

rules of the game. These rules must be brought in line with new economic and social realities.

Comment

ERIK HOLM (The prime minister's department):

In his introduction to the conference on international economic stability Niels Thygesen said that the purpose of the conference was not to give deeper insight into the problems of which the present international economic crisis is composed, but to *review these vast problems in their interrelated setting*.

I think that the conference succeeded in doing so to a rather large extent. A number of cross-references easily can be made between the papers presented at the conference. Similar lines of reference could be drawn to other problems apart from those focused on by the organizers, some of those problems, however, being found in the periphery of the issue of the conference.

Nevertheless, I doubt whether the conference succeeded in clarifying for the participants the scope for action which might be open for the politicians in order to recreate economic stability internationally. I even doubt whether the participants got a sense of direction as to where such action is mostly needed.

Most, if not all the speakers approached the question at issue in the way in which we have been used to tackle any problem during the last generation. We have been brought up as problem-solvers; we have been told to define problems as scientifically as possible, and to suggest rational solutions to

them. These possible solutions we have presented to the politicians and then asked them to choose.

It might be the economists who have suffered the most from this upbringing in the philosophical school of functionalism where the basic assumption is "the primacy of the social and the economic over the political aspects of man's life".¹ But it certainly has left its imprint on the political scientists who also reasoned as functionalists when they intervened in the discussions.

Therefore, the conference did not succeed in establishing a dialogue between these two groups. In my opinion it was because no attempt was made to analyse the political foundations of the international economic system and its present crisis.

Should I try to make such an attempt in a brief comment it only can take the form of an "outrageous proposition" like the following:

Our generation has been brought up in a political stable world. We have got used to consider this stability as natural or self-evident, and therefore not worth worrying about. But just because we did not care, we have surpassed the boundaries or the preconditions of political stability and we thus now find ourselves in a world of instability.

Let that be *my* outrageous proposition. I think there is a very basic truth to be found in it, both in the international situation as

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well as in the domestic situation in the rich countries.

The international stable world I am referring to is the one established after the Second World War based on the supremacy of the United States in all fields, political and economical. The whole world outside the Soviet bloc had to rely on American power, and due to a major effort by the Truman administration the United States actively faced and shouldered this responsibility.

Based on the political consensus expressed in the Atlantic Charter the countries in Western Europe willingly let the U.S. become the *primus inter pares* in the so-called free world. On this basis a political-economic system embracing security, economic, monetary, trade and development policies was based. Due to the overall political stability of this world it was feasible to reach viable solutions to many problems through a functional approach.

However, in all fields the functionalists have surpassed the boundaries of this world, either due to political blindness or to technological efficiency. The United States cannot and will not carry the burden any more.

The only successor which can be found to the role of responsible political leadership is the Atlantic Alliance or the US-EC relationship, to use a more modern term.

Finn Gundelach expressed the same view quite explicitly, but in my opinion he did not go far enough into the problem by saying that "if the system does not work... it must be subscribed to lack of political will".

How it will be possible to establish the political consensus, on the basis of which a political will can be exercised, is hard to see. Henry Kissinger made a strong plea for

it already in April 1973, but in vain. The failure of this attempt – the reason for which can be found on both sides of the Ocean – is in my opinion the main reason for the severe economic instability, which the world has suffered during the last three years.

Nord-Syd dialogen og de internationale energiproblemer

Gunnar Riberholdt:

I. *Nord-Syd dialogen: Et nyt internationalt forum.* Siden februar arbejdes der i de fire kommissioner, der udgør de egentlige arbejdsorganer under Konferencen om Internationalt Økonomisk Samarbejde, i daglig tale kaldet Nord-Syd dialogen eller dialogen mellem industrilande og udviklingslande.

I konferencen, der åbnedes på minister-niveau i december 1975, deltager 27 lande, heraf 19 udviklingslande og 8 industrilande. Udviklingslande-gruppen omfatter et jævnt fordelt udvalg af de vigtigste udviklingslande i Asien, Afrika og Latinamerika. Blandt de 19 lande er der 7 olieeksporterende lande, Algeriet, Indonesien, Iran, Irak, Nigeria, Saudi Arabien og Venezuela, medens de øvrige er olieforbrugende lande, Argentina, Brasilien, Cameroun, Indien, Jamaica, Jugoslavien, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Zaïre, Zambia og Ægypten. Det er interessant, at Jugoslavien har opnået en af de asiatiske pladser, medens der i øvrigt ikke deltager østlande. Af de 8 industrilandepladser indehaves den ene af EF, og Danmark deltager