



BANDUNG SPIRIT

BUILDING SOVEREIGNTY, PREVENTING HEGEMONY: The Challenges for Emerging Forces in the Globalised World

**International and Multidisciplinary Conference in the framework of a
commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1955 Bandung Asian-
African Conference
Jakarta-Bandung-Jakarta
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INTRODUCTION

The 1955 Bandung Asian-African Conference was a turning point in world history. For the first time representatives of the former colonised nations united forces and proposed alternatives to the world order dominated by the superpowers. It was the birthday of the so-called Third World, a term indicating the willingness to take up position outside the two blocks of superpowers. The conference triggered solidarity movements among the peoples, countries, states and nations of Africa and Asia. It made possible the representation of African and Asian countries in the UN, and the recognition of the voice of colonised peoples in the world order. It accelerated the complete re-conquest of independence of Africa and Asia. It led to the Non-Aligned Movement between the two blocks of superpowers. It allowed the newly independent countries to lead a development based on their national, popular and sovereign interests. It contributed enormously to the prevention of a possible third world war and to the evolution of humanity, towards a more just and peaceful world.

The Bandung Conference also gave birth to an idiom: 'Bandung Spirit', which can be summarised as a call 1) for a peaceful coexistence between nations, 2) for the liberation of the world from the hegemony of any superpower, from colonialism, from imperialism, from any kind of



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domination of one country by another, and 3) for building solidarity towards the poor, the colonised, the exploited, the weak and those being weakened by the world order of the day, and 4) for their emancipation.

However, the period of development generated by the Bandung Conference known as the 'Bandung Era' was ended tragically around 1970 by the overthrow of the leaders inspired by the Bandung Spirit, the abortion of their development projects and the entry of their country into the Western Block circle.

Now, almost 60 years after the Bandung Conference, colonisation has officially disappeared, the Cold War has ended, and the Non-Aligned Movement has almost lost its *raison d'être*. Yet, similar systems of domination by the powerful in the world order persist, wars continue to threaten humanity, mass hunger, diseases and poverty still characterise many parts of the world, and injustice has appeared in more sophisticated forms and larger dimensions. Is a better world still possible? Is there any alternative to the present course of globalisation? The Bandung Spirit's call has transcended its original space and time to become a universal message.

For its leaders, the Bandung Conference was not the end but a part of the struggle for peace and justice at the global level. In the most tense period of the Cold War (early 60s), in the middle of the Bandung Era, Indonesian president Soekarno spoke about "Building the World Anew", the rise of NEFO (New Emerging Forces) based on TRISAKTI (three forces: political, economical and cultural sovereignties), as the antithesis of OLDEFO (Old Established Forces),... He proposed concrete actions through CONEFO (Conference of the New Emerging Forces) and GANEFO (Games of the New Emerging Forces) as an alternative to the UN and the politicised Olympic games dominated by OLDEFO. A few years later, in 1965-1967, Soekarno was overthrown. All his proposals and actions were ended together with the banning of Marxism, Communism, Leninism, Maoism,... in Indonesia. Similar scenarios happened in some other Third World countries.

A quarter century after the end of the Cold War, the most serious economic crisis in world history hit the heart of the former Western Block of superpowers — the "First World" of the Bandung Era, the "North", the "Centre" of world capitalism and imperialism. Academics, analysts, activists, media, speak about the "rise of the South", the "Periphery", the "Emerging" economies, exemplified by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, known as BRICS, but also Argentina, Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey... which have won their seat in the coveted circle of the G20: the club of the 20 largest economies in the world.

The word "emerging" is striking since it was put forward by Soekarno in the 60s in the historical context of Bandung Era. What does it mean in the globalisation era? Does it have any affinity with the Bandung Era? Is it a coincidence or a continuity of the Bandung movement? What lesson to be learned for a better world order? What are the old and new challenges of the present globalised world to the Bandung Spirit-based international movements in search of sovereignty at the level of People, Nation and State?

In response to those questions, a seminar on "BANDUNG 60 YEARS ON: WHAT ASSESSMENT?" was organised at the University Paris 1



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Pantheon-Sorbonne on June 27, 2014, and put forward among others the following points:

1. The assessment of Bandung 60 years on

Statements such as “Bandung has failed” or “Bandung did not keep its promises” or “Bandung did not give any alternative to the hegemony of superpowers it denounced” are not relevant. Bandung (in the sense of the Bandung Conference and the dynamic of development that followed it and that took place in the Third World, the Non-Aligned Countries, the South, the Periphery of the world capitalism, between 1955 and 1970, or even 1990, period known as Bandung Era) has demonstrated immense achievements. The proofs are numerous. However, Bandung has its limits that explain its erosion. It is these limits that should be studied.

2. The essence of Bandung Spirit

The essence of Bandung Spirit is non-alignment: non-alignment to the hegemony of the superpowers who unilaterally and for their own benefits imposed their rules on the whole world. Initiated in Bandung in 1955 and formalised in Beograd in 1961, it was the non-alignment to the two blocks of hegemonic superpowers of that day: West and East. Today, one hegemonic block remains: the Triad (USA, EU, Japan) that imposed unilaterally on the whole world “neo-liberal globalisation”. The Bandung Spirit is to be interpreted today as non-alignment to neo-liberal globalisation.

3. The world without Bandung

What would be the world if Bandung did not take place?

Bandung, or Bandung Era, between 1945 and 1990, is the first wave of the rise of the peoples of the South dominated by the North. Bandung has fulfilled great things. With Bandung, the North was forced to adjust itself to the request of the South. Before Bandung, the world was dominated completely by the capitalist-colonialist-imperialist North. After Bandung, the North has taken back its control over the world through neo-liberal globalisation. Today, there is a sign of affirmation of the rights of the peoples, the nations and the states of Africa, Asia and Latin America, which can be considered as the second wave of the rise of the South. At academic level, without Bandung, there will be no area studies linking Africa-Asia, and Africa-Asia-Latin America.

4. The enlargement of Bandung

The alignment of Latin America to the Bandung movements started in the 1960s with the establishment of Non-Aligned Movement (Beograd 1961) and the Tricontinental Conference (Havana 1966). However, the rise of the Non-Aligned Movement in Latin America really only started from 2000 (Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Uruguay...). The time seems to have arrived for a larger alliance of peoples, nations and states of Africa, Asia and Latin America. In this perspective, the position of the peoples of the North is crucial: do they remain silent by supporting de facto the imperialist politic of their leaders; or are they willing to integrate themselves into the enlarged



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alliance of Bandung comprising the peoples of Tricontinental and a number of citizens of the North?

Bandung is a world political success because it was led by the states. In order to make the second Bandung or the second wave of the rise of the South a success, it is necessary that the alliance of the peoples of the South and the North grows to be an alliance of the states.

5. The “emerging” countries

The term BRICS to represent a group of “emerging” countries does not correspond to reality because it covers two contradictory phenomena: “lumpen development” and “emergence”. The first is a development characterised by economic growth and at the same time pauperisation of the population. While emergence is characterised by a sovereign construction of a coherent, integrated and efficient national productive system capable of competition and exportation, accompanied by a rural development allowing an equal access to land for the rural population and a guarantee of national food sovereignty. According to these criteria, the only country really emerging is China. Some other countries have only certain elements of emergence like Brazil and India. While many countries do not have any element of emergence at all: they are more precisely “submerging” and suffering from lumpen development, a development based on mainly natural resources and characterised by the growing middle class and the impoverishment of the popular class or the enlargement of the gap between the rich and the poor.

6. Other issues

Some other issues have been evoked, without involving discussion, but may be developed in future meetings:

- a) The African question. The relationship between Africa and the world (Europe, America, Asia) reveals the weakness of Africa: there is a risk that the destiny of Africa continues to be decided by others. Why? It is a vast theme of discussion to be treated in a meeting.
- b) China: sovereign or imperialist? China is sovereign, fine. But is not it also imperialist? Especially regarding its close neighbours: Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines, Vietnam... For example, the sovereignty claimed by China over almost all of the Eastern Sea (or the South China Sea) is “problematic”; it is the source of recurrent high tensions in these regions.
- c) The reunification of Korea
- d) The women question
- e) The question of religious diversity tearing up Africa and Asia
- f) The question of arms control
- g) The question of Palestine

ACTIVITIES AND TARGETS

The activities (conferences, cultural events, workshops, publications,...) are to be organised in order to set-up and develop co-operation among academic



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and civil society organisations in search of response to the Bandung Spirit message described above. More precisely, the activities are to be held for the following targets:

1. Sharing experiences, knowledge, reflection and concern related to the present world order and its impacts on all levels of societal life
2. Exploring possibilities of co-operation among academic and civil society organisations in response to the Bandung Spirit message
3. Producing a declaration, or a resolution, or a statement, or a charter as guidelines of actions based on Bandung Spirit message
4. Disseminating the result of the activities to the public through diverse forms of publication

BASIC QUESTIONS

A consensual, collaborative final statement, declaration, resolution or charter is to be elaborated before and during the commemorative conference. It will be based on the following basic questions: what is a “SOVEREIGN PROJECT” for the peoples, the nations and the States of the South that allows:

1. An economic development for the benefit of the majority of the people?
2. A political evolution in line with the democratisation of society?
3. A reinforcement of the capacity of Nation-State in becoming an active actor of the construction of the world, not just a subject or a victim of globalisation imposed unilaterally by the centres of historical capitalism and imperialism?

SEMINARS

The collective work is planned to be organised in plenary and parallel seminars under a general theme HISTORY and five sectoral themes following the five pillars of sustainable development: CULTURE, ECOLOGY, ECONOMY, POLITICS AND SPIRITUALITY & RELIGION. The TOR of every seminar is to be prepared by the coordinator of the respective seminar.

TENTATIVE ITINERARY AND PROGRAMME OUTLINE

JAKARTA

Date	Venue	Programme
Monday 26/10		
Tuesday 27/10	LIPI	Plenary Seminar on HISTORY (day) Moving to Bandung by bus (night)

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Wednesday 28/10	MUSEUM	Plenary Seminar on CULTURE, ECOLOGY, ECONOMY, POLITICS AND SPIRITUALITY & RELIGION (day)
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Thursday 29/10	MUSEUM	Cultural evening (night) Parallel Seminars on CULTURE, ECOLOGY, ECONOMY, POLITICS AND SPIRITUALITY & RELIGION (day) Moving to Jakarta (night)
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Friday 30/10	TRISAKTI	Workshops towards FINAL DECLARATION/CHARTER/MANIFESTO (day)
Saturday 31/10	To be decided	Cultural evening (night) DECLARATION and submission of DECLARATION to the Government of Indonesia (morning) Farewell Lunch (noon)

PARTICIPANTS

The main participants of the conference are academics and activists of social and solidarity movements (including artists) from Africa and Asia as well as those from other parts of the world whose work deals with Africa and/or Asia. The event is also a place for dialogues between civil society movements and other actors of development. A certain number of participants from government and business sectors will therefore be invited to join.

FINANCING

The event is supposed to be a common concern of African and Asian universities and civil society organisations as well as other institutions in favour of Afro-Asian development. Fundraising is therefore supposed to be done by the two sides involved in the event. On one side, every participant is supposed to find maximum financial support possible. On the other side, the Organising Institutions are supposed to find financial support from diverse sources (including government, funding agencies and business sector) in order to cover the cost of the organisation of the conference and the participation of the keynote speakers and invited speakers.