



congress theme document



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Globalisation means different things to different people; in many ways that meaning depends on one's perspective. This paper is written to invite and engage a debate on *Social* Globalisation, the idea that globalisation must be guided by social rather than market needs.

This document is the working document for the 2006 ILRS Congress in Oslo, Norway. We encourage our member organisations to review it, discuss it, and understand that they have a part to play in how the document (and the project) takes its final form. It is an open document, which we hope to discuss not only at Congress, but over the coming years as we do our work after Oslo.

Twelve areas of concern are presented in the document, each having the same structure:

- Introduction of the question
- A brief analysis
- Theological reflections (interfaith based)
- Questions/challenges/proposals

This will allow us to create and contribute to a more universal discussion, and will also allow us to invite people to work with us who come from different faith backgrounds and experience. That will give space for all of us to reflect and to become involved in the thinking and the process.

Two appendixes have been added at the end of the document; the first comes from our comrades in the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, and the second from the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

introduction

Globalisation is a fact. One result of globalisation is that we now are much more related to each other throughout the globe. It has an effect on us, but it also contributes to human life. It gives us access to the world, but it also gives the world access to us, not only our markets, but also our goods. Investors with large amounts of capital can determine the rules of our markets, and therefore we can be forced into structures we are not prepared for. Seen in this way, it mainly shows us that national solutions to economic problems are no longer enough; we need much more international cooperation for the good of everyone involved. We also need an intense and inclusive dialogue, so that all relevant knowledge and experience, from south and north, east and west will be on the table when decisions are taken.

The social democratic movements throughout the world are related to each other and connected to one international body – the Socialist International. That requires more and more real cooperation, and possibly also new structures for decision-making. We can no longer only learn from each other; together we must create stable systems which can provide the world with methods of decision-making that can truly ‘change life’, not only for humanity but for all of creation. For this reason it is necessary to bridge the many complex gaps between the various groupings of humanity; between south and north, east and west; between Jews, Christians, and Muslims; between monotheists, polytheists, and atheists.

The whole of humanity, now and in future, is challenged mostly by threats we have made for ourselves. And the main problem is that those of us who created the problems are not the ones which will have to pay.

The discussion which took place in the Congress of the Socialist International(SI) in November 2003 in Sao Paulo, Brazil, revealed among other things three complications:

- As Social Democrats, we too are challenged by a south/north perspective on the issue of globalisation. This is obvious in the SI and also in the ILRS gatherings. The SI has worked out a draft for a programme, which addresses the diversities and tensions (which are also present within the SI), and has created a platform for a common, radical and politically activist perspective in the framework of world politics. The conflict between high-minded principles on one side and practical solutions or pragmatic views on the other tends to give us either a principle-based worldview or a pragmatic one which can allow us to break with our own more vague principles when required.

-The topic of globalisation is strongly defined from two different perspectives; one is the ‘western’ interpretation which sees the world as being more and more dependent and related to all other human beings, and the ‘southern’ perspective which is more concerned with judging the effects on young economies that seem to be violated by globalisation. These two views must be reconciled with each other. The goal of widening markets and the problem of threatening markets through that widening process must both be analysed.

- It is possible that the very foundation of the word socialism (or if one prefers, 'social democracy'), is in its essence challenged. We must together, from south to north, start a much deeper analysis, not only in terms of economics and governance, but also in ethical, theological and overall theoretical terms.

It must be fully understood that a society with broadening gaps between individuals or groups requires more and more police, guards, and guarded houses, but a united society can spend more on equal distribution and less on law enforcement, thereby decreasing tensions.

Aside from the discussions that have taken place in the Socialist International Congress 2003 in Sao Paulo, we observe that similar discussions are taking place through the Global Progressive Forum (created by European members of the SI), and through the ongoing work of the World Social Forum.

INVITE OTHERS AND DO THE WORK TOGETHER

In doing this kind of reflection it also allows us to cooperate with other groups and movements (e.g., faith communities, environmental movements, social movements) and through this work increase our credibility, contacts, and relevance in our societies.

We want our member organisations to get involved in this "think through" process. We want our groups to get involved in the political struggle for a just world order, and in the process invite with us all good forces which can contribute to this process.



globalisation: an overview

QUEST

How can globalisation become a process which not only focuses on the limited question of global markets, but at the same time takes the necessary step towards sustainable development, social responsibility, welfare, gender equality and good governance?

A BRIEF ANALYSIS

If it can be said that the imperialistic west (or north) got an answer from the east and south, which focused on nationalism in helping new post-colonial states to become independent, can it be said that the new imperialistic views (mainly in markets) will get their answer in protectionism? The need today is to find answers which involve peoples of both the north and south in a wave of protest saying *enough is enough*. We will refuse the concept of imperialism as well as the answer of nationalism and protectionism. Even if it was true that the rapidly developing countries, especially the Asian tiger economies, made their evolution through copying the production methods and products of western economies behind the veil of protecting their own markets, that is not to say that the western economies want to see this kind of development repeated again elsewhere. In the same sense, it may be true that the WTO-rounds, the MAI, and GATTs tried too hard to push western views on the immaterial-right on the global level. The truth today is that there is a need to create an agreed process which takes into consideration both the need of the north to protect their interests, while at the same time giving space for the new emerging markets to take the necessary steps towards a well functioning and regulated global market.

That can be handled by developing a long-term strategy for a win-win situation, which can be agreed and planned by all involved. It requires both patience from the north/west and dedicated reforms from the south/east.

It also requires a genuine consideration of the debt situation for developing and transitional nations so that a new concept of economic partnership can be formed.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Neither the socialist movement nor religious communities fit well into the narrow-sighted perspective of nationalism. The global outlook and the very core of these movements would be compromised by a division of their holistic and global perspective.

Many religions contain a global perspective, which has often been understood in an imperialistic way; e.g., the whole world should be given the Gospel. But it is likewise possible to understand that view as one which includes the whole world. That is to say, there is nothing outside the range of religion, spirituality, or faith, *whichever faith one has*.

So, when Jesus spoke about the mission to the entire world - *Go to the whole world and preach the Gospel* – he focused on the global perspective. When the Book of Psalms says that *if you made your home on a mountain, out in the ocean, everywhere God will be*, it is telling the same story. There is no IN and no OUT. *All are included*.

From this view we have a responsibility to try to cope with this inclusive perspective. Black and white, female and male, young and old, north, east, west and south ... all are included. The common ship is our message, and from that viewpoint we have to approach the challenges within the vague concept of globalisation.

Judaism sees this in two ways: (1) unless you are continuously sinning against God and others, everyone has a place in the world to come. One need not be a Jew to be seen as righteous before God and share in the afterlife as well as the post-Messianic world. (2) Jews are literally obligated to attempt to change the world by transforming evil into good; no distinction is made between faiths or peoples; indeed *God is everywhere*, and all people are a part of God's creation. But in this effort, Jews do not seek for others to believe as they believe. The righteous paths of other faiths can be just as helpful in this transformation as the path of Judaism.

QUESTIONS

(Develop this together with religious communities, and anti-globalisation movements.)

- What today is the hindrance to the world becoming one?
- Can the desire of the north to make rapid progress be compatible with the need in east and south to gradually comply with the need for a new world order?
- Can the historically 'new' countries gradually become enrolled as participants in the fast-paced global market?
- How can the debt crisis, the developing of democratic systems, market requirements, global investments and the social welfare system be connected and interrelated?
- Can international institutions, like the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and others be used as responsible tools for this process? How?



democracy

QUEST

The challenges to democracy are seen at many levels; local, as well as sub-regional and nationally, on the issue of participation and legitimacy. Social movements as well as the anti-globalisation movement contribute to the new understanding of democracy, but at the same time have difficulties adjusting to a representative political model. The ILRS must contribute to a deepening of understanding of democracy, and together with the Socialist International take part in the long process to rebuild and revitalise good governance in our global institutions.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS

The struggle for democracy will never be over. In all times, at all places and for all generations we need to recover the ideals and functions of a living democracy. The old democratic countries are experiencing a drop in the percentage of participation in elections, and in more and more elections a minority of the citizens are electing their leaders and governing parties. The new democratic countries struggle to build confidence in their democratic system due to the lack of success in delivering what its citizens expect to get from the state. Other countries are still searching for their concept of democracy, and still there is a significant lack of African, Asian and Arabic models for democratic constitutions and electoral systems.

In a strict understanding of the idea of democracy — where all are equal before the law, with the right to vote for all citizens, with equal rights for all — that idea has not been valid for more than half a century, maybe even less. But the feeling today among some citizens is that the democratic system already is out of date, and in searching for alternatives they have chosen street demonstrations, local initiatives and sabotage instead of participating in elections. People don't look on the democratic system as something owned and controlled by themselves, but a tool in the hands of politicians.

A revival of democratic values and trust in the chosen system lies in the hands of the political parties *and* in the hands of the new social movements, together. There has always been a conflict between the ideologically 'pure' activists and the pragmatic doers which have found it necessary, even while opposed sometimes by the activists, to create compromises with others. It is possible to say that they are ready — to a certain, or maybe not so certain point — to compromise their innermost and deepest ideas. The question can be and is often raised: Is there not even a core of an idea?

There can be conflicts within democracy: democracy as *input*, where it matters most to contribute and get involved, which requires some kind of geographical closeness, and democracy as *output*, where effectiveness matters, which often requires democracy or some structure on a larger scale. Participation can be contrasted with governance, in questioning if it actually can create a difference in the life of the people.

Or to put it another way; one can not first say that there should be something done and then deny the necessity of creating decisive bodies for decision-making on a relevant level. These

tensions — between participation and governance — must be delegated in a proper way within all democratic systems. Globalisation is a question which really affects both perspectives. Clear examples are the issue of global warming, poverty reduction, and peace processes that require democratic structures on large scales.

Democracy is about both participation *and* delivery. We always have to be aware of the need to improve our democratic skills, systems and their efficiency. But it seems obvious that the *mega-challenge* for democracy is now the question of proper international structures. We need to create good governance at home, in our cities, our nations, our regions and globally.

- Adjusting it into a system of subsidiary
- An interaction and cooperation between the different levels of decision-making
- Developing of the global and multilateral levels which today are too weak to meet its challenges.

Transparency and openness in political processes and decisions are the precondition for democracy. At the high political level that has become more and more relevant. Participation in social movements goes hand in hand with the representative political system. The goal for us is therefore to democratise the global political system. Better control and responsibilities are necessary to meet the deficit of democracy in the global political system. In the same way, newer social movements must relate more to existing political structures.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

In the Christian interpretation you can find two, partly opposite views on democracy. One is the theocratic understanding of the power structure which in many ways limits the space for democracy. A state is given out of the hands of God and the only role for the human being is to find the will of God, which opens up *de facto* the possibility for a dictatorship in which one person or a group of people are the owners of the 'One-interpretation'. The other is represented in the picture of the body of Christ. In that model the value of all parts of the body of Christ are valued and included. This gives the individual a certain position: an individual is not replacable, should not be passive and has a unique role.

Judaism has a very strong notion of democracy, which even holds in deciding matters of the Law and our relationship to God. (e.g., God can be persuaded to change God's mind through reasoned argument.) Also, the reason that Jews followed the Law as given at Sinai is not simply because God gave it, but because a majority agreed to accept it there. Therefore, while there are different opinions on the matter among Jews, a new majority can also come to different conclusions today in regard to how one interprets the Law in our modern world. Jews believe in the free will of each individual to decide their path in life; each new life is like Adam, born good, with the ability (and *responsibility*) to choose good over evil.

QUESTIONS

(Develop this together with environmental, religious and social movements.)

- In what ways does our present political system work as a tool for developing and/or improving participation?
- Are the present systems effective when measured in terms of efficiency and delivery?

- Is it the constitutional/legal system which is a problem or is it our behaviour?
- Regionally: How can a regional democratic system fit into a national democratic system under the national level and beyond it, also globally?
- In what way (if at all) can a more activist approach, through demonstrations, boycotts, and strikes for example, be compatible with a representative democratic system?
- Participation; how can we get more and more people involved in politics?
- How can the global institutions be transformed to fit into more basic democratic structures?



sustainable development

QUEST

How can we develop progress in our world without ruining life's possibilities for the coming generations? In short, that is the quest for the world of today. Included in that quest is also finding a method to pay back the deficit we already have.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS

We live in a fast-changing world. We cannot oppose it, but we must gain control of modernisation, and not allow modernisation to gain control of us. The total costs of modernisation must be calculated. A 'new economy' must consider the costs of human suffering and future disaster just as much as it considers capital and labour costs, as well as the social costs of proposed changes. Also must be considered the social costs incurred by the lack of development, and how all of these factors affect the possibility to provide for current and future generations.

Consciousness of environmental issues has grown during the last part of the 20th century. The Socialist International defines development as *material welfare, human dignity, personal security, justice and equality*. Gro Harlem Brundtland developed that definition; *development which faces actual problems without destroying the possibilities for the future generations to meet their needs*.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

From a spiritual perspective we have a unique situation. We have somebody to be responsible to and report back to. This stewardship, shared by all humans, especially those in (and with) power, gives us a perspective which challenges all human decisions. The idea is not simply to say that nothing can change, but that all changes must take into consideration the cost for the entire creation in the long run.

For Jews and Christians the Creation story told in the Bible gives us the responsibility for this stewardship. Human beings have to take care of all creation but not ruin it; to use, not abuse.

Our theological reflection has to focus on the limits and the roles for change, development, and evolution.

QUESTIONS

(Develop this together with environmental movements.)

- We now have to examine the global as well as local systems of danger to our foundation of life. We also have to find ways to balance the need for change — for example, the transition from old structured urban and agricultural economic systems to a more modern society — with the present system within countries.
- What do you see as a danger to the environment in your society?
- Which are the driving forces for change?
- What are the best arguments against change?
- Can we, with theological and ideological arguments contribute to these judgments?
- What is the connection between global investments and short-term perspectives on the environment?
- Can it be regulated nationally or do we need international rules, made by whom?
- How could they be formulated?



human rights

QUEST

Human rights issues are now central to the agenda of globalisation. They challenge the former sovereign independence of a state. The world today can not generally accept a cruel leader oppressing his people. Intervention from the world community can be necessary if genocide or even minor risks are at stake. The universal right to human rights also challenges access to basic human needs around the world. The UN's Millennium Goals, which should reduce poverty by half by the year 2015, are the goals set by the world community. Achieving those goals requires many good efforts from around the world, from both the rich countries to the transitional and developing ones, but also within those countries. Humans have fundamental rights – that's a quest for the world.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS

Human rights create a foundation for international law. The UN's Declaration of Human Rights (1948) created enormous pressure on the international legal system to support those efforts. The world community must more strongly implement human rights and secure the ratification of these central principles by all nations. Nations have the duty to support each other and protect human rights, which includes special help that might be needed in developing countries.

The independence of a state is not questioned, but even personal rights must be protected, and such rights can be threatened by state terrorism. Involvement from others on humanitarian causes can occur through a multilateral framework. Supporting human rights involves support for local communities. Protecting their rights can be seen as a means of preventing conflicts caused by poverty, discrimination and exclusion.

Poverty takes away the basic rights for millions.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

All human beings are created in the image of the Creator. The equality of human beings is basically related to that well-grounded viewpoint. No more valued, no less equal. Race, gender, age ... nothing takes that foundation away.

Neither religious communities nor states have a good record on this. But together are we now challenged to live this understanding, and that calls us all to consider a new view of humanity.

QUESTIONS

(This work could be done together with religious movements and movements like Amnesty International.)

- What can we see in our own society in measuring inequalities which differ from this high standard of community in society?

- What do we see internationally?
- What tools are used to renew attitudes of division and the lack of fairness in our world?
- In what way are Human Rights questioned in our own society? Globally?
- What tools do we have (and use) in challenging unfair treatment and discriminations?
- What are the main obstacles for a world based on the principle of human rights for all?



poverty reduction

QUEST

Challenged by reality and by the UN Millennium Goals, the national and international efforts aimed at poverty reduction are right at the centre of politics and the agenda of the world. Poverty reduction is not only a question of money but of attitudes and the tools for a sustainable future. It involves our entire society, nations, regions and internationally.

Together with all good forces, with all the research in the UN, the World Bank, national development plans, and NGOs it could be very interesting to set up a clear agenda, an idea bank or something similar to share experiences and reflections on practical work.

Poverty is not only a question of low status, it is a sign of a social model with deep differences and divisions – nationally and internationally. Poverty affects us all.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS

Poverty and deep divisions in a society, be they local, regional or global, affect the whole society. Tensions in a community are not only a problem for the poor, but for all. That problem will multiply itself; create fences, guarded forces, and criminality.

Poverty can be a personal thing, but mainly it is a corrupt system. In order to change it, it is crucial to see *in-depth* through the accepted circumstances, traditions, and divisions, based on deep roots of the division, unequal delivery of resources, and access to the means of change.

The issue of poverty can not only be judged on an individual, local or national basis but must be challenged at all levels; local, regional, national and global. The distribution of goods and the system of capitalism has not shown the ability to create enough quick changes, nor has the communist system. Through global interdependence people now have greater access to alternative views, and that will in itself challenge the present divisions and injustices.

The need for a change of systems involves decisions at high levels as well as consciousness processes among the poor. Often it is said that the poor are *the Others* and will not in any way be positively affected by the decision of the powerful. We will maintain the view that good forces within poor communities, together with progressive forces in power structures, can bring a change to the world. But basically it is important to not perform change *for* others, to interpret their views. The poor have the right to shape their own agenda. However, that should not exclude the possibility that others may also contribute to that process.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

The poor were very much the focus of liberation theology in the 70s and 80s. They brought the view to the church that those without power or means had a certain perspective and prioritized access to God, and in interpreting the surrounding world.

In the *Ecclesia de Base*, small groups constituted within the community of the poor were

formed and their analysis was based on the perspective of Paulo Freire: See – Analyse – Act.

See – involves the necessity to observe and be aware of the circumstances in local society and unequal distribution nationally and globally.

Analyse – involves a socialist and/or biblical analysis of unequal distribution, the lack of influence and power, power structures, greed, oppression and other elements that both create poverty and keep individuals and groups in despair.

Act – involves the political and economic actions that can be taken both locally and globally. That can include everything from demonstrations, conflicts, developing of co-operatives, political involvement and so on.

Liberation theology taught the ability to read the Bible with new eyes and value the key role for the poor. There is a lot of literature and experience to use and there is a need that the concept of Base groups be re-visited.

In the Jewish tradition a great deal of attention is given to the problem of poverty. The concept of *tzedakah*, which in Hebrew has a dual meaning of charity and *justice* (the root of the word being the same word for *righteous*), explains why some form of regular individual and collective action to address and relieve poverty is considered mandatory for Jews. Looking after the welfare of others of us who are less fortunate is not merely kind, but an act of justice, fairness, a *necessary act* of social and economic balance.

The Torah as well as the Prophets repeatedly instruct both Jews and Christians on the ethical treatment of the worker, the proper payment of wages, the obligation to provide for the poor and even debt relief (the Jubilee year, et al).

QUESTIONS

(Develop this together with religious and social movements.)

- Develop your analysis in your community. Encourage people to get involved and listen to those with experiences of exclusion.
- What can be done?
- How to look at the consciousness process?
- What can we as conscious people contribute to? Can we be an obstacle to the poor?
- Can or should we use our linkage to political parties? How?

Is it a contradiction to talk about the perspective of the poor when we are — in comparison — rich?

6

multilateralism

QUEST

Maybe we thought that the world had become a better world since the cold war ended in the 80s. That was the dualistic world in which there was a 'digital analysis', black or white — no greys. We know now that it wasn't that easy. One superpower seems to be just as incapable of creating a better atmosphere in the world.

National views came after imperialism and colonialism. What will come after the cultural and unilateral efforts we now observe? Will the divide of the world actually be strengthened by unilateralism? Will it increase nationalism? Is the clash of civilizations what we now see? Is that process driven by those who oppose the only superpower or is it driven by the superpower itself?

A BRIEF ANALYSIS

The power of the strongest is an old concept of terror balance. But there is no balance.

The creation of United Nations after World War II was the first real universal attempt to form a multilateral structure in the world. The victor nations gave themselves a central role in the new body which has been kept in the UN Security Council. In many ways this has not given us a correct perspective of today's world. The veto system is one obstacle, but also the lack of representatives from other parts of the world who sit on the same level. The reconstruction of the UN will be the real sign of the awareness of the need to change. The unilateralism of today is not the best soil for the seed of real multilateral change. A multilateral effort like the Kyoto-protocol, international courts and other instruments are not today supported by the superpower, nor is the UN as a whole. Unilateralism may well be the final obstacle to multilateralism.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

The religious perspectives must be those of one world. Churches are not national in their essence but rather are the visible signs of the Universal Church, the people of God. Similar perspectives are present in other faith communities. A nationalistic view is in a way opposite to the very meaning of a world wide community. Some theologians from the Christian fields point out the globalizing-process as obvious within the Gospels. In the Gospel of St Matthew is it shown how Jesus himself is gradually widening his perspective of the world; from being sent to his own people, the Gospel ends with worldwide views.

Judaism teaches that the Law was given to a people wandering in the desert, in front of the smallest mountain, without a nation, so that no one could say that the Law was only for this one people of this one nation. The law was given for everyone, and as it is God's Law, it is not only for Jews but for the entire world — the first instance of international law? Jews see their existence as a *symbol* of the covenant between God and humanity, but do not believe they 'own' the Law or God for themselves only. Also, Jews are taught that they should not seek to be like other nations, but only accept God as their King. They are told not to put their trust in earthly Kings, but in the one God who rules over the one world.

QUESTIONS

(Develop these perspectives together with faith communities, solidarity organisations and local UN movements and similar structures.)

- What can be done to prevent the tensions in the world? (Today it is easy to blame the US in many communities for everything.) What can we do?
- Today there is a fundamental understanding of the need of a Win-Win-situation. Are there losers in the present system?
- A dialogue between US and Europe seems necessary as well as US-Africa and other continents AND Europe-Africa and so on. How could that be done on an equal level where people and nations meet as partners?



peace

QUEST

There can be no peace without justice, and without peace there can be no justice. It is also true that there can be no peace without development and a search for equality. Today the world is understood from a 'War against Terror' perspective. Preventive war and 'countries of evil' are pointed out and the unilateral force — the US and their allies — seems to have the privilege of formulating the problems. This must be discussed. But still there are other conflicts, those of the old kind. Morocco's occupation of the Western Sahara, the conflicts between Israel and Palestine, Africa's internal conflicts, regional struggle in Indonesia, China's occupation of neighbour countries, the Russian conflict in Chechnya, civil war and chaos in Colombia, Haiti and so on.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS

Peace is not only the absence of war. The circumstances for peaceful developments involve many complex dimensions of human relations. Unequal distribution must be seen as the main obstacle to peace. Unequal economic standards, education levels, gender oppression, and other things are driving forces for tensions and clashes, within societies as well as globally.

The focus in our time on terror-war threatens to diminish those factors in simplifying the views of those conflict elements. A framework for peace requires both multilateral institutions and inclusive perspectives which not only focus on power structures and nations but fairness in the markets, the ability to receive good education, gender equality and many other factors for justice.

These views are about the same for a civil war as for conflicts between countries. Injustices are the driving force for conflicts.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Justice and love are connected. The basis for human community is respect for individuals and respect for different values. Unity in diversity is the concept for human fellowship.

Faith conflicts have been *de facto* forces in driving many of the conflicts in and between countries. Religious institutions which see themselves only in terms of national interpretation are really a danger to globalism itself. Love, understanding, human values and reconciliation are tools in the true religion. These can (and must) be developed further within religious communities, and will by their essence challenge a more narrow minded and/or nationalistic faith. In the teaching of Jesus one finds very peaceful messages; *go another mile, turn the other cheek, those who use the sword will be killed by sword* and so on. But there is also another tune; *I have come to cause division, brother stand against brother* and more militant messages. Seen from a whole understanding of the entire Gospel there seems to be very limited space for the militant message and the teaching of a just war. But, surely, from a historic viewpoint there are different traditions in Christianity as well as in most religions.

QUESTIONS

(Outline this work together with peace movements and religious communities.)

The philosophy of your religion; what is the main focus — today and historically in your faith?
How are the messages interpreted vis-à-vis

- Peace
- War
- Reconciliation
- Hatreds
- Nationalism
- Militant interpretations

What is your own interpretation? Are these questions debated in your community today?



world markets (wto)

QUEST

The international market is a reality. Now we are facing the need for regulations not only in nations but also globally. The attempt to find a common understanding on what kind of rules should limit the global market has failed so far, both within the World Trade Organisation and in bilateral negotiations. Subsidies, and protected markets in rich regions are now the main obstacle for a just and open world market. How can a market be organised which will allow both equal access for all to that market, and at the same time give enough space for an immature economy to be included step-by-step in the competitive worldwide market?

A BRIEF ANALYSIS

We are now facing a defeat of common rules in the world within the WTO negotiations. The US has entered into bilateral arrangements with some countries, which will exclude most of the poorest countries. President Lula of Brazil has taken the lead in the protest against the rich countries' demands. The protests, in connection with the WTO gatherings have been massive. Different views have joined each other; people from the poorest countries, the anti-globalisation movement, protectionists in the rich countries among many others. Can the work for justice and fairness be worked out together with the radical forces in fellowship, or is it true what has been said that the radical movement always has to see it self as 'the other force', which never can join their forces with governments?

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

An equalisation will occur. How can that be interpreted in our time? The quest from a social perspective includes a tireless struggle towards equality. The market in a capitalistic society is the very foundation for the relation between human beings. The market is effective in organising how the needs meet the goods. But the market is deaf to the dimension of poverty and inequality that it can create.

QUESTIONS

(Develop this work together with environmental and social movements.)

- What are the main obstacles to a fair world market?
- What are the positions from your own countries/region?



privatisation of basic resources

QUEST

We are now facing decisive privatisations of what have until now been understood more or less as ‘free lunches’. The outsourcing of water and water pipe infrastructure to international companies especially has raised this issue to a critical point. These changes have been seen in both developed countries and in transitioning and developing countries. On the one hand there is a need for investments, on the other hand there is a definite risk of having your most necessary resources in the hand of foreign companies. In poorer countries there is also the tragic problem of people’s inability to pay for those now privatised basic needs.

With the regulation of free markets this kind of market is said to be open for global bids, but that is questioned from many perspectives.

The same kinds of questions are raised according to land ownership, the patent of crops and other issues.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS

The costs of building infrastructure is high and connected with a need for strong investors. Often they are also dependent on large-scale plans which affect many people and can change older structures and rural areas. Trans-national companies/TNCs which run these infrastructure systems can provide high efficiency and good investment capacity, but the profit can deepen the divisions within a society. Not-for-profit systems can provide a broader sense of community but have a much weaker ability to make investments.

A common international standard for basic human needs should be established, and a broad agreement, especially among the rich countries, to spread common goods in the entire world, should be a priority. Maybe it will be necessary to exclude these areas from the market and regulate them in a more socially responsible way.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Moses hit the rock and water sprang up in the desert. The view of water as a gift from earth itself is now questioned by those who advocate unregulated markets. The very foundation is the question of if — and how — Creation can be divided and owned. Here is where cultures meet. One extreme is the perspective in which no one can own what belongs to all, from generation to generation. On the other, the foundation for a capitalistic society in which ownership itself is the precondition for a good world order.

Stewardship gives human beings a responsibility to take care of and use responsibly (not misuse) the earthly gifts. How this is organized can be discussed. This is one perspective. The other is more related to — regardless of which fundamental view we take — what this means for the quest to reduce poverty. Which ways are the best for an equal and effective delivery of these earthly goods and goods?

Amos – the Biblical prophet – had a strong teaching on justice. But that will not answer the fundamental question here.

QUESTIONS

(Outline this work together with environmental and social movements.)

- What are the fundamental problems in your own society related to the question of privatization of common goods?
- What is your view on the worldwide problem which comes with this?
- Are our perspectives well grounded?
- Do we try to simplify those questions?



interfaith and culture

QUEST

There is a tendency to interpret the tensions in our time as signs of a clash between civilisations. West versus east, or more specifically Christian versus Muslim, or even more specifically Americanism versus Islamic fundamentalism serves as the image of that clash, if you looked at it on the surface of the culture of humanity. In our understanding it is much more a question of the limits for religion and state, and a fair discussion and dialogue on how to organize a modern and open society.

We are convinced that there are now good options to create the modern and intercultural society, which enriches us all. At the same time we will not be blind to the problems in confronting diverse ideas. Some examples:

- Those who tend to believe there is such a thing as an original society built on oneness; one faith, one language, and one ethnic race and so on.
- Those who see superior races
- Those who want to see an inherent connection between a certain form of extremism and one or another religious faith
- Those who see their religion as superior
- Those who understand their own religion as a foundation for such an extremism which threatens others

A multicultural society with a variety of faiths is not something which will rise automatically, but rather, needs conscious work on melting all the different roots together in a new tolerant society.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS

Concern over the intolerant trends in our own societies come from many different groups. We will not accept any negative etiquette of groups of people; nor from secular people versus religious people, nor from the believer towards the secular. Freedom of religion is at the foundation of modern society. Space for religious freedom is not, however, unlimited, but the limits must take into consideration both common values within the (secular) society and holy ingredients of different faiths.

The French decision on the prohibition of Muslim women to wear headscarves is one example and at the same time shows how difficult these decisions are.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

The 'golden rule' — found in its own distinct way in the teachings of Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Sikhism and Islam — challenges us; that what you want others do to you; you have to do for them. Or put in another way; what you want to do you must allow others do what they want, or in a third way; what is the reason for me to subordinate myself under a legislation which limits my tradition?

There is also a Buddhist legend talking about a group of blind people who never had seen an elephant. They were led to it and each of them touched the animal. Afterwards they each had a totally different understanding of what an elephant is, but together they could create a complete picture of that strange animal.

Human fellowship requires broadness, as beautiful paintings require a multitude of colours and tones. This rainbow concept has its roots in religion, but religion has also felt the temptation to make uniform the faithful.

We want to express our search for a *unity in diversity* as a common understanding of humanity from a spiritual perspective.

QUESTIONS

(Develop this work together with religious communities, refugee movements and others.)

Use the program for ILRS: *Hand to Hand* in this process.

- What are the sources for 'imperialistic' views within our own faith-traditions?
- What are our presumptions towards other religious communities?
- What are the general views within your society?
- Which relations and what knowledge do you have on other faiths in your community? Can that be developed? How?

Are there things in traditions and legislation which must be changed? In the debate? Can you contribute?



work (formal, informal, black market)

QUEST

In our analysis of the world economy the working sector must be watched from different views. In the short run; from basic needs — from hand to stomach — one must accept the informal sector for people attempting to survive. In the long run however, the quest must be to include those sectors in an open area. That is necessary for regulation, protection, personal safety, and — for the sake of the sense of community within a society — for taxation and openness in the economy. What are the necessary steps in nations with different levels of development in order to formalise the working sector?

In this perspective we also must include the views from developing countries in which there can be cheap labour, but a low level of advanced technology industries. What does their path look like towards a world market? Education, competition and common rules on the world market effect this situation in different ways.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS

There are different sectors in the economy and in areas of work. In both rich nations and in developing/transitional nations the areas of the informal economy create special problems, but are often the only chance for many poor people. Views on workers rights have always in one way or another been accompanied by development. A permanent discussion in the developed countries is if trade unions are too strong (or too weak). But they have contributed to creating a sound understanding of human value.

A problem in poorer countries which is now being debated is competition coming to one's markets from more developed countries. If you open your nation up to an international market for constructing new roads, your own companies can be out of the competition by those who have bigger machines. Your comparative advantage is cheap labour, but the disadvantages are less efficiency. If your company is going to be able to compete you must invest in new equipment — that equipment you buy from abroad so you lose human power and create unemployment and, at the same time, have to 'export' your money.

So, can you, in the long run, compete on an international market with cheap labour - low investments, or do you have to invest in (foreign) technology and cause unemployment?

Countries in transition are now challenging the international markets with cheap but well educated labour. India, with its well-functioning networks in big cities competes today heavily with the European markets in the field of call- and support-centres and computer business. Lots of jobs are just now moving from Europe and USA to India.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

A worker is worth his/her salary. Working as the necessary tool for living is the basic understanding in the Bible. But the newer understanding that you are what you are doing is not the biblical view. That inner value is dependent mainly on a human definition in itself. Your value comes from within and should not be related to your status or what you produce. This

is maybe a 'north' perspective or one borne of relative luxury, but it is basic to the evaluation of human life. Life is not worth protecting only on a superficial productivity-based evaluation, but rather based upon the value of a human herself.

QUESTIONS

(Develop this work together with trade unions and others.)

- Can markets be created with different strategies in developed, transitional and developing countries?
- Can a market be protected from foreign competition? Will that in the long run make a loser out of you?
- How can trade unions be improved without becoming a conservative factor in times of transitions?
- How are we responsible for the social factor? Can that be handled in a world wide perspective?



education - and networking for learning

QUEST

Decisive for the future is the ability for nations to distribute education and for individuals to reach their goals for personal development. Future competitiveness is totally dependent on how well a country can prepare its citizens, especially the young, for harder competition in an international market. Individual abilities are important, but equally important are the preparations made within nations to provide good options for deepening one's knowledge.

Preparations for future needs are common challenges for nations, organisations and individuals. Those include basic education, higher education, professional training and networking for training and sharing of knowledge. The internet and computers are today important tools, and accessibility is critical for a healthy learning environment. In this perspective the divisions of the world, mainly depending on the economy and structure within societies, judge the individual's access to learning. Democracy and the consciousness of present national leaders of the necessity for boys and girls to have access to knowledge will be decisive in regard to future competitiveness.

Another central key for development is the internet and worldwide knowledge. A lack of networks can be significant obstacles in this area. Even more basic studies are at stake in this field.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS

The question of education and providing equipment for developing a 'learning environment' is crucial in regard to the ability of all countries to compete in international markets.

Equal access to a quality education dwells in the hands of national leaders and can be provided by different means. A high level of awareness in this field will determine what kind of future a country has. Even globally we have to be aware of these abilities, and freedom of movement provides us with common possibilities but also shared responsibilities toward individuals to ensure the standard of education in each country.

Education, as well as some other basic service, like health care, is part of the core mission for a functional state. Equal access to the basic foundations for a lifelong learning process must be provided. From that basic point each country, as well as individuals themselves, have to build their ever deepening and broadening knowledge.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

A good start for a young girl and boy is the best gift for a future life, both for individuals *and* for a family and country. Jesus did repeatedly point to children as good examples for the adult. Maybe it was the hunger of life and the eagerness for learning, which was the key point he wanted to give as an example. Become like a child, Jesus said. A nation with hope for its future has to concentrate on the young citizens.

The daily prayer of Jews, which is recited three times a day by the most observant, commands us to teach our faith and our values and our love of God to our children.

QUESTIONS

(Develop this work together with schools, young persons, trade unions and others.)

- Is our education system preparing youngsters for competitiveness on the world markets? Are the abilities equal for girls and boys?

- What can we do to help other countries to provide for the future of their young people? What can the electronic revolution mean in our countries? What can we do to provide such possibilities to developing and transitional countries?

- How can the information gap be bridged? 'Internet for all' is a slogan, but how can that be done in areas with a lack of education, electricity and telephone networks? How can that be developed?

appendix A: ANC on globalisation

The text below is essentially from *Non-Racialism in Action Acknowledging the past, Changing the present, Building the future*. Submission of the ANC/African National Congress to the World Conference against Racism NGO Forum, August 2001.

THE ERA OF GLOBALISED CAPITALISM

We entered the third millennium in the era of globalised capitalism. The collapse of the communist bloc and the end of the Cold War, the crisis of state-led protectionist industrialisation, the information technology revolution and the strengthening of institutions of global governance as well as economic regulation have facilitated the emergence of a single world economic system. The integration of the global economy has reached a level and intensity not witnessed since the start of World War I. This is partly a result of the development of productive forces, and partly the upshot of policy choices made, and in some cases imposed, across the globe. This economic integration is but one aspect of the development of a global society. In culture, sport, policy formulation and implementation, in academic discourse; indeed in all aspects of human activity, global as opposed to local influences are becoming more and more important.

Globalisation has brought a significant change in the operation of the world economy. Corresponding to a transition from an 'international' to a 'trans-national' mode of operation, the period since the late 1980's has seen strong pressure for the free movement of commodities and capital across national borders, with corporations seeking the ability to locate in any part of the world. Driven and facilitated by a revolution in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), production processes in many parts of the world are increasingly coordinated into what Manuel Castells has called 'global networks'. At the same time the application of ICT coupled with the liberalisation of capital and currency movements, has created a world in which capital flows into and out of countries are literally instantaneous.

These developments have simultaneously led to an increase in global wealth and a widening of global inequalities. For those with wealth and appropriate skills it has meant greatly enhanced access to new opportunities. For those lacking resources or appropriate skills, or excluded from global networks, globalisation has meant growing marginalisation and poverty. Understanding this dialectic is the key to the required policy responses. It means that measures to adapt to take advantage of new opportunities thrown up by globalisation need to include conscious efforts to counter the tendency towards inequality and marginalisation that the process has thus far exhibited. Therefore we will talk about Social Globalisation.

THE THREAT POSED BY THE PROCESS OF GLOBALISATION

The process of accelerated globalisation that we have witnessed over the past decades is a thoroughly contradictory one. As already noted, in addition to an overall increase in global wealth, inequality in the distribution of wealth has widened, both between many developing and developed societies, and within societies, including within the developed world. Globalisation threatens to inaugurate a new apartheid, on a global scale, where the victims of past abuses are consigned to an economic and developmental abyss, while the beneficiaries

accumulate greater wealth and power. The practices and beliefs associated with racism, xenophobia, gender and related intolerance buttress the tendency so far manifest in the globalisation process to further marginalize the developing world.

In particular, globalisation could result in the further marginalisation of developing countries. The opening of the world to trade does not necessarily lead to the convergence of growth rates between the developed and developing world, and the continued exclusion from global productive networks presents the danger of the divergent growth.

As well as threatening to reinforce the material basis of racism on a global scale, the process of globalisation is also associated with the emergence of new forms of racism, xenophobia, gender and related intolerance. While the free movement of capital and goods across national borders is encouraged, and is growing (although increasing protectionism amongst the developed nations in the context of a global recession cannot be ruled out), the movement of people across borders, especially the movement of unskilled labour from less developed to the more developed countries is becoming increasingly circumscribed. This, combined with policies that conspire to actively 'poach' the cream of skilled labour produced in the South, means that nations which stand outside the centres of capital accumulation are most disadvantaged by these restrictive migration regimes. These developments, which intensify the tendencies towards marginalisation in the process of globalisation, are spurred by xenophobia, the hatred of foreigners. In turn such restrictions give credence to these animosities.

THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED BY THE PROCESS OF GLOBALISATION

The advent of a global economy also provides us with important opportunities to address global inequities.

1. The strengthening of organs of global governance and the emergence of developing economies as independent nation states on the global stage have created the political and institutional framework within which global developmental action can potentially succeed. In the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, the extension of the world economy was often driven through the agency of colonial domination. However, the second half of the twentieth century saw the demise of the old colonial systems and millions of formerly colonised people now enjoy (in varying degrees) formal national sovereignty and basic citizenship rights. The existence of many more independent states within the world system is an important new reality. The sovereign capacity of many new states is often severely impaired by debt, and structural adjustment programmes that have hollowed out the public sphere in these societies. Nonetheless, the existence of many relatively new independent states is an important reality in the world inter-state system, and places on the agenda the need for, and the possibility of greater equity in world trade regulations, the reform of multi-national institutions and more genuine global partnerships between peoples.

2. The information and communications technology revolution, while powerful transnational corporations in the North dominate it, nonetheless creates an infrastructure and a potential flow of information that can underpin a greater sense of our common humanity.

3. Growing globalisation, including media globalisation, have been accompanied by the

development of a wide range of generally progressive and genuinely popular social movements, focused on balanced development, peace, disarmament, gender questions, the environment, health-care and human rights questions - including the worldwide movement against apartheid and racism.

While these increasingly well-mobilised social movements are often hostile to the present character of globalisation, they are also often the products of the new realities and they have used the global information and communications infrastructure to publicise their perspectives, and to network amongst themselves.

Combined, these factors open the possibility of unity in action for a non-racial world on a global scale. Partnerships between peoples and governments can be built to ensure that globalisation, far from entrenching the calamities of history and the animosities they have generated, enables us to enter a new era of common dignity. To do so requires that we take remedial action that addresses the structural consequences of historic injustices.

REMEDIAL ACTION FOR HISTORIC INJUSTICES

The nature of the damage caused by slavery and colonialism is complex and manifold: it involves the wholesale destruction of peoples and groups, the erosion and in some cases theft, of social, economic and human capital and the destruction of the social fabric of entire peoples.

Until recent times, any state could, either on its own behalf or on behalf of its citizens, bring claims for reparations. This term, which is borrowed from international law, is broad and generic. It provides for various remedies, including:

- Reviving the status quo ante, a remedy that would wipe out all the consequences of a wrong or a crime. The nature of the crimes against humanity associated under discussion mean that such an approach is hardly applicable.
- Financial or other forms of compensation is another form of reparation. This has been the preferred route, but it is based on wrongs committed to individuals who are identifiable, when the parties against which the action are brought are also identifiable and where the nature of the wrong can be compensated by monetary means.
- Satisfaction, when the aggrieved party receives, in one form or other, a recognition of the wrong committed. This could take the form of an acknowledgement that the activities such as slavery, racial discrimination and colonialism were forms of crimes against humanity. Acknowledgement could be accompanied by an apology for the grave crimes committed or simply a statement of contrition.

However, the problem about these remedies is that they remove the element of the structural consequences of these wrongs. As already noted, the core of modern racism lies in the historical injustice that continues to shape the relations of economic and political power. Structural changes in the world economy that would contribute towards eradicating the material basis for global racism include:

- Debt reduction or cancellation, beyond the limits envisaged in the Highly Indebted

Poor Countries Initiative;

- Reversing the growing trend amongst countries of the North towards a re-duction in Overseas Development Assistance to the countries of the South;
- Ensuring equitable market access for the South by ending protectionism and unfair state subsidy, which have the purpose or effect limiting fair competition from developing countries.
- Taking positive and direct action towards bridging the digital divide in order to ensure that Africa in particular is not further marginalized in the formation of global networks.
- Democratising the multi-lateral institutions of global economic governance.
- Promoting an environment in conducive to increased long term capital flows to developing world,

Above all a world free of racism requires us to acknowledge the past and change the present. This overriding aim animates our being. It is a deep spiritual commitment which arises from the roots of our human race. Its achievement requires partnerships between South Africans: non-racial partnerships across the colour bar, partnerships between men and women, partnerships between civil society and the state.

appendix B: ETUC on globalisation

The European Trade Union Confederation's commitments regarding social globalization were announced in January 2005:

ETUC'S COMMITMENTS

14. The Executive Committee of the ETUC, along with all its member organisations and in conjunction with the respective international organisations, pledges to make full use of the existing instruments:

at global level:

The core ILO standards constitute a minimum set of rules which must be applied in the world economy. Countries must be prompted to ratify and apply international labour standards (eight fundamental ILO Conventions, other operational conventions and recommendations, and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy).

ETUC intends, both at European level and worldwide (on the basis of mandates from the respective countries), to promote closer cooperation and complementary action between all the relevant international institutions with a view to ensuring that integrated policies help to reduce poverty, foster universal respect for trade union and human rights and create decent jobs. It will support the action taken by the European Union to establish a Forum on Globalisation and the setting up of Policy Coherence Initiatives, in accordance with the recommendations of the report by the ILO World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation.

ETUC will maintain its support for international campaigns against dictators, for instance in Burma and Belarus, and will continue lobbying the World Bank and IMF.

If globalisation is to be extended, we need new rules governing foreign direct investment which the European Union ought to support. Accordingly, ETUC backs the idea of negotiating a multilateral framework guaranteeing that a fair balance is struck between private interests, workers' interests and public interests, as well as between the rights and responsibilities of the various stakeholders.

at European level:

ETUC reiterates its call for formal procedures to be put in place to enable consultation with the social partners on all aspects of European policy pertaining to globalisation (trade, development assistance, compliance with social standards, bilateral and regional relations, investment, etc.).

ETUC reaffirms the need to ratify and apply the standards adopted by the Council of Europe (human rights, the Revised European Social Charter, European Convention on Social Security).

ETUC intends to continue promoting the use of bilateral agreements by the EU to underpin trade union rights and, first and foremost, the Mercosur agreements as well as the partnership agreements and national programmes in ACP countries that are currently under negotiation.

ETUC will step up its efforts to make the globalisation process more democratic by contributing to the debate on global food safety, in a bid to boost the coherence between the objectives pursued by various key European policies (social and sustainable development policies, trade policy and the Common Agricultural Policy).

The EU must undertake to more forcefully promote the application of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy. Working in conjunction with the European industry federations, ETUC intends to develop the use of European Works Councils to ensure the effective application of core labour standards in the context of corporate social responsibility, and see to it that they become driving forces in the processes of negotiating voluntary agreements.

The European Union and its Member States must assert themselves in practice as determined, dynamic players for world peace and advocates of the globalisation of social justice, these being core elements of democracy. Action in this connection should include the

drafting of joint positions by the member countries of the IMF and World Bank.

at national level:

Countries remain the appropriate entities in which to negotiate progress on social issues. Moreover, countries are representatives of international institutions, producing standards. They have established a hierarchy of such standards covering the economy, finance and trade (IMF, World Bank, WTO, OECD), these being deemed important and binding, whereas standards covering social affairs (ILO), health (WHO), education, culture (UNESCO) and the environment are considered of secondary importance and voluntary. This situation is unacceptable and must be changed so that the United Nations' environmental and social standards take priority over financial and trade-related standards.

As the report by the ILO World Commission concludes, it is essential that public and parliamentary control be exercised over the positions adopted by countries in the various international institutions so that we can impose the operational and political coherence required to substantially reform the UN system and gradually imbue it with the authority to regulate and strike a balance between international standards. This authority could be exercised within a 'World Council of Social and Economic Security'.

"Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realised" (Article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN 1948).