

An Interview with Samir Amin

Conducted by Walter Baier in Vienna, September 2017

Walter Baier: The world always has been a dangerous place, but now it seems to have reached its most dangerous moment since WW II. Some say it has to do with Trump. Others believe that it is more structural. What is your interpretation?

Samir Amin: For me the reasons are structural. Of course Trump adds to it.

In the mid-1970s, the rates of growth of the capitalist developed centres, the United States, Europe, and Japan, fell to half of what they had been in the previous thirty years. And they have never recovered since. This means that the crisis continues and is even deepening from year to year. And the announcements that we are moving out of the crisis because the growth rate in Germany or elsewhere, is rising from 1.2 to 1.3 is just laughable.

This is a systemic crisis. It's an L-crisis. A U-crisis, which is the normal type of capitalist crisis means that the same rationality that has led to the recession, after minor structural changes, brings back growth. An L crisis means that the system cannot move up out of recession. It means that the system has to be changed. It's not only minor structural changes which are needed. It means that we have reached the point where capitalism is moving into decline. But decline is a very dangerous time. Because of course capitalism will not wait quietly for its death. It will be more and more savage, in order to maintain its position, to maintain the imperialist supremacy of the centres. And that is at the root of the problem. I don't know what people mean when they say 'dangers of war are greater than ever'? The war started in 1991, immediately after the breakdown of the Soviet Union, with the Iraqi war. There has also been war in Europe, with the breakdown of Yugoslavia. And now, in my opinion, we can see that the European system itself has started imploding. And you can see it not only in the negative results of austerity policies. Not only, of course, negative for the people but negative even for capitalism because they aren't bringing back growth, capitalist imperialist growth. They are not bringing it back at all. Simultaneously, you can see by a number of political responses, which are not responding to the real challenges such as Brexit. You can see it in Spain and Catalonia, and you will see more and more such. You can see it with the ultra reactionary chauvinistic governments of Eastern Europe. Therefore we cannot discuss how to prevent war, because war and situations still more chaotic, are inscribed into the logic of this decaying system. Therefore we have to shift the question to how we can start moving out of that system.

Some years ago I published a book analysing precisely this long-term systemic crisis; its title was provocative: *Ending the Crisis of Capitalism or Ending Capitalism in Crisis*,¹ I saw then that we cannot move out of this pattern of crisis without starting to move out of the system itself. It's a gigantic challenge. The solution will not be found in a few years. Nowhere. Neither in the North, nor in the South. It will take decades and decades. But the

¹ Fahamu Books, Oxford, 2011.

future starts today. We cannot wait until the system has led to a gigantic war and ecological catastrophe to react. We have to react now.

This requires of the left, of the radical left – or, I would say, the potential radical left, which is much broader than the actual small number of heirs of the Third International, the communist parties and their milieu – much broader than that – that they acquire audacity. Audacity. At present there are resistance movements everywhere in the world, and in some cases quite strong resistance movements. In Europe, in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America, and perhaps even in the US. Working peoples are fighting perfectly legitimate struggles, but they are on the defensive. That is, they are trying to defend whatever they have gained in the past, which has gradually been eroded by so-called neoliberalism. That is legitimate but it is not enough. It is a defensive strategy which allows the power system of monopoly capital to maintain the initiative. But we have to move from there to a positive strategy, that is, to an offensive strategy and reverse the relation of power. Compel the enemy – the power systems – to respond to you instead of you responding to them. Take their initiative away from them. That is what the challenge is. Now, I am not arrogant. I have no blueprint in my pocket for what a communist in Austria should do, for what communists in China or those in Egypt – even my country – should do. But we have to discuss it frankly, openly. We have to suggest strategies, discuss them, test them, and correct them. This is life and struggle. We cannot stop, and in that respect since I'm here with the European organisation Transform – in other words, in my opinion, among the best of the European organisations – I want to say that what we all need in the first place is audacity!

WB: What would it mean? What would audacity mean in the case of Europe?

SA: I think we may or may not share this view. That does not much matter because we have to discuss it. I think this European construction has from the start been built with iron and cement in order not to be changed. It cannot be reformed. Cosmetic lead to nothing but more of the same. It has been built that way, and the treaties of Maastricht and Lisbon, have kept it that way. Therefore I don't see any possibility of transforming it without first deconstructing the system, after which another one can be built. Please understand that I am not an "anti-European", in the sense that I don't "hate" the Europeans and I'm not a narrow nationalist of the South. No. Moreover I think the European people have a history which revealed positive elements, and there is capacity to re-animate them. In addition the fact that Europeans feel sharing some common culture can be a positive thing. But it is not so in the present circumstances, because now that commonality is used for Europe to be fellow travellers of the US, through NATO basically, but also through many other arrangements including financial ones, which reduces the role of Europe to zero. It's the US which makes the decisions and the European ruling class says 'yes, sir', and this cannot be changed.

Now, it can start to change if the popular movements move from resistance to an aggressive alternative. That could happen in some countries. It has started happening but only in some countries of Europe, Greece, Spain, Portugal... In Greece we have seen that the European system defeated that first attempt. And the European people, even those who are very sympathetic to the Greek movement have been unable to mobilise an opinion strong enough to change the attitude of Europe. That is a lesson. Audacious movements have to start, and I

think they will start in different countries. I don't know where. I discussed this with, for instance, people from "France Insoumise". I did not propose blueprints but I generally pointed to strategies starting with the renationalisation of big monopolies and specifically financial and banking institutions. But I'm saying that renationalisation is only the first step. It is the precondition for eventually being able to move to the socialisation of the management of the economic system. If it stops at the level of just nationalisation, well then you have state capitalism, which is not very different from private capitalism. That would deceive the people. But if conceived as a first step it opens the road.

Capitalism has reached a level of concentration of power, economic and therefore also political power, that is not comparable to 50 years ago. A handful, a few tens of thousands of enormously large companies, a smaller handful – less than twenty major banking institutions – decide alone on everything. François Morin, a financial top expert who knows this field, has said that less than twenty financial groups control 90% of the operations of the global integrated monetary and financial system. If you add to this some fifteen other banks you go from 90% to some 98%. It is a mere handful of banks. That is centralisation, concentration of power – not of property, which remains disseminated, but that's of less importance – the point is how property is controlled. This has also led to control of political life. We are now far from what was the bourgeois democracy of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. We have now a one party system. With the social democrats having become social liberals there is absolutely no difference between the conventional right and the conventional left, which means we are living in a one party system, as is the case in the US where Democrats and the Republicans, in my opinion, have always been one party. This was not the case in Europe and therefore capitalism in the past could be reformed. The social democratic welfare reforms after World War II were big reforms. In my view they were progressive reforms, even if they were associated with the maintenance of an imperialist attitude vis-à-vis the countries of the South. Now this is becoming impossible and you can see it in the one-party system which is losing legitimacy. In the last French election there was more than 50% abstention for the first time, which means people no longer believe in voting. But this also opens up a drift – and I'll come back to this – to fascism, to neo-fascism, which is on the rise everywhere, in the North and the South. Which is one of the reasons why we have to dismantle this system before reconstructing it. I find very strong opposition to this idea of dismantling it, particularly in Europe, and I am speaking with people who are members of Transform, who are – as I said – the best people to talk to in Europe. They are afraid that dismantling it will lead to worse. They think that Europe with all its imperfections and all its disastrous aspects is better than going back to a situation of European nationalisms fighting one another.

WB: This is a long debate between the two of us. I believe this is based in a misunderstanding. Of course there are many people in the left who see the situation as you describe it. Maybe I can help the discussion with the following comparison. Even if we agreed that it was impossible for the European treaties to be reformed what would follow from this? In 1917, Lenin recognised that the existing Russian state could not be reformed and concluded that a revolution had first to destroy the old state and create a new, a socialist one. That is one consequence which you can draw when recognising that something cannot be reformed. The

counter-example is Yeltsin who in 1990 concluded that the USSR could not be reformed; however, he decided to dismantle it, to break it apart and establish an order based on different nationalisms. One judgement, two opposing conclusions: socialism and nationalism.

The dilemma of Europe is not abstract. The left has to choose between the two directions, and accordingly the alliances it prefers to forge. You can of course say that we will line up with the nationalists because they will create a big mess, a chaos, and out of this chaos we can create something new. Or you can say that in order to revolutionise the system we need to create alliances with those forces within the system who are defending the idea of freedom, of human rights, and of a culture of solidarity. I regard this as the core of the strategic problem, and we must choose between these alternatives.

SA: I have much sympathy with what you say, but I think we should imagine alliances at different levels. What you suggest is still on the defensive – the best defence possible with the broadest alliance. I can understand it perfectly. But we also need some sort of alliances looking beyond.

That leads naturally to the Russian and the Chinese revolutions and to the lessons of a century of history.

I consider the Russian revolution as having started a revolutionary process, not achieved a revolution. A process is much more and longer than any event, whatever important this event may have been. The event made possible the beginning of the process but not more than that. Russian society at that time consisted 80% of peasants. And therefore it faced two enormous challenges. The first was how to integrate the majority of peasants into the process of – I'm not saying of building socialism – but moving ahead on the long socialist road. And that is an enormous challenge. The second was the hostility of the Western capitalist countries. The Cold War is not something that started after World War II. It started in 1917 and never stopped. First, the intervention of the imperialist powers in the Civil War of 1918 – 1922, followed by the Cold War in the 1920s and 30s against the Soviet Union, then the Second World War and then again the Cold War immediately after the victory over fascism. Those were the two challenges. The response of the system to those two challenges can be discussed today. But that's another set of debates. The Chinese Revolution went one step further. It took place in an even more peripheral country. Until to-day, it found a correct answer to the problem of how to integrate the majority of the peasants. It was also confronted with a continuous Cold War and has been able to defeat it by moving into globalisation, with all its ambiguities and dangers. We should now see the problem in that way, that is: What is the next, the immediate next step on the road? Which strategy do we need to adopt?

And I think – that is my personal opinion – we need to that effect a Fifth International. We not only need a revival of internationalism as a fundamental part of the ideology of the future, but we also must organize it – that is try to interconnect the struggles in different countries. Now, this international cannot be a reproduction of the Third. Because the Third International came after the victory of the October Revolution and a strong new state – the Soviet Union – and therefore survived – for better or worse – as a model for the others. We are not now in such position and therefore we must imagine another pattern for the new Internationale. If we look at the Second and Third Internationals – the Second up to WW I, not after – they shared the

idea of “one country – one party” – the correct party; all the others being “deviationists” or even ‘traitors’.

Moreover when we look at the Second International we discover that there was indeed one party in Germany – but this Party was half-Marxian and half-Lasalleian. There was one party in France, but it really associated three currents. There was one party in Britain, but it was a mix of trade-unionism and Fabianism. So they were different one from another, but they all had in common their pro-imperialist colonialist attitudes and – as was proven in 1914 – they worked with their bourgeoisies, against one another. The Third International recognized only “one country one Party” - the 21 conditions – all the others being traitors and revisionists.

Today we are in a different situation; we have potentially radical, pro-socialist, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, forces – different in each country. We have to bring them together. We have to understand that what we share in common is more important than the differences among us. We have to discuss the differences and discuss them freely, without arrogance by proclaiming ‘I am right and you are wrong’. Here are my arguments, here are yours, but what we have in common is more important and that should be the basis for re-constructing internationalism. I am saying that for the North and the South as well. Each has its specific conditions, and conditions are different from one country to another. The general view is similar but conditions different. At any rate, that is my vision on how to start the process.

WB: One question in this regard: Generally speaking I share this analysis, with some reservations. However, there is one argument about which I have a strong doubt. Is it really realistic to establish ‘system change’ as a precondition for addressing the huge and global problems we are facing today? In theory, yes! But in practice: Can we accept that in the era of the threat of a nuclear war we hold that peace only be achieved if the capitalist system was overthrown? What about climate change? Can we afford to say ‘either worldwide system change or ecological disaster’?

SA: I have no answer to that question, only intuitions or feelings. I am not able to argue with what appears to me to be convincing arguments.

I don’t think we are going towards a global nuclear war. Instead I think we have already moved into more and more “small wars”, which are disastrous for the territories where they occur. Syria is an example. See also the war-mongering of Trump vis-à-vis North Korea – I am afraid Kim appears much more rational than Trump. This is an intuition. I don’t think even that the establishment ruling the United States will let Trump do the worse. They would assassinate him as they’ve done through history.

Climate: There is climate change, and it’s extremely dangerous, but I don’t think that it can be stopped within capitalism and through the Paris Agreement, for instance. This is a zero agreement. Because to make it effective we need a gigantic transfer of finance from North to South, which is against the very logic of the system. So this will not happen, and therefore the Paris Agreement is just wishful thinking, nothing more. Even if public opinion doesn’t believe that and thinks it’s a good step forward. I don’t think so. And therefore I see the question of

starting to exit the system as urgent. It's the precondition. The precondition for everything. From stopping small wars – which are very destructive – to launching an alternative ecological-global policy and also for making possible a shift towards the socialisation of management.

WB: Does that mean that we accept a certain ambiguity of our strategy because implementing changes proposed by diverse, because for us the shared strategy means entering into system change, while the other forces see it as saving the existing system.

SA: Yes. There are these ambiguities and we cannot avoid them. We shall have broad alliances with people who have never thought that socialism should be the answer to the crisis of capitalism. They will still think that capitalism can be reformed. So what? If we can work together against this capitalism as it is to-day, it would be a first step.

But I think we have to think ahead about how to create a Fifth International. I don't have a blueprint for this. It is not about establishing a secretariat or organisational leadership bodies. First, the comrades have to be convinced of the idea, which is not always the case. Second the Europeans have abandoned anti-imperialist solidarity and internationalism in favour of accepting so-called aid and humanitarian interventions – including bombing people! That is not internationalism.

I think that national policies – we use this word because there is no other word – are still the result of struggles within the borders of countries. Whether these countries are indeed a nation-state or a rather a multinational state, they struggle within defined borders. Yes, this fact also creates problems, sometime important ones as we see in Spain. However, borders still exist. But these existing problems do not refute the idea that change has to start from the base and not from the top. And the base is the nation. Don't expect a UN conference with all the governments of this world deciding anything good and effective. That will never happen. Don't expect that even with respect to the European Union. It has to start from below. It is changing the balance of forces within countries, which then also starts changing the balance of forces at the international level. Therefore the task for internationalist solidarity, that of a Fifth International should be to minimise the conflictual eventual aspects of these changes, and make them complementary to one another. This is true internationalism.

WB: The world is transforming itself rapidly. China is becoming more and more the main protagonist of the 21st century. People who are becoming aware of this are starting to ask what this might mean for the world. What is your take on the current developments in China?

SA: We have to start from the Chinese Revolution. We had in China what I call a great revolution. There have been three great revolutions in modern history –the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, the Chinese Revolution – along with some in another countries like Vietnam and Cuba. But let's take the three major ones.

What I mean is that the project target of great revolutions looks far ahead of the agenda of what is immediately possible. The French Revolution said liberty and equality. The so-called American Revolution did not project this target. The word 'democracy' does not appear in US

constitution. And democracy was considered a danger. The system was invented to avoid this danger. The system did not change the relations of production. Slavery remained a decisive part of the system; George Washington was an owner of slaves! Instead the French Revolution tried to connect conflicting values of liberty and equality. In the US it was liberty and competition, that is, liberty under the condition of inequality. The Russian Revolution proclaimed ‘Proletarians of all countries unite’. As Lenin said, ‘the revolution started in the weak link but should expand quickly’ – that is, in a short historic time. He expected it would happen in Germany. History proved that he was wrong. It could have happened but it didn’t. Internationalism was not on the agenda of real history. The Chinese Revolution invented the slogan ‘Oppressed peoples unite’, which means internationalism at a global level including the peasant nations of the South. Which is a step ahead. Widening internationalism. This also was not on the agenda of what could be achieved immediately. Bandung in 1955, which was an echo of the Chinese Revolution, was very timid. It didn’t achieve much. It was watered-down by nationalistic forces and to a large extent remained in the frame of a bourgeois national project.

Precisely because the great revolutions were ahead of their time they have been followed by thermidors and restorations. Thermidor is not restoration; it means a step back in order to keep the long-term target but manage it in time, with concessions. When was thermidor in the Soviet Union? Maybe it was the year 1924 with the Nep, although Trotsky said it was 1927. The Chinese say it happened as of Khrushchev. There are good arguments for this, but other people think it occurred later with Brezhnev. However, restoration of capitalism really came with Yeltsin and Gorbachev. At that point the target of socialism was abandoned.

In China, we had a thermidor from the start – from 1950. When Mao Zedong was asked ‘Is China socialist?’ he said ‘No, China is a People’s Republic’ and building socialism is a long road – he used the Chinese expression ‘A thousand years’. So thermidor was there from the start. There were two attempts to go beyond that thermidor. The first one was the Great Leap Forward, the second the Cultural Revolution. Then we had a second thermidor with Deng Xiaoping. We still don’t have a restoration up to now. Not just because formally the Communist Party has the monopoly of political power, but because some basic aspects of what has been achieved by the Chinese revolutionary process, has been maintained. And this is very fundamental. I refer here specifically to the state ownership of land and its use by families in the frame of the revival of peasant agriculture, associated with the construction of a modern industrial system. These are the two legs on which China stands and moves. It defines a kind of state capitalism. Simultaneously the Chinese project does not reject the idea of its participating to globalization, which is dominated by capitalist/imperialist major powers. For sure globalization comes into conflict with the “two legs’ Chinese strategy”. They are not complementary; they are in conflict. China has entered into the globalisation of trade, and the globalisation of investments, but with state control, at least to a certain effective extent. In addition China is not operating within globalization just like those countries which accept the conditionality imposed through free trade, free investment, and financial globalisation. China has not moved into financial globalisation. It has maintained its independent financial system, which is operated by the state. Not only formally but in substance.

My qualification is that China is not socialist but it is also not capitalist. It contains conflicting tendencies. Moving toward socialism or capitalism? For sure most of the reforms that have been introduced particularly after Deng Xiaoping, have been rightist. Making room, and expanding room, for capitalist mode of production and the emergence of a bourgeois class. But, so far, the other dynamic -that identified by the “two legs strategy” -has been maintained, and this conflicts with the logics of capitalism. That is how I situate China today.

WB: And what is the role of China in a global perspective?

SA: China should and could play a positive role, initiating a multi-centred global system, which Chinese leadership calls ‘anti-hegemonic’. For the sake of diplomacy, they prefer not to call it ‘anti-imperialist’, which in fact they have in mind. To move in that direction, there are some good signs and some bad signs. The good signs are at the political level. The Silk Road is not a trade agreement; it is a political way to make a rapprochement – a serious one – with Russia, with the Central-Asian republics and Iran – and therefore holds the door open for Middle-Eastern and Arab countries. It is positive. But it can remain wishful thinking on paper if it is not followed by complementary policies at the economic level. It is wrong to reduce the target of that strategy to ensure for China the access to oil. China can help Russia to reconstruct its industrial capacity, can help Iran and eventually other Middle East countries to construct it. The other part of the Chinese global geo-strategy - I refer here to the transport route through South East Asia – by rail from China to Singapore and to Rangoon – bears different objectives: merely facilitate commercial penetration, or again helping the countries involved to industrialize and move partly away from imperialist control?

WB: Would you say that the influence of China on Africa is helpful for the respective countries?

SA: It could be. Until now it is mainly wishful thinking and an ambition to have commercial penetration. It is less bad than trading with the West, because trading with the West is accompanied by conditionality, and trading with China has no conditionality, but it is not the solution to the problems of African societies.

I’ll give you a concrete example. In Zambia, after Kaunda was replaced by terribly ugly, pro-Western corrupt leaders, a new government was elected, not a revolutionary one. Three months after the election they invited me and asked me directly: We will soon receive a Chinese delegation. What do you think we can get out of this relation with China? I frankly said : the Chinese know what they want. They want copper. They do not mind if they invest in a private or in a state company, provided they also get an agreement that the copper gets to China and about a system of pricing. They know what they want. But you, what do you want? You have to know what you want. Do you want infrastructure? They can do it. Do you want industry? They can help. Do you want a revival of the peasantry? They have experience. You have to know what you want and you will probably get it. If you don’t know what you want, the Chinese will get what they want with no counterpart to your benefit. You can get from them what you cannot get from the West. The West is imperialist. You have to know that. And my interlocutor told me: ‘my administration doesn’t know it.’

WB: In a conversation with you it would be unthinkable not to discuss with you the contradictions in the Arab world – all the more so that they have an impact on European societies. Would you say that one of the main problems in the Arab world lies in the defeat of the political and secular left?

SA: The US was surprised by the explosion in Tunisia and Egypt. They did not expect it. The CIA thought that Ben Ali and Mubarak were strong, like their police forces. The French also believed this with respect to Tunisia. But these gigantic, chaotic movements in Tunisia and Egypt lacked a strategy, and that allowed them to be contained in the old structures and decapitated. But then, just immediately after these two explosions, the Western governments understood that similar movements could also happen elsewhere in the Arab countries for the same reasons. They decided to “pre-empt” the “revolutions” by organizing themselves “coloured” movements controlled by them. They selected to that effect supporting Islamic reactionary movements financed and controlled by their allies, the Gulf countries. The Western strategy was successful in Libya; but failed in Syria.

In Libya there was no “popular” mass protest against the regime. Those who started the movement were small Islamic armed groups who immediately attacked the army and the police, and the next day, called NATO, the French and the British to rescue them! And indeed Nato responded and moved in. Finally the Western powers have reached their goal, which was destroying Libya. The propaganda said it was about destroying the dictatorship of Ghaddafi in order to establish democracy! Today Libya is much worse off than it was then. But that was the target. It was not a surprise. The target was to destroy the country.

The same with Syria. In Syria, there was a growing civilian democratic popular movement against the regime, because the regime had moved towards accepting neoliberalism in order to remain in power. But the West, the US in particular, did not wait. The next day, they had the Islamic movements moving in and, with the same scenario, attacking the army and the police and calling the West in to help. But the regime was able to defend itself. The dissolution of the army expected by the US did not happen. The so-called Syrian Free Army is a bluff. These were only a small number of people who were immediately absorbed by the Islamists. And now the Western powers, including the US, have to recognise that they have lost the war, which does not mean that the Syrian people have won it. But it means that the target to destroy the country, through civil war and intervention, failed. The imperialist powers have not been able to destroy the unity or the potential unity of the country. That is what they wanted to do, with of course the approval of Israel - to repeat what happened in Yugoslavia. And they failed.

In Egypt, the US – backed by the Europeans who simply follow the US – chose the Moslem Brotherhood as the alternative. Initially, on 25 January 2011, the Moslem Brotherhood, lined up with Mubarak against the movement. Only one week later, they changed sides and joined the revolution. That was an order from Washington. On the other side the radical left was surprised by the popular movement and unprepared, the youth was divided into many organisations, resulting in a lot of illusions and the lack of analytical and strategic capacity. Finally the movement resulted in what the US wanted: the elections. In those elections,

Sabahi, supported by the left, got as many votes as Morsi. That is around 5 million votes. It was the US embassy, not the Egyptian electoral commission, who declared Morsi the winner!

The mistake of the Moslem Brotherhood was to think that they had achieved a final and total victory and that they could exercise their power alone. So they entered into conflict with everybody including the army. If they had been smarter and had found an agreement with the army they would still be in office and sharing power with the army. That they wanted all the power for themselves and used it in such an ugly and stupid way, just a few weeks after their victory, turned everybody against them.

This led to the 30th of June 2013: 30 million people demonstrating in the streets of all the country against the Moslem Brotherhood ! The figure is correct but nobody in the West says it. At that point in time, the US Embassy asked the leadership of the army to support the Moslem Brotherhood despite the people. The army did not follow and decided instead to arrest Morsi and disband to the so-called parliament – a non elected body made up exclusively of people chosen by the MB! Yes , as a result of these initiatives the leadership of the army acquired gigantic popularity. And it is understandable. But the new regime is simply continuing the same neoliberal policy. “Tout changer afin que rien ne change”!

WB: Middle East? Is it possible to improve the situation in Syria and Iraq without finding a solution to the Kurdish question?

SA :

The Kurds must be recognised and accepted as a nation. They have a language, a territory, and I don't see why they should not be considered as such. But in alliance with other peoples of the region and against imperialism. Not in alliance with imperialism against the others. Nationalism is progressive in the South as long as it is anti-imperialist. But nationalism that just seeks the support of imperialism against neighbours is not progressive at all. The leaderships of the Kurds have unfortunately chosen the second option. In alliance with the US and Israel against the Arabs. This is a wrong choice whatever had been the unacceptable inability of the Arab leadership that to manage a pluri-national state. Iraq is not the only state which is pluri-national; after all, communist Yugoslavia was able to manage pluri-nationalism very successfully for a long time. The Soviet Union also. But the Arab leadership is of a narrow-minded bourgeois kind, and therefore unable to manage the question. Yet that is not a reason to go and play as a card in the hands of the US. In addition the choice of the Kurds led them into conflict with Turkey, because Turkish regime is also unable to manage a pluri-national state, is unwilling to accept that Turkey is one state but two nations : the Turks and the Kurds.

Conclusion : we are in a situation where we shall have more continuous armed conflicts in the Middle East. Which is also a tool for the US to maintain its presence in the region.