

TOWARDS A REVIVAL OF THE SOLIDARITY BETWEEN THE PEOPLES OF THE SOUTH?

INTERVIEW OF SAMIR AMIN*

by Rémy HERRERA **

Paris, April 25, 2005

Question by Rémy Herrera: Fifty years ago, in 1955, the main state leaders of Asian and African countries, having regained their political independence, met for the first time in Bandung. What was their common project?

Answer by Samir Amin: The Asian and African leaders brought together in Bandung were far from being identical. Political and ideological currents they represented, their own visions of the future society to be built or rebuild and of its relations with the western countries, as many topics of difference. The national liberation movements were divided between tendencies ranging from radical (“socialist”) to moderate currents; the opposition being based on a complex whole of causes, due for the ones to social classes on which the movement was based (peasants, popular urban world, middle or favored classes...), and for the others to traditions of their political and organizational formation (communist parties, trade unions, churches...). Nevertheless, a common project brought them closer and gave a direction to their meeting. The battle for the achievement of the historical task of independence was not completed. In their minimum joint program, there was the completion of the political decolonization of Asia and Africa. In addition, they all considered that regained political independence was only the means, the end being the conquest of the economic, social and cultural liberation. But two visions divided them: there was the majority opinion of those who thought “development” possible in the “interdependence” within the world economy, and that of the communist leaders who thought that leaving the capitalist camp would result in rebuilding —with, if not behind, the USSR— a world socialist camp. The capitalist Third World leaders who did not plan “to leave the system” (“delinking” or “disconnection”) did not share either between them the same strategic and tactical vision of development. But they thought that the building of an independent developed society implied a degree of conflict with the dominant western countries. The radical wing estimated to have to put a term to the control of the national economy by the capital of foreign monopolies. Concerned to preserve regained independence, they refused to enter the planetary military game and to be used as a basis for surrounding of the socialist countries that the U.S. hegemony tried to impose. However, they also thought that to refuse insertion in the Atlanticist military camp did not imply that it was necessary to be placed under the protection of the adversary of this one, *i.e.* the USSR. From which it comes “neutralism”, or “non alignment”, denomination of the group of countries and of the organization which was going to be created from the spirit of Bandung.

* Samir Amin is the director of the Third World Forum (Dakar) and of the World Forum for Alternatives.

** Rémy Herrera is a researcher at the CNRS and teaches at the University of Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne.

R.H.: What was the reaction of the western powers in front of Bandung?

S.A.: The western powers were not going to accept the spirit of Bandung and non alignment of their own free will, neither on the political level, nor on that of the economic battle. True hatred that they kept for the Third World radical leaders of the 60's (Nasser, Soekarno, Nkrumah, Modibo Keita...), almost all overthrown at the same time, during the years 1965-1968 –time in which happened the Israeli aggression of June 1967 against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan–, shows that the political vision of non alignment was not accepted by the Atlantic alliance.

R.H.: How did this non alignment evolve in the course of time?

S.A.: From summit to summit, during the 60's and 70's, non alignment, institutionalized in “Not-Aligned Movement”, gathering almost the totality of the Asian and African countries, was to slip gradually from the positions of a front of political solidarity focused on the support to the struggles for liberation and the refusal of the military pacts, to those of a “trade union for economic claims with respect to the North”. Within this framework, the Not-Aligned were to ally Latin American countries that, with the exception of Cuba, had never been able to plan to oppose to the United States' hegemonism. The Group of 77 –the whole of the Third World countries–, translated this broad new alliance of the South. The battle for a “New International Economic Order”, committed in 1975 after October 1973 war and the oil price adjustment, crowned this evolution, to sound the knell of it. What one may call the “ideology of development”, presently in a crisis which could be fatal to it, knew its “great time” precisely between 1955 and 1975.

R.H.: How to define this “ideology of development”, political economics of non alignment, resulting from Bandung?

S.A.: The political economics of non alignment, although often implicit and vague, can be defined by the following elements: 1) the will to develop the productive forces, to diversify output, in particular to industrialize; 2) the will to provide the national state with the direction and control of the process; 3) the belief that the “technical” models constitute “neutral” data, that can only be reproduced, would it be by controlling them; 4) the belief that the process does not imply originally popular initiative, but only popular support to the state's actions; 5) the belief that the process is not basically contradictory with the participation in trades within the world capitalist system, even if it involves temporary conflicts with the later. The circumstances of capitalist expansion during the years 1955-1970 rendered, up to a certain point, this project successfully. The objective of development policies applied in Asia, Africa and Latin America was essentially identical, in spite of differences in the ideological line. Everywhere, it acted as a nationalist project aimed at accelerating modernization and the enrichment of the society by its industrialization. One understands without difficulty this common denominator if one simply recalls that, in 1945, almost all the countries in Asia (except Japan), Africa (including South Africa), and Latin America (although with some nuances) were still deprived of any industry worthy of this name –save mining extraction here and there–, largely rural by the composition of their population, governed by archaic or colonial regimes. Beyond their wide diversity, all the national liberation movements assigned the same objectives of political independence, modernization of the state, and industrialization of the economy.

R.H.: Did all the Third World countries really try to implement this strategy?

S.A.: It would not be correct to say that all of them did not try to do it, as soon as they were able to do it. Admittedly, variants were practically as numerous as the countries; so, it remains legitimate to try to classify them in models which gather them. But one might be victim of criteria chosen in function at least of the idea –if not necessarily of ideological preferences–, that one has or rather had on the unfolding of these experiences, of the possibilities, as well as of the external and internal constraints. On the contrary, by stressing the common denominator which joins them together, I invite to distance from these classifications and to read again what did history be by the light of what it led to.

***R.H.:* What did industrialization imply exactly?**

S.A.: Industrializing implied above all to build a domestic market and to protect it from the devastations of the competition which would prevent its formation. The formulas could vary according to circumstances and to theoretical or ideological theses (priority to light industries of consumption, or to “industrializing industries”), but the final objective was identical. Technology could only be imported, but it was not necessary to accept the property of installations to be built by foreign capital; that depended on the negotiation capability one had. Financial capital was to be either invited to invest itself in the country or borrowed. Here again, private foreign property – public financing (thanks to national saving or to external aid) as a formula could be adjusted to the estimation one made of the means and costs. Imports requirements these plans of growth acceleration implied industrialization could only be met, initially, by traditional exports of agricultural or mining products. It was possible in a phase of general growth, as that of post-war, when the demand for almost all products was itself increasing continuously (energy, raw materials...). The terms of trade fluctuated, but did not cancel systematically, by their deterioration, the effect of growth of exported volumes. Urbanization, transports and communications infrastructures, education, social services, etc., certainly aimed to serve industrialization, but were also carried on with their own ends, to build a national state and to modernize the behaviors, as one reads it in the once trans-ethnic nationalist discourse. Modernization, although centered on industrialization, didn’t amount to the latter.

***R.H.:* Was state’s intervention considered to be absolutely decisive for development?**

S.A.: At that time, opposition one makes today so often between “state’s intervention” – always negative because essentially in conflict with what one claims to be the market’s spontaneousness– and “private interest” –associated to market’s spontaneous tendencies– was not in use. This opposition was not even noticed. On the contrary, the common sense shared by all the powers at the time saw in the state’s intervention an essential element of the market construction and modernization. The radical left, of socialist aspiration, for sure, associated the expansion of this “statism” (or state socialism) with the gradual expulsion of private property. However, the nationalist right, which did not assign this objective, was not less interventionist and partisan of state control: the building of private interests that it proposed required fairly, according to it, a vigorous state control. Crack-brained notions of which today dominant discourses nourish themselves would not have had any echo at that time.

***R.H.:* Nevertheless, development was not conceived as much always in opposition to capitalism, was it?**

S.A.: That’s true. Today, temptation is great of reading this history like that of a stage of world capitalism expansion, that would have achieved, more or less well, some functions attached to national primitive accumulation, consequently creating the conditions of the

following stage, in which one would enter now, characterized by the opening to the world market. I will not propose to yield to this temptation. World capitalism dominant forces did not create spontaneously the “development model”. As a product of the Third World national liberation movement at that time, this development imposed itself. Thus, the reading I propose emphasizes the contradiction between spontaneous, immediate tendencies of the capitalist system, which are always guided only by short-run financial calculation peculiar to this mode of social management, and longer-term visions, which animate rising political forces, in conflict with the first ones. Admittedly, this conflict is not always radical; capitalism fits this conflict together, it does not cause its movement. The conflict between the world capitalism dominant forces and those which animated the project of Bandung was more or less radical according to whether the implemented state control was considered as having to supplant capitalism or to support it. The movement’s radical wing adopted the first thesis, thus entered in conflict with the immediate interests of capitalism, in particular by nationalizations and the expulsion of foreign property. On the contrary, the moderated wing sought to conciliate the conflicting interests, consequently offering larger opportunities to adjustment. At the international level, this distinction married easily the terms of the East-West conflict between sovietism and western capitalism.

***R.H.:* Which role did the national bourgeoisies play in these movements?**

S.A.: All the national liberation movements shared this modernistic thus capitalist and bourgeois vision. That does not imply in any manner that they were inspired, even less directed, by a bourgeoisie, in the full sense of this term. This bourgeoisie did not exist, or hardly, at the time of independence. And it exists yet only in an embryonic stage, on the most favorable assumption. On the contrary, modernization ideology existed indeed and constituted the dominant force giving sense to the peoples’ revolt against colonization. This ideology was carrying a project, which I qualify of the name –curious, at first glance– of “capitalism without capitalists”. “Capitalism”, by its conception of modernization, called to reproduce the relations of production and social relations essential and suitable to capitalism: wage relation, firm management, urbanization, hierarchical education, national citizenship... Undoubtedly, other values of advanced capitalism, like that of political democracy, cruelly failed –what one justified by the requirements of the very initial stage of development. “Without capitalists”, insofar as, in the absence of a bourgeoisie of entrepreneurs, the state was called to replace it; but also, sometimes, insofar as the emergence of the bourgeoisie was held suspect, because of the primacy the later would give to its immediate interests on those of the longest term in construction. Suspicion became even synonymous with exclusion in the radical wing, which then conceived naturally that its project was to “build socialism” and met the discourse of sovietism. Having used the objective of “catching-up” on the western world as the essence of its concerns, this project had achieved, by its own dynamics, to build a “capitalism without capitalists”.

***R.H.:* Which assessment can one draw, in practice, from this development strategy?**

S.A.: The results are so strongly contrasted that one is tempted to give up the common expression of “Third World” to define the whole of the countries which were subjected to development policies during these post-war decades. Today, one opposes, not without reason, a newly industrialized, partially competitive (countries known as “emergent”) Third World to a marginalized Quarter World (the “left out” countries).

***R.H.:* What assessment can be drawn if one chooses the criterion of “national construction”?**

S.A.: The results, taken as a whole, remain debatable. The reason is that, while capitalism development supported national integration in the former times, on the contrary, globalization operating in the peripheries of the system disintegrates societies. However, the national movement's ideology was unaware of this contradiction, having been remained locked up in the bourgeois concept of "catching up the historical delay" and conceiving this catching-up by taking part in the international division of labour –and not by rejecting it through disconnection, or *delinking*. Undoubtedly, this effect of disintegration was more or less dramatic according to the specific characteristics of pre-colonial or pre-capitalist societies. In Africa, whose artificial colonial boundaries drawing did not respect the former history of its peoples, disintegration produced by capitalist peripherization made it possible "ethnism" to survive, in spite of efforts of the ruling class coming from national liberation to transcend ethnism manifestations. When the crisis burst in, brutally destroying the surplus growth which had allowed to finance the new state's transethnic policies, the ruling class itself split up into fractions which, having lost any legitimacy based on the achievements of "development", try to create new bases, often associated with an ethnicist withdrawal.

R.H.: And according to criterion/ia of "socialism", what have been the results?

S.A.: In this case, results are even more contrasted. Of course, by "socialism" it is necessary to understand the meaning understood by the radical populist ideology at that time. It was a progressive view, emphasizing a greater social mobility, reduction of income inequalities, a kind of full employment in urban zone, to some extent a sort of "poor" Welfare State. Accordingly, the achievements of a country like Tanzania offer a striking contrast in comparison with those of Zaire, the Ivory Coast or Kenya, for example, countries where the most glaring inequalities have been reinforced continuously for 40 years, in periods either of growth or stagnation.

R.H.: And if one selects a capitalist criterion of competitiveness in the world market?

S.A.: From this point of view, results are extremely contrasted and they brutally oppose a group including the main countries in Asia and Latin America, that become competitive industrial exporters, to all the African countries, which remain restricted to the export of primary products. The first ones constitute the new Third World –the periphery of tomorrow in my analysis–; the second ones, which one calls now the "Quarter Monde" –marked out to be marginalized, left out in the capitalist globalization. Thus, the range of advances which were accomplished within the framework of Bandung's nationalisms and their equivalent in Latin America is extremely contrasted. It is impossible to give an account of this main fact without taking into consideration, country by country, how all the internal and external factors operated concretely, either to accelerate the achievements or to slow down them.

R.H.: Does it mean that a solidarity between the South's peoples does not exist yet?

S.A.: In the current moment, the solidarity between the countries of the South, as it had expressed itself strongly from Bandung (1955) to Cancun (1981) on the political level –with non alignment– as well as on the economic one –by the joint positions adopted by the 77 in the U.N. institutions, especially the UNCTAD–, doesn't exist apparently no more. Integration of the countries of the South, implemented by the trio of international organizations in charge of it, WTO, the World Bank and the IMF, is undoubtedly mainly responsible for the weakening of the 77, of the Tricontinental –which does not exist yet– and of the Not-Aligned Movement – which however is giving signs of a possible revival. The stressing of development inequalities within the Group of the 77 is also at the origin of this evolution.

R.H.: Wouldn't the South have no more the same interests to defend collectively?

S.A.: It is perhaps true for who only looks upon the short term and the immediate conditions which control “advantages” that the ones or the others can draw or believe they can draw from neoliberal globalization. It is not true in the long term; really existing capitalism has no much to offer, neither to the popular classes of the South, nor even to those countries it does not allow the “catching-up”, *i.e.* their affirmation as equal partners, in the same position to those of the centers (the triad: United States, Europe, Japan) in the shaping of the world system. And it is once again from the political view that the awareness of a required solidarity between the countries of the South is arising. The arrogance of the United States and the implementation of its project of the “military control of planet” are at the origin of the position of strength of the recent Not-Aligned summit, in Kuala Lumpur, in February 2003.

R.H.: For many observers, the Kuala Lumpur summit was a surprise, but can it be interpreted like a true rebirth of a front of the South?

S.A.: It has perhaps surprised some sluggish chancelleries, which had been convinced that, in new globalization, the South did not matter any more. Subjected to devastating structural readjustment plans, held by the throat by the debt servicing draining, governed by *compradore* bourgeoisies, the countries of the South don't appear to be no more able to question the international capitalist order, as they had tried to do so from 1955 to 1981. Surprise: Not Aligned have condemned the imperialist strategy of the United States, its disproportionate and criminal objective of military control of planet, its deployment through endless production by Washington of planned and decided unilaterally wars. The South is becoming aware that neoliberal globalized management has nothing to offer to it and, for this reason, that this management has to resort to military violence to impose itself, making the play of U.S. project. The Movement is becoming that of non alignment on neoliberal globalization and on the hegemony of the United States.

R.H.: What would be the guiding lines of a great alliance on the basis of which the solidarity of the South's peoples and states could be rebuilt?

S.A.: On the bases of both the positions taken by certain states of the South and the ideas which are gaining ground, the guiding lines of the possible revival of a “front of the South” are becoming apparent. On the political level, this requires the condemnation of the new principle of the US policy –the “preventive war”– and the evacuation of all their foreign military bases from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Even if the Not Aligned accepted to keep silent on the question of U.S. protectorates in the Gulf, they took in these circumstances positions close to those defended by France and Germany in the Security Council, thus contributing to accentuate the diplomatic and moral isolation of the aggressor. The area Washington chose for its military uninterrupted interventions since 1990 concerns the Arab Middle East (Iraq and Palestine –for the later, *via* the unconditional support to Israel)–, the Balkans (Yugoslavia, new implantations in Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria), Central Asia and the Caucasus (Afghanistan, ex-Soviet regions). The objectives sought by the United States involve several elements: 1) takeover on the most important oil areas of the world and, consequently, exerting pressures intended to bring Europe and Japan down to the status of vassal allies; 2) the establishment of permanent military bases in the middle of the Ancient World (Central Asia, at equal distance from Paris, Johannesburg, Moscow, Beijing and Singapore) and the preparation of other “preventive wars” to come, aiming above all the great countries intended to become essential partners with whom “it is necessary to negotiate”: first of all China, but also Russia, and India. The achievement of this objective implies the installation, in the region in question, of puppet governments

imposed by the U.S. army. From Beijing to Delhi and Moscow, *made in USA* wars are more and more understood ultimately as a threat almost more directed against China, Russia, and India, than against their immediate victims, such as Iraq.

R.H.: What would be the guiding lines of an alternative at the economic level?

S.A.: In the economic field, the guidelines of an alternative that the South could defend collectively, because of the converging interests of all the southern countries, are taking shape. The idea that the international transfers of capital must be controlled is back. The opening of capital accounts, imposed by the IMF as a new dogma, has a sole goal: to facilitate the massive transfer of capital towards the United States in order to cover its growing deficit –produced by both its economy’s deficiencies and the deployment of its military strategy. There is no interest for the South to facilitate this capital hemorrhage, and eventual devastations caused by speculative raids. Consequently, the submission to the “flexible exchange rate” hazards, that follow logically from the capital accounts, must be called in question. Instead, the institution of systems of regional organizations ensuring a relative stability of the exchange rates would deserve to be the subject of debates and researches within the countries of the South. By the way, during the Asian financial crisis (1997-98), Malaysia took the initiative in restoring the exchange control, and it gained the battle. The IMF itself was constrained to recognize it.

Question: Is the idea to regulate foreign investments also back?

S.A.: No doubt the countries of the South do not consider, as it has been the case in the past for some of them, to close the door to any foreign investment. On the contrary, foreign direct investments are requested and attracted. But the methods of reception again give rise to critical reflections, to which certain Third-World governmental circles are not insensitive. In close connection with this regulation, the conception of intellectual and industrial property rights that OMC wants to impose is now disputed. Far from promoting a “transparent” competition on open markets, this conception is quite understood on the contrary as being aimed to reinforce transnational monopolies.

R.H.: More particularly, what about the agricultural matter, so important for the South?

S.A.: On this point, among the countries of the South, many realize again that they cannot do without a national policy of agricultural development, which takes into account the need to protect the peasantries from the devastating consequences of their accelerated disintegration under the effect of the “competition” that WTO wants to promote in agriculture and to preserve national food sovereignty. The opening of markets for agricultural products, which allows the United States, Europe and some rare countries of the South (those of South cone of America) to export their surpluses towards the Third World, consequently threatens the objectives of national food sovereignty, without counterpart; productions of the Third World peasantries coming up against insuperable difficulties on the markets of the North. Now the neoliberal strategy, which disintegrates these peasantries and accentuates migration from the rural areas to the urban slums, causes the reappearance of peasants’ struggles in the South, which worry governments. In the arena of WTO especially, the agricultural question is often discussed under the exclusive angle of subsidies granted by the United States and Europe not only to their agricultural domestic productions, but also to their agricultural exports. Fixing on the only question of the world trade of agricultural products evacuates from the start the major concerns which I have just called upon, and involves ambiguities, since it invites the South to defend positions even more liberal than those adopted by the North. Nothing prevents from

disconnecting the subsidies granted to the farmers by their governments and those intended to support agricultural export dumping of the North.

R.H.: Another fundamental issue: the debt. Isn't it economically unbearable?

S.A.: The debt is no more felt as economically unbearable, but moreover its legitimacy begins to be called into question. The objective to repudiate unilaterally odious and illegitimate debts, as well as to introduce an international law of the debt which still does not exist today, is a claim that is coming out. A generalized audit of the debt would indeed make it possible to reveal a significant proportion of illegitimate, odious, and even sometimes filthy debts. Now only all debt interests already paid have reached such levels that the legal requirement of their refunding would cancel the debt in progress, and would reveal the whole operation as a truly primitive form of plunder. The idea that foreign debts should be subjected to an usual, civilized legislation, like domestic debts, must be the subject of a campaign falling under the prospect to impulse the international law while reinforcing its legitimacy. It is because the law is silent on this matter that the question is settled only at the cost of a wild power struggle. Power struggle then allow to consider as legitimate international debts which, if they were internal –creditor and debtor belonging to the same country– would bring both of them in justice for “criminal conspiracy”.

R.H.: In this context, is a new Bandung possible today?

S.A.: The present world system is so different in its structures from that of post-World War II that a “remake” of Bandung cannot be considered. The Not-Aligned were located in a militarily bipolar world, prohibiting the brutal intervention of the imperialist countries into their business. In addition, this bipolarity fused partners of the capitalist centers (United States, Western Europe, Japan) in a united front. As a result, political and economic conflict for liberation and development opposed Asia and Africa to a united imperialist camp. The present world is militarily unipolar. At the same time, cracks seem to appear between the United States and some European countries concerning the governance of a globalized system which from now on is fully aligned on the principles of liberalism. In the field of the economic management of neoliberal globalization, at least in theory, the central triad’s states constitute an seemingly solid block. The inescapable question is therefore whether current evolutions represent a lasting qualitative change –the center combining no more in the plural, but having turned out definitively “collective”– or are only related to conjuncture.

R.H.: How could a new large anti-imperialist front be rebuilt politically by the countries of the South?

S.A.: The rebuilding of a solid front of the South implies involvement of peoples. In many countries of the South, to say that the current political regimes are not democratic is putting it mildly, and the regimes are sometimes frankly odious. These authoritarian structures of power support the *compradore* fractions, whose interests are linked to the expansion of global imperialist capitalism. The alternative –the building of a front of the peoples of the South– requires democratization. This necessary democratization will be a difficult and long process. But its way surely does not pass by the installation of puppet governments offering their domestic resources to the plunder of U.S. transnational firms, i.e. even more fragile, less credible and less legitimate regimes than those they would replace under the invader’s protection. By the way, the objective of the United States is not to promote democracy in the world, in spite of its hypocritical speeches on the matter.

R.H.: But how could the South liberate itself from the neoliberal illusions?

S.A.: Undoubtedly, in the immediate future, governments of the South still seem to fight for a “true” neoliberalism, whose partners of the North, like those of the South, would agree “to play the game”. The countries of the South will be able only to note that this hope is completely unrealistic, illusory. It will then be necessary for them to return to the imperative idea that any development is necessarily self-reliant. First of all, developing consists in defining national objectives that allow both modernization of the productive systems and creation of the internal conditions in the service of social progress; then it is to submit the terms of the relations of the nation with the developed capitalist centers to the requirements of this logic. This definition of “disconnection” –my own definition, that doesn’t mean “autarky”– locates the concept at the antipodes of the opposite principle of “structural adjustment” –the liberalism’s one– to the requirements of globalization which then is inevitably submitted to the exclusive imperatives of the expansion of dominant transnational capital, deepening further inequalities on a worldwide scale.

Question: In the South, is the option of self-reliant development still a requirement?

S.A.: Yes, it is. Self-reliant development has constituted historically the specific character of the capital accumulation process in the capitalist centers, and determined the methods of the economic development which followed; namely that it is governed mainly by the dynamics of the internal social relations, reinforced by external relations serving it. In the peripheries, on the contrary, capital accumulation process is derived above all from the development of centers, grafted as “dependant” on the latter. Thus, self-reliant development supposes the control of the five essential conditions of accumulation: 1) local control of the reproduction of the labor force, which supposes, at a first stage, that the state policy ensures an agricultural development able to release food surpluses in sufficient quantities and at prices compatible with the requirements of the profitability of capital, and, at a second stage, that mass production of wage goods can follow simultaneously the expansion of capital and that of the wage bill; 2) local control of the surplus centralization, which supposes not only the existence of national financial institutions, but also their relative autonomy compared to the transnational capital flows, thus guaranteeing national capability to direct their investment; 3) local control of the market, largely reserved for national production, even in the absence of high tariffs or other protections, and the complementary capability to be competitive on the world market, at least selectively; 4) local control of natural resources, which supposes, beyond their formal property, the state’s capability to exploit them or to keep them in reserve; and 5) local control of technologies, in the sense that, either invented locally or imported, they can be reproduced quickly without being indefinitely constrained to import their essential inputs.

R.H.: Does the debate about self-reliant development thus exceed that about opposing import substitution and orientated towards export strategies?

S.A.: Yes, it does. The concept of self-reliant development, to which one could oppose that of dependant development, produced by a unilateral adjustment to the dominant tendencies which commend the deployment of capitalism on a worldwide scale, is not reducible to the discrepancy strategies of import substitution / orientated towards export strategies. These last two concepts concern “vulgar” economics, which neglects the fact that economic strategies are always implemented by hegemonic social blocks, through which are expressed the dominant interests of the society in question. Every strategy implemented in the real world combines import substitution and export orientation, in variable proportions according to the situations. The dynamics of self-reliant development is founded on a major articulation which connects in

a narrow interdependence the growth of the production of production goods and that of the production of mass consumption goods. Self-reliant economies are not closed on themselves; on the contrary, they are aggressively open, in this sense that they shape, by their exporting potential, the world system as a whole. To this articulation corresponds a social relation whose principal terms are the two fundamental blocks of the system: the national bourgeoisie and the working class. On the contrary, the dynamics of peripheral capitalism –the antinomy of central capitalism which is self-reliant by definition– is based on another articulation, which connects export capability, on the one hand, and consumption (imported or produced locally by import substitution) of a minority, on the other hand.

R.H.: Is not a critical reading of the historical attempts of self-reliant, popular and/or socialist developments also required?

S.A.: Since three-quarters of century, the question of self-reliant development and of disconnection is practically posed by all the great popular revolutions against really existing capitalism: Russian and Chinese socialist revolutions, Third World peoples' liberation movements. Historical answers that were given to this question, in connection with those given to the other aspects of the development of the productive forces, of national liberation, of social progress, and of the society's democratization, must be indeed the subject of a permanent critical reading, by learning the lessons from their successes and their failures. At the same time, the terms in which these questions arise are themselves subjected to a permanent evolution, because capitalism changes, it adapts itself permanently to the challenges the peoples' revolts represent for it. Thus, self-reliant development and delinking or disconnection could never be reduced to formulas valid for every situation and moment. These concepts must be reconsidered according to the evolution of capitalist globalization. The wave of national liberation which swept the Third World after World War II resulted in the formation of new state powers, mainly based on national bourgeoisies controlling these movements, to some extent and at various degrees. And it have produced development projects, in form of strategies of modernization, aiming at ensuring "independence in interdependence". These strategies did not consider a true disconnection, but only an active adaptation to the world system –a choice expressing clearly their national bourgeois nature. Historically, this project proved to be an utopia. After a successful spread, to all appearances, from 1955 to 1975, it got out of breath, and finally led to the recompradorization of peripheral economies, under pressures of policies of openness, privatization and structural adjustment.

R.H.: And concerning the experiments of socialism, or those known as "really existing socialism"?

S.A.: The experiments of "really existing socialism", in the USSR and China, on the contrary, had actually delinked, disconnected, and built in this spirit a system of criteria for economic choice independent from that imposed by world capitalism's logic. This choice, as others associated with it, translates the authentically socialist origin of the purposes of the political and social forces which gave the impulse to these revolutions. However, confronted to the choice between "to catch up" at all costs by a development of productive forces ordering to adopt organizational systems in the likeness of those set up by capitalist centers and "to build another society" (socialism), the Soviet and Chinese societies gradually gave priority to the first option, to such an extent that the second one was almost empty, void of real contents.

R.H.: So, what would be today, for the South, the conditions of a development worthy of this name?

S.A.: A development worthy of this name requires a deep and diffuse transformation, allowing to the agricultural revolution to cut through its path, as well as to a dense network of small industries and of secondary cities to fulfill irreplaceable functions in the support of the society's general progression. The concrete choices of stages related to this general prospect depend on the outcome of social struggles, and require the success of national, popular, democratic alliances, capable of getting out of the ruts of compradorization. In the concrete implementation of these stages policies, concepts of social efficiency will have to be developed, progressively, substituting to the narrow capitalist concept of "competitiveness". At the same time, one couldn't lose sight of the long-term perspective of planetary universalism. That requires a certain external openness (strictly selected technological imports), although the latter must be controlled as far as possible to be put in the service of general progress, and not to stand in the way of it. Consequently, the global evolution imposes the construction of large regional sets, especially in the peripheries, as well as, within this framework, the preferential installation of means necessary to prepare modernization on a worldwide scale and to transform of its nature, gradually liberated from the capitalist criteria. This construction requires in its turn that one transcends the limits of strictly economic arrangements in order to begin building large political communities. Formulating self-reliant development and delinking at this level implies the negotiated articulation of the relations between these large regions, concerning both trade and the determination of its terms, the control and use of resources, finance, as well as political and military security. Therefore, that would require reshaping the international political system, liberated from hegemonies, in order to turn into the route of pluricentrism.

***R.H.:* In such a pluricentric perspective, is a new internationalism associating the Asian, African, Latin American, and European peoples foreseeable, and possible?**

S.A.: Yes, it is, absolutely. The conditions for a convergence exist; conditions that would allow a bringing together, at least, of all the Ancient World peoples. Such a convergence would crystallize, at the level of international diplomacy, by giving consistency to the axis Paris–Berlin–Moscow–Beijing, reinforced by the development of friendly relations between this axis and a rebuilt Afro-Asian front. The solidarity with the Latin American peoples' struggles is also fundamental. It goes without saying that progresses in this direction, that of a convergence and bringing together of the Asian, African, Latin American, and European peoples reduce to nothing the criminal ambition of the United States of America. The latter would be then constrained to accept coexistence with nations decided to defend their own interests. In the present moment, this objective must be regarded as a priority in an absolute sense. The deployment of the U.S. project over-determines the stake of all struggle: no social, democratic progress will be possible and durable as long as this hegemonic project of the United States will not be routed. To reach this goal, Europe must —and it can— free itself from the "liberal virus". But this initiative can only come from peoples. Of course, dominant segments of capital, whose interests are defended by European governments in exclusive priority, are partisans of globalized neoliberalism, and agree to pay the price of their subalternization by the United States. Peoples of Europe have quite different visions of the European project, that they would like social, as well as of their relations with the rest of the world, that they intend to see managed by law and justice. If this humanist political culture of "old Europe" wins —and it is possible—, then an authentic convergence between Europe and the Third World will constitute the basis on which could be built a pluricentric, democratic, and peaceful world.