One-day seminar

BANDUNG 60 YEARS ON: WHAT ASSESSMENT?
University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne
June 27, 2014

Summary Report
Presented by Darwis Khudori

Some of the presenters and participants of the seminar
The seminar was rich and fascinating. Around 30 participants including 12 presenters were involved the whole day from 8:30 to 18:00 local time. The following summary report is aimed at giving a general idea on the content and the actors of the day. A more complete report in French is available at http://www.bandungspirit.org/ and the complete proceedings of the seminar will be published in 2015.

**Why the seminar in Paris?**
The seminar was organised for several reasons. The first reason is the importance of the Bandung Conference to world history. The second is that the Bandung Conference will have its 60th anniversary in 2015. It is an opportunity to be taken for rethinking the world in relation to that essential event. The Bandung Spirit Network (of scholars and activists of social and solidarity movements) is organising a series of events along 2014-2015 in the framework of commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, in every possible place. The final event (conferences, gatherings, festivals…) will take place in Indonesia in October/November 2015. The third reason is that the ANRI (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia) have submitted a proposal for the adoption of the Indonesian archives of Bandung Conference as a part of the UNESCO’s Memory of the World in 2015. The outcome of the seminar may be useful for the UNESCO’s deliberations. The fourth reason is that many scholars and intellectuals interested and concerned by the Bandung Conference live in Paris, in France and in its neighbouring countries. They were willing to participate in the seminar at their own expense. It was logical that the seminar was to be organised in Paris. The fifth reason is that the CHAC (Centre d’Histoire de l’Asie Contemporaine) of the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne was willing to host the seminar.

**What is the main question?**
The 1955 Bandung Asian-African Conference was a turning point in world history. For the first time in world history representatives of the former colonised nations united their forces and proposed alternatives to the world order dominated by the superpowers. It is the birthday of the so-called Third World countries, a term that indicates the willingness of those nations to
take position outside the two blocks of superpowers. The conference has triggered solidarity movements among peoples, countries, states and nations of Africa and Asia. It has 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 has accelerated the complete reconquest of independence of Africa and Asia. It has led to the Non-Aligned Movement between the two blocks of superpowers. It has allowed the newly independent countries to lead a development based on their national, popular and sovereign interests. It has contributed enormously to the prevention of a possible third World War and to the evolution of humanity towards a more just and peaceful world. It has given birth to an idiom: Bandung Spirit, which can be summarised as a call 1) for a peaceful coexistence among the nations, 2) for liberation of the world from the hegemony of any superpower, from colonialism, from imperialism, from any kind of 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 for their emancipation. However, the period of development generated by the Bandung Conference was ended tragically around 1970 by the overthrow of the leaders inspired by the Bandung Spirit, the abortion of their development projects, the entry of their country into the Western Block circle. This period was called later the Bandung Era.

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 persists, 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. On the other hand, some countries have been considered to be “emerging”, such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, known as BRICS, but also Argentina, Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey... which have been included in the G20: the 20 largest economies in the world.

So, what assessment could be made of the Bandung Conference?

Who are the speakers
Mr. Samir AMIN — Egypt/Senegal/France (emeritus professor of economics, founder and activist of Third World Forum and World Forum for Alternatives)
Mr. Youcef BENABDALLAH — Algeria (professor of economics at Ecole Nationale Supérieure de la Statistique et d'Economie Appliquée)
M. Omar BENDERRA — Algeria/France (economist, former president of public bank in Algeria, activist of Frantz Fanon Foundation)
Mr. Adams BODOMO — Ghana/Austria (professor of African Studies at the University of Vienna)
Mr. Amzat BOUKARI-YABARA — Benin/Martinique/France (historian, specialist in African and Latin American Studies)
Ms Nadia CHETTAB — Algeria (professor of economics, University of Annaba)
Mr. Darwis KHUDORI — Indonesia/France (architect and historian, associate professor of Oriental Studies, University of Le Havre)
Mr. Lazare KI-ZERBO — Burkina Faso/France (philosopher, executive secretary of the Comité international Joseph Ki-Zerbo)
Mr. Boutros LABAKI — Lebanon (professor of economics and history, Libanese University)
Ms. NGUYEN Dac Nhu-Mai — Vietnam/France (historian of International Relations, former associate researcher at CNRS)
Mr. Ricardo PARVEX — Chile/France (biologist, former staff of Salvador Allende’s government, journalist, lecturer at the University of Paris 5)
Mr. Dominique Martin SAATENANG — Cameroon/France (known as Black China, expert of martial arts, ambassador of Shaolin Temple)
Mr. Hugues TERTRAIS — France (professor of history, director of the Centre d’histoire de l’Asie contemporaine)

How was the day organised?
The seminar was organised as a journey from the past to the present, from inside to outside, from Bandung to the world. After a welcoming word by the host (Hugues Tertrais, director of CHAC) and an introduction by the seminar initiator and coordinator (Darwis Khudori, lecturer and researcher at GRIC), the day was started by a projection of four short documentary films on the Bandung Conference, followed by comments and discussion.

The following part of the seminar took place in three successive panel discussions. The first one dealt with the Bandung Conference and its impacts. There were five speakers in this panel, successively Darwis Khudori (Written works related to the Bandung Conference: state of knowledge), Samir Amin (Deployment and erosion of the Bandung project), Boutros Labaki (Context and impact of Bandung on Arab East), Amzat Boukari-Yabara (From Richard Wright to Malcolm X: vision and influence of Bandung on the Afro-American struggle) and Adams Bodomo (Africa-Asia relations: How Bandung redefined area and international studies), followed by a plenary discussion.

This morning session ended at 12:45.

Started at 14:30, the afternoon session was dedicated to the second and third panel discussions. The second panel discussion dealt with the follow-up of the Bandung Conference in Africa and Asia. Three speakers presented their contributions: Lazare Ki-Zerbo (Experience of the International South Group Network under the light of Bandung), Youcef Benabdallah (Experience of development in Africa and Asia: the logics of development through the case of Algeria, Korea and China) and Nadia Chettab (Africa and the economic locomotives of the South: reality and perspectives). After a plenary discussion, the second was followed immediately by the third panel discussion dedicated to the development in Africa, Asia and Latin America in connection with the Bandung Conference. There were three speakers for this session: Ricardo Parvex (These last seventy years in Latino-American continent: between the Non-Alignment and the Cold War), Omar Benderra (From Bandung to BRICS: a Fanonian outlook on the multipolarity) and Nguyen Dac Nhu-Mai (New Bandung Spirit: an opportunity for the renaissance of a multipolar world), followed by a plenary discussion.

After all, at the end of the day, the participants could enjoy a “fruit” of the Bandung Conference, a film on the relationship between China and Africa that has allowed an African to be a master of martial art and ambassador of Shaolin Temple. The hero of the film himself, Dominique Martin Saatenang, presented the film. The discussion following the film ended towards 18:00.
What are the main issues of the discussions?

In addition to the paper presentations, the discussions following every session allowed the deepening and the extension of the theme of the day. Among the issues discussed or evoked in the discussions, here are the essential ones:

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. France and Bandung

   The hostility of the Western Block (USA, UK, France…) regarding the initiative of the Bandung Conference has been revealed in divers books. A study on the archives of USA, UK and Japan on the Bandung Conference has been published. As for the French position, a study on the French diplomatic archives shows that France shared that hostility. As a colonial power, France was very concerned by the Bandung Conference: the Vietnam affair was not totally settled; North Africa claimed their independence; Algerian war had just started; Sub-Saharan Africa started to move... The French archives reveal that France followed closely the Bandung Conference and its constellation: Bogor, Bandung, Cairo, Conakry, Beograd, Moshi, Algiers... since its preparation in 1954 to its end in 1965.

4. 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
5. The enlargement of Bandung
The alignment of Latin America to the Bandung movements started in the 1960s with the foundation of Non-Aligned Movement (Beograd 1961) and the Tricontinentale 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 alliance of Bandung comprising the peoples of Tricontinentale 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.

6. 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.

7. The China-Africa relationship
In response to the call of the Bandung Final Communiqué, China is the only country participant of Bandung that has been developing economic and cultural cooperation with Africa in a methodical, systematic, consistent and continuous way since the end of the 1950s up to the present. Its approach is completely different from that of G7 (EU, USA, Japan). The latter takes a position of “donor” imposing severe conditions (especially liberalisation and privatisation), which put the national sovereignty of African countries into danger, for African countries wishing to receive their “aid”. On the other side, the “win-win” pattern of Chinese approach does not impose any condition on Africa in its exchanges with China. Meanwhile, regarding Chinese actions in Africa, many criticisms have been written, especially by representatives of the North, since China became the first trading partner of Africa in 2008,
overtaking USA and EU. This issue should be watched carefully by using scientific approaches rigorously.

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

a) The African problem. 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
Les photos sur les pages suivantes sont extraites des photos plus larges prises lors de la journée par Darwis Khudori, Wilma Margono, Nguyen Dac Nhu-Mai et Louis Reymondon. Les premières treize photos sur cette page représentent les intervenants prévus de la journée, les trois dernières photos les intervenants spontanés. Jim Adhilimas a témoigné de sa participation à la Conférence de Bandung en tant que jeune bénévole de l’organisation de l’événement. Tandis que Wilma Margono a parlé de la participation de son père à la conférence. Quant à Rémy Herrera (économiste, CNRS, Paris I), il a évoqué la similarité de ce qui se passe actuellement en Amérique Latine avec Bandung.


On y voit parmi les intervenants : Samir Amin, Youcef Benabdallah, Nadia Chettab, Nguyen Dac Nhu-Mai et Dominique Martin Saatenang.

Au centre : Samir Amin. On y voit Boutros Labaki derrière Samir Amin.
Dominique Martin Saatenang et Boutros Labaki.


Photo de famille. On y voit aussi des participants non intervenants.