

THE SOVEREIGN POPULAR PROJECT; THE ALTERNATIVE TO LIBERAL GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract

Global capitalism as practiced today is a complex matrix of states (sovereign nations in principle), peoples, nations (be they “homogenous” or not), and social classes formed by the capital/labor conflict inherent to the capitalist mode of production. As such, conflicts between states and class struggles are interwoven in a close relationship of interdependence. The interdependence of social struggles in various countries of the world, therefore, depends on how the various dominant blocs exploit the possibilities at their disposal in the international arena. Success here depends upon the value of their respective political and social projects. This article argues that the cooperation of independent nation states founded on the Sovereign Popular Project (embracing industrial self-sufficiency, food sovereignty, and popular democracy) is a fundamental precondition for a progressive move beyond the current international system of imperialist hegemony.

The affirmation or rejection of national sovereignty gives rise to severe misunderstandings as long as the class content of the strategy in the frame of which it operates is not identified. The dominant social bloc in capitalist societies always conceives national sovereignty as an instrument to promote its class interests, that is, the capitalist exploitation of home labor and simultaneously the consolidation of its position in the global system. Today, in the context of the globalized liberal system dominated by the financialized monopolies of the Triad (U.S., Europe, and Japan) national sovereignty is the instrument which allows ruling classes to maintain their competitive positions within the system. The government of the USA offers the clearest example of that constant practice: sovereignty is conceived as the exclusive preserve of US monopoly capital and to that effect the US national law is given priority above international law. That was also the practice of the European imperialist powers in the past and it continues to be the practice of the major European states within the European Union (Amin 2013, Chapter 4)

Keeping that in mind, one understands why the national discourse in praise of the virtues of sovereignty hiding the class interests in the service of which it operates has always been unacceptable for all those who defend the laboring classes.

Yet we should not reduce the defense of sovereignty to that modality of bourgeois nationalism. The defense of sovereignty is no less decisive for the protection of the popular alternative on the long road to socialism. It even constitutes an inescapable condition for advances in that direction. The reason is that the global order (as well as its sub-global European order) will never be transformed from above through collective decisions of the ruling classes. Progress in that respect is always the result of the unequal advance of struggles from one country to another. The transformation of the global system (or the subsystem of the European Union) is the product of those changes operating within the frame of the various states which, in their turn, modifies the international balances of forces between them. The nation state remains the only frame for the deployment of the decisive struggles which ultimately transform the world.

The peoples of the peripheries of that system, polarizing by nature, have a long experience of that positive progressive nationalism which is anti-imperialist, rejects the global order imposed by the centers, and, therefore, is potentially anti-capitalist. I say only potentially because this nationalism may also inspire the illusion of a possible building of a national capitalist order able to catch up with the national capitalisms ruling the centers. Nationalism in the peripheries is progressive only at that condition, as long as it remains anti-imperialist, that is, today conflicting with the global liberal order. Any other nationalism (which in this case is only a façade) which accepts the global liberal order is the instrument of local ruling classes aiming at participating in the exploitation of their peoples and eventually of other weaker partners, operating, therefore, as sub-imperialist powers.

The confusion between these two antonymic concepts of national sovereignty and, therefore, the rejection of any nationalism annihilates the possibility of moving out of the global liberal order. Unfortunately, the left—in Europe and elsewhere—does often make such a confusion.

Global Really Existing Capitalism Is Imperialist in Nature

The diversity of the social and political conditions in the states which make up the global system stems from the types of developments which define the global expansion of capitalism, subjected to the demands of accumulation in the center of the system. Moreover, the history of the making of each country, whether dominant or dominated, has always been characterized by features which are unique to it. As such, hegemonic blocs of classes and interests that have enabled capitalism to assert its domination and those which victims of the system have established or tried to establish in order to face the challenges, have always been different from one country to another and from one period to another. These evolutions have shaped specific political cultures, setting up in their own ways value systems and “traditions” of specific forms of political expression, organization, and struggle. These diversities are very objective just like the cultures through which they are portrayed. Finally, the development of productive forces in itself, through scientific and technological revolutions that

define their content, has on its part dictated changes in the organization of work and various forms of its subjection to the demands of capitalist exploitation. All these different realities prohibit the reduction of political actors to the bourgeoisie/proletariat conflict.

Capitalism is based on a market integrated in its three dimensions (commodities market, financial markets, and the labor market). But really existing capitalism as a global system is based solely on the global expansion of the market in its first two dimensions, as the establishment of a real global labor market is hindered by the persistence of political state barriers to the detriment of economic globalization which is as such always limited. For this reason, really existing capitalism is necessarily polarizing at the global level and the uneven development it creates is the most violent and growing contradiction of modern times that cannot be overcome within the framework of the logic of capitalism.

Development and “underdevelopment” are the two faces of the same reality: global capitalism. There is no scientific basis to the dominant discourse that links capitalism to the affluence of the countries of the center and qualifies others (developing countries) as “retarded.” Consequently, national liberation struggles of the people in the peripheries have always, objectively, been in conflict with the logic of capitalism. They are “anti-systemic” (anti-capitalist), though at varying degrees of the conscience of the actors and the radicalism of their projects. This situation calls for a long-lasting transition to global socialism. If capitalism has set the foundation of an economy and a global society, it is, however, unable to carry on the logic of globalization to the end. Socialism, conceived as a qualitatively higher level of humanity, can for this reason be considered universal. However, its construction will have to go through a very long historical transition by using a strategy of the contradictory negation of capitalist globalization.

In its manifestation as a political and social strategy, this general principle signifies that the long transition calls for the indispensable establishment of a popular national society associated to an auto-centered national economy. Such a creation is contradictory in every aspect: it associates capitalist criteria, institutions, and operational modes to social aspirations and reforms which are in conflict with the logic of global capitalism; it also associates an external exposure (controlled as much as possible) to the protection of the demands of progressive social transformation which conflict with dominant capitalist interests.

Due to their historical nature, governing classes generally formulate their visions and aspirations within the perspective of really existing capitalism and, willingly or unwillingly, subject their strategies to constraints of global capitalist expansion. This is the reason why they cannot really envisage a delinking. On the contrary, popular classes must give in to this whenever they try to use political power to transform their conditions and liberate themselves from the inhuman consequences which the polarizing expansion of capitalism subjects them to. The appraisal of the strategic choices of government policies and movements of the dominated masses in the global South should attend to the following proposal: *An inward-looking development option is indispensable.*

Historically, an inward-looking development (“self-reliance”) has been a specific feature of the capital accumulation process in core capitalist countries and has conditioned the modalities of the resulting economic development, which is mainly controlled by the dynamics of internal social relations and strengthened by the external relations at their service. On the other hand, in the peripheries, the capital accumulation process is mainly derived from the evolution of countries of the center in a way that consolidates “dependence.”

The dynamics of the inward-looking development model is based on a major articulation: one which puts side by side the close interdependence of the growth of the production of goods for production and that of the production of goods for mass consumption. This articulation falls in line with a social relationship whose main terms are set up by the two main blocs of the system: the national bourgeoisie and the labor force. Inward-looking economies are not water tight entities in themselves; on the contrary, they are aggressively open in that they shape the global system in its totality through their potential political and economic intervention on the international scene. However, the dynamic of peripheral capitalism—the antinomy of central inward-looking capitalism by definition—is based on another main articulation that puts side by side the capacity to export on the one hand and consumption of a minority—imported or locally produced—on the other hand. This model defines the comprador as opposed to national nature of bourgeoisies in the peripheries.

This contrast results in a divergent trend toward the integration of nations in the centers where centripetal forces dominate the inward-looking accumulation on the one hand, and on the other hand, toward the permanent disintegration threat of those of the peripheries due to the effects of centrifugal forces of dependent accumulation. Imperialist policies encourage such trends, defending them with arrogance and cynicism, with the excuse of the “right to interference,” “humanitarian” interventions, and abusive rights to “self-determination.”

The Awakening of the South

The deployment of imperialism was manifested from 1492 (not the date of the “discovery” of America, but the date of its conquest and the destruction of its people), and in the four centuries that followed, by the conquest of the world by Europeans. The people of Asia and Africa, American Indians who survived the genocide, and later on, the new nations of Latin America and the Caribbean, had to try and adjust to the demands of this subjection.

Such deployment of global capitalism/imperialism was for the affected people, the greatest tragedy in human history, thus demonstrating the destructive nature of the accumulation of wealth. For this reason, capitalism can only be a moment in history, with its continuous development leading to barbarism. It is an unsustainable system in the long term (and not the “end of history!”), not only for ecological reasons—though reasonable—but above all, for the devastating effects of mercantilism on individuals and whole peoples rendered “useless.” The catastrophe manifested itself through the destruction of complete

populations and the reduction of the proportion of non-European populations from 82% of the world population in 1500, to 63% in 1900.

Simultaneously, the misfortune of some was the delight of others. Accumulation through dispossession of total populations did not only lead to the wealth of the dominant classes of the Old Order, but above all, to the administrative and military reinforcement of European countries. The industrial revolution of the end of the eighteenth century could not have been without this first period of imperialist deployment. On its part, the military supremacy of Modern Europe made the nineteenth century the peak of capitalism. The North-South gap widened and the apparent wealth ratio moved from 1 to 1.3 in 1800 (a ratio not always favorable to Europeans) (see Bairoch, 1993) to 1 to 40 today. The pauperization law formulated by Marx was more evident in the system than could be imagined by the father of scientific socialism!

This page in history is now closed. The people of the peripheries no longer accept the fate reserved for them by capitalism. This crucial change in attitude is irreversible and signifies that capitalism has reached its period of decline, a decline initiated by the 1917 Revolution, followed by the socialist revolutions of China, Vietnam, and Cuba and by the radicalization of national liberation movements in the rest of Asia and Africa. The concomitance of these two forms of transformation is not by chance. This does not exclude the persistence of various illusions: that of reforms capable of giving a human face to capitalism (something it has never been able to do for the majority of people), that of a possible “catching up” within the system, which is the dream of the ruling classes of the “emerging” nations, exhilarated by the success of the moment; and that of backward-looking traditionalism (pseudo-religious or pseudo-ethnic) into which a vast majority of the “excluded” people of today have fallen. Such illusions seem to persist due to the fact that we are passing through a conjunctural low point. The wave of revolutions of the twentieth century is over, that of the modern radicalism of the twenty-first century is still to come. And as Gramsci wrote, there are monsters in the twilight of transitions. The awakening of the people of the peripheries was manifested from the twentieth century not only by their demographic growth, but also by their expressed intentions to reconstruct their country and society, wrecked by the imperialism of the four preceding centuries.

Bandung and the First Globalization of Struggles (1955–1980)

In 1955 in Bandung, the governments and people of Asia and Africa expressed their intention to reconstruct the global system on the basis of the acknowledgment of the rights of countries previously under domination. Such “rights to development” formed the basis of the globalization of the period, which was implemented within a negotiated multipolar framework and consequently imposed on imperialism, itself forced to adjust to these new realities.

The industrialization process initiated during the Bandung period was not the result of the logic of imperialist deployment, but was imposed by the

victories of people of the South. Such progress undoubtedly nurtured a “catching up” illusion that seemed to be underway, whereas imperialism, forced to adjust to the realities of the development of the peripheries, was recomposing itself around new forms of domination. The old contrast of imperialist countries/dominated nations synonymous with the contrast of industrialized/unindustrialized countries, gradually gave way to a new form of contrast based on the centralization of advantages associated with the “five new monopolies of imperialist countries” (the control of modern technologies, natural resources, the global financial system, means of communication, and weapons of mass destruction).

The Bandung period was also that of African Renaissance. Pan-Africanism should be situated within this perspective. It is not by chance that African countries are involved in renovation projects with inspiration from the values of socialism, for the liberation of the people of the peripheries is actually anti-capitalist. There is no need to denigrate these numerous attempts on the continent, as is the case today: in thirty years, the horrible regime of Mobutu led to the production of an education capital in Congo forty times higher than what the Belgians achieved in eighty years. Whether we like it or not, African countries are at the origin of the creation of veritable nations. And the options (trans-ethnic) of the ruling classes favored such crystallization. Ethnic deviations came later, caused by the erosion of the Bandung models, leading to the loss of legitimacy of powers and the recourse to ethnicity by some of those in power to reconstitute power for their particular interests.

New Era, New Challenges?

The dichotomy centers/peripheries is no longer synonymous with industrialized/unindustrialized countries. The polarization centers/peripheries which marks the imperialist character of the expansion of global capitalism is still underway, and is even gaining more ground through the help of the “five new monopolies” imperialist countries benefit from (mentioned above). In such conditions, the continuation of accelerated development projects in emerging peripheries, which has been an undisputable success (in China especially, but also in other countries of the South), does not abolish imperialist domination. This deployment instead sets up a new centers/peripheries contrast rather than eroding it.

Imperialism cannot be conjugated in the plural as in the previous phases of its deployment; it is henceforth a “collective imperialism” of the “triad” (U.S., Europe, and Japan). In this way, the common interests of the oligopolies which have their roots within the triad triumph over (“mercantile”) conflicts of interests that may oppose them. This collective character of imperialism can be seen through the control of the global system by common instruments of the triad; at the economic level the WTO (Colonial Ministry of the triad), the IMF (Colonial Agency of collective monetary management), the World Bank (Ministry of propaganda), OECD, and the European Union (set up to prevent Europe from

coming out of liberalism); at the political level, the G7, the armed forces of the U.S. and their subordinate instrument represented by NATO (the marginalization/domestication of the UN completes the picture). The deployment of the project of U.S. hegemony through the military control of the planet (involving among other things, the abrogation of International Law and the right that Washington has assigned itself to carry out “preventive wars” where it chooses), centers around collective imperialism and gives the North American leader the means of overcompensating for its economic deficiencies.

Objectives and Means of a Strategy to Develop Convergence in Diversity

The people of the three continents (Asia, Africa, and Latin America) are today faced with the expansion project of the imperialist system described as a globalized neoliberal system which is nothing but the development of “apartheid at the global level.” Will the new imperialist order in place be challenged in future? Who can challenge it? And what will be the outcome of such a challenge?

Does the image of the dominant reality not give room for the idea of an immediate challenge to this order? The ruling classes of the defeated countries of the South have largely accepted their positions as subordinate compradors; the people, helpless and fighting for daily survival, usually tend to accept their fate or even—worse—nurture new illusions which these same ruling classes shower on them (Political Islam is the most dramatic example). However, from another angle, the rise of resistant movements and the fight against capitalism and imperialism, the successes recorded—up to their electoral terms—by the new leftist governments in Latin America and Nepal (whatever the limits of the victories), the progressive radicalization of many of these movements, and the critical positions taken by governments of the South within the WTO, are proof that “another world,” a better one for that matter, is possible. The offensive strategy necessary for the reconstitution of the peoples of the South’s front requires the radicalization of social resistance in the face of capitalism’s imperialist offensive.

The governing classes in some countries of the South have visibly opted for a strategy that is neither one of passive submission to the dominant forces in the global system nor one of declared opposition: a strategy of active interventions where they base their hopes in order to accelerate the development of their country. Through the solidarity of national construction produced by its revolution and Maoism, the choice to preserve the control of its currency and capital flow, the refusal to challenge the collective ownership of land (the main revolutionary gain of the peasants), China was better equipped than others to positively exploit this option and to draw unquestionably brilliant results. Can this experience be followed elsewhere? And what are some of the possible shortcomings? An analysis of the contradictions presented by this option has pushed me to conclude that the project for a national capitalism capable of asserting itself like that of the dominant powers of the global system is very much an illusion. The

objective conditions inherited from history do not enable the implementation of a historic social compromise of capital/labor/rural population which will guarantee the stability of the system which, for this reason, can be directed to the right (and be confronted to growing social movements of popular classes) or evolve toward the left by constructing “market socialism” as a stage in the long transition to socialism. The apparently similar options formulated by the governing classes of other “emerging” countries are still very fragile. Neither Brazil nor India—because they did not experience radical revolutions as in China—are able to efficiently resist the combined pressures of imperialism and reactionary local classes.

Meanwhile, the nations of the South—at least some of them—now have the means that can enable them to reduce to nought the “monopoly” of technology of imperialist countries. Such nations are capable of developing themselves, without falling into the dependence trap. They have a technological mastery potential that can enable them to be able to use their own resources for themselves. They can also compel the North, by recuperating the usage of their natural resources, to adjust to a less harmful consumption method. They can equally come out of financial globalization. They have already started challenging the monopoly of the weapons of mass destruction that the U.S. is planning to conserve. They can develop South-South exchange—of goods, services, capital, and technology—which could not be imagined in 1955 when all these countries were deprived of industries and the mastery of technology. More than ever before, delinking from imperialism is on the agenda of possibility.

Can these nations achieve this? And who will do it? The governing bourgeoisie classes in place? I strongly doubt it. The popular classes who have come to power? This could probably begin with transitional regimes of national/popular natures.

The agrarian question is at the center of problems to be resolved and this constitutes the main area of the national issue. The capitalist option of the private appropriation of land by a minority and the exclusion of others is entirely a borrowed option from Europe. But this was only feasible thanks to the possibility of the massive emigration of the rural population. Capitalism is unable to resolve the peasant problem of the peripheries that contain half the population of humanity in the same way. In order for these countries to succeed in their objectives, they need to have four Americas for their emigration! The alternative is the peasant system based on the access to land for all peasants. In fact the possibility of progress on this basis is potentially higher to those of the capitalist system. If we could divide the growth in productivity of modern farmers, who are few, among the millions of excluded people who have today become “useless,” it would be more modest than we imagine. The peasant system is developing toward a “socialist orientation,” to quote the Chinese and Vietnamese formula; it is the sole guarantor of the solidarity of national construction. I will hereby refer to my article on “the Land Tenure Reforms in Asia and Africa.” (Amin 2013, Chapter 5).

National States: What Is the Way Forward Today?

According to most of what is said today, national states can no longer be the place for the definition of major choices that dictate the evolution of the economic, social, and even political life of communities due to “globalization” which is a product of the expansion of the modern economy. There can, therefore, be no alternative, as Mrs. Thatcher used to say. In reality, there are always other alternatives which by their nature can define the action margin of the National state within the global system.

There is no “law of capitalist expansion” which serves as a supernatural force. Inherent trends in the logic of capitalism are challenged by resistance forces that do not accept its effects. Real history is a product of this conflict between the logic of capitalism’s expansion and the social struggles of its victims against the effects of this expansion.

The effective response to the challenges facing communities can only be found if one understands that history is not determined by the infallible deployment of the laws of “pure” economy. It is produced by social reactions to trends expressed by these laws, which on their part define all social relationships within the framework in which these laws operate. “Anti-systemic forces”—if one could as such qualify this organized, coherent and effective refusal of the unilateral and total subjection to the demands of these so-called laws (in fact simply the law of private profit which characterizes capitalism as a system)—shape real history as much as the “pure” logic of capitalist accumulation. They dictate possibilities and forms of expansion which are then deployed in the areas which they organize. The future is fashioned through transformations in the relationship of social and political forces; produced on their part by struggles whose outcomes are not known in advance. This, however, deserves some reflection, so as to contribute to the crystallization of coherent and possible projects, while at the same time, helping social movements to overcome the “dummy solutions” where in the absence of this one, there is a risk of getting bogged down.

There are of course various interests and visions of the social and political forces under consideration expressed through different spoke-persons. These can be, as presently, the unilateral spokes-persons for the interests of the dominant transnationalization of capitalism (in countries within the imperialist triad) or its subordinate “comprador” allies (in countries within the periphery). In this situation, the role of most countries has been reduced to the maintenance of internal order, while the superpower (the U.S.) solely exerts the responsibilities of a type of a “pseudo-world state.” The U.S. thus alone disposes of a greater margin of autonomy while the others have nothing.

Apparently, the development of social struggles can bring to power hegemonic blocs different from those governing the globalized neoliberal order in place, based on compromises between social interests known to be diverse and divergent. In such a situation, the state has more possibilities. It is necessary to note that such evolutions can happen, for better or for worse.

I will add here that there are also “national interests” which legitimately recognize the establishment of a multipolar world order. These “national interests” are usually voiced by ruling governments to justify their own specific options. Political experts of the “geopolitical” set up at times such interests as “invariants” inherited from geography and history. This does not cancel the fact that they exist and play a role in determining the geometry of alliances and international conflicts, increasing and limiting at the same time the marginal activity of states.

The ancient world systems have always been multipolar, even if such multipolarity has never truly or generally been equal till date. For this reason, hegemony has always been a desired ambition of states rather than a reality. These hegemonies, even when they did exist, were always relative and temporal. Partners of the multipolar world of the nineteenth century (extended till 1945) were exclusively “the major powers” during the period. Within the contemporary world of the triad, there are probably those who still cherish fond memories of this period and a return to this system of “balance of powers.” This is not the multipolarity desired by the vast majority of the planet (85%!).

The multipolar world brought about by the Russian and Chinese revolutions, and later dictated partially by the liberation movements in Asia and Africa, was of a different nature. I am not hereby analyzing the period after the Second World War in the conventional terms of the “bipolarity” and of the “Cold War” which does not give the progress of the countries of the South during the period the respect it deserves. I am rather analyzing this multipolarity within the terms of the conflict of basic civilization which, beyond distorting ideological expressions, deals with the conflict between capitalism and the possibility of its being eroded by socialism. The ambition of the people of the peripheries whether they staged a socialist revolution or not—to abolish the effects of polarization produced by capitalist expansion falls within an anti-capitalist perspective.

Multipolarity is thus synonymous with the real autonomy margin of states. This margin will be used in a given manner as defined by the social content of the state in question. The Bandung period (1955–1980) in this way enabled countries of Asia and Africa to forge new ways which I have described as auto-centered development and delinking, coherent with the national-populist project of powers resulting from national liberation. There is certainly a link between the “internal” conditions defined by the national social liberation alliance at the root of the specific project of the country concerned, and the favorable external conditions (the East-West conflict was neutralizing the aggressiveness of imperialism). I speak here of autonomy which is by definition relative independence, whose shortcomings are jointly determined by the nature of the national project and by the authorized action margin within the global system. This is because it remains very present and oppressive (globalization is not a strange thing!). For this reason, there is a tendency in schools of International Political Economy and of Global-Economy to challenge the importance of this action margin, and reduce it to nought. This indicates that within the globalization system (of all times) the “total” determines the “parts.” I prefer an

analysis in terms of complementarity/conflictuality which resituates all the powers in relation to the autonomy of national and international social and political struggles.

The aftermath of the war (1945–1980) is now history. The collective imperialist project within the triad is currently being deployed (U.S., Europe, and Japan) with the hegemony of the U.S., which abolishes the autonomy of the countries of the South and greatly reduces those of countries associated with Washington within the imperialist triad.

The current moment is characterized by the deployment of a North American hegemony project at the international level. This project is the only one that occupies the center stage today. There is no longer a counter project to limit the areas subjected to the control of the U.S. as was the case during the bipolar period (1945–1990); beyond its original ambiguities, the European project itself is fading out; countries of the South (the group of 77, the Non-Aligned) which had the ambition during the Bandung period (1955–1980) to mount a common front against western imperialism have renounced it; China itself, currently acting alone, is only interested in protecting its national project (itself ambiguous) and does not make itself an active partner of the transformation process of the world.

The collective imperialism of the triad is the result of a real evolution of the production system of capitalist countries which has not produced the emergence of a “transnationalized” capitalism (as the work of Hardt and Negri tends to claim), but the solidarity of the national oligopolies of countries of the system expressed in their desire to “jointly control” the world for their own self interests and profit. But if “the economy” (understood as the unilateral expression of the demands of the dominant segments of capitalism) brings together countries within the triad, politics divides their nations. The deployment of social struggles can thus challenge the role the state plays at the exclusive service of huge capital in Europe in particular. Within this hypothesis, one would expect once more to see the emergence of a polycentrism granting Europe a considerable margin of autonomy. But the deployment of “the European project” does not fall within this framework, needed to bring Washington back to reason. This project is nothing but “a European wing of the American project.” The “setting up” project is one of a Europe that is implanted in its double neoliberal and Atlanticist options. The potential advanced by the conflict of political cultures, effectively requesting the end to Atlanticism, remains undermined by the options of a vast majority of the left wing (in electoral terms the European socialist parties), rallied behind social-liberalism. These terms are in themselves contradictory given that liberalism is in itself non-social or even anti-social if not reactionary.

China and Russia are the two major strategic opponents of the Washington project. The ruling governments in these three countries are becoming more and more conscious of this. But they give the impression that they can operate without directly hurting the administration of the U.S. or even “tapping into the friendship of the U.S.” in conflicts opposing them to one state or the other. The “common front against terrorism”—which they all tend to adhere to—

undermines things. The double game of Washington is clearly visible here: the U.S. on the one hand, supports the Tchetchens, Ouigurs, and Tibetans just as they support Islamist movements in Algeria, Egypt, Syria, and elsewhere! And, on the other hand, Washington waves the flag of Islamist terrorism in order to rally Moscow, Beijing, and Delhi behind it.

Can countries of the South play an active role in the desired defeat of the military projects and ambitions of the U.S.? The people attacked are presently the only active opponents capable of curbing the ambitions of Washington. Even then—and partially by the fact that they are active and feel it—the methods used in their fight remain of questionable efficiency and appeal to means which will delay the crystallization of the solidarity of people of the North in their genuine fight. On the other hand, the analysis I have made of the “generalized compradorization” of dominant classes and authorities in all the regions of the South leaves us with the conclusion that there are no great things to be achieved from ruling governments or those likely to be in place in the nearest future, even if they are of course “fundamentalists” (Islamists, Hindus, or ethnic groups). These governments are certainly shaken at the same time by the unending arrogance of Washington and worried by the hostility (not to say hatred) of their peoples toward the U.S.. Is there anything they can really do other than to accept their fate?

For the time being, the South in general no longer has its own project as was the case during the Bandung era (1955–1980). No doubt, the ruling classes of countries qualified as “emerging” (China, India, Korea, South East Asia, Brazil, and some others) have objectives they have set for themselves and which their countries are working to achieve. The objectives can be summarized as the maximization of growth within the globalization system. These countries have—or believe themselves to have—a negotiation power that will enable them to benefit more from this “selfish” strategy than from a vague “common front” established with countries weaker than them. But the advantages they could get from this situation are specific to particular domains they are interested in and do not oppose the general structure of the system. They are thus not an alternative and do not make of this vague project (an illusion) of the construction of “national capitalism,” a consistency that defines a real community project. The most vulnerable countries of the South (the “Fourth World”), do not even have their own similar projects, and the eventual product of “substitution” (religious or ethnic fundamentalism) does not merit to be qualified as such. Moreover, it is the North that solely takes the initiative to set up “for them” (one ought to say “against them”) their own projects, like the European Union—ACP association (and “economic partnership agreements” called upon to replace the Cotonou Agreements with African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries), the “European-Mediterranean dialogue,” or the American-Israeli projects in the Middle East and even the “Greater Middle East.”

The challenges facing the establishment of a reliable multipolar world are more serious than could be imagined by many “anti-globalization” movements. They are considerably many. For the time being, there is great need to rout Washington’s military project. This is an indispensable condition to open up

the much-needed freedom margins without which any social and democratic progress and any progress toward a multipolar construction will remain very vulnerable. Given its inordinate nature, the U.S.' project will no doubt collapse, but certainly at a terrible human price. The resistance of its victims—people of the South—will go a long way and will be strengthened as Americans will continue to be bogged down in the numerous wars they will be compelled to be involved in. Such resistance will end up defeating the enemy and perhaps awaken opinions in the U.S., as was the case with the Vietnam War. It would, however, be better to stop the catastrophe sooner; a situation international diplomacy can do, especially if Europe takes its responsibility as a major player seriously.

In a much longer term, “another globalization” will mean challenging the options of liberal capitalism and the management of issues of the planet through the collective imperialism of the triad within the framework of extreme Atlantism or of its “readjusted” version. A reliable multi polar world will only become a reality when the following four conditions have been fulfilled:

Europe should truly embrace the social path of “another Europe” (and thus be committed to the long transition to global socialism) and should start dissociating from its imperialist past and present. This is obviously more than simply coming out of Atlantism and extreme neoliberalism. Indeed there is a variety of bourgeois nationalist, fascist, and social imperialist reactions to neoliberalism that are more in line with the underlying class forces in European societies than socialist internationalism.

In China, “market socialism” should triumph over strong trends of the illusory construction of “national capitalism” which will be impossible to stabilize as it excludes the majority of workers and the rural population.

Countries of the South (people and states) should be able to build a “common front,” which will enable the movement of popular social classes toward not only imposing “concessions” in their favor, but also to transforming the nature of the ruling governments, replacing dominant comprador blocs with “national, popular, and democratic” ones.

At the level of the reorganization of the systems of national and international rights, there should be progress both in respect for national sovereignty (by moving from the sovereignty of nations to that of the people) and individual, collective, political and social rights.

Toward a Revival of the Bandung Spirit and the Reconstruction of a Front of Non-Aligned Countries on Globalization

The first wave of revival among the states and nations of Asia and Africa, which shaped major changes in the history of humankind, organized itself in the Bandung spirit in the framework of countries which were not aligned on colonialism and neocolonialism, the pattern of globalization at that time. This first assessment of Bandung does not exclude a critical analysis of the variety of visions of the countries involved with respect to their relations of subordination to western imperialism. Now, the same nations, together with those of Latin

America and the Caribbean, are challenged by neoliberal globalization, which is no less imbalanced by nature. Therefore, they must unite to face the challenge successfully, as they did in the past. They will, in that perspective, feed a new wave of revival and progress on the three continents.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) united only the nations of Asia and Africa. The states of Latin America, with the exception of Cuba, abstained from joining the organization. Reasons for that failure have been recorded: (1) Latin American countries were formally independent since the beginning of the nineteenth century and did not share the struggles of Asian and African nations to reconquer their sovereignty; (2) US domination of the continent through the Monroe Doctrine was not challenged by any of the state powers in office (except Cuba—the Organization of American States included the “master” [the US] and was qualified for that reason by Cuba as “the Ministry of colonies of the US”); (3) the ruling classes of European origin looked at Europe and the US as models to be copied. For those reasons, the attempt to build a “tricontinental” consensus did not succeed; the Bandung movement was joined only by movements of struggle (often armed struggle) and was rejected by all state powers on the continent at that time.

Things have changed: (1) the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have recently established their own organization (CELAC, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), excluding the US and Canada, and have, therefore, formally rejected the Monroe Doctrine; (2) new popular movements have created a consciousness of the plurinational character of their societies (people having Native American, European, and African ancestors); (3) these movements have also initiated strategies of liberation from the yoke of neoliberalism, with some success, that may surpass in some respects what has been achieved elsewhere in the South. Therefore, the revival of NAM must now include them and so become a tricontinental front. The axis around which the states and nations of the three continents should organize their solidarity in struggle can be formulated as building a common front against unbalanced, neoliberal, imperialist globalization.

We have seen that the states that met in the context of Bandung held different views with respect to the ways and means of defeating imperialist domination and advancing the construction of their societies; yet they were able to overcome those differences in order to successfully face the common challenge. The same is true today. The ruling powers on the three continents as well as popular movements of struggle differ to a wide extent when it comes to the preferred ways and means to face the renewed (but essentially the same) challenges.

In some countries, “sovereign” projects have been developed, which associate active state policies aimed at systematically constructing a consistent, national, integrated, modern industrial system of production, supported by an aggressive export capacity. Views with respect to the degree, format, and eventual regulation of opening to foreign capital and financial flows of all kinds (foreign direct investments, portfolio investments, and speculative financial investments) differ from country to country and from time to time. Policies

pursued with respect to access to land and other natural resources also reflect a wide spectrum of different choices and priorities.

We find similar differences in the programmes and actions of popular movements of struggle against the official systems of power. Their priorities cover a wide spectrum: democratic rights, social rights, ecological care, gender, economic policies, access to land, and more. In a few cases, attempts have been made to bring these different demands together into a common strategic plan of action. In most cases, little has been achieved in that perspective.

Such a wide variety of situations and attitudes creates problems for all, and may even generate conflicts between states and/or between partners in struggle. So what can be done?

Sovereign Projects in the Perspective of a Negotiated Globalization

A national sovereign project implies the concept and implementation of a set of consistent national policies aimed at “walking on two legs”: (1) constructing an integrated, auto-centered industrial system of production; (2) moving toward policies to revive and modernize peasant agriculture; and (3) articulating these two goals into a consistent, comprehensive plan of action.

Constructing an integrated, comprehensive industrial system of production implies that each industry is conceived in order to become a major provider of inputs and/or a major outlet for other industries. That concept conflicts with neoliberal dogma, which is based on the exclusive criterion of profitability for each industrial establishment considered separately from others. This concept has led to the dismantling of some industrial systems constructed previously (in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and some countries of the global South) and to subordinating what remains of them to the status of subcontractors for the further global expansion of giant transnational corporations (operated by financial capital from the US, some Western European countries, and Japan). My alternative concept implies state intervention, that is, state planning, managing an independent national financial system with a view to prioritizing finance for the construction of industries in the framework of budget constraints to avoid inflation and the growth of foreign debt. Systems of taxation should be conceived in order to support the deployment of this project. Eventually, foreign direct investments should be required to negotiate conditions that reinforce the national project rather than annihilating it.

Defining policies aimed at reviving peasant agriculture should reduce migration out of rural areas at rates that do not allow these populations to be absorbed by urban industrial development. This target implies that land is not considered as “merchandise,” but as a common national good at the disposal of the whole population. It, therefore, implies ownership patterns that protect access to land for all peasant families, on as equal a footing as possible. Another target is to ensure national food sovereignty. This vision again conflicts with neoliberal dogmas and policies of so-called agricultural development based on the massive dispossession of peasants to the benefit of agribusiness, large landowners, and a

minority of rich peasants. A number of priority industries should support the modernization of peasant agriculture by providing requested inputs and offering goods for consumption. Such plans for the revival of rural life should be developed for a large majority of countries in Asia and Africa as well as in Latin America, whenever the rural population still represents a significant proportion of the total population (30% or more) and should be adjusted to the specificities of each national case.

The first goal of such sovereign projects should be ensuring social progress for the vast majorities of working classes and reducing inequalities. The concept of neoliberal rule of an unregulated market, which is supposed to generate social justice through the windfall effects of the expansion of markets, is undermined in practice by ongoing inequality. The second goal is to create objective, favorable conditions for the invention of participatory democracy. Electoral representative democracy has been too often associated with social disaster and consequently has already lost its credibility within wide segments of these societies. The third goal is to prepare the ground for global negotiations offering countries of the South (and the former East) chances to become active, equal partners in the reconstruction of a pattern of negotiated globalization that resists hegemony.

Practically speaking, achieving these three goals means opening channels for a debate with citizens, trade unions, and other organizations of authentic popular civil society, resulting into a plan for state support of projects of comprehensive industrialization; and opening channels with peasant popular organizations with a view to defining a plan of action for the revival of rural peasant agriculture. These are the first concrete steps we can take toward achieving the ambitious goals set out in this essay.

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