EDITORIAL

EXIT FROM THE HEGEMONIC NARRATIVE

By Isaac Bazié

We owe Samir Amin the insistent and clear-sighted observation that it is necessary to "exit from capitalism in crisis" and not "exit from the crisis of capitalism". That is, in his view, the proper way "to pursue another route". Very clearly then that this capitalist edifice in crisis, with its variations over time and its mechanisms of domination and exploitation, cannot be renovated to ensure the flourishing of marginalized peoples: it is necessary to exit from it! In the Spirit of Bandung, that means "liberation" from all forms of domination on one side and, on the other side, "emancipation" based on people's interest and that of local and global sustainability in conformity with UN Charter.

That emancipation implicates being aware of the "duties of independence", as President Sukarno formulated it in his opening speech at the Bandung Conference on 18 April 1955. The exit of this neoliberal building that has housed historical colonization and its sophisticated forms until the 21st century has several doors. One of them concerns exiting from the single narrative hegemony that has been ruling and using manipulable jargons such as universalism, civilization, colonization, globalization, good governance, democracy, etc.

By hegemonic narrative, I mean the exclusive narrative that goes alongside the domination and exploitation of former colonized vast regions of the world. It unfolds currently through the obligation put upon millions of people to live according to the laws of neoliberalism, to adopt political, cultural, and moral values forged by the West and its allies. That is the discursive and rational apparatus that justifies, accompanies, and imposes the legitimacy of the unique neoliberal model and its practices in the rest of the world. It is not only a machine for producing discourses and values. It also provides ways of reading and understanding the imperialist processes so as not to question them. The exit from that hegemonic narrative requires that we take the right measure of one of its consequences: it has imposed itself durably in such a way as to become a tradition. This fact negatively impacts the mindset of communities in search of alternative options. Consequently, that hegemonic narrative becoming tradition in the minds of dominated people is now hard to challenge and remove.

Consequences of a hegemonic narrative that has become a tradition

In several African languages, "tradition" literally means: "what we were born and found"; to put it another way: "what was there before we were born". It refers to a framework of beliefs,
knowledge, and practices that form a complex whole with sometimes blurred contours. This complex whole comprises a hard core around which the members of a community gathering. They share these beliefs, this knowledge, and these practices, transmit them from one generation to another. That also allows collective identities to endure over time. Many traditions "that were there before we were born" have not always been introduced in a concerted manner, or for the benefit of the communities, quite the contrary. That is precisely the case in the African context: colonial and post-colonial structures created a tradition of economic dependence ("the miserable practices of giving 'aid'", as Samir Amin put it), an impoverishment of the imaginaries, and a fear of going off the beaten track.

Much has been said about the economic dependence of formerly colonized countries. It is commonplace that many countries are held at arm's length by "international aid" in vital areas such as health, education, nutrition, etc. It is embarrassing to notice that what should be an exception – aid – has become a norm that feeds expectations on the part of those who are permanently assisted (and exploited), without a generalized and significant explosion of that outrage that led President Thomas Sankara (Burkina Faso) to achieve food self-sufficiency in only 4 years! The absence of this proud outrage is a consequence of historical violence that has given birth to a tradition: the consequences of historical violence that have become normal. However, it is enough to take a step back to see that tradition, including the economic dependence of many African countries, may lead to absurd behaviors: Several years ago, in a village in Burkina Faso, a proud father refused to use an animal-drawn plow to cultivate his field, preferring to continue using the hoe! The justification he gave for this completely irrational behavior: "A donkey will never feed me!" It would have been demeaning to cultivate his fields with an animal that was not noble in his eyes! Before he was born, people used to cultivate their fields with a hoe...

Tradition. In a bus full of passengers on an African track, people complain about difficult living conditions. One of the passengers asks: "What do the white people think of our situation? Why do they not come and help us?" This young passenger was born into conditions where he understood that development had to come from outside, from the white man... Tradition.

This economic dependence is only one of the consequences of a more general historical and political phenomenon: the imposition of a single model, based on Western values and structures, and imposed in colonial contexts; this model has become over time a tradition, with changing forms and names, but very effective. The Spirit of Bandung stands against the obligation – even after historical and explicit colonization – to adopt a way of thinking and being imposed by foreign powers; it defends peoples' right to live their temporality, to find the answers they deem appropriate to the challenges they face and to freely choose their allies on the world stage. This is the opposite of the colonization-Westernization-globalization of the world.

The unique model that has imposed itself over time has found fundamental values and paradigms through which it operates: Western democracy, neoliberalism, etc. The recent demonstrations in Havana allow some Western political leaders, in their capacity as apostles of the hegemonic Westen model, to lecture Cuba on the voice and needs of the Cuban people. What happens after they spent decades strangulating Cuba through the embargo, intending to prove that the Cuban model will not work.

The Coronavirus pandemic and other global issues highlighted the impasse if we focus on only one way to solve the local and global problems: what happens when it appears once again that the West can't find the solution for the global issues, including the long-lasting consequences of having colonized and influenced big parts of the world? One of the main consequences of the single model that has become a tradition is the lack of alternatives: following the same path for a long time weakens the capacity and boldness to imagine and to take other ways. One of the challenges of the 21st century is to reconnect with the alternative principles and ideals with which the cardinal values of the Bandung Spirit are associated, to imagine solutions to local and global crises other than the hegemonic model: these are crises like the environmental issue, living together and the question of diversity, resources sharing, peacekeeping, and sustainable conflict resolution, etc.
Facing the duties of independence: Boldness to Innovate and explore alternative ways

The growing decolonial movement in Africa, as well as the rise of Asia in general, supported by a wave of innovative practices, are now strengthening on the one hand new dynamics for collaboration, understanding and development in the Global South; on the other hand, these new trends face, in the Global North, a culture and a narrative of threat (suspending the aid politics), suspicion, fear and taboo. Indeed, the imposition of the unique Western model was also done by the implementation of a violent repression since colonial times, of whoever could raise against that project: this is how in French-speaking Africa for instance, the legendary complicity between the “Blacks” and the “Reds” (communists) also gave rise to violence and crimes that cost the lives of several anti-colonial leaders. Today, this same culture of fear and suspicion remains, even if it operates less through open and direct violence, and more through institutional strategy, and rhetoric of fear and warning: for instance, warning against China, warning against authoritarian drifts and the absence/backsliding of Western-style democracy etc. It is precisely what Sukarno was pointing out to the attendees of the Bandung conference: “do not be guided by these fears, because fear is an acid who etches man’s actions into curious patterns. Be guided by hopes and determination, be guided by ideals, and, yes, be guided by dreams!” The single model becoming a tradition has traced a path and pattern that lead from Africa to Europe and North America. The narrative of fear and suspicion from the Western against alternative paths and models is intended to keep subordinated subjects following the same old way of dependence. It has been supported by those subjects themselves, because dependence has become a tradition, and also because it seems more secure to use one’s shoes on old paths than trying to go on new ways.

But time is changing again since the Bandung days and the struggles for independence in the following years. Boldness and innovative initiatives are being experiences. Three decades ago, Thomas Sankara succeeded in his fight against hunger in former Upper Volta, whose name he changed into Burkina Faso, “the Land of upright people”. Under Paul Kagame’s leadership, post-genocide Rwanda is now a prized destination for sponsors and those who look for a safe and prospering place to invest, work and live! Eloquently, this land made the choice to become anglophone within a few years, exiting from the francophone ghetto that was not it’s choice, but only one of the handicapping legacies of colonialism. The achievements of the revolutionary Thomas Sankara as well those of President Kagame didn’t occur by politely demanding the rulers of the imperialist world order the permission to develop their countries: they have been made possible through boldness! That is the keyword and foundation of the strong desire to exit from the hegemonic narrative. The first one, Sankara, had enough boldness to reject the idea of “aid” that means subjugation; the second one, Kagame, implemented bold local and international politics which direct benefits are the redesigning of his country, provision for basic needs and more; the recently change in the bilateral relationship between Rwanda and France, which is now based on mutual respect, is one of the consequences of that boldness. Boldness is the key, when it becomes clear that the hegemonic model is no more acceptable, because it is what makes the difference between frustrated diagnosis and innovative steps on new ways. We hear it from Ghana’s President Nana Akufo-Addo, advocating for African solutions for African Problems: “We have to get away from this mindset of dependence”. Boldness to build as he says, “a Ghana beyond aid” while lecturing with a smile France’s President, Emmanuel Macron, and the audience on the responsibility of Africans to care for themselves.

Without boldness, the potential innovations that are reachable by Africa and Asia for instance will be quite difficult to achieve. African countries have more realities and challenges in common with many Asian countries than with European or North American countries: the management of complex linguistic realities, religious and cultural diversity, the challenges of innovating and applying an adequate political model in the formation of national identities, cultural values and relations between generations and genders are all issues that the Global North has addressed in its own way, and that Africa has more in common with Asia and the Global South in the broad and inclusive sense of the term.

The reference to the Bandung Spirit is, from this point of view, a statement in favor of freedom of choice and the flourishing of alternative thinking.
It is about having the boldness to exit from the single narrative and its beaten path, to defy the warnings and fears, and dare to take new initiative. Recent history has shown that this is the way of the future through several examples: the affirmation of Ubuntu as a value based on the interdependence between individuals and communities (see article below Bandung Spirit Thinker and Actor); the use of the palaver tree model by women in Mali for better female participation in the survival of communities weakened by terrorist violence; the revitalization of desert areas through locally inspired practices as achieved by the alternative Nobel Prize (see article in Challenges and Alternatives in Bandung Spirit Bulletin April-July 2021). On a larger scale, South-South cooperation in the spirit of consensus and not of opposition and majority reason are all extraordinary real and potential avenues. These are alternative exit doors from the hegemonic narrative.

May the Bandung Spirit Bulletin contribute to the construction of alternative narratives.

BANDUNG SPIRIT WATCH

HAITI AND CUBA:
Haitian killers stalk Cuba

By Leonel Nodal
Cuban journalist and writer based in Havana, Cuba

Haiti and Cuba are in trouble. This is what the mainstream Western press repeats. And they are right to put the two island nations of the Caribbean in the same bag. Their destinies have a common root.

The two Antillean nations, separated by 77 kilometers from the Paso de los Vientos, share the role of two revolutions, which mark milestones in the history of America. The peoples of these two nations committed the same capital sin, unforgivable, by establishing precedents that attacked the global colonial order of the 18th century (Haiti) or the imperialist order of the 20th century (Cuba).

In the case of Haiti – by undertaking an uprising that marked the beginning of the end of the colonial slave regime. Cuba, by promoting a process of necessary economic and social changes that put an end to Washington's dominance over the Island, which proclaimed itself the first socialist country in America, just 150 kilometers (90 miles) from the United States.

Assassination in Haiti, riots in Cuba

The recent assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse captured the attention of the world press, which presents scenes from a country plunged into barbarism.

As for Cuba, they spread vandalism against public buildings, looting of commercial establishments and violent attacks on police officers by groups of people whom they described as "dissatisfied with the handling by the communist government" of a critical lack of food and medicines amid the rigors
of the Covid-19 pandemic, which is why they "demand a regime change" in the country.

In both cases, the simplification of the news commits unforgivable faults.

Oblivious accomplices and necessary memory

The recent assassination in Haiti is one of an endless list, which like others, barely hides a new interference by the United States and its allies in the political leadership of the country. The novelty consists of the blatant use of a commando of Colombian and American mercenaries, remotely guided by a recruiting agency, who appears on behalf of a Venezuelan opponent based in Miami.

It seems casual, but the assassination of the current president in Haiti and the political disturbances that occurred in Cuba have a common origin in the United States, precisely in Miami, where bandits from Venezuela and Colombia mix with their fellow men of Cuban or Haitian origin, a whole crápula that has its privileged refuge in Doral, the same place where Donald Trump’s organization reigns.

It does not matter what the author of the assassination of the Haitian president is called, or who supported him. They are the usual ones, the murderers of Haiti who for more than a century have reappeared again and again to prevent their rebirth.

The purpose is the same. The details matter little. All this is theater, videofilms to entertain the news, cellophane paper to elegantly wrap another robbery of the punished Caribbean nation.

In 1958, Cuba, like Haiti and the Dominican Republic, which share the neighboring island of Hispaniola, were ruled by three sinister military dictatorships, exercising despotic power with the full backing of the United States. Fulgencio Batista, Francois Duvalier and Leonidas Trujillo were the heir generals of a history of bloody coups d’état, united by their services to the new expansionist empire of the north, plundering wealth under the mask of a beneficial investor.

"Humanitarian interventions" of the United States began in Cuba, when in 1898 they prevented the victory of the Cuban independence army against Spain to impose an amendment voted by the Washington Congress to the first Constitution of the nascent republic, which would legalize the theft of their lands, ports and natural wealth, but above all their sovereignty and self-determination, attributing the right to intervene when they deem it convenient.
That subjection to Yankee imperial power lasted until January 1, 1959, when the revolution led by Fidel Castro overthrew the protected dictatorship of Washington.

The hostility of the northern power was manifested immediately, before the trials and convictions of criminals and torturers, or even more after the application of an Agrarian Reform Law that nationalized the US large estates. Washington did not accept the Cuban compensation proposal and immediately launched a sanctions policy that resulted in a total economic, commercial and financial blockade that lasts until today, designed to starve the resistance of Cubans and provoke the desired "change of regime".

**Haitian punishment, a model for Cuba**

In Haiti, the prosperous French Caribbean coffee and sugar colony of the mid-18th century, the 300,000 black slaves forcibly uprooted from Africa had the audacity to rise up in 1793 against the monarchical power of France, under the leadership of François Dominique Toussaint-Louverture, died 1802. His successor, Jean Jacques Dessalines defeated the French troops in 1803.

And another January 1 – 1804 – Haiti was proclaimed the first independent country in Latin America and second in the American continent after the United States, which coldly welcomed the libertarian epic of the Haitians, since several of the Founding Fathers of the Union approved slavery, which they kept in force.

Haitians – slaves who won their freedom – would never be forgiven. The price placed on their daring would be an unpayable debt, plunging them into misery and starving them to death.

In 1824, France demanded 150 million francs from Haiti (what today would be $ 21 billion), in exchange for recognition of its independence. The debt, which was 10 times greater than Haiti’s annual income at that time, would have to be paid within 30 years. Haiti was paying that debt until 1947.

Until 1915 few Haitian presidents finished their seven-year term. The United States made no secret of its intention to use Haitian territory as a potential military base. After a long succession of coups, in 1915 President Wodrow Wilson ordered the invasion of Haiti on the pretext of countering the influence of the German Empire, restoring order after the death of President Jean Vilbrun Guillaume Sam at the hands of an angry people, and defending the interests of the American investment bank Kuhn, Loeb & Co. founded in 1867 by Jewish capital that merged with Lehman Brothers in 1977.

The United States extended its occupation from 1915 to 1934, with the supposed purpose of cleaning up public finances, creating an army, building schools, roads, etc.

In the shadow of the occupation, the Haitian Constitution was amended to allow foreigners to own Haitian properties. In this way the land was taken from the peasants to create large plantations. This caused outrage among the people, who rose in revolts that the United States in turn brutally repressed, killing between 15,000 and 30,000 Haitians.

The occupiers left Haiti in 1934, leaving behind the ruthless National Army, trained by their military instructors to repress the people. Starting in 1950, the anti-communist wave propagated by Washington in Latin America, sponsored the most barbarous military dictatorships, such as that of François Duvalier, called "Papa Doc", continued until 1971 by his son Jean Claude (Baby Doc) with the employment of a paramilitary force called "the tonton macutes", death squads that sowed terror and death for 30 years.

The United States has intervened three more times with supposed "humanitarian purposes", but the results are in sight.

The blockade, isolation and payment of a ruinous debt imposed on Haiti are the matrix of the punishment model designed for Cuba by the United States in the so-called Cuba Democracy Act, which made the blockade law, if they ever achieved the dream – already destroyed in Playa Girón, in 1961 – to overthrow the Revolution and re-impose its hegemony, as they did until January 1, 1959.

What they forget is that, despite its geographical proximity, Cuba is not Haiti.
NAM WATCH

After Cornwall’s G7: NAM’S GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION

By M. Faishal Aminuddin

At the G7 meeting in Cornwall, the UK reached an agreement that the group of strong and democratic economies would implement the Build Back Better World (B3W) scheme initiated by the United States. The scheme aims to compete with China’s Belt Road Initiative (BRI) while conveying that their scheme stands on a “value-driven, high-standard and transparent” partnership. Beijing responded to the move by criticizing that the era in which the world was ruled by only one country or bloc was over.

Clubs of G7 countries are actually more bound by capitalist economic values, democratic politics and industrialism. Even in unilateral cooperation among the club’s members, it is very open to build partnerships with other countries. This is why the G7 economic bloc is actually not rigid. The economic club under it, the G20 actually has great potential in economic and natural resources but they are not able to simply take control of the various organizations that are the instruments of the G7 club to dictate international economic and monetary policies.

The emergence of China as a world economic giant has an impact on changes in the geopolitical structure. The BRI scheme was launched by Xi Jinping as a part of the ambitious overseas economic campaign, breaking through geographical boundaries, cutting border administration barriers and spurring economic productivity and of course the exploitation of natural resources. Its expansion is carried out by financing infrastructure programs that connect China with various countries and regions. Regional economic integration can be realized when everything is well connected.

China wants to restore the glory of many nations from trading through the Silk Road Economic Belt for land infrastructure networks and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road for strategic port coverage and shipping lane security. China only focuses on expanding its economic influence without building or expanding its political values and ideology. Thus, China is not burdened by moral responsibilities or carries certain political and religious prejudices that harm its interests. They can more freely relate to various countries with their own systems, ideologies and values.

Geopolitically, the expansion of China's economic influence can be used to build strategic alliances for their defense and security interests. Even though the status of China in NAM is observer, most of NAM member countries are its strategic partners, for example the China-Pakistan economic
corridor that builds the highway from Kashgar to the Port of Gwadar in Pakistan; in Indonesia, the Chinese financing is determinant in the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed rail project and several locations of giant seaports on the island of Java. All financing is carried out through the China Development Bank where as of 2017, there have been 900 projects in 60 countries built worth USD 890 billion. The number of countries involved is double from only 10 countries that joined after two years of BRI’s inception. By 2020, the number of countries involved will be 139 countries.

In Asia, apart from China, the significant strength of the NAM member state is India. Economic cooperation between India and Latin American countries has increased to USD 36 billion in 2019. In term GDP, India is the only NAM member country outside the G7 that occupies the top five of the world under the US, China, Japan and Germany, all making 55 percent world GDP. China accounts for 16.38 percent of world GDP but in terms of Power Parity Purchasing (PPP) it is already the first. This means, in terms of population, if India can also record high and constant economic growth, it could be in second place behind China in terms of PPP. However, China and India have a history of conflict. Likewise between India and Pakistan so that India prefers to provide development assistance to Afghanistan such as an injection of USD 3 billion for infrastructure projects.

NAM has become a kind of “forum for political movements” between countries that do not yet appear to have a strong basis for economic cooperation. If we look at the 1955 Bandung principles, there are two points that can be used as the basis for the formation of economic cooperation. First, NAM pays respect to national economic sovereignty. Various ideological choices and economic systems make NAM countries have a wide spectrum. Starting from a capitalist, socialist to mixed economic system. This creates a variety of asymmetrical axes. For example, countries in Latin America, which were swept away by the Bolivarian-style wave of economic socialism, could not build good economic cooperation with countries with market systems such as India, Indonesia and many other countries in Asia.

Second, cooperation is built on mutual benefit. Of course this is just a jargon that is difficult to see in reality. Similar to the “fair trade” myth. The BRI loan scheme from China provides benefits for countries that access it because with good infrastructure, they can accelerate development potential in the hope that economic growth can be achieved maximally. However, the issue that becomes the main criticism is “moral hazard” because the debt scheme will definitely burden the indebted countries. Especially if the country does not have a good capacity so that Chinese intervention in the economic sector in that country cannot be avoided.

How to formulate a model of an independent national economic system, but able to compete in a healthy manner to be implemented in international trade cooperation? The absence of this formula has made NAM countries swayed in the pull of a capitalist and socialist economic system and only a few were able to develop a mixed economic system that had a significant impact. This is a challenge for NAM’s leadership in the future.

In addition to the challenges for economic cooperation, the geopolitical challenge in the current situation is how can NAM come up with a formulation to redefine what is meant by “not to intervene and interfere in domestic affairs”? This pacifism produces permanent obstacles that cannot be overcome by NAM, especially related to border disputes and conflicts, violence and human rights violations. The G7 bloc has an interest in expanding the acceptance of the liberal democratic system as a prerequisite and the only measure for improving the quality of individual respect and civic freedom.

In this position, the Western bloc has more clarity than NAM which has to deal with various differences and interests. This can be seen in various recent cases such as the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict, military coups in Myanmar and dozens of others in Africa that cannot be overcome by NAM's internal mechanisms. NAM has shared values, meaning that they can have meetings to build alliances and care to ensure that NAM plays a strategic position in managing its geopolitical interests. NAM needs to reposition its geopolitical structure, which has been more associated with the Global South, into a Triangular Cooperation. The term Global South is exclusive and inferior, so asymmetrical cooperation with other new world axis powers is urgently needed.
China has emerged as a great power that does not need a political bloc. China’s economic dominance is not supported by political and economic instruments outside of state actors. They do not want to build economic dependence between poor countries on them. However, the BRI scheme is not intended to help strengthen the independence of countries that are clients of the scheme. The big work for NAM leadership in the future is whether to make China the center of the NAM political bloc which means betraying the Non-Aligned principle or following the B3W scheme that makes NAM countries clients, binding themselves as peripheral powers from the Western bloc that is now repositioning and wants to take back its strategic influence over the world.
On the first day of the annual congress of the Canadian Association for African Studies, she was scheduled to speak at the opening conference. Leymah Gbowee. Of course, I had already heard about her: about her socially and politically decisive action in Liberia, in the context of the civil war in 2003 and afterwards; about the Nobel Prize she received in 2011 etc. On that occasion, the Nobel Committee awarded the prize to three women leaders; one of them is Leymah Gbowee, a social worker and activist for women's rights and sustainable peace in the world. In her inspiring Nobel speech about Liberian women's struggles against violence and injustice, and for social and political peace, Gbowee advocated for a "triumph of humanity" that will be accomplished when these struggles achieve their goals.

I was curious to hear about that woman. A mother of six, a witness to the civil war at age 17, determined not to fall into fatalism; a woman who, with other sisters, armed herself with non-violence to march peacefully to get the political leaders and warlords to lay down their murderous weapons. The initiative of this small group of women that spread across the country radically forced peace in Liberia and is now inspiring other struggles.

In her inaugural lecture, Leymah Gbowee outlined the very foundations of her work and the main principles that should lead each person to question the impact of his actions for a better world, on a small and large scale as well. In African philosophy, there is a term that has become commonplace, and which highlights the strong link between the individual and the community: Ubuntu. From this concept, the theme of the annual CAAS conference, Gbowee expresses what makes her struggle meaningful: the recognition of the humanity of each person, before or beyond the labels of color, social status, gender or religion. In fact, one of her strong actions in Liberia was to bring Muslim and Christian women together in the same struggle for peace! The activist Leymah Gbowee has thus worked within an ideal that fits perfectly with the Ubuntu Spirit, refusing to accept that the flourishing of Liberian society can be done in war and without the contribution of women. Ubuntu: I am because we all are. It is therefore an ideal that is not limited to ending the civil war in Liberia, to reconciling the religious, political and social fractions in her country. It is also an ideal that seeks sustainable peace throughout Liberia and the world, by non-violent means, against all that does not recognize the dignity of human beings, their right to a respectable life, to fair treatment and to the satisfaction of their needs. It is therefore easy to understand that Leymah Gbowee's action gives an important place to women; it is also understandable that she intervenes on several stages on an international scale, to defend the rights of women, the cessation of forms of social exclusion and systemic injustices; it is also quite logical that she calls on her colleagues in Africa, but also in Asia, in the Arab world too, and declares herself in solidarity with their struggles. Leymah Gbowee’s struggle thus echoes the values dear to the Bandung Spirit. Her struggle has a local but also a global impact, in favor of the poor, the exploited and the abused, especially women: on a small scale, she and her comrades in struggle have shown the importance of women for the development of the whole Liberian society: "you (men) are, because we all (men and women) are"; on a larger scale, her message has the same potential to create a world more united in its diversity, creating solidarity between the weak and the power-holders: "you are because we all are": it is the refusal of a world order marked by traditions and governances that prevent millions of people, especially women, from flourishing and contributing to collective happiness in a dignified way.

Whether in Stockholm (to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011), or at the annual conference in Canada in 2021, we celebrate Leymah Gbowee, a well-known and inspiring activist. This woman is even more inspiring when one remembers that her entire story came from a tragedy that the 17 years old girl experienced: civil war, violence. The drama of the civil war gave birth to the social worker Gbowee, to the trauma therapist, to the non-violent activist, to the Nobel Peace Prize winner! The ideal that carries her is that of a moral force that pushes her to revolt in a non-violent way against what destroys the human being. Starting with women and girls. For a Peace on a world scale.

To learn more about Leymah Gbowee:


Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa: [https://gboweepeaceafrica.org/local-partnerships](https://gboweepeaceafrica.org/local-partnerships)
CHALLENGES AND ALTERNATIVES

An oasis of Hope Under Repression:

THE PALESTINE INSTITUTE FOR
BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

How do we find hope when events and news are of oppression and repression?

By Mazin Qumsiyeh

PALESTINE is the Western part of the Fertile Crescent where humans first developed agriculture. This is why this part of Western Asia was the cradle of civilizations and monotheistic religions. The Natuffian Agricultural era (inclusive of our ancestors the Canaanites) had a long history of 12,000 years. During these centuries, there were some relatively few conflicts here. In the past thousand years, one could point out only the Crusaders and the advent of Zionism as historical events that resulted in mass killings and displacement of local people. Now in the 21st century, the situation of Palestine remains the only unstabilized colonial anti-colonial struggle remaining. If the world needed a reminder of this, the events of May 2021 provided ample proof that without justice to the Palestinian people, there will not be peace here. Currently 7.5 million (of 13.5 million total) Palestinians are refugees or displaced people denied their natural right to return to their homes and lands. Zionism was intent in transforming a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious country of Palestine into the “Jewish state of Israel”. This conflict which lasted now for over a century, may give many cause for despair. So where does one derive hope from?

PALESTINE is the Western part of the Fertile Crescent where humans first developed agriculture. This is why this part of Western Asia was the cradle of civilizations and monotheistic religions. The Natuffian Agricultural era (inclusive of our ancestors the Canaanites) had a long history of 12,000 years. During these centuries, there were some relatively few conflicts here. In the past thousand years, one could point out only the Crusaders and the advent of Zionism as historical events that resulted in mass killings and displacement of local people. Now in the 21st century, the situation of Palestine remains the only unstabilized colonial anti-colonial struggle remaining. If the world needed a reminder of this, the events of May 2021 provided ample proof that without justice to the Palestinian people, there will not be peace here. Currently 7.5 million (of 13.5 million total) Palestinians are refugees or displaced people denied their natural right to return to their homes and lands. Zionism was intent in transforming a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious country of Palestine into the “Jewish state of Israel”. This conflict which lasted now for over a century, may give many cause for despair. So where does one derive hope from?
I wrote a book titled *Popular Resistance in Palestine: A History of Hope and Empowerment* in which I cited hundreds of example of amazing positive action that counter the destructive forces of wars and repression in Palestine. I could cite many more brilliant successes after it was published in 2012. Here I just wanted to highlight one case which provides an example of building amid the mayhem. The example is the Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability started in 2014 and that deals with issues of environmental justice. But first let us talk of the impact of occupation and colonization on the environment which gives a context of the need for such an institution.

**The Challenge of Environmental Injustice**

Before the Zionist project in the late 19th century, Palestine had some 1300 villages and towns each with small and manageable population. The total population then was 850,000 with various religious persuasions (3% Jewish, 13% Christian, 80% Muslim, 4% other). It was only in 1948-1950 when Israel was founded by military rule that a large wave of ethnic cleansing happened and Zionists took control of the much of the land of the local Palestinians. Nearly 500 villages and towns were destroyed and their land re-cultivated mostly with European pine trees which damaged the local environment.

The system of occupation and colonization creates significant issues for the local people and the local environment. We can cite dozens of example in detail but let us just list key challenges:

1. Draining of the Hula wetlands in northern Israel (key biodiversity area, especially for migratory birds);
2. Israel’s diversion of the headwaters of the Jordan Valley that resulted in significant impact on the valley system and drying the Dead Sea;
3. The planned Red Sea – Dead Sea canal, a joint project between Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority;
4. Israel’s practice of putting some of the worst polluting industries in Palestinian areas;
5. The settlements and the walls, built with little environmental impact assessment, that scar the biblical and natural landscape;
6. Settler attacks on Palestinian property, including but not limited to burning trees and dumping sewage on farm land;
7. Israeli colonies were built on stolen Palestinian lands and concentrated on the high grounds (hills and mountains). Due to this peculiar arrangement, a runoff of wastewater, pollution from industrial colonists in declared “industrial zones”, and soil erosion on the hills directly impacts Palestinian communities located in the lower areas adjacent to these colonies;
8. There is uneven distribution of water between the natives and the Israeli colonizers.

There are many other issues where the occupation can effect sustainable development and protection of the environment because it is profitable to the occupiers. Alon Tal, Founder of the Israel Union for Environmental Defense, acknowledged that: “...it’s a Zionist paradox. We came here to redeem a land and we end up contaminating it”. Besides the colonization, other issues affect environmental conservation in Palestine. Rapid natural and unnatural (via migration) growth of population places much pressure on our limited space and overtaxed water resources. The industrial
consumerist agriculture imported from the West exacerbates things (use of pesticides, monoculture etc). Law enforcement related to nature conservation remains marginal and the society remains largely unconnected from nature, focusing on mere survival. Finally, we can state that research and development efforts were very meagre because of this complicated stressful situation in Palestine.

PALESTINE INSTITUTE OF BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY (PIBS): a case study in “good globalization”

Using largely volunteer efforts and local donations but with significant networking globally, PIBS and the Palestine Museum of Natural History of Bethlehem University were established in 2014 and focused on research, education, and conservation of our natural world, culture and heritage and the use of knowledge to promote responsible empowered human interactions with all components of our environment. We endeavored to work locally, regionally and globally to achieve the UN SDGs. In the past three years, PIBS:

1) Published dozens of applied research papers on issues ranging from environmental health to biodiversity to sustainable livelihoods, to education, and more (see examples here [http://www.palestinenature.org/research/]);
2) Developed an agricultural research station and botanical garden (including aquaponics) and use them to empower marginalized local farmers (production, research, and knowledge transfer). For example we trained farmers in use of aquaponics based on research in our facilities and created a community garden and helped people grow their own vegetables in their yards and balconies;
3) Developed educational programs that benefited thousands;
4) Hosted thousands of local and international visitors who gained knowledge of local challenges and opportunities;
5) Built partnerships with local and global governmental and non-governmental entities resulting in benefit to environment and sustainability;
6) Developed databases and other resources including collections, photo library, digital library, local biodiversity database, and a seed bank.
This is an integrated system for research, education, and conservation to address areas in need in Palestine, a country under stresses of occupation. Our motto is RESPECT (first for ourselves, then other human beings, then the environment with all its components). The museum grounds and its botanical garden (integrated ecosystem) is an oasis for wildlife in Bethlehem and an oasis for young people seeking alternatives and a new way of looking at themselves and their environment (empowerment and nature conservation).

Youth learning 2014 (the courtesy of PIBS).

The botanical garden and experimental agriculture research station develops modules that are expanding (a ripple effect). It has been well received and replicated in other places. Already in Nablus and Hebron initiatives are under way to create a similar project. PMNH/PIBS published papers that suggest to other developing countries that they could do similar projects and already received some inquiries and interests on these even before some of our experiences are fully out and shared. For a short video of general accomplishments, see https://youtu.be/BPhFLOsEIM0 The latest annual report can be seen here: https://www.palestinenature.org/annual-reports/

How did we manage to do all of that with limited funds and largely volunteer cadre of dedicated people? The answers can be summed up in five key issues:

1) The project was built bottom up and involved both local and international volunteers;
2) The research projects developed were collaborative;
3) In building our research, education, and conservation projects and in fundraising we made maximum use of internet resources including available databases;
4) We leveraged local and international university students and from several universities;
5) In building its staff and selecting volunteers, PIBS was cognizant of human diversity and serves especially marginalized communities. We also used cultural heritage to promote biodiversity.

PIBS emphasized benefit sharing to local people and this increased our involvement in permaculture (including aquaponics and aquaculture) as well as in ecotourism for example in four communities (Husan, Battir, Al-Walaja, Beit Jala) surrounding Wadi Al-Makhour, a UNESCO world heritage site where we benefited 80 farmers and many other locals.

As climate changes and population growth increases, the practices described above become even more critical to sustainable development. Having people grow food and herbs literally in their backyards gives them empowerment and increases their income and food security. The project also improves both physical (through better and more organic nutrition) and psychological (through gardening and fresh air and plants) well-being of marginalized communities especially in the difficult circumstances of occupation and marginalization. Increased vegetation cover while recycling nutrients via composting also reduces effects of global warming (mitigation and adaptation for sustainability).

The social networking also allows us to get almost immediate support from colleagues and stranger across continents. One has to guard not to spend
too much time on social platforms but they could allow for fruitful collaborations and networking if done properly. We have managed to recruit significant support, meet potential volunteers, collaborators and donors through such platforms as VolunteerMatch, WorkAway, FaceBook and LinkedIn. The resulting 14 dunum garden, buildings, facilities and most importantly PEOPLE that are motivated and empowered is the oasis of hope in the middle of this mayhem.

BANDUNG SPIRIT IMAGINATIVE UNIVERSE

NAWAL EL SAADAWI

October 27, 1931 – March 21, 2021

The news about the passing away of Nawal El Saadawi in Cairo on March 21, 2021, touched my heart with sadness. Studying Egyptian society in Egypt and in France during the 90s, I had read some of her novels and essays as well as articles about her. I had a chance to meet her in the Institute of Arab World, Paris, in December 2000. Here are some photos of our meeting. From left to right: Darwis Khudori, Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin (Indonesian scholar and activist on gender issues visiting Paris), Nawal El Saadawi and her husband (note and photos from Darwis Khudori).

Her struggle for women’s rights

by Hamdi Abdelazim Abdelkader

Doctor in Literary Studies, Professor, Department of French, University of Béni-Suef, Egypt

Born on October 27, 1931 in Kafr Tahla, a village in the Nile Delta, Nawal El Saadawi studied medicine at Cairo University and Columbia University in New York. Her experience as a psychiatrist in her hometown, which she recounted in Memoirs of a Woman Doctor in 1958, and the excision she underwent at the age of six, shaped her convictions. Her first essay La Femme et le
Sexe (L'Harmattan, 1969) opened the debate on the practice of genital mutilation, which is still practiced on more than 90% of Egyptian women. El Saadawi's work is the beginning of an abundant literary production, more than fifty books, translated into about thirty languages, and regular contributions in the media, in which she denounces patriarchy and religious extremism, polygamy and the wearing of the Islamic veil, violence against women and the inequality of inheritance rights between men and women in Islam.

Nawal El Saadawi was fortunate to have a father who was a civil servant in the Ministry of Education and was determined to provide a quality education for his nine children at a time when girls were married off in their early teens. It was against this backdrop that she was circumcised at the age of six, one day in the summer of 1937. In the German documentary The Free Voice of Egypt broadcast on Arte in 2017, she confides that she was never able to heal from this deep wound of body and mind. The fight against excision will become the fight of her life. But in 2008, it will end up being banned in the country, even if it is still practiced in the countryside.

It was also when she heard her grandmother say that "a boy is worth at least fifteen girls" that her rebellious spirit was forged. Her thirst for learning made her a good psychiatrist. Nawal Al-Saadawi is considered the most important figure of women's emancipation in the Arab world in the last five decades. In her books, she fights against the oppression of women: polygamy, the wearing of the veil, the "unequal division of inheritance" between men and women in Islamic law.

Psychiatrist and writer, she was for half a century the spokesperson for feminism in Egypt and in the Arab-Muslim world. In 2020, Time Magazine ranked her among the hundred most influential women of the 20th century. She has long fought for women's rights and against patriarchy. This struggle, which brought her threats from extremists, is explained in her two feminist books: In the Beginning, There Was Woman and Women and Sex. She then left Egypt to live in the United States where she continued her work for three years at Duke University in North Carolina.

Returning to Egypt in 2005, Al-Saadawi embarked on a presidential campaign before dropping out of the race; security forces prevented her from conducting her election meetings. In 2007, Al-Azhar University filed a complaint against her for infringing on the Muslim religion. In her work, she herself, by breaking taboos, gained international notoriety and became a reference in feminism. "For me, feminism includes everything. It is social justice, political justice, sexual justice," she said in an interview with the British newspaper The Guardian in 2010.

In conservative Egypt, her speech has always very engaging. She paid a heavy price more than once. After the publication of Women and Sex, political and religious authorities condemned it. The book caused a stir and the Egyptian Ministry of Health fired her from her position as Director General of Public Health in 1972. In 1981, during the wave of repression orchestrated by Anwar Sadat, she was arrested and spent several months in prison. In 1991, her Arab Association for Solidarity with Women, which she founded in 1982, was dissolved.

The guardians of Islam wanted first of all to silence her. They accused her of undermining the religion. In 2001, her couple was sued by a lawyer who wanted to invalidate her marriage, arguing that Islam forbids a man to marry a non-believing woman. Twice, from 1993 to 1996 and from 2007 to 2009, she was forced to leave Egypt. In her Memoirs of the Women's Prison in 2002, she denounced: "My greatest crime is to be a free woman at a time when only slaves are tolerated". "Writing has become a weapon to fight the system, which derives its authority from the autocratic power exercised by the leader of the state, and that of the father or husband in the family", she confided in 1999 in her youthful memoirs published in English and titled A Daughter of Isis (Zed Books), castigating "the injustice exercised in the name of religion, morality or love".

In conclusion, this prolific writer with left-wing convictions led a fight for the emancipation of women until her death in Cairo on March 21, 2021, at 89 years old, breaking taboos such as sex and religion and stigmatizing male authoritarianism. Her outspokenness and controversy in Egyptian society inspired generations of feminists. ■
Alternative for the coming decade: CRISIS TECHNOLOGY ACCELERATION OR CYBER PLANNING OF THE ECONOMY

By Elena Veduta

Capitalism is a chaotically organized economy accompanied by economic crises that forcefully bring the economic system to balance through the destruction of production, the absorption of bankrupts by larger capitalists. Each crisis "resolved" in this way carries the embryo of a more than grandiose future crisis.

By the beginning of the 20th century, monopoly capitalism, which replaced the free capitalism of the 19th century, organized the First and Second World Wars for the military "resolution" of the global crisis. At the same time, World War II turned out to be significantly destructive than the first.

The current economic crisis is the deepest in the history of peacetime. Temporary monetary instruments stop working, then the 2020s are seen as a decade of "technological acceleration" – unprecedented progress in the field of cybernetics, AI and weapons technologies. Today humanity is faced with the problem of a peaceful way out of the global trajectory of the growth of the quality of life, using artificial intelligence (AI) in the economy is required. To understand the reasons to introduce AI in the economy, we will research the following stages of the transformation of economic models in the period of "peacetime" after the Second World War.

Stage 1 (1950-1991): Bipolar world and 2 models of economic development

After the restoration of the destroyed world economy, all countries of the world developed according to one of two models – a course towards industrialization with a greater share of the public sector and state planning of the economy, carried out often with the support of the USSR, and a policy of financial stabilization with the help of the IMF and the World Bank, where transnational corporations (TNC), mostly based in the USA, play a dominant role. The structural crisis of 1973-1975 and two oil shocks showed that the world market loan capital, which is ruling by TNCs, allowed to shift the burden of debt to developing countries opened their markets to speculative flows of fictitious capital.


After the fall of the USSR almost all economic models of countries were transformed into models of financial stabilization with the removal of restrictions for foreign investors.

With the liberalization of the world economy, the domination of the international monetary system, which makes it possible to launch world inflation through unsecured US dollars, the rest of the
countries are forced to seek financial stabilization, reducing their production and increasing unemployment. Fictitious demand, fuelled by bank loans, masks overproduction. Real investments are giving way to uncontrolled growth of fictitious capital, the bubbles of which burst due to a decrease in surplus value. Securities are getting cheaper, TNCs are centralizing world capital. At the lowest point in the cycle, when output is at its lowest, the last bubbles of fictitious capital deflate. Financial stabilization leads to a drop in production, unemployment and social inequality, including developed countries. Attempts to revive the economy by lowering interest rates and triggering global inflation are unsuccessful. With no way out of the global crisis, TNCs seek to retain power by introducing AI to manage people.

**Stage 3 (2020 to the present): Post-image digital transformation of the world economy and an alternative**

Humanity has entered a new era of civilization generated by information and communication technologies. The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the accelerated establishment of control over the movement of people and the enrichment of digital giants – Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, Google, which has become threatening the absorption of all states by digital giants and a digital corporation China, the most advanced in the use of AI to control people.

It is believed that today there are two global projects – China's "One Belt, One Road" and the Western project "Green Deal" under the flag of "inclusive capitalism". However, both projects aim to use AI to manage people and launch financial speculation, including Green Derivatives to reallocate assets and revenues in favor of digital giants and a Chinese corporation. This explains why, in addition to the Vatican, the Council on Inclusive Capitalism has representatives from TNCs, but not from states. The introduction of AI for managing people, turning them into "happy" biorobots, becomes inevitable.

Digital globalized fascism, unleashing the economic chaos and AI to manage people, can be countered by economic planning to improve people's lives using the advances of the digital revolution. The USSR had such alternative planning experience (1921-1991). As a pioneer on the difficult path of building socialism, the USSR made many mistakes. Today, it becomes urgent to understand the reasons for the "failure of the first socialist experiment" to overcome his mistakes.

**The course of industrialization of the USSR (1927-1950) which led to the "take-off" of the USSR**

Forward planning of the economy became the core of the industrialization of the USSR. The governing parameter of the plan is production investment.

Planning began with the development of release targets for key sectors. The problem of distributing and building the production chain for fulfilling the tasks for the release of key sectors solved by the method of successive approximations (iterations). This method allows coordinating in the time planned calculations of material, labor, financial balances of all links of the management system for fulfilling strategic tasks. The calculation algorithm included the adjustment of orders, taking into account the real capabilities of manufacturers to fulfill government orders. The calculations of the plan continued until the input-output balance was calculated, which would ensure the development of the economy in the desired direction. The situation could have changed, which required changes to the plan. For this, the principle of rolling planning was applied, which involves adjusting the plan online.

Thanks to the creation of a system of centralized economic management based on "live" planning of the economy with feedback from manufacturers, the USSR during 1929-June 1941 came out in terms of industrial production and national income to 1st place in Europe and 2nd place in the world, managed to win the Second World War and quickly restore the economy by the 50s, become a country that determines the development of the bipolar world.

**Errors of Soviet planning (1950-1991)**

After the war, the course of the USSR aspired to become a world leader in the development of science and technology through the priority development of sectors that determine scientific and technological progress, which led to a disruption in economic development - to a crisis of overproduction.
Already in the 1950s, it was necessary to reorient the development of the Soviet economy towards the growth of public goods with the inclusion of feedback on prices in the consumer market.

By that time in the United States, a new science of cybernetics had appeared, which studied information processes to create automated control systems. The leadership should have seen the importance of cybernetics in the development of Soviet planning. Instead, the nomenclature slowed down the development of cybernetics in the USSR. Awareness of its necessity came only in the mid-50s. Therefore, an economic-mathematical direction arose in the country. On the other hand, attempts to create a nationwide system of economic management were unsuccessful due to the lack of a dynamic model of the intersector balance (ISB), which would allow to coordinate the activities of economic agents in the direction of increasing the quality of life.

The lack of democracy in the country led to the triumph of the interests of the nomenklatura, who dreamed of becoming as rich as the owners of TNCs. A nomenclature that prefers voluntarism to automated control. She was interested in carrying out reforms to dismantle the USSR State Planning Committee and in the transformation of the country’s management to global governance in 1991.

Knowledge of Marxism and cybernetics, planning experience at different levels of the state, helped the Soviet scientist Nikolai Veduta to create a dynamic model ISB. The model is imitative, reflecting the multiplicative process of production of material resources of the output ordered by end users when fulfilling the employment balance. In the course of calculations according to the model, the principles of economic development, the efficiency of distribution of capital investments, and optimization of the structure of the final product for the consumer market are implemented.

The introduction of AI in the economy will increase the efficiency of management decisions in the field of the economy for entering on the trajectory of the growth of public welfare. There is no other option for using the achievements of the digital revolution to get out of the global crisis.■

For a more elaborated article on the issue, see: Elena Veduta, Stop talking about the economy! Cyber-planning is the only way out, Defend Democracy Press, 13/05/2021, http://www.defenddemocracy.press/stop-talking-about-the-economy-cyber-planning-is-the-only-way-out/
BANDUNG 1955 DECLARATION ON PALESTINE

In view of the existing tension in the Middle East, caused by the situation in Palestine and of the danger of that tension to world peace, the Asian-African Conference declared its support of the rights of the Arab people of Palestine and called for the implementation of the United Nations Resolutions on Palestine and the achievement of the peaceful settlement of the Palestine question.

FINAL COMMUNIQUE, 1955 BANDUNG ASIAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE. For the full declaration, see https://bandungspirit.org/IMG/pdf/anri-bandung_conference-final_communique.pdf

BELGRADE 1961 DECLARATION ON PALESTINE

The participants in the Conference condemn the imperialist policies pursued in the Middle East, and declare their support for the full restoration of all the rights of the Arab people of Palestine in conformity with the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations.


DECLARATION ON PALESTINE FROM THE LEADERS OF ASIAN AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES AT THE 2015 COMMEMORATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BANDUNG CONFERENCE

1) We, the leaders of the Asian and African countries remain committed to the principle of self-determination as set forth in the Final Communiqué of the Bandung Conference in 1955, and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. We deplore the fact that sixty years since the Bandung Conference, the Palestinian people remain deprived of their rights, freedom and independence, and that millions of Palestinians are still living under occupation and as refugees, and that this historic injustice continues.

2) We, in the spirit of Asian African solidarity, pay tribute to the resilience and steadfastness of the Palestinian people in the face of the illegal Israeli occupation, and reaffirm our full support of the just struggle of the Palestinian people to regain their inalienable right to self-determination, including the realization of their sovereignty and independence of their State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the 4 June 1967 borders and relevant United Nations resolutions, as set out in the two-State solution.

3) We stress that the only viable solution to the Israeli-Palestine conflict is an agreement, which ends the illegal Israeli occupation that began in 1967, resolves all permanent status issues – Palestine refugees, Jerusalem, settlements, borders, security and water – and justly fulfils the inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people. We further reaffirm that a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is imperative for achieving peace and security in the region.

For the full declaration, see https://bandungspirit.org/IMG/pdf/declaration_on_palestine.pdf

INDIAN CITIZENS’ CALL ON THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT TO DE-RECOGNISE THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Around 260 Indian citizens signed the statement calling on the Government of India to de-recognise the state of Israel, identifying it as an Apartheid state. They also called upon all Indians, as individuals, as civil society organisations, trade unions etc., to endorse the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction of the Israeli state and all its allied institutions. Finally, they declared their solidarity with the Palestinian people whose Right to Political Self-determination and Right of Return must be respected and fulfilled. The

For the full statement and list of signatories, see https://bandungspirit.org/IMG/pdf/indiancitizens-public_statement_on_palestine_by_concerned_indians.pdf

DECLARATION ON THE SUPPRESSION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF APARTHEID IN HISTORIC PALESTINE

Over 600 scholars, artists and intellectuals from more than 45 countries have signed a declaration calling for the dismantling of the apartheid regime set up on the territory of historic Palestine and the establishment of a democratic constitutional arrangement that grants all its inhabitants equal rights and duties. The signatories include many distinguished figures, including the Nobel Peace Prize laureates Adolfo Pérez Esquivel and Mairead Maguire, academics with legal expertise Monique Chemillier-Gendreau and Richard Falk, scholars Étienne Balibar, Hagit Borer, Ivar Ekeland, Suad Joseph, Jacques Rancière, Roshdi Rashed and Gayatri Spivak, health researcher Sir Iain Chalmers, composer Brian Eno, musician Roger Waters, author Ahdaf Soueif, economist and former Assistant Secretary-General of the UN Sir Richard Jolly, South African politician and veteran anti-apartheid leader Ronnie Kasrils and Canadian peace activist and former national leader of the Green Party of Canada Joan Russow.

For the full declaration and list of signatories, see https://www.aurdip.org/declaration-on-the-suppression-and.html

GEOPOLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

UNILATERAL ECONOMIC SANCTIONS: IMMORALITY AND ARROGANCE OF GREAT POWER POLITICS

President of International Progress Organization keynote speech at global town hall debate Vienna, 9 May 2021

At an international civil society conference on global threats and challenges, organized by the Germany-based Schiller Institute, the President of the International Progress Organization (I.P.O.), Dr. Hans Köchler, yesterday criticized the excessive use of unilateral sanctions in today’s global system. Characterizing sanctions as “conduct of war by other means,” he said that, in the absence of a global balance of power, economic coercion has become “a tool of choice in a new version of asymmetric warfare” where the intervening state “intends to achieve maximum results with minimum risk for itself.” Focusing on the illegality of unilateral sanctions as a tool of power politics, Dr. Köchler criticized the punitive measures imposed by the United States on Syria and Yemen that have further aggravated the suffering of the people under conditions of a devastating civil war and are actually prolonging the conflicts in both countries. The President of the I.P.O. said that the noble principles of human rights would be utterly meaningless if we allow governments to continue with punishing entire peoples under the guise of human rights protection.

The global town hall debate on "The Moral Collapse of the Trans-Atlantic World and the Quest for a New Paradigm" was moderated by Mr. Harley Schlanger, Vice-President of the Schiller Institute USA. In two panels, speakers from Afghanistan, Austria, France, Japan, Germany, Netherlands, Peru and Syria addressed the threats to global peace and the need for reform of the system of international relations. Among the keynote speakers were Dr. Bouthaina Shaaban, Political and Media Advisor to the Syrian
Presidency, Col. Richard H. Black, former head of the US Army's Criminal Law Division at the Pentagon, Mr. Sayed Mujtaba Ahmadi, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Afghanistan in Canada, Prof. Éric Denécé, Director, French Center for Intelligence Research, Mr. Daisuke Kotegawa, former Director for Japan at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Dr. Joycelyn Elders, former Surgeon General of the United States.

For the full speech, see [http://i-p-o.org/Koechler-UNILATERAL_SANCTIONS-Speech-08May2021.pdf](http://i-p-o.org/Koechler-UNILATERAL_SANCTIONS-Speech-08May2021.pdf)

### PRESENT MAIN CONCERNS OF THE PHILIPPINE PEACE AND SOLIDARITY COUNCIL (PPSC)

**Contribution to the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting of the World Peace Council, conducted thru ZOOM from Kathmandu, Nepal, on June 19, 2021**

Aside from the issue of the Covid-19 pandemic, the PPSC is very much concerned about:

01) The Biden administration's continuation of the Trump plans in building-up of new nuclear-armed missiles and submarines to modernize its ballistic missile arsenals. This is especially so with Biden's ambiguous position on Trump's unilateral withdrawal from agreements under the previous US-Soviet treaties on Strategic Arms Limitation (SALT) and Strategic Arms Reduction (START). Adding more nuclear weapons and delivery systems will only add to the danger of world-wide nuclear destruction in case of a US-Russian nuclear exchange caused by imperialist design or an accident.

02) The Biden administration's continuation of the Trump plans at building-up US-NATO forces in the Ukraine, at the borders of Russia, which could spark a global nuclear conflict with Russia. At the same time, US-NATO forces in the Ukraine are helping the neo-nazi forces of Ukraine in attempts to destroy the independent governments of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic in the Donbass region.

03) The Biden administration's continuation of the US-NATO jihadist war against Syria.

04) Biden's continued all-out support for zionist Israel's occupation and grabbing of more Palestinian and other Arab lands, and periodic zionist wars against the Palestinian people.

05) The Biden administration's continued campaign to destabilize Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia; its continuation of the US economic, financial and trade blockade against Cuba; and its provocative interference in some purely internal affairs of Russia and of China.

06) The periodic US-led, as well as the Chinese, naval maneuvers and military exercises in the areas of the Paracels and the Spratlys in the South China Sea, which could spark a widespread military conflict in our South-East Asian region.

07) China's excessive maritime claims under its “9-dash-line” map, and continued military build-up in the artificial islands that China has built and turned into military bases within the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of the Philippines and Vietnam in the South China Sea.

08) China's military maneuvers in the Taiwan Strait, which could spark a bloody conflict with the US-backed Taiwan regime. The PPSC is wary of China's continued threat to “reunify” Taiwan with the PROC, even through military force. Reunification should be through peaceful and independent processes, in the same way that the PPSC supports the proposal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the peaceful and independent reunification of the Korean peninsula without any recourse to force, or threat of force.
09) Philippine President Duterte's suspension of his previous decision to abrogate the US Visiting Forces Agreement. The PPSC constantly calls for the abrogation, not only of the US Visiting Forces Agreement, but also of the US-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951, and of the US-Philippine Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement of 2013.

10) President Duterte's turn-around on the long-standing Philippine support for the Palestinian people's struggle for an independent Palestinian state, and his purchase of armaments from Israel. Last May 27, the Philippine delegation to the UN Human Rights Council voted in favor of convening an international commission to investigate Israeli war crimes during last month's 11-day Israeli destruction of Gaza. Suddenly, Duterte rebuked the Philippine delegation and wanted them to withdraw their vote, just because of the objection from the Israeli government.

(Note: In support of the concerns raised by the delegates from India and Pakistan regarding the prospects of a bloody medieval Taliban takeover of Afghanistan after the US-NATO withdrawal this year, the PPSC requested for other delegates' inputs towards a common position on Afghanistan)

RECENT ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS


The book analyses the Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) strategy of appropriating cultural resources in Assam while pursuing the Hindutva agenda. In Assam, where numerous ethnic and regional political outfits have registered their electoral presence, the ‘Rainbow Alliance’ emerged as the dominant strategic tool for BJP in its electoral battles. The book studies how BJP has capitalized on people’s attachment to their ethno-regional cultures and has successfully co-opted and ‘saffronized’ the ‘Rainbow’ by bringing together diverse ethnic groups into its fold. Scrutinizing electoral strategies, BJP’s victories in 2014, 2016 and 2019, and the efforts towards dismantling consensus around the National Register of Citizens (NRC) by enacting the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the book provides a holistic view of this steady ‘saffronization’. It also critically investigates BJP’s populist development agenda.

From the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh’s (RSS) grassroots work to the government’s policy initiatives, the book analyses the regime’s performance and ideological pursuits in depth. It highlights how BJP’s strategies in Assam are unique in some ways and how similar strategies can be seen elsewhere in India.

The present text, published as no. 36 of the series "Studies in International Relations," is an expanded version of a lecture delivered by the President of the International Progress Organization at the conference, "The Rise of Asia in Global History and Perspective: 60 Years after Belgrade – What Non-alignment in a Multipolar World and for a Global Future?" at the University Le Havre Normandy, France, on February 11, 2021.

The publication briefly documents and analyzes Austria's relationship, in the mid-1950s, with countries that later became founders of the Non-aligned Movement. In the decade after World War II, Austrian diplomacy was focused on the conclusion of a "State Treaty" with the Allied occupying powers, to bring about the withdrawal of all foreign troops. Köchler's analysis uncovers a largely hidden aspect of the history of modern Austria, namely the role of Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in the reemergence – amidst the superpower rivalry of the Cold War – of Austria as a sovereign state.

In Chapter I – "Neutrality as non-alignment" – the author describes the intensive and constructive cooperation of the founding fathers of Austria's second Republic with leading figures of the Bandung Conference (1955), in particular President Sukarno of Indonesia and Prime Minister Nehru of India. He explains the structural connection, well appreciated by Austrian politicians at the time, between the principles of non-alignment and a strict definition of neutrality in the sense of non-participation in any military alliance. Reference is also made to the importance given to "neutrality" in the 19th century concert of European Powers, after the Napoleonic wars, when the Vienna Congress (1815) declared that it was "in the general interest" that Switzerland should enjoy the "benefit of perpetual neutrality." The analysis of the historical part is based on contemporary reports and comments as well as archival documents, including confidential diplomatic memoranda from Austria and the United States. Köchler underlines the special importance of the "Moscow Memorandum" of 1955, signed by Austria and the Soviet Union, for the conclusion of the Austrian State Treaty with the Allied Powers after World War II. The Memorandum set down Austria's commitment to adopt, once the withdrawal of all foreign troops had been achieved, a status of permanent neutrality according to the model of Switzerland.

Chapter II – "Redefining neutrality" – juxtaposes the country's early commitment to a strictly non-aligned foreign policy with today's ever closer integration into the North Atlantic security architecture, a development that has undermined Austria's status of permanent neutrality. The author refers to the close cooperation of Austrian Chancellor (Prime Minister) Bruno Kreisky (during the 1970s and early 1980s) with Asian, African and Latin American countries in support of a North-South Dialogue, and a New International Economic Order in particular. He further describes the paradigmatic change of Austrian foreign policy in the post-Kreisky era when Austria decided to join the European Union as full member, which led to a redefinition of the concept of neutrality, a process that brought about the country's regular participation in military activities within the framework of the European Union and NATO.

The publication is complemented by a detailed bibliography, including historical documents, and the reproduction of several rare historical photographs. The Annex contains a reprint of the text of a message of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to the delegates of the International Progress Organization's conference on "The Principles of Non-alignment," which the author of the present book convened in 1982 in Baghdad.
A NEW JOURNAL ON AFRICA FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Founded by Isaac Bazié and launched with first issue in May 2021, the articles and the current call for contributions are accessible online at https://edition.uqam.ca/afroglobe/index

The reflections presented in this launch issue – as well as the issues in preparation – highlight the major orientations of the journal: they come from several disciplines (culture, literature, sociology, political science and law), written in English or in French. In its editorial policy, Afroglobe intends to contribute to the effort to produce knowledge about Africa and the world in African languages. This is why the summaries of the articles and the interview in this issue are translated into Wolof (Boubacar Boris Diop, Serigne Momar Sarr), Bamana (Noël Sanou) and Swahili (Michael Okyerefo, Kayamba Tshitshi Ndouba).

ARTICLE

Fabio Massimo Parenti (research team coordinator), XINJIANG: Understanding Complexity, Building Peace, Eurispes – BRICS Laboratory, International Diplomatic Institute (IDI), Centre for Eurasia-Mediterranean Studies (CeSEM), Rome, May 2021.

The Xinjiang Report. An analysis model as a contribution to the reduction of international tensions

Over the past year, the Western media has given considerable attention to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Newspapers, television programs and, above all, social media users have focused in particular on the alleged repression, by the Chinese government, of the local Uyghur community, a predominantly Islamic ethnic group with its own language (Uyghur, of Turkic origin) that has lived in the region for centuries, accounting for just over half of the total population.

In Europe, the issue has caused consternation and indignation in public opinion, to the point of influencing politics, and convincing the foreign ministers of the member countries of the European Union to approve sanctions against some Chinese officials considered to be particularly implicated – according
to the allegations – in the so-called “Uyghur genocide”. However, the accounts and testimonies coming out of China, as well as from foreign journalists, diplomats, experts, students and professionals who have had and continue to have the chance to visit Xinjiang and its cities and counties, tell a very different story, which seriously undermines the West’s charges.

The detention and re-education camps, are, in fact, shown to be confinement and de-radicalisation centres for men and women affiliated with terrorist groups, such as the East Turkestan Liberation Organization (ETLO) and the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), which for several years have been carrying out attacks not only in Xinjiang but elsewhere in China as well, and even abroad, against Chinese targets (diplomatic representations, tourist groups or companies) or targets of other nature, as evidenced by the presence, reported in recent years, of ethnic Uyghur fighters among the ranks of ISIS in the Syrian and Iraqi conflicts.

This report thus seeks to shed light on a topic – that of the social and political situation in Xinjiang – that is much broader and more complex than the simplistic accounts and allegations of the Western mainstream press, whose sensationalistic narrative risks generating serious diplomatic tensions, undermining consolidated bilateral or multilateral cooperation platforms and, last but not least, providing sectarian, violent and subversive groups with a very dangerous political and moral legitimacy.


RECENT MEDIA PUBLICATIONS

BOOK

This is the twelfth book in French written by the Palestinian author, who continues to denounce, in his articles, poems and testimonies, the injustice imposed on an entire civilian population in a region locked up, abandoned, confined and attacked.

It brings together the daily testimonies of the Palestinian writer during these eleven days of absolute horror, as well as his articles of analysis and reflection during and after the offensive, his poems and his stories, written under very difficult conditions, under bombs and missile rains falling everywhere, every minute. We find in this book the testimonies of young students and graduates of French under the bombs, as well as the links of the interventions and the interviews granted by Ziad Medoukh to the media, radio and television channels and French-speaking sites on this aggression.

It is the first book published abroad, less than two months after the ceasefire, on this new bloody attack on an already isolated and locked up region.

These chronicles are qualified by the publisher as a heartbreaking appeal, a legitimate cry against injustice and oblivion, springing from the heart, burning with truth and sincerity, but above all a cry of hope in life which continues even among the ruins, who resists and who remains worthy. It is a testimony to future generations of the massive destruction of an entire abandoned region.

If the Israeli occupation forces have decided to destroy Gaza, the Palestinians are building and rebuilding because they love life.

**ARTICLES**

Manoranjan Mohanty, "The cost of China’s economic achievements: China and CPC's success has come at the cost of rural-urban inequality and enviromental degradation", The Indian Express, Saturday, July 03, 2021.


The Communist Party of China (CPC), which observed the centenary of its founding on July 1 with a very assertive speech by Xi Jinping, has much to celebrate and the world, even a divided one, has to acknowledge its accomplishments. A country which suffered oppression by multiple colonial powers and extreme poverty and frequent famines is today a global power with modern industrial strength. It has lifted nearly 800 million out of absolute poverty.

The victory of the CPC-led revolution in 1949 and founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the launching of the economic reforms in 1978 are major landmarks in this story. That China has effectively handled the challenge of the pandemic, revived its economy and sent a mission to Mars makes the occasion more joyful for it. Xi announced the achievement of the goal of building a “moderately well-off society in all respects”, set at the 16th Party Congress in 2002, besides underlining, in strong terms, China’s determination to defend its territorial identity.


This article explores the current scenario of urban agglomerations, drawing attention to the growth of population and the process of unruled urbanization that endangers the delicate balance between human settlements and the surrounding environment. It focuses on the heritage values as fundamental elements for a correct urban development and highlights the
impacts that metropolises and megacities have on climate change and the effects on them produced by COVID-19. It then looks at the role that minor cities and towns play and the coming opportunity to revamp them using new technologies and connectivity corridors and to mitigate urbanization. It concludes by observing how complex urban problems must be faced with a comprehensive vision that is driven by the social quality approach and an engagement with the BRICS countries.

RECENT PAST AND PRESENT INITIATIVES

RECENT PAST

THE RISE OF ASIA IN GLOBAL HISTORY AND PERSPECTIVE: 60 Years after Belgrade, what non-alignment in a multipolar world and for a global future?
LA MONTEE DE L’ASIE EN HISTOIRE ET PERSPECTIVE GLOBALES: 60 ans après Belgrade, quel non-alignement dans un monde multipolaire et pour un avenir mondial?

International and Interdisciplinary Webconferencing, February 10-12, 2021

THE RISE OF ASIA CONFERENCE 2021 took place virtually on Zoom in Paris (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne) on February 10, 2021, and in Le Havre (Université Le Havre Normandie) on February 11-12, 2021. More than 100 papers were presented and discussed in 35 plenary and parallel sessions of the conference, with the participation of more than 300 persons from more than 50 countries. 31 videos of the conference are available online at youtube and their playlist is available at https://bandungspirit.org/

PRESENT

BANDUNG SPIRIT ONLINE CONVERSATION SERIES

66th Anniversary of the 1955 Bandung Asian-African Conference
60th Anniversary of the 1961 Belgrade Non-Alignment Conference
55th Anniversary of the 1966 Havana Tricontinental Conference

In the framework of preparation of the conference “BANDUNG-BELGRADE-HAVANA IN GLOBAL HISTORY AND PERSPECTIVE: WHAT DREAM, WHAT REALITY, WHAT PROJECT FOR A GLOBAL FUTURE?” that will take place in Indonesian on October 24-29, 2022, Bandung Spirit Network organises Bandung Spirit Online Conversation Series on the following topics:

BANDUNG-BELGRADE-HAVANA GEOPOLITICAL INSIGHTS
The conversations are focused on global geopolitical hotspots around the world where the invisible hands of imperialism may
play: Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Cyprus, Greece, Haiti, Hong Kong, Iran, Lebanon, Mali, Palestine, Taiwan, Venezuela... The videos of the conversation are available online at youtube and their playlist is available at https://bandungspirit.org/

BANDUNG SPIRIT URBAN DEVELOPMENT WATCH

With the continuous increase of urbanisation and concentration of population in urban areas worldwide, it is worthwhile to set-up and develop an international network of UDW (Urban Development Watch). It will allow to identify the challenges in a given urban area, to compare with other urban areas, to learn each other among the "watchers", to see the problems at national, regional and/or global levels.

The object of watch is a geographical area/locality/territory (town, city, agglomeration, urban/suburban zone). The watch may be focused on one or more sectors: culture, ecology, economy, politic and/or religion/spirituality, etc.

The UDW working group members meet every 6 weeks to present and discuss a study case. The videos of the conversation will be put online at youtube.

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

THE RISE OF ASIA IN GLOBAL HISTORY AND PERSPECTIVE:
COVID-19 FROM ASIA TO THE WORLD: WHAT ASSESSMENT AND WHAT PERSPECTIVE FOR A COMMON FUTURE?
INTERNATIONAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE
Paris, February 9, 2022 & Le Havre, February 10-11, 2022

The conference is open to individual and group paper presentations. Those willing to present their papers are invited to submit their proposals until September 30, 2021. The selected proposals will be communicated to their authors starting from October 2021.

The Covid-19 global situation allows us to state the following points:
1) We are living in a crisis of civilisation provoked or accelerated by the pandemic and the climate change, crisis that may be seen as a transition from capitalist mode of production-based towards another; the new one is however unknown in advance.
2) Asia plays an important if not leading role towards a new global civilisation;
3) There is a risk that the rise of Asia leads to a planetary catastrophe since it is based on a model of growth created and developed by the West based on economism, productivism, consumerism, materialism, patriarchy, model denounced as the root problem.

So, how does this “crisis of civilisation” manifest in different fields and different localities? In what way
the pandemic affects peoples, societies, nations, states? How do they manage the pandemic? Do Asian countries perform better than others? Does the pandemic constitute a point of “bifurcation” (Immanuel Wallerstein), a moment of “delinking” (Samir Amin), towards a “global rebalancing” or a “global restructuring” (Manoranjan Mohanty)? What “status quo” and what “transformation” following the pandemic? Are there signs of changes towards a new global post-capitalist, post-productivist, post-consumerist, post-materialist, post-patriarchal civilisation?

As a matter of indication, major changes in the following fields may help us to answer those questions:

1) Gender and women’s issues (feminist movements, ecofeminism, gender justice, “depatriarcalisation”, LGBT, MeToo...)

2) Ecology (climate change, pandemic, green cities, green capitalism, eco-renewable energy, plastic, waste, pollutions, eco-socialism, vegetarianism, veganism...)

3) Digital universe (information, communication, media, GAFAM, Ali Baba, cryptocurrency, fake news, artificial intelligence, cyber-economy, cyber-crimes, cyber-war...)

4) Biotechnology (medical-agricultural-industrial-environmental-biotechnology, genetic engineering, cloning, GMO, vaccines...)

5) Demography (national-regional-international uneven growth, aging societies, over population, ethnic-religious-conflicts, urbanisation, migration...)

6) New phase of decolonisation (counter hegemony, decolonisation of mind, Black lives matter, Palestine lives matter, anti-racism, anti-occupation, anti-apartheid, anti-war...)

It is to assess the state of the world under Covid-19 pandemic and to catch the perspective of a common future that the 6th edition of the Rise of Asia Conference Series is organised. It encourages the participation of scholars from a wide range of scientific disciplines (area studies, cultural studies, ecology, economics, geography, history, humanities, languages, management, political and social sciences...) and practitioners from diverse professional fields (business, civil society, education, enterprise, government, management, parliament, public policy, social and solidarity movements...) as well as artists and writers, based in diverse geographical areas (Africa, North, Central and South America, Australia, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Oceania, Pacific...).

For more information: https://bandungspirit.org/

**CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

**ISSH-2021**

**The 2nd International Conference on Innovations in the Social Sciences & Humanities**

Ton Duc Thang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

17th and 18th of December 2021

The conference is organised by Ton Duc Thang University jointly with scholars at six other universities:
- University of the South Pacific;
- Jadavpur University in India;
- Higher School of Economic University Moscow in Russia;
- Pratt Institute in USA;
- College of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences at Purdue University Northwest, USA;
- The Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research.

**Important dates:**
- Abstract Submission: Aug 15th
- Notice of acceptance: Sept 15th
- Full paper submit by Nov 1st
- Registration/payment: Nov 1-25
- Conference: Dec 17–18, 2021

For more information: https://issh2021.tdtu.edu.vn/
ABOUT US

We are scholars and activists of social and solidarity movements getting together around the common ideals of Bandung Spirit. Our network continues to develop since 2005, the year of the 50th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, which was commemorated for the first time by "non-state" actors (civil society, scholars and activists of social and solidarity movements) in divers parts of the world. See more information at https://bandungspirit.org/

BANDUNG SPIRIT BULLETIN is aimed at: 1) Strengthening and consolidating the movement; 2) Informing and learning each other among members of the movement; 3) Documenting individual and collective experiences, ideas, thoughts, and reflections related to the movement; 4) Informing the public about the activities of the movement.

The bulletin header symbolises the Bandung Spirit Movement in the cosmos offering possibilities of imagined Bandung Constellation. Its position is not at the centre, but at a certain point of the universe, to symbolise its awareness as a tiny and humble element of a collective movement. It was designed by Darwis Khudori, architect, historian, executive editor of the bulletin. As for the Bandung Spirit logo, it was designed for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the 1955 Bandung Conference organised by scholars and activists of social movements in Indonesia on April 2005. It takes a form of a flower as a symbol of love and peace. The number of petals (50) refers to the 50th anniversary, while the five colours symbolise five continents and their cultural diversity. The composition of the petals is such that it gives impression of a collective movement following the movement of the hands of clock, symbolising dynamism, interdependence and solidarity following the time. The logo designer is Erwinton P. Napitupulu, Indonesian architect based in Bandung.

The BULLETIN is open until August 31, 2021 to proposals of contribution to the upcoming issue no. 3 / October 2021. See guidelines for contributors at https://bandungspirit.org/ section BULLETIN.