

SAMIR AMIN

THE REVIVAL OF THE MOVEMENT OF NON ALIGNED COUNTRIES

If the repeated discourse of the Western media is to be believed, the idea of the revival of the Non-Alignment is unrealistic. According to that discourse, all that happened in the world between 1945 and 1990 can be explained merely by the 'cold war' and nothing else. The Soviet Union disappeared and the page of the Cold War has been turned, and any posture analogous to what we have known has no meaning. Let us examine the ineptitude of this discourse and its incredibly dismissive prejudice - nay, even racism. What is its basis? The real story of Bandung and Non-Alignment that arose from it showed that the peoples of Asia and Africa actually seized at the time an initiative by themselves and for themselves. The reader will find in what I have written a demonstration that the Non-Alignment was already a movement of countries non aligned on globalisation ' in contrast to the globalisation that the imperialist powers wanted to impose on countries that had regained their independence, substituting the deceased colonialism with a neocolonialism.

Non-Alignment constituted a refusal to comply with the requirements of this renewed imperialist globalisation. Imperialism won the battle, for the moment at least. Non-Alignment was, therefore, itself a positive factor in the transformation of the world for the better, despite all its limitations. The Soviet Union understood at the time the benefits it could derive through its support for the Non-Aligned, especially because the Soviet Union was also in conflict with the dominant system of globalisation, and suffered from the isolation into which the Atlantic powers locked it. Moscow realised that by supporting the Non-Aligned it could break this isolation. In contrast, the imperialist powers fought against Non-Alignment because it was not 'aligned' to globalisation.

Call it 'Bandung 2', if you like. Of course 'the world has changed' since then (this observation reveals its extreme banality). Thus the new imperialist globalisation is not a copy of the one that Bandung faced. The discourse that reduces Non-Alignment to an avatar of the Cold War reflects a persistent prejudice in the West: the peoples of Asia and Africa were unable to drive the initiative on their own then, and they are no more capable of doing so now. They are doomed forever to be manipulated by the major powers (primarily Western of course). This contempt barely conceals a profound racism. As if the Algerians, for example had taken up arms to please Moscow, or perhaps Washington, and they had been manipulated to this end by certain leaders who had chosen to play a game of playing one power against another. No, their decision stemmed from their just desire to be free of colonialism, the form that globalisation took in that era. And when they implemented their own decisions, the battleground is drawn between those who supported the struggles and those who opposed them. That is the reality of history.

1. We live in an unbalanced globalisation, unequal and unjust. Some have exclusive rights to access all the resources of the planet for their own use or even to waste. For others, their obligation is to accept this order and adjust their own requirements, even to give up their own development, waive their rights to basic food, education, health, life itself for large segments of their people - our people. This unjust order is called 'globalisation'.

We should even accept that the beneficiary powers of this unjust world order, mainly the United States, the European Union and associated military partners in NATO, have the right to intervene by force of arms to enforce their abusive rights to use - even to pillage - our own wealth. They do so using various pretexts - the war against terrorism when it suits them. But the facts show that in neither Iraq nor Libya, for example, did their intervention help restore democracy. On the contrary, their interventions have simply destroyed the states and societies concerned. They did not open the way to progress and democracy, but rather closed them.

Our movement could be called the Non-Aligned Movement on Globalisation. We are not opponents to any form of globalisation. We are opponents of this unjust form of globalisation in which we are the victims.

2. The responses we want to give to this challenge are simple to formulate in terms of their major principles.

We have the right to chose our own path of development. The powers that were and are the beneficiaries of the existing order should accept to adjust themselves to the requirements of our development. The adjustment must be mutual, not unilateral. That is, it is not the weak who have to adjust to the strong, but rather the strong need to adjust to the needs of the weak. The legal principle should be designed to redress injustices, not to perpetrate them. We have the right to implement our own sovereign development projects. We reject the tenets of globalisation that are currently in place.

Our sovereign development project must be designed to enable our nations and our states to industrialise as they see fit, in the legal and social structures of their choice, those that allow us to capture and develop ourselves with modern technologies. These must be designed to ensure food sovereignty and allow all strata of our people to be the beneficiaries of development, halting ongoing processed of impoverishment.

The implementation of our sovereign projects require us to regain our financial sovereignty. It is not up to us to adjust the financial plunder for the benefit of the banks of the dominant economic powers. The global financial system must itself be forced to adjust to the implications of our sovereignty.

It is up to us to define the ways and means of developing South-South cooperation that can facilitate the success of our sovereign development projects.

3. Our movement can and must act within the UN to restore their rights violated by the unjust globalisation order.

At present a so-called 'international community' has proclaimed itself as a replacement of the UN. Media of dominant powers keep repeating the phrases: "The International Community believes this or that, decides this or that". Looking more closely, we discover that the 'international community' they refer to is made up of the United States, the European Union and two or three handpicked countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Is there anything more seriously insulting to our people than this self-proclamation ? China,

Algeria , Egypt , Senegal, Angola, Venezuela , Brazil , Thailand, Russia, Costa Rica and many other countries apparently no longer exist. They no longer have the right to make their voices heard in the international community. Yes, we bear a great responsibility in the UN environment where we are a major group. But this requires the restoration of the rights of the UN, the only acceptable framework for the expression of the international community.

4. We can now take a look at our past, which provides us a great lessons about what we once were and what we should be again.

The Non-Aligned Movement was formed in 1960 in the path opened by the Bandung Conference of 1955. It sought to assert the rights of our peoples and nations of Asia and Africa which had not then been recognised as being worthy of being partners in the reconstruction of a new world order. Our movement was not the by-product of conflict between the two major powers of the time - the USA and the USSR - and the "Cold War " as may try to make us believe. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Asia and Africa were still largely subjected to odious colonialism. Our people were engaged in powerful struggles to regain our independence by peaceful means or by means of liberation war if necessary. Having regained our independence and restored the existence of our states we found ourselves in conflict with the world order that wanted to impose on us at the time. Our Movement of Non-Aligned Countries then proclaimed our right to choose our route to development, implemented laws and forced the powers of the time to adjust to the demands of our development.

Certain powers at that time accepted it. Others did not. Western powers - the United States and the countries of what would become the European Union, already involved in NATO since 1949 - have never hidden their hostility to our own project of independent development. They fought us by all means at their disposal. Other powers , the USSR first, chose a different path for us. They accepted and even supported the positions of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The military power that the USSR represented during that era in effect limited the possibilities of aggression by those nostalgic of colonialism and consistently ardent supporters of the unjust international order.

We can therefore say that even if the world today is no longer that of 1960 - a banal and obvious observation - the Movement of Non-Aligned there was already 60-year ago was a *Movement of countries Non Aligned on Globalisation*, that globalisation they wanted to impose on us at the time.