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Author(s): Samir Amin

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Democracy and national strategy in the periphery*

It is well-known that the Third World is a heterogeneous grouping and that generalisations are therefore usually impossible. It can be agreed, however, that social inequalities are unfortunately all too often quite blatant, in fact scandalous, and that even the most primitive form of democracy is the exception rather than the rule. The lack of solidarity between Third World states in international economic negotiations is as marked as the animosity which frequently characterises their political relationships.

Is there a connection to be discerned among these three aspects: social inequality, lack of democracy, lack of solidarity? Doubtless, everyone will readily acknowledge that one exists. But the nature of the connection and its underlying causes is the focus of diametrically opposed theoretical and ideological points of view. There are in effect two perspectives on the global evolution of modern societies which, on this question as on others, radically contradict one another.

In the dominant 'linear' perspective, social inequality and the absence of democracy are the price of poverty. The accumulation of capital is necessarily accompanied, in its initial stages, by the impoverishment of the peasantry and the penury of the working-class, described by Engels in the case of England in the middle of the nineteenth century. Later on, when the rural surplus population had been absorbed, the labour movement managed progressively to impose both better material conditions and political democracy. Sir Arthur Lewis's familiar thesis concerning the 'dualism' of societies 'in transition towards development', like that of the Latin-American *desarrollismo* of the 1950s, makes the same point: economic development would create the objective conditions for a better social distribution of income as well as providing the basis for a democratic political life.¹ This thesis presupposes that the external factor (integration into the world economic system) is basically 'favourable', in the sense that it offers the

* Translated for *Third World Quarterly* by Thomas Clegg.

¹ For further reading see also various works of CEPAL, published under the direction of Raul Prebisch, during the 1950s and 1960s.

opportunity for 'development'. Development in this context proceeds at a rate which is governed by the internal conditions that characterise different Third World societies. These conditions are thus thought to be decisive in this process.

In the context of a linear perspective, today's developed countries form the image of the 'developing' countries as they will be tomorrow. A formalistic nationalism would also characterise various Third World societies during the first period of 'development'. The construction of the nation state would demand it. This nation state would assert itself by opposing others, notably its neighbours. As the European nations were constituted through an uninterrupted series of wars from the seventeenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, a similar confrontation among contemporary Third World states would not be surprising.

The thesis advanced in this article takes the opposite view. We contend that the emergence of capitalist expansion on a world scale entails an inherent inequality, which prevents the 'delayed reproduction' of the same evolutionary scheme. Social inequality and the absence of democracy are thus, in the periphery, the product of capitalist development.

I would like to illustrate this thesis, in what follows, by insisting on two aspects of the worldwide expansion of capitalism:

- i) that this expansion is accompanied by a growing inequality in the social distribution of income in the periphery, while at the system's core, it effectively creates the conditions for a lesser degree of social inequality (and greater stability in the distribution of income, the foundation of a democratic consensus);
- ii) that the bourgeoisie of the periphery is incapable of mastering the local process of accumulation, which thereby remains in a perpetual process of 'adjustment' to the constraints posed by accumulation on a world scale. In these conditions, the project of constructing a bourgeois national state is not merely handicapped by a basically unfavourable external factor, but is rendered completely impossible. The peripheral state is then necessarily despotic because it is weak. In order to 'survive', it has to avoid conflict with the dominant imperialist forces and attempts rather to improve its international position at the expense of its more vulnerable peripheral partners.

This twofold observation strongly suggests the conclusion that political and social democracy as well as international solidarity among peoples

require the abandonment of the myth of the 'national bourgeoisie', and the replacement of the 'bourgeois national' project by a 'popular national' project. This is the price to be paid for democracy.

Inequalities in the distribution of income at the core and at the periphery of the world capitalist system

Although empirical research concerning the distribution of income is relatively recent, there are figures available today for a great number of countries, both developed and underdeveloped, which measure the degree of inequality in income distribution by means of Gini coefficients and Lorenz curves.

In general, this research shows that inequality in the distribution of income is more pronounced in the periphery of the system than in its advanced core. This inequality arises for a number of reasons, including the following:

Firstly, labour productivity varies from unit to unit, and from sector to sector. Productivity would only become equalised given the theoretical hypothesis of an economy constituted by production units which were all equipped with the most efficient means (and thus a state of competition would no longer continue between them!). The most developed capitalist countries approach this model, while the underdeveloped formations diverge from it in an extreme way. This is why the distribution of value added per job from one sector to another is grouped relatively closely around its average in the OECD countries, but is very unevenly spread in the Third World countries.² The fact that a comparison gives results of this kind proves, in our opinion, that the law of value operates at the level of the world capitalist system, rather than at the level of its national components.³

Secondly, the differential in salaries and payment for work in the Third World, however small, is never as reduced as it would be if it were determined solely by the social costs of training. The spread here results from the strategy of those in power and of capital, from its history and from those political requirements compatible with the exercise of power by the hegemonic social bloc at the system's core.

Thirdly, the distribution of industrial, commercial, real estate,

² Samir Amin, 'Niveau de salaires, choix des techniques de production et répartition de revenu', in A D Smith (ed), *Cahiers de l'IIES* (Geneva, 1969).

³ See the argument concerning the content of the law of value operating at the world scale in Samir Amin, *L'avenir du maoïsme*, Paris: Minuit, 1981, pp 7-28; trans. *The Future of Maoism*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1982.

agricultural, financial and other property is itself the outcome of the history of the social formation and of local capitalist development. If one admits that there exists no 'ideal model' of capitalism, but only its concrete historical forms, there is no reason why this important element in determining the structure of the distribution of income should operate in the same way everywhere.

Whatever the causes, it is possible to compare the current empirical distributions in the world. It is striking to see that the spread of Lorenz curves is by no means accidental. As a matter of fact, the curves of all the OECD developed capitalist countries are grouped in a tight bunch. In contrast, income distribution in all the contemporary Third World countries is considerably more unequal. Two clear medians placed within each of the two groupings correspond with the following values:⁴

- 25 per cent of the population disposes of 10 per cent of total income in the core, and 5 per cent in the periphery;
- 50 per cent of the population disposes of 25 per cent of income in the core, and 10 per cent in the periphery;
- 75 per cent of the population disposes of 50 per cent of income in the core and 33 per cent in the periphery.

The bunching of Lorenz curves for the developed countries implies that Western societies have obviously similar income distribution characteristics. The position of different countries within the core grouping of Lorenz curves also implies that the improvement in income distribution is linked to the existence of powerful social democratic forces, but that the real extent of this improvement is very limited. The most advanced social-democratic countries, in Northern Europe, are situated close to the minimum inequality curve; the most liberal (the USA) and the least developed (Mediterranean Europe) are close to the maximum inequality curve.

The spread of curves for the Third World may seem disconcerting at first sight. There is no visible correlation between the degree of inequality on the one hand, and the ranking of these countries in terms of factors such as per capita GDP, the degree of urbanisation, the level of industrialisation, and so on. But, as we will show later, a more attentive examination can provide a basis for an interpretation of this spread of results.

⁴ We will refrain from providing here the technical arguments which permitted us to elaborate these statistics based on the work of the World Bank (Hollis Chenery, Ahluwalia, etc., *Growth with Redistribution*) and of the ILO (WEB programme, the work directed by Dharam Ghai and others). For an explanation of the Gini coefficients and Lorenz curves used in our model, see our article in *Review* (cited in note 5).

We can now proceed to the more interesting questions in the following section: i) is it possible to move from the crude empirical level to a higher plane, to explain the essential reasons for the relative positions of different countries?; and ii) is there a direction to the movement observed (towards more or less equality) and how is it to be accounted for?

We will not go back over the details of the theoretical reconstruction of these curves, which have been expounded elsewhere.⁵ We will only set out the broad outlines here.

Regarding the distribution of income in the capitalist core, three successive theoretical hypotheses suffice to account for the median of the tight grouping of Lorenz curves representing the OECD countries.

First hypothesis: if the social formation were reduced to a pure capitalist mode of production, the structure of income distribution would be determined by the rate of extraction of surplus value. If it were the case that the entire population were proletarianised and all proletarians were to sell their labour power at the same price, which is the value of labour power, and if we retain the complementary assumption that the number of capitalists was negligible, the model of income distribution could be shown by a straight line whose slope would be determined by the rate of extraction of surplus value within a social formation.

Second hypothesis: we suppose that the prices paid to the labour force are distributed unequally around its average value, so that the ratio between the quartiles was 1 to 4.

Third hypothesis: we introduce within this scheme the existence of a certain number of small and medium-size firms and various activities (similar to those of the liberal professions), the salaried population comprising 80 per cent of the total population, and we suppose that individual revenues of members of these social groups are situated in the middle and high-income brackets within the total distribution.

In this way, a curve is finally obtained which is very close to one representing the empirical reality of the contemporary developed capitalist world.

With regard to the peripheral capitalist societies, we have proceeded in two steps. In the first instance, we looked at the case of a rural,

⁵ Samir Amin, 'Income distribution in the capitalist system', *Review*, Summer 1984; Samir Amin, *Classe et nation dans l'histoire et la crise contemporaine*, Paris: Minuit, 1979, pp 157–67; trans. *Class and Nation: Historically and in the Current Crisis*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980, pp 149–72.

'pre-capitalist' society in which 90 per cent of the population, also predominantly rural, is subject to exploitation of an 'egalitarian' kind by a state-class of rentiers who receive a tribute equal to half the total agricultural output. At the same time, the peasant communities have relatively little internal differentiation, but benefit to different extents from favourable natural conditions, resulting in per capita outputs ranging from 1 for the poorest quartile to 2 for the richest.

Next, one supposes that an agrarian society originally of this type is integrated into the global capitalist development of a 'semi-colony'. A small class of latifundists and rich peasant landowners (10 per cent of the rural population) appropriates tribute in the form of land rent. With demographic pressures acting over a period of fifty to a hundred years, and in the absence of industrial outlets, a third of the population falls into absolute poverty. This third of the rural population (landless peasants and minifundists) disposes of an income barely equal to that of the lowest quarter of the peasant farmers. Agrarian reforms have eventually taken place in most regions of this type. If one excludes the socialist countries (China, North Korea, Vietnam), these reforms, more or less radical in nature, have redistributed land in favour of the middle strata, to the detriment of the richest latifundists, without altering the fate of the poorest half of the peasantry.

In the end, the curve which best fits these hypotheses in fact corresponds with a median representing real situations existing in Southern and Southeast Asia, as well as in the Arab world today.

It is interesting to see that this structure, associated in the current phase of capitalist development with the hegemony of the local bourgeoisie (agrarian reforms and industrialisation), can be explained by four essential factors: i) the prior history of a rural class society which only allows the peasantry to keep roughly half its output; ii) the private appropriation of surplus in the form of land rent by latifundists and, following agrarian reform, by rich peasants; iii) a 'natural' inequality in the productivity of agricultural land ranging from 1 to 2; iv) an increase in rural population density and the formation of a reserve of surplus labour consisting about a third of the rural workforce.

The 'model' in question also corresponds, it seems, with the situation in Latin America, at least in the case of the bigger countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Brazil. It fits less well the situation in certain Central American regions, of which Nicaragua under Somoza or Guatemala are prime examples. In contrast, the 'model' is certainly different in Sub-Saharan Africa where the prior experience of local class

societies is weaker, the availability of land greater, and so on. In these areas the distribution of income is no doubt less unequal, although precise information is unobtainable. Nevertheless, even here the trend is towards the appearance of greater differentiations, as all the empirical studies have shown.

In our second step, we introduce the concept of the urban economy into our model. In this instance we find a capitalist sector (which employs at most half of the urban working population), for which the conclusions reached above remain valid, given the following assumptions: i) a higher rate of surplus value resulting in a wage-profits ratio of 40:60 instead of 60:40; and ii) a steeper wage scale (1 to 6 instead of 1 to 4). Moreover, the 'informal' sector, which manages somehow to employ half the urban working population, earns incomes of roughly the same size as those of the poorest quartile of the capitalist sector.

In order to combine both curves, rural and urban, two principal factors must be kept in mind: i) the proportion of rural to urban population, which differs from one country to another; and ii) the large gap between net per capita output in rural and urban areas, when this output is measured in current prices and income, as it is in current statistics. This gap is always roughly about 1 to 3, that is, per capita output is three times greater in the urban economy than in the rural. The end result obtained, i.e. the curve constructed by combining the simpler elements, is an interesting one. The resulting curve is, as we have already seen, a median of the actual income distributions that occur in the contemporary Third World.

The question arises as to whether this situation is 'transitory' or not, i.e. whether the corresponding income distribution and that described are evolving towards the model outlined above. In other words, is there a 'tendential law' of the movement of income distribution, in conjunction with the movement of capital? On this difficult topic, the following three types of response can be identified:

- i) That there is no tendential law governing this movement. In other words, income distribution is only the empirical outcome of diverse economic and social factors whose movements, convergent or divergent, have their own autonomy. This proposition may be restated in 'Marxist' terms by noting that income distribution depends on class struggles in all their complexity, both national (such as bourgeois-peasant alliance, social-democracy) and international (imperialism and the position occupied within the

- international division of labour, and so on). The capitalist system is capable of adapting itself to all these different situations.
- ii) That there is a tendential law working to bring about a progressive reduction of inequalities. The situation in the periphery today is simply one of an unfinished transition towards capitalist development.
 - iii) That there is a tendential law of progressive pauperisation and growing inequality. It remains to be seen why pauperisation should take place, and by means of which preponderant force (one that cannot be countered by opposing forces?), and on what scale the process occurs (at the level of each capitalist state, of all the developed countries, of all the underdeveloped countries, or throughout the worldwide core-periphery system?).

The Marxist thesis of progressive pauperisation is an abstract formulation of a concrete issue: does capitalist expansion eventually benefit the majority of people in terms of relative standards of living, or, on the contrary, does it tend to polarise society?

The actual history of accumulation in the developed centres of capitalism is fairly well known. Disregarding local variants, a plausible generalisation could be constructed on the following lines. The peasant revolutions, which often introduced the capitalist era in these centres, reduced the degree of inequality in the countryside, at least when they adopted a radical form. This reduction of inequality took place at the expense of the feudal aristocracy, but at the same time led to the impoverishment of a minority of poorer peasants who were expelled to the cities. The working-class wage was fixed from the outset at a low level determined by the income of these poorer peasants. It tended to increase after stagnating for a period at this level (or even diminishing), when the expulsion of landless peasants from the countryside finally slowed down. From this point onwards (about 1860?) workers' wages and the real incomes of the 'middle' strata of the peasantry tended to increase together, in conjunction with a rise in productivity. There was even a tendency for a rough parity to be established between the average wage of workers and peasant incomes, although this tendency is not observable at each stage of accumulation (it depended on the structure of alliances between the hegemonic classes). In the stage of late capitalism, there is perhaps a 'social-democratic' tendency towards the reduction of inequalities. But this operates in conjunction with imperialism: a favourable position within the international division of

labour favours social redistribution. But it would be wrong to generalise here, as comparable cases of evolution, for example Sweden and the USA, diverge in this respect.

It is necessary to move beyond an examination of the capitalist core considered on its own, and take into account the evolution of the world system as a whole. Our thesis here is that the stability of income distribution in the core during the present presupposes rather than excludes a far more unequal distribution of income in the periphery. The realisation of value at the scale of the system as a whole requires this complementary opposition of structures.

One is thus led to an unavoidable question: what is the overall tendency of the changes in income distribution within the periphery? Although precise information in this domain is fragmentary, it seems that the most pronounced trend has been towards the worsening of inequalities, certainly during the last hundred years (1880–1980).

A thesis often advanced to explain this fact is that inequality in these regions is the price of accumulation, and once the first phase of the latter is completed (with the reduction of the labour reserve provided by the peasantry), the system will tend to reduce this inequality. This thesis has renewed its appeal among a wide variety of circles, from the traditional Right to certain Anglo-Saxon Marxists. The work of the late Bill Warren and various critiques which have been directed at our own stance are situated on this terrain.⁶ This thesis appears to us to replace the concrete analysis of the worldwide expansion of capitalism, which diversifies while at the same time unifying, with the abstract vision of a capitalism reduced to its tendency towards unification. The argument to which the supporters of this thesis turn as a last resort is that the worsening of inequalities is only 'provisional'. This abuse of the argument concerning time removes any political significance from the thesis in question. To say that capitalism aggravates the situation for a century or two, but that it will improve matters thereafter is not an answer to the problems of our society, but a way of sweeping them under the carpet. This line of reasoning suffers in general from an almost complete lack of any political analysis concerning the diversification of capitalist formations, and a consequent refusal to make any qualitative distinction between core and peripheral formations.

⁶ Bill Warren, *Imperialism, Pioneer of Capitalism*, London: Verso, 1980. See our commentaries in Samir Amin, *La déconnexion*, Paris: La Découverte, 1986, Ch. 4; Samir Amin, 'Expansion or crisis of capitalism?', *Third World Quarterly* 5(2) April 1983.

Without going into the details of this debate, let us say that our thesis here is that even the most radical bourgeois national projects in the Third World are probably destined to failure and will in the end submit to the demands of transnationalisation. As a corollary to this thesis regarding the transformation of the peripheral bourgeoisie into a comprador class, we believe that there is no discernible tendency towards diminishing inequality in income distribution in the Third World. If any movement can be observed, it is rather in the opposite direction: towards growing inequality. The idea of progress by stages which could be repeated after a given time-lag is obviously a powerful concept in its simplicity, but one which is obviously false. However, the belief that developed countries provide the model for the future development of the underdeveloped countries remains firmly entrenched, despite its refutation by four centuries of capitalist development, and particularly by the experience of the last hundred years.

According to the logic of the 'stagist' perspective described above, the issue of inequalities in the distribution of income is seen merely as a question of relative quantity, without any qualitative significance. But it is not just a matter of greater inequality: inequality itself determines the creation and development of a productive system in the periphery, which is qualitatively different from that which exists in the capitalist core.

If in fact the various resources (unskilled and skilled labour, capital) are allocated to the types of final consumption (of the different strata of population according to their income) which directly or indirectly command them, one finds:

- that in the core the various resources are allocated to the consumption of each stratum in proportions similar to the share of each of these stratum in consumption. For example, if necessary consumption (meaning necessary for the reproduction of labour power) represents 50 per cent of total consumption and surplus consumption 50 per cent, the shares of capital and of labour power with different skills (low, medium, high) allocated to necessary and surplus consumption respectively are 50 per cent–50 per cent for each category of resource (capital, unskilled workforce, skilled workforce).
- that in the periphery, on the other hand, the scarcer resources are allocated to the consumption of the wealthier strata in greater proportions than their share of total consumption. This 'distortion'

in favour of the upper strata within income distribution is all the stronger when distribution is more unequal. For example, according to our calculations concerning the employment of medium and highly skilled labour (with secondary, technical or higher education) in the Arab world, surplus consumption constitutes 50 per cent of total consumption, but absorbs 75 per cent of these scarce resources (as against 50 per cent in France).

In addition, one observes a tendency both for a deepening of inequalities in income distribution in the Arab world (before and after 1974) and for a worsening of this distortion in the employment of scarce resources. It is also noticeable that inequalities are more marked in the Arab world (where per capita GDP is higher than in other regions of the Third World, such as Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa) and that the distortion in the use of resources is at the same time more pronounced.⁷

The productive apparatus of the peripheral countries is thus not a mere copy of that of the core at an earlier stage of evolution. It differs qualitatively, and therein resides the very purpose of the international division of labour. These differences explain why, when in the core the Lorenz curve is stable (or is even moving towards less inequality), in the periphery it is shifting in the opposite direction, towards even greater inequality. The distortion in income distribution is a condition of expanded reproduction, of accumulation on a world scale.

On this point, Marx's thesis concerning progressive pauperisation is perfectly visible on a world scale. If income distribution tends to be more and more unequal in the periphery, which constitutes the majority of the world system's population, and is stable in the core, then at the global level it is moving towards greater inequality. The very fact that pauperisation manifests itself at the world level but not at the core is surely proof of the fact that the law of value acts at the global level, rather than at the level of individual capitalist formation. Marginalisation and impoverishment in the periphery, however, operate not only by means of an increase in the rate of extraction of surplus value, but also through the indirect extraction of surplus labour in non-capitalist forms, both traditional and newly-invented.

⁷ Samir Amin, *L'économie arabe contemporaine*, Paris: Minuit, 1980; trans. *The Arab Economy Today*, London: Zed, 1982.

From the bourgeois national project to the bourgeois comprador project

If in the nineteenth century the imperialist system is seen as having virtually extended colonial and semi-colonial regimes throughout Africa and Asia, national liberation movements in the aftermath of the Second World War reconstituted them into independent states. Has this major transformation of the world capitalist system put an end to the core/periphery dichotomy? The prevailing opinion in the West is that independence effectively opened the way for the creation of new bourgeois states with the capacity to advance along the path of capitalist development. This process would depend essentially on internal conditions within each state. Thus the pace and the orientations of economic growth, of social developments and of political organisation (the latter's despotic or democratic character) would be determined, for the most part, by internal class struggles. This thesis therefore denies that there is a qualitative difference between bourgeois national states in the core and in the periphery of the system. In other words, it accepts the hypothesis that a bourgeois national project is capable of being carried out. I think, for my part, that this thesis is mistaken and is refuted by what I call the failure of the bourgeois national option in the contemporary Third World.⁸

Of course, the Afro-Asian states, nations and peoples understood that the reconquest of political independence was only the means to an end, the final goal being the conquest of economic, social and cultural independence. But here the forces of national liberation were split between two visions: there was the opinion, shared by a substantial majority, that 'development' was possible through 'interdependence' within the world economy; and that of the socialist leaders who thought that abandoning the capitalist bloc would lead to the reconstruction, with the USSR, if not under its leadership, of a world socialist bloc.

The leaders of the capitalist Third World did not envisage 'delinking' from the capitalist system, but nor did they share a common strategic and tactical view of 'development'. While this is not the place to expand on our concept of 'delinking' (see *La déconnexion*) we should make clear that this concept is not to be confused with 'autarky'. It refers to the need to submit foreign relations to the logic of an internal popular strategy of development, as opposed to the strategy of 'adjusting'

⁸ Samir Amin, *La déconnexion*, Chs. 1 and 4. See also 'Bandung 30 years later', a paper presented at the UN conference in Cairo, 1985, unpublished.

internal development to the constraints of the global expansion of capitalism. Delinking therefore assumes opting for an internal price and income system autonomous from the global system. This national system would therefore constitute the yardstick for measuring a rationality which reflects popular interests, while the global system of so-called economic rationality, on the basis of which 'comparative advantage' and 'competitiveness' are measures, actually reflects the interests of international capital and its subordinate local transmission belt classes. To varying degrees, however, they believed that the building of an independent developed economy and society (even within a framework of global interdependence) would entail a certain amount of 'conflict' with the dominant West (the radical wing reckoning that would put an end to the control of the national economy by the capital of foreign monopolies). Moreover, careful to preserve their recently-won independence, they refused to enter into the global military game or to provide support for the encirclement of the socialist countries which American hegemonism had tried to impose. However, they also believed that to refuse to join the Atlantic military bloc did not imply the necessity of placing themselves under the protection of its adversary, the USSR. From this stance emerged 'neutralism' or 'non-alignment'.

The coming together of the Afro-Asian states had already begun with the constitution, within the UN, of the Arab-Asian group, aimed at defending the cause of the colonies still engaged in the struggle for independence. Bandung in 1955 reinforced this rapprochement and galvanised the struggle. From summit to summit during the 1960s and the 1970s, 'non-alignment' gradually shifted from a platform of political solidarity based on support for national liberation struggles and the rejection of military pacts, to that of a 'trade association of economic demands *vis-à-vis* the North'. The battle for a 'New International Economic Order' (NIEO) commenced in 1975, following the Israeli-Arab war of October 1973 and the subsequent upward revision of oil prices.

Neither on the political nor the economic plane was the West ready to accept the spirit of Bandung. Was it really only a coincidence that, one year later, France, Britain and Israel tried to overthrow Nasser through their aggression in Egypt in 1956? The genuine hatred which the West maintained towards the radical leaders of the Third World in the 1960s (Nasser, Sukarno, Modibo Keita, almost all of them overthrown in the same period, 1965-68, during which the Israeli aggression of June 1967 also occurred) shows that the political vision of

Bandung was not accepted by imperialist capital. It was thus a politically weakened non-aligned bloc which confronted the global economic crisis from 1970–71 onwards. The firm opposition of the West to the idea of a NIEO demonstrates conversely that there was a very real logic at work linking the political and economic demands of the Afro-Asian bloc following Bandung.

Thirty-two years after that historic conference, we have the factual lessons and the necessary hindsight to take stock of the situation. What were the real objectives of the Bandung project? Has it simply exhausted its force, having attained its goals? Or did it fail to attain its goals because they were objectively impossible? Of course, what with hindsight appears as an 'ideology of development' was never the subject of a consensus of interpretation. Having enjoyed its 'golden age' between 1955 and 1975, it has now, as we will later show, entered a perhaps fatal crisis.

The traditional socialist bloc was not prepared to accept the objectives which emerged from Bandung. In 1948, Zhdanov proclaimed the division of the world into two camps, capitalist and socialist, preemptively condemning as illusory any attempt to place oneself outside them, in other words to seek to be 'non-aligned'. In this spirit, the socialists did not foresee the possibility of the conquest of independence by a national liberation movement which they themselves did not lead. It was only following the first 'stabilisation' of 1950–55 (the victory in China, the armistice and division of Korea and Vietnam, the acknowledged defeat of guerrillas elsewhere in Southeast Asia); the demonstration of the viability of the new 'bourgeois' regimes of the Third World; the inception of these states' conflict with the West, albeit under a 'bourgeois' leadership; and the death of Stalin (1953) and the ideological opportunities offered by Khrushchev, that the possibility of a 'viable' third bloc and of a 'third path to development' began to be perceived.

On the other hand, the radical non-socialist nationalist leaders of the Third World certainly believed in the possibility of a 'third path to development' which would be neither 'capitalist' nor inspired by the socialist models of the USSR and China. Their rejection of Marxism combined a number of considerations: they occasionally perceived in Marxism an avatar of European culture incompatible with their own peoples' value systems; they sometimes simply feared the loss of their independence, particularly given the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe (which was then being denounced by Yugoslavia and China);

they were also drawn towards the Western model of efficiency and consumption, even of freedom (though perhaps this was a value to which they attached less weight), rather than to the Soviet and Chinese models, which seemed less efficient and more austere. It was perhaps from this ambivalence that the ideologies of 'particular socialisms' (African, Arab) progressively emerged.

A 'Bandung project' did, therefore, exist, in our opinion, although it was implicit and imprecise in nature. I will not shrink from labelling it our era's bourgeois national project of the Third World. Beyond the various concrete manifestations and specificities of its national expressions, the project can be defined by the following elements: i) the desire to develop the productive forces, to diversify outputs (notably by industrialising); ii) the desire to reinforce the nation-state's direction and control over this process; iii) the belief that the process did not imply in the first instance popular initiatives but only popular support for state actions; iv) the belief that the process did not fundamentally contradict participation in the international division of labour even if it did entail momentary conflicts with the developed capitalist countries.

The realisation of this bourgeois national project implied control over a series of processes by a hegemonic national bourgeois class, through its state, including at least the following: i) control of the reproduction of labour power, which entails a relatively complete and balanced development so that local agriculture, among other economic activities, is able to provide the essential elements for this reproduction in sufficient quantity and at suitable prices to assure the valorisation of capital; ii) control of national resources; iii) control of local markets and the capacity to penetrate the world market in competitive conditions; iv) control of the financial circuits permitting the centralisation of surplus value and the orientation of its productive uses; v) control of the technologies in use at the level of development reached by the productive forces.⁹

Seen from this angle, the development experiences of the Third World can be classed into two categories of objectives: that of those countries which have simply attempted to accelerate their growth without worrying about achieving the conditions listed above (Ivory Coast, Kenya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia . . . the list is long); and that of the countries which have tried to realise the conditions in question (Egypt under Nasser, Algeria, Tanzania, India, Brazil, South Korea).

⁹ Samir Amin, *La déconnexion*, Chs. 1 and 2.

As can be seen, this classification does not necessarily match the division between those regimes anxious to promote a certain degree of social justice and bring about reforms, notably agrarian (such as Egypt under Nasser, or South Korea) and those which did not hesitate before accepting a worsening of social inequalities (Brazil for example). Nor does it correspond to the division created by their attitudes *vis-à-vis* transnational capital (Brazil and Kenya both welcome such capital, but the former tries to integrate it within its own national policies, while the latter is content to adjust to its demands), nor to the divide over the issue of maintaining political relations of conflict or alliance with East and West. Correlations do exist, but the nuances of the combinations formed to meet concrete circumstances make each Third World country a special case.

It is now no longer possible to ignore the inadequacies of all attempts at development, which have not withstood the reversal of favourable conjunctures. The food and agriculture crisis, the external financial debt, the increased technological dependency, the fragility of capacities to resist eventual military aggression, the waste produced by capitalist models of consumption and their ideological and cultural impact, point to the historical limits of this option. Even before the current crisis offered the opportunity for the 'offensive of the West' which managed to reverse the previous trends, these deficiencies had in many cases led to an impasse. I do not claim that these experiences in principle had necessarily to end where they did, and that consequently their 'bankruptcy' was predestined. I can only contend that, to go any further, a genuine 'revolution' was required, capable of putting an end to the twin illusion concerning the possibility of a national development without this being the product of a truly popular force, and the possibility of this development without 'delinking' from the world system. It is not certain whether some movements in this direction could not have been possible (and I am thinking notably of the case of Egypt). Yet significantly, popular revolution did not occur, and because of this, the historic page was turned.

In view of the experience outlined above, we can say that the project in question deserves to be called a bourgeois national project and as such was demonstrably impossible to achieve. In this way, history has shown that the national bourgeoisie within the Third World is not capable, in our era, of achieving what it achieved elsewhere, in Europe, North America and Japan in the nineteenth century. There is nothing new in this thesis, and the failure of the bourgeois national project has

been repeated many times in the past. One such failure is that of Egypt. The history of Egypt since Mohamed Ali is that of a series of challenges by the national bourgeoisie, broken each time by the conjunction of their internal fragility and imperialist aggression.

A detailed examination of the history of other countries and regions of the Third World would illustrate, in our opinion, the same thesis: that of an uninterrupted succession of bourgeois national bids, their repeated miscarriage and the submission to the demands for subordination which followed each time. This has occurred in Latin America since the nineteenth century (we cite here only the most recent examples of the Mexican Revolution of the period 1910–1920 and that of Peronism in Argentina), in India (whose evolution from Nehru's 'First Plan' to the return of the Right to government following Congress's first defeat is eloquent), and in numerous Arab and African countries.

The favourable conjuncture of the post-war period was due to an exceptional combination of circumstances. On the economic side, the strong growth of the 'North' facilitated the 'adjustment' of the South. On the political side, peaceful coexistence was accompanied by the rise of Soviet military and industrial might (from the first Sputnik to the achievement of strategic 'parity' during the 1960s and 1970s), combined with the decline of the ageing British and French colonial empires and the spread of Afro-Asian independence struggles. This conjuncture lent real weight to the concept of non-alignment.

But success may bring delusions with it. One such delusion is plainly encapsulated in the theory of a so-called 'non-capitalist path', concerning a 'gradual' evolution towards socialism. Of course, the theory in question did not convince everyone. In the 1960s it was violently attacked by China as an opiate meant to lull the peoples and douse the fires of the 'zone of storms'.

The page of history has today been turned. Since the beginning of the 1970s, the economic boom of the West had faded to make way for the current structural crisis, while the competition among Europe, Japan and the United States has replaced reconstruction under American protection. In the Soviet Union, Khrushchev's promises to overtake the American standard of living by 1980 and the expectations of a rapid democratisation following the 20th Party Congress (1956) gave way to immobilism under Brezhnev (which now appears to be under challenge from Gorbachev). In China, the revisions which followed Mao's death revealed that neither the question of economic efficiency, nor that of democracy, had yet found their 'definitive' answer. Throughout the

Third World, the hunger crisis, that of external debt and the impasse created by imported technology have led to a series of surrenders to the *diktat* of transnational capital, reorganised around the IMF, the World Bank and the consortium of big Western banks. In the countries with a radical orientation, the *coups d'état* and acts of military aggression (the 1967 war was not an accident) greatly contributed to putting an end to the experimentation of the post-Second World War period.

The basis of the new world conjuncture is formed by the aggression of the capitalist West against the peoples and nations of the Third World. The objectives of the capitalist West is to subordinate the subsequent evolution of the Third World to the requirements of the redeployment of transnational capital.¹⁰

But is this situation really only a conjuncture, fleeting in nature though painful, which will perforce be followed by a new hatching of advanced 'national bourgeoisies'? Or does it involve a historical turning-point which will no longer permit the pursuit of successive bids by the bourgeois national project, a project which has characterised the history of capitalism for at least a century? The real debate concerning the nature of future challenges and options is focused on these two considerations.

The hypothesis which we are putting forward is that the contemporary crisis marks the end of an era, an era which for Asia, Africa and Latin America might be termed the century of national bourgeoisies, in the sense that it has been characterised by successive attempts at bourgeois national construction. To note simply that these experiments have not produced results is hardly new. What is new, according to this hypothesis, is the affirmation that such attempts will no longer take place in the future. In other words, the bourgeoisie of the Third World has now finally accepted the pursuit of its development through economic subordination to the core. This is a project imposed upon it by the expansion of transnational capital, which has forced the new bourgeoisie to become comprador subordinates.

Many reasons militate in favour of this hypothesis. The depth of subordination of the periphery to the core and the globalisation of capital in the contemporary world indicate the existence of a political and economic situation which has little in common with the

¹⁰ Samir Amin, 'A propos du NOEI et des relations économiques internationales', *Socialism in the World* (29) 1982; trans. 'After the NIEO, the future of international economic relations', *Journal of Contemporary Asia* (12-14) 1982. See also Samir Amin, 'La crise, le Tiers Monde et les relations Nord-Sud et Est-Ouest', *Nouvelle Revue Socialiste*, Paris: September-October, 1983.

circumstances existing at the end of the Second World War. A thousand indicators illustrate this point overwhelmingly, not only in terms of national economic planning, finances and technology, but also in terms of consumption, culture and the ideology of everyday life. The social structures formed and deformed by these phenomena draw our attention to the fact that the present challenge has little to do with that which once confronted the Soviet and Chinese people.

The alternative: popular national development, political and social democracy, and the ending of dependence

The worldwide expansion of capitalism is thus of a polarising nature. Since the origins of capitalism, four centuries ago, the core/periphery opposition has remained inherent within this system. This opposition, which constitutes the principal aspect of capitalism's contradictions, is unsurmountable within the framework of the world system. Inclusion within this world system, the 'external factor', is not only in itself an unfavourable influence, but I would go so far as to say that it is becoming increasingly so. It only took nineteenth-century Germany a few decades to 'catch up and overtake' England. How long will Brazil require to 'catch up and overtake' the USA? Later attempts to create bourgeois national states thus, as ever, remain doomed to failure, condemned, through compradorisation, to perpetuate polarisation in renewed forms corresponding to the development of the system as a whole.¹¹

It is this polarisation which is in fact responsible for the appearance of socially and politically unacceptable regimes in the periphery of the system. They are socially unacceptable because they are founded on impoverishment and the exclusion of the great mass of the people. They were politically unacceptable in the past in the sense that the setting up of the system required colonial domination; and they remain unacceptable because the pursuit of a form of local development integrated within the system demands that the new independent state remains despotic. Thus, democracy is not the 'rule', but the exception, produced from time to time by the impasses of capitalist development, but always vulnerable. Contrary to the 'optimistic' thesis of

¹¹ See Samir Amin, *La déconnexion*, and three other forthcoming studies: Samir Amin, 'L'Etat et le développement' ('*State and Development*'); 'L'accumulation 30 ans plus tard' (*Accumulation on a World Scale, 30 Years Later*); and 'A propos "The Third World Revolt"'.

development by stages, according to which social misery and despotism will be progressively overcome by capitalist expansion, that expansion will continually reproduce these conditions.

Given these conditions, capitalism has raised the spectre of its being overthrown through a 'revolt of the periphery'. In this sense the 'socialist revolutions', all of them emerging in the periphery or semi-periphery of the system (Tsarist Russia, China, etc.), constitute, along with the generically similar national liberation movements, the most essential change in our contemporary world. These struggles, effectively or potentially, usher in the 'post-capitalist' era.

I would contend that 'delinking' on the basis of a popular national social alliance (as opposed to the bourgeois national project) constitutes the only positive prospect for avoiding capitalist relegation to the periphery. By 'delinking', I mean in precise terms the subordination of external relations to internal demands for popular transformation and development, as against the bourgeois strategy of adjustment of internal growth to the constraints of the worldwide expansion of capital.

The unequal character of capitalist expansion, which cannot be overcome from within its own framework, thus objectively demands the reconstruction of the world on the basis of another social system. The peoples of the periphery are obliged to become aware of this demand and to impose the new system, if they are to avoid the worst, which may extend to genocide, as the history of this expansion shows.

These challenges to the capitalist order in the form of revolts in the periphery force one seriously to rethink the question of the 'socialist transition' towards the abolition of classes. However carefully formulated, the Marxist tradition continues to be handicapped by its initial theoretical view of 'workers' revolutions' paving the way, on the basis of advanced productive forces, at least in relative terms, for a fairly rapid transition characterised by democratic rule of the popular masses. While termed a 'dictatorship over the bourgeoisie' (by means of a proletarian state of a new type which will soon 'wither away'), this rule is nevertheless considerably more democratic than the most democratic of bourgeoisie states. Obviously, reality has not turned out like this. All revolutions of an anti-capitalist bent have so far taken place in the periphery of the system; all have been confronted by the problems of the development of the productive forces and the hostility of the capitalist world; none has yet been able to establish any real form of advanced democracy; all have ended up reinforcing the state system. They have reached a point where doubts are increasingly cast upon their

'socialist' character and on the prospects for effecting, at whatever time in the future, the definitive abolition of classes. For some people (of whom we are not a part and whose theses we have criticised in the past) these systems are nothing more than specific forms of capitalist expansion itself.¹²

The crucial task is not of course to 'label' these systems, but to understand their origins, problems and specific contradictions, the dynamics which they allow or exclude. We have arrived at the thesis that in cases of popular national states and societies; we stress that they are popular, and neither bourgeois nor socialist. In the same way, we reached the conclusion that this popular national 'phase' was inevitably imposed by the unequal character of capitalist development.

These systems are, because of this, effectively faced with the task of development of the productive forces and are founded upon social forces that refuse to accept the argument that development can be achieved by means of a simple 'adjustment' within the framework of capitalist expansion on a world scale. They are the product of revolutions led and supported by progressive social forces in revolt against the effects of the unequal development of capitalism. Therefore such systems are contradictory and conflicting combinations of three different forces.

The first of these, socialist or at least potentially so, translates the aspirations of the popular social forces which gave birth to the new state. The second, capitalist in nature, expresses the fact that, given the actual state of development of the productive forces, capitalist relations of production are still necessary, and hence require real social forces to maintain them. This is why each time an extension of market relations is tolerated within a country of the Eastern bloc, the situation improves. But the existence of capitalist relations should not be confused with integration within the capitalist world system. Many of the criticisms directed at China, Yugoslavia, and Hungary have foundered on this slippery terrain, wrongly objecting that these countries are undergoing 'reintegration' into the capitalist world system. On the contrary, the state is present to isolate these relations from the effects of inclusion within the system dominated by the capital of the core monopolies.

The third series of real social forces operating in these regimes, which we term 'statist', have an autonomy of their own. They are neither

¹² Samir Amin, *La déconnexion . . .* Ch. 4; Samir Amin, 'Expansion or crisis of capitalism', *Contemporary Marxism* (9) 1984.

reducible to a disguised form of capitalist relations (as statism effectively is in the capitalist Third World), nor to a 'degenerate' form of socialism. Statism represents real and potential social forces in their own right.

The problems faced by the capitalist Third World with the advent of political liberation were similar in nature. But the ambiguity of the strategies it adopted was more pronounced because, even where radicalisation had occurred during the struggle for independence, the option in favour of a programme of popular content and delinking was hampered by bourgeois aspirations and the illusory promise of the bourgeoisie national project. Why did the 'Third World' then not set off on the path to constructing a bourgeois national state by copying those of the capitalist core? To be sure, the outcome did not simply result from 'ideas' without any reference to the social base; it was rather the expression of certain social classes and strata of a bourgeois inclination, which dominated the 'national liberation movement' (i.e. the revolt against the effects of the unequal development of capitalism) and continue to dominate the states which emerged from it. History teaches us that the bourgeoisies of the periphery have attempted this task of constructing the state at each stage of world capitalist expansion, although of course in forms appropriate to their respective times. It also teaches us that in the end such attempts were always blocked by the conjunction of external aggression and the internal limits of these attempts.

The question of democracy, both in the socialist countries and in those of the Third World, must be placed within this context.

Let us be clear on this point: the critique which Marx directed at bourgeois democracy, i.e. of its limited and formal character, remains, to my mind, wholly correct. All the same, this democracy was not offered by the bourgeoisie to its people but conquered, relatively late in the day, by working-class struggles. For the capitalist mode itself does not require democracy. The spring behind its social dynamism is located on another level, that of the competition among capitalists and individuals. Moreover, capitalism separates economic and social management, ruled by fundamentally undemocratic principles, from political management, run today according to the democratic principle of election. We would add that this form of democracy only functions when its social impact has been annihilated by the exploitation carried out by the dominant forces of the core powers within the capitalist world system, that is to say once the labour movement has renounced its own

project for a classless society and accepted the capitalist 'rules of the game'.

In the periphery, democracy, even more restricted in nature, is barely more than the expression of the crisis of despotism which is here a form of the capitalist system. Countries in Latin America, South Korea and others, currently furnish blatant examples of the violent political contradictions afflicting a Third World in crisis. I mentioned earlier that Latin American *desarrollismo* had claimed that 'industrialisation' and 'modernisation' (along bourgeois lines and within the context of an even greater integration into the world system) would automatically lead to a democratic evolution. The 'dictatorship' was looked upon as the vestige of a supposedly pre-capitalist past. The facts have demonstrated that modernisation within the framework of this bourgeois project has only 'modernised dictatorship' and substituted an 'efficient' and 'modern' violence of a fascistic type for the old oligarchic, patriarchal systems. The bourgeois project, however, has not delivered the promised results: the crisis has revealed the vulnerability of this construction and the impossibility of the 'independence' which legitimated dictatorship for some. But were not the democratic systems, which were imposed in these circumstances, faced with a formidable dilemma? There are only two choices available: Either the democratic political system accepts submission to the demands of 'adjustment' to the world system, and is thereafter incapable of effecting social reforms of any importance, soon precipitating a crisis for democracy itself; or else popular forces, seizing the means provided by democracy, impose these reforms. The system then enters into conflict with dominant world capitalism, moving from a bourgeois national project to a popular national one.¹³ The dilemma of Brazil and the Philippines derives entirely from this conflict.

The popular option requires democracy. This is so because democracy is a necessary internal condition of socialism. Once the spring of competition amongst capitalists is broken, social relations based on cooperation among workers instead of submission to exploitation are unthinkable without the complete expression of democracy.

In the socialist countries complex reasons of a particular nature which relate to the history of Marxism, and which we have analysed

¹³ Is not the doctrine of the Brazilian PMBD, which believes in the possibility of reconciling liberal political democracy and a dependent economic development, a return to the illusions of *desarrollismo*?

elsewhere,¹⁴ have their share of responsibility for the deadlock created by the refusal of political democracy. Despite the national and social achievements which have brought with them eventual support of the popular masses, the denial of political democracy attests to the preponderance of statist forces to the detriment of the socialist tendencies present.

This situation is graver still regarding the radical experiments within the Third World. There the absence of political democracy works in favour of capitalism, either of the private or state form, and causes the system to degenerate towards a bureaucratic capitalism which ultimately risks becoming a form of compradorisation. In the socialist countries, this risk is unlikely to materialise, as the popular national state (although undemocratic) has sufficient solid historical grounding to allow the continuation of relative stagnation within the confines of statism, or the renewal by society of its move forward. In contrast, examples abound of complete failure among the radical states of the Third World and their subsequent 'recompradorisation'.

In every case democracy is the only means of reinforcing the chance for socialism within popular national society, of isolating the internal capitalist relations of production from the influence of their compradorised insertion into the capitalist world system, and hence reducing the degree of their external vulnerability.

What kind of democracy are we talking about? No doubt the heritage of Western bourgeois democracy is not merely to be scorned, bestowing as it does a respect for rights and for legality, freedom of expression for a diversity of opinions, the institutionalisation of electoral procedures and the separation of powers, the organisation of countervailing powers, and so on. But nor is this legacy the last word. Western democracy is lacking in any social dimension.¹⁵ The popular democracy of the moments of revolutionary social transformation (such as the USSR in the 1920s, Maoist China) also teaches us a great deal about the nature of any 'popular participation', to use a tired expression, which is to have real meaning. To conserve Western democratic forms without taking into consideration the social transformations demanded by the

¹⁴ Samir Amin, *La déconnexion* . . . Chs. 1, 2 and 4; see also Samir Amin, *L'avenir du maoïsme* . . .

¹⁵ There is no form of social phenomenon which does not allow for the occasional exception. Swedish social democracy is by no means inferior to the best achievements of the Eastern bloc. This is surely attributable to the peculiar history of Sweden and to its labour movement, without parallel elsewhere in the West. But it must also be conceded that the privileged position which Sweden occupies within the international division of labour has facilitated this exceptional evolution.

anti-capitalist revolt of the periphery is to become trapped within a travesty of bourgeois democracy, which will remain alien to the people and consequently extremely vulnerable. In order to take root, democracy should above all inscribe itself within a perspective which moves beyond capitalism. This domain, like others, must be governed by the law of unequal development.¹⁶

Obviously, it is this prospect which imperialism finds intolerable. For this reason, the campaign concerning 'democracy', orchestrated by the West, stresses only certain aspects of the problem and neglects others. For example, it identifies multiparty political systems with democracy. No doubt the 'single party' has more often than not, become, the expression of statist dominance.¹⁷ But equally, it is often the product of the effective achievement of popular national unity: this is true in the case of the Chinese Communist Party and some other organisations which emerged from the liberation struggle. In these instances, the creation of 'other parties' might be an artificial operation, not an urgent item on the agenda of popular struggles. The democratisation of the Party, its separation from the state, the clear distinction between state and civil society, the opening up to debate of the party and social organisations (truly independent trade unions, peasant cooperatives) are the essential reforms here which false Western friends of the peoples of the Third World refuse to acknowledge as democratic advances.

The question of the divergence of interests and of conflicts between Third World countries should also be situated within this context.

The illusions fostered by the bourgeois national project lead the states of the periphery to emphasise the divergent interests dividing them, on account of their different functions within the world system. Thus producers of energy or raw materials and semi-industrialised countries, countries liable to become indebted to the world financial market and those lacking resources, countries with food deficits and those with food surpluses, will find it difficult to form a united front against the North. This front could only be established on the basis of the common denominator linking these countries; namely, their status as peripheral entities. On this basis the popular national regimes engaged in a strategy of 'delinking' could strengthen their national

¹⁶ See my general thesis regarding the significance of unequal development in Samir Amin, *Classe et nation* . . .

¹⁷ For the sake of argument one could cite numerous cases of 'one party' regimes or even regimes of 'no parties allowed at all' which do not provoke Western ire, simply because these states accept the neo-colonial submission. Similarly, there are many well-known examples of 'multi-party systems' which are in practice hardly democratic!

options by a form of regional cooperation, itself delinked from the world capitalist system. At present South–South cooperation is complementary to unequal North–South relations.¹⁸ As long as Third World countries continue to attempt to achieve a capitalist development integrated in the global expansion of capitalism, these countries will be bound to compete among themselves and therefore conflict among them will be the rule. Of course, the matter of intra-Third World conflicts is vast and complex, and could by itself constitute a subject for study, for which this is not the place. So to make this long story short, and recognising that the political (and sometimes military) conflicts between Third World countries are certainly not all of the same kind, I propose here to distinguish four different groups of such conflicts:

- i) Certain conflicts are merely the continuation of the struggle for liberation of the peripheral peoples against imperialism, due to the fact that certain radical regimes have constituted or constitute a target for the West to destroy, with the latter mobilising neo-colonial regimes to fight on its behalf. The actions of the accomplices of the permanent aggression of Israel and South Africa against Egypt and the Southern African front-line states respectively provide evidence of this type of conflict;
- ii) The illusions fostered by the bourgeois national project may have stimulated ‘sub-imperialist’ ambitions, about which much has been written in the past. Experience has shown that, far from establishing themselves as new imperialisms, even second class ones, these attempts have finally ended with the absorption of local surrogates within the sphere of influence of the real imperialist centres. The conflicts that occur within regional groupings, conceived as ‘common markets’ between local surrogates in which the activities of monopoly capital concentrate, and the other second rank states of the periphery (e.g. Kenya vs. Tanzania; Nigeria and Ivory Coast vs. the ECOWAS partners), are one outcome of this problematic.¹⁹ The Iran–Iraq conflict is the result of excessive regional hegemonist ambitions of the leadership of both these countries;
- iii) Without doubt conflicts of a purely local origin exist, both within

¹⁸ Fayçal Yachir, ‘La coopération Sud–Sud, une alternative?’ *Bulletin du Forum du Tiers Monde* (2) October 1983; Samir Amin, ‘Afro-Arab co-operation, the record and the prospects’, *Africa Development* (1987).

¹⁹ Samir Amin, *Impérialisme et développement inégal*, Paris: Minuit, 1976, Ch. 5; trans. *Imperialism and Unequal Development*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977, Ch. 5.

the frontiers of a single state and between neighbouring states. The heterogeneous and even artificial character of many Third World states is often responsible for these conflicts. It remains the case that these conflicts are frequently caused by struggles between different segments of the comprador ruling class. These segments mobilise in their support forces which the mere fact of social diversity (ethnic, religious, regional) would not alone have caused to confront one another, either spontaneously or under the force of necessity;²⁰

- iv) Nor do the conflicts between socialist countries stem from an inevitable clash of nationalisms traversing social classes and regimes. In some cases, they involve profound differences concerning international politics (for example the refusal of Yugoslavia and China to submit to the strategy of the Soviet superpower). In others, the conflict is rather the expression of the expansionist ambitions of powers aspiring to regional hegemony (such as that of Vietnam *vis-à-vis* Laos and Kampuchea). Here again democratisation is the only response capable of disarming adventurist leaderships and preventing their going astray.²¹

In all these cases the conflicts of minor or secondary powers in the contemporary world are, at some point, bound to conform with the strategies of the superpowers. It can thus be perceived that these conflicts do not simply replicate the confrontations which accompanied the formation of the core capitalist nations. On the contrary, they are themselves either the result of the polarisation between core and periphery, or a vector of its reproduction.

In conclusion I do believe that the issues of 'social justice' (a better distribution of income), political democracy and international solidarity (rather than intra-Third World conflicts) in the Third World are indeed connected, so that it is impossible to 'cure' any of these evils without considering the whole problem of their interlinkage. Our thesis has been that the global expansion of capitalism is responsible for growing social inequality, political despotism and growing intra-Third World conflicts. Therefore, opting for 'another development'—based on popular interests and democracy—and building international solidarity on the basis of this option necessarily involves 'delinking' from the logic of global capitalism. The drama of Third World nationalism is that it has

²⁰ Samir Amin, 'Etat, nation, ethnie et minorités dans la crise', *Bulletin du Forum du Tiers Monde* (6) 1986.

²¹ Samir Amin, *Classe et nation . . .* Ch. 7; Samir Amin, *Impérialisme et développement inégal*, Ch. 8.

continuously hoped that the global system could adjust to additional national bourgeois projects. History has proved that these projects are ultimately doomed to failure and are followed by comprador subalternisation, with all its negative social and political consequences.