what today would be called local self-reliance might be viable. But that is not our world. In the world of today the local community can be kept going on such a basis as long as there is sufficient normative fervor and normative production locally, in addition to inspiration from the outside. But it may crumble due to outside influence as soon as the ideological production is reduced to a trickle and routine sets in, as was seen "clearly in the hippie communities of the 1960s (but less so in the European communes of the 1970s, maybe perhaps they do not have the same pretenses of being so all-embracing). In the world of today the transnationals and other forces will move into an unprotected local community with its demonstration effects both on the production and the consumption sides, and the stronger community might also very easily prevail upon the weaker one. Certainly, this may also be true in any future world: anarchist thought has always been weak on the problem of how all these communities are to be integrated into a reasonably peaceful whole, just as not much work has been devoted the relation between local and national planning in a self-reliant society.

7. The role of the state.

Hence, local self-reliance can only become a practice involving the great majority of the population in a setting of national self-reliance. Concretely this means not only the negative - very important and difficult though - that it is the task of the state under a program of national self-reliance not to stand in the way when the local communities try to develop on a self-reliant basis. There are also a number of positive functions that can best be performed at the national level. Thus, there will always be some economic cycles that will transcend the local level. The production of fertilizer does not only have to be according to local blogas formulas; there could also be some scope for chemical plants in addition to that. But such cycles should be under collective control by people accountable to the masses affected by their decision. In other words, there should be direct control of the managers of such nationalized plants, not only indirectly by controlling (election-wise, on an institutionalized basis) the politiclars who presumably control the managers. The system known as "self-maragement" is insufficient for this purpose for the simple reason that managers and workers in such plants may have a joint

interest in sharing the spoils that accrue to them from exploiting other parts of the economic cycle. (18) Neiter parliamentary elections, nor workers' control have proven themselves sufficient. The Chinese pattern, or non-pattern, of "cultural revolution" is probably better but difficult to institutionalize because the moment that happens it is lost. Needless to say, the pattern would not go well with Western paradigms for nation-building based on elite-controlled and predictable institutions with little scope for spontaneity!

Obviously, there is also the task of the national center to provide a good infrastructure for any cooperation between the local units. The transportation and communication networks of a dependency-oriented country is being much less centralized. One of the first tasks of a national government that goes in for selfreliance would be to use surplus to build roads between outlying villages, connecting the periphery with the periphery so as to. permit inter-dependence on the basis of concentric solidarity giving second priority to the roads and tele- communication connecting the capital with the district capitals and the district capitals with some "reliable" center in the village - as is done in most countries today. Thus, it is naive to believe that a dedication to self-relieance does not have profound effects also at the national level: it is not only for the state to retire in favor of a laisser fairs village ion. Even if only the bicycle and an impoved wheelbarrow (rubber wheels of the same type as the bicycle, a handle that is compatible with creet walking). In some cases this will have to be subsidized from the national level. especially in the mountains where road-building may be absolutely essential, yet far beyond local means (an example being Sierra Maestra in Cuba).

But there is also another very important function for
the state to fulfill, and a much more problematic one. Although
the relations between the local units may be equitable, they may
not be equal. No units exploits the other, but they may differ
in their "factor-endowments", some having more, some less of potential and actual non-human and human resources. Thus, one unit
may be much more able to inspire and be inspired by the masses
so as to release creativity beyond the critical treshold. They
may all practice "serve the people", but not all practice "trust
the people" - those that do may discover that they are amply
rewarded. Hence, there is scope for the state to intervene at

some point to prevent the most successful from converting their surplus into tools of inequity. A state based on a very low level of local self-reliance may have the centralized burcaucracy and the power apparatus needed to take from the rich (individuals) and give to the poor (individuals) through taxation and welfare state practices; a self-reliant country may not have this power to intervene. The units to be put on a more equal footing are no longer individuals but the local units. To tax them collectively and transfer to the less fortunate may harm the self-reliance of rich and poor alike: not to do so may lead to destructive imbalances. A Chinese answer here, in an effort to overcome this contradiction, is to have the richer communes transfer the surplus into the industrial sector which is more centrally controlled (apart from the countless very small "factories"), and use the control over the industrial sector to level off inequalities. In a country where 80% work primarily in agriculture this may be an answer - at least for some time - it is not in a country where less than 20% work in agriculture. Hence: here is not only the scope, but the burning need for social creativity!

Thus, solf-reliance at the national level consists in more than assuring the conditions for autonomy of the units at the local level and an equitable pattern for exchange and cooperation of their choice. The state will also have to supplement and complement local production patterns, at least to the extent that tho "economy of scales" doctrine has some substance to it and is not merely an ideology to protect expansionism and centralization. Particularly important here is the production of labor-saving devices to avoid unnecessarily hard and degrading work. Then the state may have to play some new equalizing role. Finally, the state will have to provide the protective shield against outside penotration, partly by producing its own ideology. Some of this will have to come from the national centers to start with (the masses having been deprived of self-confidence and being tapped for resources for too long a time), partly by producing for satisfaction of material needs on a national scale till local units are in a position to do so themselves all over the country (which will take time given the strength of the center-poriphery gradients inside the country), and partly by providing national defence against . interventionism of various kinds that will try to destroy emerging patterns of self-reliance. The defense may be non-military or military, national (conventional "modern" army)

or local (guerrilla) - preferably all four combined in a web of determination and will to survive that in and by itself is self-reliance.

But once more: national self-reliance, particularly in the Third World, is not enough. Most of the national units are too small and weak alone, measured against the giants in the Western center (and Japan). Like local units they can too easily be conquered from the center when they are alone , fragmented and marginalized, with lack of any self-confidence, dependent (or so they believe) on the center for material and non-material goods and services, partly paralyzed by fear (which is not strange, given the interventionism to which the Third World - including the small countries in Eastern Europe - has been exposed in the years after the Second world war). No doubt the way out here is solidary action: the regional self-reliance of the Third World and subgroups, partly working for more equitable patterns of exchange, partly working for a higher level of autonomy (in the economic field this has taken the form of action for better terms of trade and increased processing the Third world, so far). It is unnecessary to repeat that the OFEC action could not have been pulled off by one oil-producing country alone, as unnecessary as it is to state the obvious: the CFEC action shows with all possible clarity that. regional solf-reliance is not enough. And that brings us back to the first chain of reasoning against single level self-reliance, from the higher towards the lower levels.

8. Self-reliance as a three-pronged dynamic approach

Evidently, then, the answer, and this is the doctrine of self-reliance if there is any, is to combine all three levels — the regional, national and local levels — in a three-pronged approach with the dovelopment of human beings everywhere as the goal. But this is a general strategic consideration, how is it converted into political tactics? More precisely, if it is impossible to do all three at the same time, which level should be given the priority? Does one start with individual prise deconscience, or with mobilization, confrontation, fight at the local, or the national, or the regional levels?

The answer to this cannot come out of general, theoretical speculations. It all depends on the "political situation".

But that, in turn, is not only a question of some objective circumstances; it also depends on subjective goal-setting, on conscsiousness-formation, on level of mobilization. The political situation offers an opportunity for confrontation only when there is a minimum of consciousness and readyness to act. Thus, the October 1973 war was an objective situation that helped increase the level of Arab solidarity. Many of those Arab states in which the Arab nation is divided were and are oil-producing countries, but none of this would have meant anything if they had not had - for some time at least - a vision, a goal of substantially improved terms of trade. They had, and they used the mobilization brought about by the confrontation over some other issue to inject the goals of their consciousness into the struggle - no doubt leading to some kind of partial transcendence of the world order. In other cases both consciousness and mobilization may be there waiting for an opportunity to launch a confrontation (eg., when some old man, some symbol of some ancien régime dies socially or biologically). All other combinations may also be meaningful except two: consciousness without any action (the other four), or action without any consciousness. But these are not given, static entities, they develop as the process unfolds itself; dialectically, not linearly.

The conclusion from all this would be to seize opportunities when they arise, meaning when the forces favoring dependency are weak - whether at the local, national or international levels. Recently international action has perhaps been most consistently dynamic, or at least this is the image given by the press, always catering to the clite levels. Third world clites have exhibited remarkable solidarity, and through their actions and organizations (Group of 77, the non-aligned) have succeeded in changing the thinking, to some extent also the practices in the world economic order. But the solidarity extends to the Level of regional selfreliance only. The moment there is any talk of national selfreliance the countries whose elites prefer to stay in the capitalist system (but on better conditions) differ sharply from those with a more socialist orientation. And among the latter there is a similar distinction between those that feel national self-reliance is enough and those that include the step towards local selfreligance on their political agenda. Whoreas many Third world countries today are moving towards some pattern of national selfreliance in the sense of nationalizing some key industries (usually to gut them under the control of the military rulers of the country), only a few can be said to steer the surplies

systematically in the direction of those most in need, and among them only a handful may be said to go in for local self-reliance. Together, however, this "handful" of countries with others at the local levels added to them, may comprise as much as a quarter of humanity - as pointed out in the introduction.

Should one then argue against the New International Economic Order which obviously represents self-reliance at the regional level only, with some excursions into the national level and with no mention of the local level, nor of the individual human beings with their needs and goals? No. It should be seen as one among many necessary but not sufficient steps, adding up to a process of fight against dependency. It came about because the international level provided better opportunities for confrontation than the other two levels; with the less developed countries . more conscious and better mobilized than ever before and the other side delegitimized and idea-empty. The Vietnam wars served to reveal the true nature of the Western world. divided into those who the killing, and those who supported them and those who failed to protest before it was clear that the Vietnamese were defeating the "most formidable power the world has ever seen". Of course, there have also been openings at the national and local levels, but with the exception of China and the former Indochina countries less spectacular in recent years. Substantial progress has been made at the national levels, though, in such countries as the People's Republic of Korea and Cuba - but those three examples together / indicate that it may be advantageous for a country to have a philisopher as leader rather than a leader who feels called upon to give "on the spot guidance" on anything from chicken breeding to factory lay-outs. What is left for the local population but "to do and die", if not in a war battle at least in the battle of production, when the leadership is in the hand of a (self-appointed) universal genius?

Having a positive attitude to NIEO as a part of a much more comprehensive process does not, or should not, make us blind to its weaknesses, though. For instance, very soon the first and second worlds may discover that Third World solidarity is to their advantage, for it means that the majority- which rejects both national and local self-reliance - will outdo the socialist minority among the Third World countries, both of the more classical (Soviet) style and of the more recent (China-style) varieties. This, in turn, has the obvious consequence that the focus will be on the Third World as a whole, not on restructuring or creating new structures

among Third world countries and inside them. And this, in turn, gives for the capitalist West a chance to reappear in a new guise, using their subsidiaries in the Third World under the name of nationalized companies for the transfer of technology etc., or through the formula of joint ventures. (20) Doing so the patterns of dependency can be recreated, and the wasting of resources for the production of non-basic material goods in a way that also counteracts the basic non-material needs can continue more or less unabated. After all this is more or less what happened in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union, and since these countries will have to turn their failure to develop more genuine patterns of socialism into a virtue, they will probably even support such practices and continue to argue in favor of increased trade even when it can be shown to be anti-thetical to development as conceived of here; satisfaction of human needs for those most in need.

Clearly, to the Western countries this is preferable to countries that go in for genuine national self-reliance, not to mention those that add to this a pattern of local self-rellance although even better was the pre-UNCTAD pattern. As a sonsequence it may be predicted that Third world solidarity will break up, for beyond a certain point (that may already have been reached) it becomes regressive rather than progressive. After that solidarity among Third world countries that go in for national self-reliance, and countries that also go in for local self-reliance, may see the light of day, and become important factors even when they are not geographical neighbors. This may also serve to highlight the problems of national and local self-reliance rather than the perconnial theme of "terms of trade" (a very limiting approach anyhow), and serve to push more countries into more advanced development patterns. If this happens the continued need for Third world solidarity in another field will become evident: the solidarity in case of invention will have to proceed from the verbal stage (and the UN voting formula) to concrete action. "Intervention if one of we expande the pattern of self-reliance is attack on us all" will have to be political formula, loading to collective defense.

Thus, in the years to come, Third world solidarity will probably strengthen and weaken at the same time - but in different fields. It takes little imagination today to envisage a Third World Secretariat, for instance having the Third World Forum as one of its sources of inspiration. But a secretariat

of that kind, doing for the Third World what OECD and the EC Commission does for the capitalist world (backed by such organizations as the Trilateral Commission) would also quickly reveal some of the cracks in the solidarity, particularly if (or when) the Brasils, Irans and Indias start behaving like the big powers have done in the UN since its inception. There is also the problem of imbalances in the production of development intellectuals: high in Latin America and South Asia, low elsewhere. But the point to be made is that these are problems that will have to be faced. The contradictions will have to come up to the surface and be handled by the Third World itself.

It is assumed that as the regional level of self-reliance matures and gains momentum, the other levels will also come into motion throughout the developing world. One reason this is so is negative: it will very soon become evident that the level of living of the masses does not necessarily improve with such measures as nationalization of key industries because the basic distribution structure remains the same. Another reason is positive: the achievements under self-reliant regimes will continue to gain recognition, as has been the case with China, and it will be more difficult for other regimes not to make at least some steps in the same direction. Fore some time to come, however, the movement will tend to get stuck at the level of national self-reliance, if for no other reasons because the social group most capable of overthrowing a capitalist regime in favor of national self-reliance is likely to be the armed forces, who are also the most capable of resisting attempts towards autonomy at the local levels; especially if there is an ethnic component in that struggle. In many countries, consequently, the politics of self-reliance will for some time reduce to the politics of what happens inside the armed forces, between those recruited from the national periphery (often the army) and those that are coming from the center and have a more professional, less populist vision of development (usually overrepresented in the mavy and in the armed forces). So far the world has no superience with a popular uprising against a national, even socialistic government with impedeable anti-imperialist credentials - except, perhaps, in Eastern Europe. That experience will soon be part of contemporary history. In all probability the experience will be that it is more, not less difficult to fight a well entranched, self-righteous "progressive" national elite than it was to fight the old imperialist configurations - among other reasons because of many of the national elites were on the progressive side in that abruggle.

9. The reaction of the capitalist world

What will be the reaction to all this in the capitalist West? In the beginning - meaning now - they will watch from the side-lines, refer to self-reliance as a "fad", and try to debunk it with frequent references to returns to the Stone Ages and the Middle Ages. (22) The basic message, "we are going to set our own goals and choose or own means" will not be lost - but will be received with a mixture of disbelief and anger. The rapid (23) gains in the living standard of the poorest in the poor countries will be measured not against the misery they are escaping from, but against the living levels attained by the richest in the rich countries of the world on the basis of centuries of exploitation. Like marxism in its days, self-reliance will be debunked as "an ideology of leftist intellectuals in Western Europe, the sons and daughters of directors and professors, sometimes joined by their parents, something one can afford when one is rich, not when one is poor" (24) They will tie up enthusiastically with those in the Third world who feel that self-reliance is something second class. All the evidence to the contrary, especially based on comparison of pairs of similar countries (25) will be discounted as based on special circumstances: all failures and negative experiences will be seen as typical. Since Western elites have done this continously since 1917 there is considerable expertise available in writing commentary of that kind. It will be put to work in the mass media factories of human disconcern (25)

For a self-reliant country in other parts of the world this no longer matters: they are not taking their leads from status quo oriented Western ideology production. Just like the minimum task of the state is not to impede moves towards local self-reliance (as long as such moves are compatible with the self-reliance of other units), the minimum task of the Western čenter is not to stand in the way. This will be hard on all the "development agencies", a blooming industry in the West providing jobs for bureaucrats and professionals, new outlets for excess capital, even under governmental guarantee, and a smooth continuation of Vestern colonial practices in extending the life expectancy of roles as missionary, benefactor, administrator of other peoples, and large-scale manipulator.

Under self-reliance there is still some scope for "develop-ment assistance", but of an entirely different kind:

- as an effort to restructure their own productive machinery so as to make it less dependent on factors from, and markets in, Third world countries,
- as a joint exploration of the technologies of local self-reliance, particularly making experiences in communities in rich and poor countries visible to each other.
- as a supplier of some means, particularly untied grants, for some of the programs under national self-reliance.
- some functions in connection with regional selfreliance, eg. in connection with integrated commodity
 programs possibly also extending some help in
 connection with the redirection of trade.

One fortunate pattern in the Western world where this is concerned is the competition among development agencies, with the Dutch, Swedish and Canadian afencies leading the field in understanding self-reliance and rejecting some of the development assistance practices of the 1950s and 1960s. However, the West does not like to be rejected, particularly not in what the West perceives as selflessness. The result may easily be the interventionist aggressiveness so well known from the post Second world war era.

However, as dangerous as the conventional form of developmont assistance - a clear antithesis to sclf-reliance because it leads not only to dependence on more aid but also to a habitforming pattern of international begging, (China was the first to get out of that)-is the possibility of the capitalist countries investing in self-reliance. The slogan is a good one, it has appeal and is semantically close to the capitalist idea of "self-help". The stupid capitalist is the one who fights this and stimulates his country to engage in military, political, economic and cultural interventionist practices: the clever capitalist is the one who spies on progressive groups to get ideas and starts marketing equipment "for your self-reliance"," to help overcome the first hurdles." Much of this could be compatible with new orientations in the field of technical assistance, adding up to a rich package of "if you can't lick'em, join'em" elements that may constitute the most dangerous form of attack.

A more subtle form with some of the same consequences might come from the political left in the center countries of today's world dominance — structure, with offers to serve as catalysts in the process needed to undertake a structural change. Unless there is a clear program for phased withdrawal, or a genuine pattern of joining the local communities, such practices only

amount to a continuation of the dependency structure. The obvious alternative would be for such groups to promote self-reliant structures in their own territorial or non-territorial environment, thereby also weakening the power of those very same center countries to intervene in weaker countries moving towards self-reliance. This is important because one of the most obvious implications of a program favoring local and national self-reliance would be to reject techniques that presuppose that other local, national or regional units are cast in the roles of delivering the raw materials or the raw labor. But such policies tend to be resisted:

10. Self-reliance in capitalist countries.

At this point, however, another factor enters the global politics of self-reliance: efforts in the same direction in the first and second worlds. In overdeveloped countries the euphoria in rediscovering the local community, agricultural work, forms of togetherness that are productive, not only consumptive, in short self-reliance in its various manifestations is now quite well known to many. What is not so well known is that there may soon be similar movements under way in the second, the conventional socialist world. Generously interpreted, even the call at the 25th congress of the communist party in the Soviet Union for more emphasis on non-material aspects of life may offer some openings in this direction. Given the propensity of these countries to imitate the West i is likely that inspiration may come from leftist theory and practic in capitalist Western Europe rather than from an other member of the socialist community -Chinactor the socialist countries have great difficulties learning

The Second world is blinded by fear and Western superiority complexes (27) that seems to take on a special marxist form, accusing them of catering to petty-bourgeois elements and inclinations in the Chinese peasantry.

Thus, in the richer parts of the world the motivation pattern for self-reliance will be different. What in the Third world is a necessity, a matter of survival, of life and death, because other forms have been proven so wanting, even catastrophic, is in the First world a way both of getting out of material overdevelopment and non-material underdevelopment. It is partly stimulated by the increasingly well known negative aspects of modern industrial societies, partly by visions of something better, of a higher

quality of life because the material standard of living may be somewhat reduced. At the same time it also offers solution to the obvious problem of double-edged dependence: it is not only Third world countries that are dependent on imports and exports; First world countries depend equally much on exports and imports, and the solution is self-reliance.

As the Third world becomes decreasingly available for the old expoitative trade patterns, the First world production volume becomes increasinly disproportionate to the demand. The old methods, to increase the markets in space through more or less imperialistic practices, and the markets in time through fads and planned obsolescence have served the system well, but the second one will also be decreasingly available as Western consumers mature and become less manipulable - in other words more self-reliant. Excess production leads to well-known problems; one of them being structural unemployment. But there are several solutions to the problem of excess production, all of them compatible with more self-reliant patterns of life in the overdeveloped countries:

- keep productivity, but reduce the working hours so as to introduce opportunits for much richer life-styles,
- reduce the productivity not only by making work more labor-intensive, but by making it more creative, which would mean trading off some of the standardized mass production of today's industrial society for more artisan type of work.

Of course, these two methods do not exclude each other but are both very sensible reactions to the changing structure of world economic relations at the same time as they may constitute solutions to problems of material overdevelopment and non-material underdevelopment. Or, do these countries need wars to discover self-inclinate?

Self-reliance in socialist countries.

In the Second world countries, the socialist world, the problems will be put differently. There is much less dependence on the Third world for trade, and one cannot as yet talk about any material everdevelopment except in some elite segments of those societies. On the centrary, there are patterns of material underdevelopment, not in the fields of schooling, medical treatment and clothing, but definitely in the field of shelter and food. [28] Especially where the latter is concerned the contrast between Chinese and Soviet achievements in the field would point to the significance of local self-reliance. This might one day constitute

a very powerful source of motivation, even spearheaded by peasant revolts (of which Eastern Europe has a long history). But there is also considerable motivation to be found in the non-material under-development of the socialist countries in Eastern Europe - both in the fields of alienation (which they would share with the capitalist countries in Western Europe) and indeed in the field of repression. More scope for local initiative, for designing and practising one's life according to one's own inclinations, without for that reason wanting to return to capitalism. It may well be that this kind of motivation would be most strongly felt among intellectuals - which brings us back to the formula of an alliance between intelligentsia and peasants as one possible formula for the mobilization for self-reliance in these countries. In due time the yearning for more freedom may lead to new forms of self-reliance in China, too. (29)

12. Conclusion

Let us now try to summarize. We have been working analytically with

three levels of self-reliance: local, national, regional, with the individual level underlying it all, five stages in the political process: consciousness and mobilization/confrontation/struggle/transcendence,

two fields of motivation: material and non-material three worlds: the third, the first, the second - and the fourth in the background: China.

And what we have tried to do is to indicate how they can all be seen as elements in an historical process that has been going on for some time, that unveils itself before our eyes and in all probability will gain more momentum in the future. The basic point in the present analysis is not that it contains more elements or ideas about what self-reliance could be, but that en effort is made to establish some kind of relatively credible scenario for how it may proceed to more levels, involve more phases in the political process, and spread geographically to new areas, all the time liberating more people, more effectively, in more fields, partly be demolishing anti-selfreliant structures, partly by the inspiration of good examples, in large areas of the World. No doubt this process will get stuck many times on the way, being limited to one level, (eg. the regional or the national) to one phase only (eg., the talking/writing phase, consciousness-formation only), to one field (the material needs of humaniting), to one part of the world (the Third world). In saying this, however, we are

already referring to the past: we are far beyond this combination. But we are also very far away from overturning dependency patterns, creating a world of self-reliance at all levels, in all fields, in all parts of the world.

Nevertheless it is strongly felt that this movement will continue, and not only because self-reliance seems to speak so much better to the human condition in all parts of the world than any other short formula in today's arsenal, of supermarket, of political slogans. It is this: self-reliance as a method is entirely compatible with self-reliance as a goal. It is so different from competitive, social darwinist capitalism or totalitarian, repressive socialism with all their lofty talks and visions of liberating human creativity and bringing about the brotherhood/sisterhood of all; while in reality forging new chains of enslavement. It is so different that we would like to conclude by paraphrasing (30) one of the greatest thinkers and practitioners in the field, next to Mao Tse-tung (and much less different from him than people tend to think), M.K. Gandhi, stressing the unity of goals and means: there is no road to self-reliance -- self-reliance is the road.

NOTES

- * This paper grew out of the Seminar on self-reliance organized at the Institut d'études du développement, Geneva, winter and summer term 1976. I am deeply indebted to all the participants in the seminar for the discussions, and particularly to Peter O'Brien and Roy Preiswerk. Above all, however, my gratitude should be to all those who made an encounter with the Chinese experience, indeed struggle, for a self-reliant existence after a century of humiliation and at all levels, individual, communal, provincial, country-wide possible.
- 1. For one inspiring article about Chinese self-reliance see Tony Durham, "Think Big, Think Little", in Peter Harper et al., Radical Technology, London, 1976. The Chinese have for a long time made the distiction between yang fa ("foreign ways"), t'u fa ("earth methods") and hair fa ("entirely new methods") and the idea of combining them, walking on not only two, but many legs .
- 2. John Gittings, in his article "Keeping the Country on his Toes", The Guardian, 20 May 1976, writes: "The Fatherly Leader, KIm Il Sung, Has in the past thirty years visited 2.896 places in Korea to give On the Spot Guidance. Some places he has visited more than once, making a grand total of 9.030 times". Enfortunately there is usually some relationship between this incredibly high level of mobilization of a no doubt very dedicated leader and some kind of demobilization of the people. Gittings also argues against the idea that juche should mean self-reliance; but it does mean that "people rather than things are regarded as the essence or mainstay of development.
- 3. In these countries it is known under such names as "the green wave", "green socialism", "populism", and the political momentum is often carried by the youth movements or peasants' parties, or generally parties particularly strong in the countryside and now looking. for a new, more comprehensive political basis. Characteristic of them, as one of the most important authors in the field, the Norwegian professor of sociology and politician Ottar Brox, has pointed out is the idea of taking the community as the basis for political theory and practice, not the sectors as liberals/capt-talists do, or the classes as markist/socialists do. A society can be analyzed in terms of sectors and classes, but political practice along such lines will tend to be abstract, above the level of the community with which people can identify. To focus only on the community, however, leaves out the national sector and class contexts. It should also be pointed out that Brox himself is a leading sember of the Norwegian socialist party.
- 4. The Cocoyoc declaration, circulated as a General Assembly document The procise wording in the part of the Cocoyoc declaration spelling out sold selfance is: "The ideal we need is a harmonized, cooperative world in which each part is a center, linving at the capense of notedy clse, in partnership with nature and in solidarity with future generations".

- 5. The alternative would be a less interconnected world which would be difficult, perhaps even impossible given the high population density relative to the pre-1500 world. Hence, the argument in this paper is not against inter-connection, but against their present structure: they have to be redirected and become more equitable. Isolationism is not identical with self-reliance.
- 6. As pointed out, the Chinese People's commune seems to be of the magnitude 10 (temm),10 (brigade) and 10 (the commune itself around 10.000). As to ujama'a (meaning "family-hood" in swahili): "The size of an ujama'a village depends on the land available, and the number of people in each village ranges from 50 to 4.000, although 500 to 2.500 is normally virwed as the desirable village size" ("Self-reliance and ujama'a: Tanzania's development strategy", by J.H.J. Maeda and Ibrahim E.Kaduna in What Now?, The 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report on Development and International Cooperation, Pp. 54-59). Also see Jimoh Omo-Fadaka "Tanzanian Way to Self-reliance", Ecologist, vol.2 no.1, February 1972. Other sources indicate that out of 7.000 villages 700 are ujama'a.
- 7. There are some countries today with a population in the order of magnitude of 108 (above 100 million). They should be regarded as regions some of them more successfully integrated than others rather than as countries, particularly since with the partial exception of China they are all highly multinational.
- 8. The inclusion of the magnitude 10¹⁰ (ten billion and above) implies that this is regarded as an acceptable population figure for the world 10¹¹ probably not.
- 9. To take but two examples: oil and sunshine as sources of energy. The less developed countries are probably also the countries with most sunshine, which may indicate that the energy balance of the world would turn in their favor if societies became more sun-based than they are. On the other band, this also applies to oil, which gives a clue to the obvious strategy of the rich countries in order to preserve the present "order": to monopolise the conventors assuming they cannot buy the sunshine the same way the bought the oil (they may send the clouds in that direction, though).
- 10. In the book Bearning from the Chinese Feedle (Johan Galtung and Funiko Mishirura, Osio, 1975 so far available in Morwegian, Sanish and Swedish edition) the position taken is that Chinese culture and history were necessary conditions for the Chinese patterns of self-reliance certainly not for self-reliance as such.
- 11. This is elaborated in Johan Galtung, The True Worlds: A Fransnational Perspective, New York, 1977; chapter 4.3.
- 12. See the Cocoyoc declaration for formulations.
- 13. In the case of China, as pointed out by Sartaj Azis (in a communication to the Fifth World Future Studies Conference, Dubrovnik 28 March 2 April 1976), there is a trade-off between equality and the freedom to choose occupation, proceedy also to choose the place to work, to live. On the other hand, there is considerable freedom of expression and impression. Wrother other countries will make similar or different trade-offs on the way to self-reliance remains to be seen. Somethin, probably has to be sagnified a before a society with reasonable weathing, economic well-read, freedom and identity for all, is obtained.

- 14. The present author has some experience with the former Indo-Norwegian fisheries project in Kerala, India (see CERES, no.41, 1974). During a short follow-up study in January 1976 it became clear that the proletarization of the local fisherman population had gone even further, making it likely that in some years they may no longer be able to engage in regular fishing, being entirely dependent on the export market, even on international trade. Shrimps, prawns and lobster in short luxury sea-food play the same role relative to houshold fish as luxury cash crops relative to staple food products.
- that individuals or very small groups (families, what in the West is called "communes") also can be owners of means of production, land, and their own labor as long as they produce for own consumption and do not exploit others. There is nothing in self-reliance ideology against the family farm but the foudal land-owner is ruled out. Nor is there anything against small-scale capitalism if possible.
 - why

 16. This is/the Yugoslav experiment to some appears as microsocialism combined with macro-capitalism: a high level of
 sharing in decision-making inside the factory, eg., about how
 the factory shall participate in what may one day become indistinguishable from a capitalist market.
 - 17. The classic here in the book by Kropotkin,

containing visions very similar to what today is the practice in Chinese people's communes. Will now day the picture of Stelin disappear in favor of an other great Russian - on the walls in Chinese compunes - or will, in the spirit of self-reliance - grainally all the foreigners in the usual Marx-Engels-Tenin-Stelia/Map Tac-ting quint t disappear?

- 18. Take the example of a tourist agency. The Yugoslav model would provide for an open discussion between guides, secretaries, drivers, clerks and managers but there is nothing in the model that would guarantee the inclusion of a rather important group: the tourists. A self-reliance model docussing on the total cycle would build their participation into any model of decision-raking.
- 19. See "deli-relience and global intendependence: Some Reflections on the New Invernational Economic Order", <u>Papers</u>, Chair in Conflict and Paper Nosearch, University of Oslo, 1976.
- 20. For an exploration of this, see Johan Galtung, "Fest-West Security and Commention: A Sceptical Contribution", Journal of Pages Research, 1970.
- 21. This important group of Third World intellectuals is an excellent entrage of a new actor created as the dynamics of Third World salf-reliance gets on the way. Their weakness is that they, true to the tradition of intellectuals, are much stronger on regional and national self-reliance than on local self-reliance, and creately also weak on the theory of intellectuals and their chieffs to constitute a new class. The rise of intellectuals are class to close is closely linked to the rice of the nation-state and cannot like each tradition; small communities are less dependent on intellectual analysis.

- 22. No doubt there is much to learn from these periods, especially as to satisfaction of basic material needs, and needs for identity. But the issue is not well put: the issue is whether one can have some of the positive sides of those periods in human history without also having to accept the negative aspects. Thus, ill health is hardly a necessary concomitant.
- 23. The experience with the four best known Third World countries that are socialist (Cuba, China, North-Vietnam and North-Korea) seems to indicate that periods from 5 to 25 years are sufficient to bring the masses in countries at the bottom of the world capitalist system over an acceptable floor there basic necessities are concerned.
 - 24. All parts of a sentence like that are wrong: a self-reliance is reflected in some leftist intellectuals and some value-conservative intellectuals too -but as practice it is very much the product of the East, and of intellectuals and non-intellectuals alike. The record of self-reliant vs. dependent countries serves to indicate that the masses in the latter cannot afford to stay dependent; that a change towards self-reliance is a necessity.
 - 25. For an example of a cynical and ill-informed article about self-reliance, from the beginning to end characterized by human disconcern, see C.F. Kindleberger, "World Populism", Atlantic Economic Journal, Vol. III, no.2, 1975, pp. 1/7. (A very minor point: the present author is referred to as "a Marxist sociologist by the name of Johann Galtung" which makes three errors in one line. One can be inspired by Marxism and yet feel that more is needed as a guide to practice in our complex world; sociology is certainly too limited hence approaches like peace research and development studies; on the other hand, one n is enough).
- 26. A typical example is catastrophe aid and the aggressiveness with which China's lack of interest in receiving such aid upon the earthquake that shattered Tangshan 29 July 1976. But so much of China's policies are designed precisely to meet such calamities on a self-relian basis, very woll knowing that catastrophe aid is one of the instruments used by rich countries to forge dependence although at the same time no doubt also dictated by selfless considerations. Ferhaps most important, underlining how self-reliance is a psycho-political rather than merely an economic category, is the attitude with which the Chinese people seen to be able to face such situations: practical, non-panicky self-reliant.
 - 27. It is interesting to note how the two big Western powers, United States and the Soviet Union, both seem to assume that China is not on her own social dielectic but will have to go through the same stages that they think they have been through. The American assumption is typically that the present Chinese system of self-reliance will yield when the GNP/capita comes up: the Soviet assumption that it will disappear when China comes out of her present "stalinist" phase and enters the more technocratic phases that succeeded it in the Soviet Union.

- 28. Jimoh One-Fadaka in "Escape Route for the Poor"(Radical Technology Boyle and Marper, eds., pp.249-253) quotes the examples of China, Mangamia, Albania, North Korea, Vietnam, Burma and Cambodia as examples of self-governing, self-regulating, self-supporting economic tructures. He also argues against the Soviet model claiming that it is authoritarian, enforced; that the pace of growth for agriculture is very low "yields still compare unfeverably with those of 1913", and that the system has led to increasing preoccupation with material possession and the emergence of new and privileged classes.
- 29. One is thinking particularly of forms that would permit more freedom of choice of accupation, place and work and perhaps in general more individual creativity in creating one's own lifestyle, in full solidarity with others.
 - 30. The original reads: "There is no road to peace, peace is the road".