

PART V

BUILDING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC
ALTERNATIVES TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS



Chinese Social Transformation and its Implications for the Future of Afro-Asian Solidarity

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Introduction

On 25 December 2011, China and Japan unveiled plans to promote direct exchange of their currencies. This agreement will allow firms to convert the Chinese and Japanese currencies directly into each other, thus negating the need to buy dollars (*BBC News* 2011). This deal between China and Japan followed agreements between China and fourteen other countries to trade outside the sphere of the US dollar. A few weeks earlier, China had also announced a 70 billion Yuan (\$11 billion) currency swap agreement with Thailand. These reports were carried in the financial papers and the organs that understood the response of the Chinese to the continued devaluation of the US dollar. The disguising of these devaluations as 'quantitative easing' did not fundamentally deceive societies of the African and Asian blocs that wanted protection against a future financial collapse in the Western capitalist states (Johnson and Kwak 2010). As recently as March 2012, one expert speaking at the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank stated that, 'It may only be a matter of time before the US dollar gets replaced as the main currency in international trade.' The Western media and financial papers have been careful in reporting on this seismic shift in the international financial system. There are major implications that will emanate from this direct exchange of currencies between the first and second largest holder of US Treasury Securities.¹ Prior to this agreement between China and Japan, the Japanese formed a core partner in the post-World War II international

financial architecture that maintained the dollar as the currency of world trade and supported the hegemonic position of the United States in the international political economy.

This currency swap agreement was deepened by a later investment agreement between China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. Hence, while the corporate media has focused on the battle by the US and EU to 'bully' China into allowing its currency to significantly appreciate (i.e. be determined by market forces) and ultimately fully internationalized so that its currency could be traded by global financial institutions, China has been truly doing its own thing (like establishing the current swap trade settlement arrangements with neighbours) based on its strategic calculations and economic interests. The ability of China to chart its own path is in itself a dimension of a new international economic order. This aspect of Chinese economic relations has been accompanied by rapid and fundamental changes in the nature of the world economy.²

This chapter will seek to lay out an African perspective on the changes in the global political economy, delving into the implications of the 'Rise of China' and the debates on the nature of China in the global economy. Vijay Prashad in his study of the relationships between the Darker Nations and the imperial powers had spelt out how anti-colonial nationalism within the non-aligned movement had been the foundation of an alternative world order based on peace, self-determination and international cooperation (Prashad 2008). This book, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*, was written before the collapse of the neo-liberal financial system in 2007-08. Since the emergence of the BRICS formation as a centre of alternative financial resources, there has been a growing realization from all continents that new forms of economic arrangements will be necessary to bypass the Breton Woods system. In the face of this realization and the aggressive deployment of financial and economic resources by China, there has been a spate of anti-Chinese ideas that China has emerged as the new imperialist hegemon. One of the many challenges will be whether the access to Africa's natural resources and energy resources will follow the path of plunder and brutality that emerged from Western colonial domination. Like Africa and the rest of the other countries of the Afro-Asian bloc, China has been through periods of brutal imperial domination and wars, and therefore shares the aspirations of moving to new forms of relations. The Chinese aspiration for alternative social relationships within the context of socialist transformation has been fought for in a revolution. Under the political leadership of the Communist Party of China, it was recognized that independence and economic growth had to be defended so that the defence of the Chinese revolution has taken many twists and turns. Many scholars and policy makers in the West credit the present spectacular growth to the opening up of China to the West. But as

Samir Amin has argued, even if China's opening is within the capitalist mode of production, the future result of this 'evolution' would be a multi-polar world organized around the newly emerging powers.

One of the fundamental questions posed by the present conjuncture is whether the challenge of the Afro-Asian bloc can continue without even greater militarism and militarization from the United States and its allies. Will the current depression end up in open global warfare?

This chapter seeks to grasp the implications of the call by the people of the Afro-Asian bloc who want a new mode of organization and whose campaigns for environmental justice seek to build on the struggles for independence. Will the rise of China reproduce the barbaric exploitation of workers that has been the history of capitalism as well as the ecological disaster? The reality of the environmental crisis is sharpening the debate and discussions on transformation. Transformations and climate debt (reparations) are interrelated and the challenge is how to move the Afro-Asian solidarity bloc in a direction away from the 'development models' that devalued their humanity. How can our work as intellectuals and activists assist in the transformation of society, to develop human potential for self-emancipation from all forms of bondage and restrictions, mental, racial, economic, gender, social and cultural?

This is the essence of an understanding of transformation, a tremendous change in social organization, modes of thinking, cultural and gendered practices. In this sense, transformation involves far more than legal changes, such as political independence or simply the transition from one mode of production to the next. Transformation involves a thorough change in society from top to bottom. Throughout the world, the new vigor of Chinese investment in the infrastructure of societies in Africa, Asia and Latin America has opened new possibilities for reconstruction away from the old forms of relations with Western Europe. Reconstruction after wars of devastation offers opportunities for societies to make a break with old forms of economic and social relations. I argue in this chapter that it is the social struggles of the working peoples in the Afro-Asian world that can lay the basis for a new transition beyond capitalism. This argument is not new in Africa since during the period of the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles, progressive intellectuals from centres of study and reflection had been writing about the challenges of the transition to socialism (Thomas 1976). This author benefited from the theoretical insights of the Dar es Salaam School that had grappled with the challenges of the transition beyond capitalism. Tanzania in both theory and practice was one of the anchors of the spirit of South-South cooperation.

After examining the trajectory of Afro-Asian solidarity up to the current changed world situation, the chapter will lay out some of the debates on the

nature of the social transformation in China. We will then conclude with the call by Samir Amin for the progressives of the North and South to be bold in formulating a political alternative to the existing system. Amin proposed three main directions (a) socialize the ownership of monopolies, (b) definancialize the management of the economy and (c) deglobalize international relations. These audacious proposals require new forms of struggles and new networks globally. The revolts against neoliberalism throughout the world provide a firm basis for building social relations between the classes in China and the other countries of the Afro-Asian Bloc to chart a new course for humanity. It is this break that brings the peoples of Africa and China together. This break involves a rethinking of the basic ideas of linear thinking and the view that associates development with European stages of growth, as modernity and enlightenment thinking are now being interrogated. Finally, we will make the case for *ubuntu* and the shared sense of humanity as the basis for twenty-first century relations. The theoretical base for this chapter rests on a South-South perspective that is nested within the conceptual framework of *ubuntu*. Five years ago, in another conceptual analysis of the relationships between Angola and China, Sreeram Chaulia and I mapped out the theoretical framework for a South-South analysis. Then, it was articulated that the relations between Africa and China emerged out of struggles, common interests and transformation (Campbell and Chaulia 2009). Julius Nyerere had developed the formulation of Unequal Equals to characterize the incubation stages of the relationship between Tanzania and China in the period of the Cold War. The transformation of the economic basis of twentieth century international relations was being forced on to the international stage by the emergence of new international players in the twenty-first century (Prashad 2013). Realist conceptions of power and might predispose academics, even within China, to think of world politics in terms of the dynamic of great power rivalry. What this chapter will seek to do from the analysis of the ideas of Bandung, is show that there was a search for a multipolar world, and that this process is occurring so rapidly that it is eroding old ideas of economic alignments.

The ideas and practices of the anti-colonial leadership period were not adequate for the movement to make a quantum leap outside of the orbit of international capitalism. The social and economic conditions in this period of capitalist depression require new ideas, new alliances, and a new politics for the twenty-first century. This will be one of the surest paths to transcend this obsolete capitalist system (Amin 2010).

The Spirit of Bandung and the Peoples of the World

'Let a New Asia and a New Africa be Born'

These words of President Sukarno of Indonesia were delivered at the opening session of the Asian-African Conference that was held in Bandung, Indonesia from 18 to 24 April 1955. After the independence of India in 1947 and the accelerated decolonization process, Jawaharlal Nehru committed India to support independence and decolonization in all parts of the world. Nehru was the host for the Asian Relations Conference held from 22 March to 3 April 1947 in Delhi in which 250 representatives from twenty-five Asian countries participated as well as those from Australia and New Zealand as observers. India, then, had not yet gained its independence officially. Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister of the interim government and he outlined his vision of peace and independence when he said in his address:

We have laid a strong foundation for our work. I hope that this endeavor will continue that this towering tree of Asian unity that has brought us together will culminate into something wonderful... universal peace based on freedom. For we, at present, cannot separate the destiny of one people from the destiny of other peoples because they interact together. Any sane person can understand that it is impossible to disassociate the problems confronting us today. It is impossible - as has been said a long time ago - there cannot be a world which is half free and half under the yoke of slavery, nor part of the world torn by war and another part enjoying peace. Freedom is for all, peace is for the entire world (Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization 2013).

In his quest for unity in Asia, Nehru worked with the new leaders of China to articulate a clear expression of solidarity with the peoples of Indo-China who were fighting for freedom. In June 1954, during the Geneva conference on the future of Indo-China, the Chinese premier Chou En-Lai accepted an invitation to visit India. The invitation had been extended to him by V. K. Krishna Menon, India's representative at the conference. The ensuing talks between Chou En-Lai and Nehru ended on 28 June 1954 in the signing of a joint statement on the principles on which relations between India and China were to be based. These principles, which were subsequently known as the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence or Panchsheel, were: (1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; (2) non-aggression; (3) non-interference in each other's internal affairs; (4) equality and mutual benefit; and (5) peaceful coexistence (Mohanty 2005). Parallel to this meeting of minds between Nehru and Chou En-lai, there had been a new assertiveness by the peoples of Indonesia who were maturing out of the struggles against Dutch Colonialism.

In April 1954, the Indonesian government proposed the convocation of an Asian-African conference. In December of the same year, the five prime ministers of Burma, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India, Indonesia and Pakistan held a conference in Bogor, Indonesia, reached an agreement on convening an Asian-African conference and decided that the conference would be jointly proposed by the five countries. When the conference did meet, it captured the energies of the ongoing struggles for independence and the conference was attended by twenty-nine Asian and African countries besides the five countries mentioned above, namely, Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gold Coast (Ghana), Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, the Vietnam Democratic Republic, South Vietnam (later reunified with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) and Yemen (Republic of Yemen).

The conference was chaired by Indonesian Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo and the Indonesian President Sukarno made an opening address entitled, 'Let a New Asia and a New Africa be Born'. Recalling the anti-imperialist and militant formations that had been alive during the capitalist depression from the time of the Conference of the League against Imperialism, Sukarno declared, 'our nations and countries are colonies no more. Now we are free, sovereign and independent.... We are again masters in our own house. We do not need to go to other continents to confer.' Sukarno also warned that 'colonialism is not yet dead, so long as vast areas of Asia and Africa are unfree'. Sukarno also called for unity beyond religious differences.

There were strong pressures by Western states to seek to isolate China but the leader of the Chinese delegation, Zhou En-lai refused to be drawn into a bruising debate with China's neighbours and instead offered a conciliatory approach to the relations with the neighbors of China based on 'peaceful coexistence'.³ In tracing the history of colonialism, Chou En-lai said that, 'the rule of colonialism in this region has not yet come to an end, and new colonialism are attempting to take the place of the old ones... He continued by noting that, 'they are clamoring openly that atomic weapons are conventional arms and are making precautions for atomic war. The people of Asia shall never forget that the first atomic bomb exploded on Asian soil and that the first man to die from experimental explosion of a hydrogen bomb was an Asian.' The Chinese prime minister directed his comments especially to the leaders of Thailand and the Philippines in declaring that the Chinese delegation came to Bandung to 'seek unity and not to quarrel... to seek common ground, not to create divergence.'

The conference had been divided into three committees, namely, political, economic and cultural; and the final communiqué outlined basic principles which included economic cooperation, cultural cooperation, human rights

and self-determination, the issue of people in dependent countries, other issues, promotion of world peace and cooperation as well as the adoption of the Declaration on Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation, and listed ten principles in handling international relations. The conference reached consensus on the crucial question of independence and support for all peoples under colonial rule. It was noted that at that time, the question of colonialism in Puerto Rico was high on the agenda of Bandung and Nehru of India was firm that the movement must support decolonization everywhere. There were six African societies represented: Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast (Ghana), Liberia, Libya and the Sudan. These countries formed the backbone of a new alignment which was envisaged as a counterweight to the United States and the Soviet Union.

The spirit of unity of the Asian and African people, opposing imperialism and colonialism, struggling for the defence of national independence and world peace and the promotion of friendship among the peoples as demonstrated at the conference is known as the 'Bandung Spirit'. Since that conference African activists have held on to the ideals of solidarity and cooperation that echoed from this meeting.⁴

This idea of solidarity was carried forward leading to the support for the rapid decolonization process in Africa and the nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956. President Sukarno of Indonesia had been emboldened by the spirit of Bandung and he carried these ideas to the United Nations in 1960. He noted,

It has been said that we live in the midst of a revolution of rising expectations. It is not so. We live in the midst of a world of rising demands. Those who were previously without freedom now demand freedom. Those who were previously without a voice now demand that their voices be heard. Those who were previously hungry now demand rice, plentifully every day. Those who were previously unlettered demand education. The whole world is a vast powerhouse of revolution, a vast revolutionary ammunition dump. No less than three-quarter of humanity is involved in this revolution of rising demands, and this is the greatest revolution since man first walked erect in a virgin and pleasant world. The success or failure of this organization will be judged by its relationship to that revolution of rising demands. Future generations will praise us or condemn us in the light of our responses to these challenges (Sukarno 1960).

Sukarno did not live to see the realization of the spirit of Bandung; he was overthrown in a violent counter-revolutionary and anti-communist putsch which killed more than half a million Indonesians (Scot 1985). This military coup in Indonesia, the war against the Vietnamese people and the assassination of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo were all part of the efforts of Western Europe and the United States to destroy the national liberation project and

diminish Afro-Asian solidarity. Despite these measures, after the revolution in Cuba and the expansion of the Tricontinental conference, the efforts to create the nonaligned bloc created a new force with calls during the seventies for a New International Economic Order (Prashad 2007: 214–10).

Prior to the convening of the first nonaligned meeting in Belgrade in September 1961, there emerged a new force called the OSPAA (Organization for Solidarity for the People of Africa and Asia). After the Anglo-French, Israeli war against Egypt in 1956 there had been a meeting of solidarity that had gathered in Cairo, Egypt in 1957. There were 500 delegates from thirty-five countries that met for the convening of the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization (AAPSO). AAPSO was officially launched on 1 January 1958 with Cairo as the headquarters of this organization. One of the more overlooked outcomes of the meeting of the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Conference in Egypt was the prominent role played by women, especially the sterling leadership of Egyptian women. The formation of the Afro-Asian Federation for Women was the forerunner of numerous areas of collaboration between women from the Third World that later took on a massive presence in the UN work relating to women (Prashad 2007: 57).

After this effort the Cubans extended this solidarity to include the peoples of Latin America and in 1966 called the Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (Organización de Solidaridad con los Pueblos de Asia, África y América Latina), abbreviated as OSPAAAL, meeting in Havana. It was here that Amílcar Cabral delivered his important speech on liberation in Africa, ‘The Weapon of Theory’.

The crucial issue for the peoples of this moment was a better quality of life. As Cabral maintained, ‘Always bear in mind that people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone’s head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children.’

The NIEO and the Future of our Children

Prime Minister Nehru of India was one of the most committed of the leaders of the Third World that had come to be loosely organized in the formation called the non-aligned movement. From the outset, the non-aligned movement was conceived as a loose formation that would be based on international solidarity and building a new base for international economic relations.⁵ Mahatmas Gandhi had inspired freedom fighters in many parts of the world and Nehru had worked closely with Gandhi to expel the British from India. As early as 1946, even before the full independence of India in 1947, Nehru had called for a separate identity of the former oppressed peoples. He did

not envisage a new bloc and wanted the non-aligned movement to be a force for peace, decolonization and anti-racism. In his presentation at the Belgrade summit in 1961, Nehru said,

It is a strange thing that a few year ago-six, seven or eight if you like – this business of non-alignment was a rare phenomenon. A few countries here and there talked about it and other countries made fun of it, or at any rate did not take it seriously. Non-alignment? What is this? You must be on this side or that side. This was the argument. Well that argument is dead today; nobody dare say that, because the whole world of history of the last few years has shown the growing opinion, the spread of this concept of non-alignment.⁶

Nehru envisaged a strategy of cooperation that would support total independence. Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt echoed the same philosophical position in 1961 when he stated that, ‘non-alignment means that we ought to decide what we believe in and not according to what might satisfy any particular country. It means that our policy is not attached to the policy of any other country or any big powers.’

In the spirit of Bandung there was renewed confidence among the colonized and in the early sixties the massive decolonization process was accompanied by high expectations about economic cooperation among the non-aligned countries. During the era of Nehru, Indian scholars and diplomats were very active in support of liberation, but Western planners scheming through universities and the Bretton Woods institutions worked hard to wean India from the ranks of militant anti-colonial fighters so that by the year 2012, India was the largest recipient of World Bank aid.

Although China was not a member of the non-aligned movement, the foreign ministry in China followed the deliberations of the non-aligned movement very closely and Chou En-lai strengthened the capabilities of the Chinese state to support liberation. As a leader who understood the impact of colonial domination, Chou En-lai undertook visits to the countries of Africa and Asia, including one visit of seven weeks to Africa. This was the period when China was still seeking the support of the members of the non-aligned movement to regain its seat at the United Nations as the official representative of the Chinese people, a position that had been usurped by Taiwan with the support of conservatives in the United States. The visit of President Richard Nixon to China in 1972 after secret negotiations between Henry Kissinger and the Chinese leaders provided new room for US legitimacy at a moment when the forces of liberation in Africa, Asia and Latin America were calling for the isolation of the United States. One year after the Nixon visit to China, this same administration was involved in the murderous overthrow of the leadership of the Chilean people on 11 September 1973 (Qureshi 2008). Kissinger and Nixon had feared the implications of the redistribution of wealth in Chile and

the positive lessons that may have been learnt. The assassination of Salvador Allende followed the trajectory of the opposition to democratic participation and expression in the Third World. This opposition to democracy, while loudly proclaiming support for democracy and human rights, was consistent with the needs of US capital to repress working peoples throughout the world.

When the United States devalued the dollar in 1971 there was an even greater impetus among the non-aligned states as they worked to strengthen institutions within the United Nations system that would work for a New International Economic Order (Addo 1984). However, the United States and her allies within Western Europe were bent on rolling back the gains of independence and popular representation in trade unions and other forums for democracy. A. M. Babu, Samir Amin, Vijay Prashad, Archie Singham and numerous others have written extensively on the massive campaign by the United States to reverse this anti-colonial front and undermine solidarity (Singham 1977). US cultural institutions, universities and media houses were mobilized to diminish the importance of non-alignment and penetrate those classes in the non-aligned world that had ideological proclivities with US imperialism (Schiller 1992).⁷ India was one target of this penetration with sustained support for the emerging capitalists in India who turned away from the social democratic ideas of Nehru (Srikant 1984). This was most manifest in many areas of military, cultural and economic relations and it is important to highlight one, in relation to India. This was the dropping of the claim that the question of the independence of Puerto Rico should be placed on the agenda of the decolonization committee of the United Nations.

The total onslaught on the ideas of independence, economic cooperation and non-alignment took many forms but was most destructive in the elimination of the leaders who wanted to make a break with the colonial order. ‘The western powers were not going to accept the spirit of Bandung and non-alignment on their own free will, neither on the political level, nor on that of the economic battle. The true hatred that they kept for the Third World radical leaders of the 1960s (Nasser, Soekarno, Nkrumah, Modibo Keita...), almost all overthrown at the same time, during the years 1965–1968 – a time in which the Israeli aggression of June 1967 against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan happened – shows that the political vision of non-alignment was not accepted by the Atlantic alliance.’⁸

The 2011 invasion of Libya and the execution of Muamar Gadhafi exposed the devastating continuities of the policies of the United States to halt the move towards economic independence and economic cooperation (Campbell 2013). Yet every act of military oppression instigated even new forms of solidarity. This solidarity was at its peak in the twenty-year period 1955–75 and it was in the same moment that societies such as the Vietnamese

were able to repulse the US military aggression and inspired the mobilization of millions in the global peace movement. This solidarity was also inspired by the anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa to the point that even those who were cooperating with the imperial supporters of apartheid had to pay lip service to the call for the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the African National Congress.

In every part of the non-aligned world, whether in Vietnam, Palestine, South Africa or Western Sahara, Afro-Asian solidarity was able to survive when the states of the non-aligned movement succumbed to pressures from the international financial institutions. Julius Nyerere of Tanzania had distinguished the peoples of Tanzania in their forthright support for the decolonization of Southern Africa and attempt to develop a self-reliant economic path. Elsewhere in my scholarship on the IMF and Tanzania, I have documented extensively the assault of the Western financial institutions on the experiment in Tanzania which was based on an African conception of socialism, *ujamaa* (Campbell and Stein 1989). It was Nyerere who was forthright in calling the IMF and World Bank institutions of oppression as he called for the cancellation of the Third World debt. The statement of Nyerere became legend as he intoned, 'Must we starve our children to pay our debts?' (quoted in Booker 2004).

Julius Nyerere joined with leaders of the non-aligned movement such as Fidel Castro of Cuba and Michael Manley of Jamaica to mobilize many societies in the South and in the Afro-Asian community to oppose the IMF and called for the cancellation of the odious debt. This form of Afro-Asian solidarity took deep roots in Latin America and grew into one branch of the anti-globalization campaign. Scholarly work by African intellectuals at the Economic Commission for Africa exposed the levels of capital flight from Africa under the guise of aid, while explaining that 'debt sucks the natural resources out of a country, forcing countries to become dependent on international creditors for more aid and new loans' (Jubilee USA n.d).

This theme of the future of the Children of the Afro-Asian bloc was honed by scholars such as Dr. Adebayo Adedeji, who wrote that 'Debt is tearing down schools, clinics and hospitals and the effects are no less devastating than war' (Jubilee USA n.d).

In noting that the relations between the West and Africa were a manifestation of a new kind of slavery, this international campaign outlined how the IMF and World Bank took away the sovereignty and freedom that had been won at independence. When countries are enslaved by debt they cannot improve the lives of their citizens nor gain control over their own futures. 'Every child in Africa is born with a financial burden which a lifetime's work cannot repay. The debt is a new form of slavery as vicious as the slave trade' (Jubilee USA n.d).

It is the nature of the total assault on African self-development which has led many African scholars to be cautious in using the term 'Cold War' to refer to the all-out attack against independence. In all parts of the Third World, from Vietnam to Guatemala and from Angola to Nicaragua, the poor experienced the brutal unleashing of the Cold War's anti-communist machinery. Whether it was in the wars against the peoples of Angola or the support for the racist apartheid regime in South Africa, the United States became politically and diplomatically energized as they carried out crimes of war against the peoples of the world. Mahmood Mamdani has documented the ways in which one can chart the militarization of the planet from the wars against the Vietnamese people to the current militarization that carries the label, 'War on Terror'. Mamdani wrote: '1975 was the year of American defeat in Indochina. 1975 was also the year the Portuguese empire collapsed in Africa. It was the year the center of gravity of the Cold War shifted from Southeast Asia to Southern Africa. The question was: who would pick up the pieces of the Portuguese empire, the US or the Soviet Union?' (Mamdani 2002).

As the centre of gravity of the 'Cold War' shifted, from Southeast Asia to Southern Africa, there was also a shift in US strategy. The Nixon Doctrine had been forged towards the closing years of the Vietnam War but could not be implemented at that late stage – the doctrine that 'Asian boys must fight Asian wars' – was really put into practice in Southern Africa. In practice, it translated into a US decision to harness, or even to cultivate, terrorism in the struggle against regimes it considered pro-Soviet. In Southern Africa, the immediate result was a partnership between the US and apartheid South Africa, accused by the UN of perpetrating 'a crime against humanity'. Reagan termed this new partnership 'constructive engagement'.

It is this interconnection between multiple wars in Africa and Asia that should encourage a newer generation to interrogate the scholarship from Realist scholars in China and India about new superpowers in the twenty-first century. As the United States carries out its present campaign to launch its Africa Command, it is an opportune moment for business and political leaders in Africa to reflect on the conjuncture where the militarism of the United States is no longer capable of maintaining the dominance of the IMF and US capitalism. In all parts of the Afro-Asian world, the lessons of the military and economic assault of the Triad (North America, Western Europe and Japan) are being absorbed as new relations are being fashioned. It was in East Asia where these new relationships blossomed in response to the Asian financial crisis (Chang 2002, 2010). These relationships within Asia have now placed the Asian societies at the centre of the world economy. More importantly, has been the intellectual assertiveness of these societies to reject the neoliberal approach to economic relations. Vijay Prashad in *his book Poorer Nations: A Possible History*

of the Global South has been able to document the tenacity of social movements from the Third World. In the intellectual fora sponsored by the imperial states there has been the inclination to diminish the intellectual assertiveness of the societies that reject the neoliberal approach to economic relations.

ASEAN States Oppose Neoliberalism

After the spectacular cohesion of the non-aligned group in the 1970, there was a counter-offensive from the Eastern states on economic, military and cultural fronts. Culturally, the Western media and intellectuals denigrated the idea of Afro-Asian solidarity; militarily, these states attempted to halt the processes of decolonization (highlighted by the Western alliance to preserve apartheid); and, economically, assaulting autonomous economic initiatives through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment programmes. Scholars have subsumed these assaults as one component of neoliberalism which is essentially the reconstitution of class power by the global economic elite. David Harvey, in particular, argued that neoliberalism in its practice has not been a 'utopian project to realize a theoretical design for the reorganization of international capitalism' but a practical political project meant to restore the power of economic elites. This power has been concentrated in the financial sector in the West and it is now legend how this financial sector reproduced a form of political legitimacy by its corruption of the intellectual enterprise. In his book, *Predator Nation: Corporate Criminals, Political Corruption and the Hijacking of America*, Charles Ferguson (2012) detailed the complicity of the top intellectuals in the USA in purveying neoliberal ideas when they were compromised by their association with the banking and financial sector.

This conflict of interest between the top academics in the United States and the society as a whole had been discussed by many authors and commentators who have linked the corporate criminality to the collapse of the Western financial system. During the period after the Wall Street collapse in 2008, the political leaders of the United States were willing and ready to throw out the very same free market neoliberal principles which they promoted globally, when these principles threatened the power of the financial oligarchy. State intervention came in the form of massive bailouts for the banks. One of the intellectual proponents of the principles of neoliberalism, Alan Greenspan, had to admit that there was a 'flaw' in the free market philosophy when he testified before a Congressional Committee in the United States in October 2008 after the fall of the Lehman Brothers financial firm and the US government bailed out the financial industry (Leonhardt 2008).⁹

The societies of East Asia had learnt the lesson that neoliberalism was a practical political project meant to restore the power of economic elites during the late 1990s when the Asian financial crisis was engineered for the

expansion of US imperial power in Asia. After the devastating results of the 'shock therapy' imposed on Russia and the countries of Eastern Europe, the societies of East Asia searched for levers that would release them from the former position where their currencies were tied to imperial currencies. This led to the strengthening of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Malaysia, a key member of the non-aligned movement had been vigorous in the proposing of an East Asia Economic Caucus comprising the members of ASEAN as well as the People's Republic of China, Japan, and South Korea. Based on their experience with the Wall Street financiers, the political leaders of Malaysia wanted to counterbalance the growing influence of the United States in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and in the Asian region as a whole. The ASEAN plus three proposal was also frowned upon by China which wanted to develop bilateral relations instead of multilateral relations. However, after the start of the new century with the clear decline of the United States, the importance of the ASEAN states grew and these states grasped the new role of China in the world economy. The Chinese also moved to develop multilateral relations after the financial crisis and on both sides there were moves to work for further integration under ASEAN Plus Three.

These societies sought to change the nature of how they were integrated into the global economy on terms that better supported the quality of life of their populations. These states had embarked on economic management projects that generated a rising rate of GDP growth (or exports) over a long period of time (more than a decade). Simultaneously these societies were able to obtain a higher level of GDP per capita than in other parts of the Afro-Asian World. Simultaneously, these East Asian societies strengthened local economic capabilities and deepened initiatives which could be categorized as schemes which fostered greater cooperation among Asian nations. These schemes also fostered the integration of the economies of Asian nations. In an effort to escape the Dollar Wall Street Regime (DWSR), these countries were seeking to deepen ways to strengthen their firewall to protect their economies from the continued devaluation of the US dollar. In the year of the 'Eurozone crisis' when the future of the EURO as a viable currency was fraught with uncertainty, many states were reconsidering holding their reserves in the US dollar.

The primary initiative that Asian societies used to build a firewall is that each nation took steps to build up large amounts of hard currency reserves so that they would have the financial resources to avoid ever having to be dependent on (at the mercy of) the IMF. The second initiative that the ten ASEAN nations plus Japan, China and South Korea agreed on was to deepen their cooperation with each other by pooling their financial resources into a regional pool of money which all of them could have access to if they ever faced a financial

crisis again. This was the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI). Initially when the CMI was launched, the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) had been lukewarm its goals; but over a decade, especially after the 2007-08 Wall Street crash, the preliminary partnership that was called ASEAN plus three (viz ASEAN countries plus China, Japan and Korea) matured to the point where the ASEAN Swap Agreements have now been expanded to the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM) agreement. The CMIM set of rules with structured mechanisms for financial regionalism to work for the development of Asian bond markets. These three pillars of the new Asian economic cooperation – CMIM, Asian Bond Markets and bilateral swap agreements – mark a new stage in the international political order. In March 2012, the CMIM leaders agreed to double the size of a regional fund that aims to defend their economies against currency volatility. Though modest in international terms (from US\$120 billion to \$302 billion) it was one indication that countries were seeking an exit the dollar. At the Asian Development Bank (ADB) meeting on 3 May this cooperation continued to evolve to a deeper level on a wide range of fronts, all of which in total reflect the efforts by Asian societies to develop a regional financial architecture with their own institutions which again helps to create better development opportunities from the ways in which Asian nations are integrated into the global economy. In October 2013, the Chinese President Xi Jinping mooted the idea of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as an international financial institution to provide finance to infrastructure projects in the Asia Pacific region. One year later in November 2014, the AIIB was launched in Beijing at the time of the meeting of Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

These measures in Asia to escape the volatility of the US financial system and the devaluations that came in the crisis management of this international financial architecture were hastening the discussion of new financial agreements in all regions of the world. From Latin America, a process of democratization broke the old political alliances with the United States and democratic governments come together to establish the Latin American Reserve Fund. The same central banks that form the kernel of the Latin American Reserve Fund have been working towards the establishment of the Bank of the South. Pushed by leaders who are claiming their voices, Latin American societies are breaking with the orthodox approaches and this was most manifest by the boldness of the leaders of Argentina in relation to the mandate of the Central Bank. The Central Bank was mandated 'to promote, to the extent of its ability and in the framework of policies established by the national government, monetary stability, financial stability, jobs and economic growth with social fairness'. When the President of Argentina, Cristina Fernández, followed by nationalizing foreign oil companies, Western commentators were worried about the demonstration effect for the other

sections of the Afro-Asian world. Apart from the initiatives of President Cristina Fernández' government, the peoples of Latin America are slowly laying the groundwork for a new currency, the SUCRE. As in Asia, the Bank of the South will be one of the fundamental institutions of the Union of South American Nations that has been launched in Latin America in order to guarantee the independence of the societies of Latin America.

We have already made reference to the most coherent formation that resulted in the cooperation in the ASEAN nations. At the same time, it is worth repeating what is known: that in the face of the orientation towards socialism in China, the US and the West fought the 'Cold War' differently in the Asian countries than they did in Africa.

In order to create a counterweight to the influence of Cuba in the non-aligned movement, the United States supported governments such as Singapore, Saudi Arabia and Morocco in order to limit the influence of the ideas of socialist transformation. To counter 'communism', the US invested in countries that are now referred to as the Asian Tigers – Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea. This anti-communist strategy meant that the West supported the breaking up of large landholdings and supported land redistribution programmes. At the same time, the West adopted policies which allowed Asian capitalists to copy patents, and for governments to support local industries and opened their markets to imports to help build indigenous capitalists linked to global markets. But in Africa and the Middle East, they supported killers and dictators and the likes of Jonas Savimbi; they overthrew Kwame Nkrumah; joined in the killing of Patrice Lumumba; orchestrated military coups; supported apartheid; and fuelled wars and conflicts that are to date the bane of the continent's destabilization. In short, after Vietnam, the West fought Africans militarily and economically by (a) using armed forces/violence to defeat 'nationalist' forces labelled as 'communists', and (b) using neoliberal policies, tied to foreign assistance programmes which prevented indigenous economic transformation and perpetuated colonial-based economic relationships to global markets.

China and Kissinger in the Midst of the War Against Vietnam

Even while the war against Vietnam was being waged, the United States under Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger moved decisively to wean a section of the political leadership of the People's Republic of China into a de facto political alliance with the United States. Henry Kissinger, who described himself as an 'interlocutor' in the relations between the United States and China perfected a form of duplicity that is now called, 'strategic ambiguity'. In this process, Henry Kissinger has now written for posterity the tremendous investment that was made by the political and financial leaders in the United States to support

a brand of anti-communism inside a state that was committed to socialist reconstruction (Kissinger 2011). In the ambiguous relations that ensued over the next period, both the United States and the People's Republic of China could claim to resolve a contentious issue on which the parties remain far apart, and to do so in a manner that enables each to claim obtaining some concession on it. The West claimed that this period set China on the course of 'reform' while for the Chinese, it was fulfilling the axiom of Deng Xiaoping that the Chinese should, 'Hide your capabilities, bide your time.'

From the African point of view, the Kissinger diplomatic overtures to China were being carried out at the same time as he oversaw the National Security Study Memorandum 39, which stated that the white racists were there to stay in Southern Africa and that the US should support the white minority regimes (Lockwood 1974). Kissinger and the United States was opposed to the independence of Africa and his diplomatic overtures were followed by successive US policy makers who worked with the Chinese political leadership to oppose the African National Congress in South Africa and the MPLA in Angola. There was no ambiguity when Chinese assistance was organized against African liberation in the name of weakening the Soviet Union. Western Europeans confused the questions of independence and liberation in Africa with the goals of the United States to 'constrain Soviet expansionism' (Coker 1979).

In pursuit of his goal of 'containing Soviet expansionism', Kissinger has recounted in great detail how China was enlisted in a quasi-alliance or a de facto alliance against the socialist camp, which not only contributed to the dissolution of the existing socialism in Eastern Europe but, as well, inflicted a devastating blow against national liberation and progressive movements in Angola, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Vietnam (and Indochina generally). Boasting of this alliance between China and the USA after China had invaded Vietnam 'to teach it a lesson', Kissinger exalted,

The war had been extremely costly to the Chinese armed forces, not yet fully recovered from the depredation of the Cultural Revolution. But the invasion served the fundamental objective: when the Soviet Union failed to respond it demonstrated the limitation of its strategic reach. From that point of view, it can be considered a turning point for the Cold war, though it was not fully understood as such at the time. The Third Vietnam war was also the high-point of Sino-American strategic cooperation during the Cold War (Kissinger 2011: 340).

Kissinger's open acknowledgment of the deceptions and subterfuge that led the US and China to become allies in support of a genocidal government in Cambodia is still not yet interrogated by international scholars. However, this military assault was only one component of the overall attempt to weaken

Afro-Asian solidarity. While the US acted militarily with China, Japan acted in the context of investments to undermine socialist transformation in Vietnam. Immediately after the Vietnamese victory over the US in 1975, the Japanese worked closely with international organizations to penetrate Vietnam to pursue the strategy of depoliticization which had been the guiding principle of foreign policy after the start of the Cold War. The Asia desired by Japan after World War II was one drawn together by economic aspirations; in other words, what Japan wanted and what the west supported was for Asia to become depoliticized through the myth of development and economic growth.¹⁰ In the twenty-year period after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the societies of Asia moved decisively to strengthen economic cooperation. This move was intensified after the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and by the start of the twenty-first century China had begun to be integrated into a new axis of the world economy in East Asia.

While the peoples of Asia were consolidating economic cooperation, in Latin America, the rise of democratic governments led to the articulation of a new path to socialism based on Latin American history of independence. At the head of this initiative, called the Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America was the political leadership of Venezuela. With the retreat of US capital from Latin America there was intensified attention to holding on to Africa as the base for accumulation for Western capital. Professor Adebayo Adedeji (former head of the UN Economic Commission For Africa) noted that all of the home-grown plans of the Africans from the period of the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980, through to the Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-90, including the African Alternative Framework For Structural Adjustment (1989), the African Charter for Participation and Development, as well as the African Union were opposed. In many instances, they were sabotaged directly by the international financial institutions and, to a great extent by the leaders of the USA and the European Union. Adedeji drew attention to the fact that 'all of the plans for self-reliant development in Africa had been opposed, undermined, and dismissed by the Bretton Woods institutions and Africans were thus impeded from exercising the basic and fundamental right to making decisions about their future.'

The challenges of Africans vis-à-vis the Bretton Woods Institutions were supported by the new energy of China that became vigorous in its strengthening of relations with Africa. This new turn in international politics challenged Africans and Asian activists to reconceptualize the ideas and forms of politics that had guided the thinking at Bandung. These challenges required even more understanding of what was going on inside of China.

The Economic Transformation of China

It is now possible in the midst of the worst depression since 1929 to re-evaluate the ideas and policies of capitalist development and socialist transformation of the last century. Conceptions of reconstruction from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) have reinforced the underdevelopment and exploitation of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Slowly, the peoples of Asia have been making a break with the neoliberal ideas of the US and the rapid growth of the ASEAN economies now points to the reality that state intervention for economic planning is a superior form of economic management. In Africa, where the structural adjustment policies of the IMF rolled back the gains of independence, the conditions of the peoples have deteriorated by every index of quality of life. This deterioration can be compared to the qualitative transformations inside of China.

Since the successful socialist revolution of 1949 and the coming to power of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the Chinese peoples have escaped the worst ravages of the capitalist depression. The impressive economic growth rates in China have prompted differing interpretations on the foundations for the doubling of the size of the Chinese economy every eight years. Between 1978 and 2005, China's economic output, as measured by real gross domestic product GDP, grew 9.6 per cent per year.

Between 1981 and 2005, an estimated 600 million Chinese people moved out of poverty. This growth has led to a substantial increase in real living standards and a marked decline in poverty. Between 1981 and 2005, the proportion of China's population living on less than \$1.25/day is estimated to have fallen from 85 to 15 per cent, meaning that roughly 600 million people were taken out of poverty (Shah 2011).

In 1949, 89 per cent of China's population lived in the countryside, with agriculture accounting for about 60 per cent of total economic output. The backbone of China's economy, agriculture and industry, together employ more than 70 per cent of China's labour force and account for over 60 per cent of the country's GDP. Beyond these empirical facts of the impressive growth there is a great difference in scholarly analysis on the foundations of this economic transformation. One Canadian publication summed up the economic dynamism of China in this way,

Chinese firms have positioned themselves to exploit China's comparative advantage as the final stage in sophisticated global value chains producing computers, sports equipment, clothing, household fixtures and a wide range of other products. Understanding China's role in these global production networks is critical to understanding China's emergence as an economic power. The popular image of China as the manufacturing center of the world is thus misleading.

Instead, China has become an integral part of a much more complicated reality that involves leading firms in North America, Europe, and Japan, resource firms all over the world, manufacturers of components in the more advanced economies of East Asia such as Korea, Taiwan, and Malaysia, and final assembly in China, Vietnam, and other countries in East Asia. Chinese leaders have now concluded that their success in positioning China as the point of final assembly in an integrated East and Southeast Asian manufacturing system is no longer the key to future development. They are now trying to reposition the country so that it can create a capacity for indigenous innovation, pursue scientific development, develop its own technologies and industries, and bring further inland the benefits of industrialization. If the past thirty years are anything to go by, these goals are likely to be reached sooner rather than later (Hart 2012).

By the end of 2011, the foreign-exchange reserves of China reached US\$ 3.2 trillion. This was an unprecedented turn of events in the annals of the international economic rebalancing (Chinability 2011). This impressive economic transformation has been met with hostility in many parts of the Western world with increased commentaries of the nature of the international system.

When China Rules the World

Martin Jacques (2009), author of *When China Rules the World* argued to the European readers of his work that, ‘History is passing our country and our continent by. Once we were the centre of the world, the place from where power, ideas and the future emanated. If we drew a map of the world, Europe was at its centre. That was how it was for 200 years. No more. The world is tilting on its axis in even more dramatic style than when Europe was on the rise. We are witnessing the greatest changes the world has seen for more than two centuries. We are barely aware of the fact. And therein lies the problem’ (Jacques 2012). From the point of view of Martin Jacques, the problem for Europeans was their view that economic development was associated with stages of human history that Europe had passed through to arrive at what was called in Europe, ‘the Enlightenment’. The intellectual orientation of the European scholarship from both the right and the left has been to associate development with European stages of growth.

Martin Jacques’ admonition for Europeans to take a fresh look at China is more positive than the more hostile economists who argue that China is manipulating its currency and that pressures should be mounted so that the Chinese currency is revalued (Bergsten et al 2008). This chorus of the currency manipulation of the Chinese is echoed by other hostile writers who write on ‘How China is colonizing Africa and threatening the American way of life’ (Leeb 2011; Navarro and Autry 2011). These hostile books and articles focus

on corruption, environmental degradation, inequalities, uncertainty, and other social ills that are placed on the shoulders of a 'totalitarian' communist party. In the most recent political skirmishes inside the Communist Party of China, Western commentators have been quite ready to diminish the achievements of the transformation by pointing to 'The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers' (McGregor 2010). Within China itself, the generation of leaders who had been trained under Chou En-lai has given over to a new class that looks to the West for intellectual leadership and has internalized the ideas of Realism in international relations. Henry Kissinger has written approvingly of this new stratum within China, and these forces reproduce themselves by sending their children to institutions of higher learning in North America and Western Europe.¹¹

The fact that these students have the requisite disposable income to be able to pay fees in the United States was one indication of the growing inequalities inside of China. In 2011, China was home to the second largest number of billionaires and in November counted one million millionaires (Balfour 2011). Though negligible in numbers, in relation to the rest of the 1.3 billion persons, this new class of millionaires was becoming a pole of wealth and conspicuous consumption, belying the socialist heritage of China. One writer commented, 'Between these top party functionaries along with the new rich *nouveaux riches* people and the rest, the gap has continuously widened: the richest families (i.e., the top 10%) had 65 times the income of the poorest (the lowest 10%)' (Wu 2010). In 2011, China leapfrogged Japan to become the world's second-largest economy, a title Japan had held for more than 40 years.

The interpretation of this rapid transformation has drawn differing ideas about the real meaning of this economic development and change. From within China itself, the present leadership has opted for a political platform of 'harmony' with recourse to Confucian principles as the basis of state legitimation (Dotson 2011). As reported by US officials who were studying the deployment of the principles of 'harmonious' development, 'The newfound praise for Confucius is tied closely to the Party's official narrative of a 'Harmonious Society'. This propaganda theme emphasizes: the Party's benevolent concern for the welfare of the common man; an (at least nominal) effort to balance growth more evenly between China's haves and have-nots; and, above all, the clearly implied responsibility of China's citizens not to challenge CCP rule. In this political environment, the Confucian emphasis on ethical behavior and loyalty to the existing political order has made the Chinese government a belated convert to Confucian philosophy – or at least, it would very much like for its citizens to internalize selected aspects of Confucian philosophy. As stated by Dr. Cheng Li, a scholar of Chinese politics at the Brookings Institution, '[Confucianism is] such a big basket you can select whatever you want. They will ask people

to behave appropriately, not too aggressive, not use violence and don't pursue revolution' (Dotson 2011: 6).

Even while the political leadership was proposing 'harmonious development' and the establishment of Confucius Institutes, there was one section of the Chinese intelligentsia who were calling for a more confrontational foreign policy. One book in particular, *Unhappy China – The Great Time, Grand Vision and Our Challenges*, argued that China has no choice but to become a superpower. This call for China to be a superpower meant that there are some Chinese intellectuals who are not making the distinction between imperial states and oppressed nations. In the past, the position of the leaders of China was that China represented a core section of the South and was a 'developing country'. This is especially the case in the negotiations of international meetings. In 2011 during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP17) meeting in Durban, South Africa, and the context of international negotiations of global warming, China's political leaders positioned it as a developing country and sought alliances with societies from the global South to resist the pressures from Europe and the USA that because of its impressive economic growth, China should be classified as a developed country. In the same week that the government of China issued its White Paper on Climate Change, Martin Khor, Executive Director of the South Centre in Geneva wrote an op-ed in the main English language newspaper, *China Daily*, under the heading, 'Is China still a developing nation?' Khor answered in the affirmative (Khor 2011).

Here was another case of ambiguity. For certain international negotiations, the Chinese political leadership would draw from its political capital with the anti-globalization centres such as the South Centre in Geneva while in its universities the Realist views of military strength and superpower dominate. The language in the books by sections of the intelligentsia is very different from the official position articulated at the meetings between China and other societies of the Afro-Asian bloc.

It was in Latin America where the legacies of Afro-Asian solidarity had proclaimed for socialism. In Latin America and other parts of the world that had been in the past dominated by Western imperialism, there is an expectation that the planet will be moving from a uni-polar world to one of cooperation. The Cuban Revolution continues to hold out the promise of an alternative to the North American form of capitalism and has been one source of support for the radical wing of the Afro-Asian Bloc. Latin American societies that have declared their opposition to imperialism of all forms are taking the lead to establish institutions such as the Bank of the South to de-link from the imperialist financial institutions. Bolivia and Venezuela established very robust relations with China based on mutual respect and cooperation. Brazil stands out in this region as a state on the rise but for millions of African

descendants and indigenous peoples, the fact that Brazil has overtaken the United Kingdom as the sixth largest economy has not been of any comfort in relation to their quality of life. The anti-racist struggles of Latin America were heightened at the World Conference against Racism in Durban in 2001 where the spirit of Bandung brought back the issues of racism, xenophobia and intolerance to the forefront of international politics. This area of the Bandung period has been resisted by many governments in the South and societies such as India opposed the UN conference against racism in their rush to hold on to the obsolete caste system in the twenty-first century.

The Indian bourgeoisie and its intellectual defenders continue to look to the United States and Western Europe at a moment when the current deep and multi-faceted capitalist crisis is being exploited by extreme right-wing and neoliberal forces. These intellectuals from the BRICS societies who aspire to reproduce the European stages of development do not grasp the interconnections between the xenophobic sentiments in Europe and old conceptions of white supremacy. Acts of discrimination and racist violence are multiplying throughout Europe and questions about economic growth cannot be separated from issues of free movement of peoples and the strengthening of the International Labour Organization to protect workers everywhere. Thus far, the traditional left has supported the anti-racist struggles but in this era of the depression this international solidarity requires a more vigorous expression.

Because of the long traditions of socialist and social democratic scholarship in Western Europe, there has been robust discussion on the meaning of the political directions in the emerging nations, especially China. Inside Europe, the changes in China are being followed by the officials of the European Union. Leaders such as the former President of France called upon China to bail out Europe. As the *New York Times* commented during the period of financial uncertainty in the Eurozone countries, 'Why China Should Bail Out Europe'.

Indeed, the call by President Nicolas Sarkozy of France this week to President Hu Jintao of China, seeking support for the European Financial Stability Facility, could represent a major change in the global landscape: the consolidation of China's economic dominance at the expense of the status quo powers – the United States and Europe (Subramanian 2011b).

The same commentators from institutes such the Petersen Institute urge the Chinese to support the IMF without a real change in the voting power and direction of the IMF.

In Western Europe where the centre of Anglo-American media gives Western intellectuals a privileged voice in shaping international opinions, there is a constant stream of books highlighting the weaknesses of the

socialist foundations of Chinese society. Jonathan Fenby's book, *Tiger Head, Snake Tails: China today, how it got there and where it is heading*, reproduced the liberal views on the limits of Chinese transformation (Fenby 2012). Other British writers who believe that Chinese citizens should forget their 300 years of history and internalize the ideas of the European Enlightenment arrogate the right to educate the Chinese on the need for 'liberal democracy'. Will Hutton in his book, *The Writing on the Wall: China and the West in the 21st Century*, warned the Chinese that in the next century is going to be Chinese, it will be only because China embraces the economic and political pluralism of the West in general, and our Enlightenment institutions in particular. 'The rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, the freedom of the press, the scientific and research processes in independent universities, or the very idea of representative, accountable, checked and balanced government – all these flowed from the great intellectual, philosophic and political wellspring that we call the Enlightenment' (Hutton 2007).

One of the most challenging questions for scholars in the twenty-first century is to be able to grasp the reality that the two wings of the European Enlightenment (Adam Smith and Jean Jacques Rousseau) internalized the Newtonian ideas of separation and compartmentalization. This Newtonian paradigm of lower and higher stages was reproduced in versions of Marxism that sought to denude Marxism of its revolutionary content. Hence, within these wings of liberal thought there is very little understanding of the possibility of a leap that transcends the stages that Europe went through. These sterile renditions of Marxism can be found among sections of the Latin American left and the last remnants of the European Marxists. Perry Anderson one of the holdovers from Europe and of the *New Left Review* argued, 'If the twentieth century was dominated, more than by any other single event, by the trajectory of the Russian Revolution, the twenty-first will be shaped by the outcome of the Chinese Revolution.' Marxists and non-Marxists have weighed in on this debate on the meaning of the Chinese revolution noting that Anderson did not distinguish between transformation within socialism and the modernization project of international capitalism. Other writers within the New Left were not as ambivalent on the content of 'The Chinese Road: Cities on the Transition to Capitalism'. Richard Walker and Daniel Buck stated clearly that the revolution in China was a revolution on the road to capitalism or 'capitalism with Chinese characteristics'. These authors examined the commodification of land in China, the growth of an internal market along with the strength of the capitalist classes within the Chinese Communist Party.

From Africa, Samir Amin more than fifteen years ago pointed out the reality by asking whether China was evolving toward a stabilized form of

capitalism. This is itself a contradiction in so far as there has never been a stabilized form of capitalism. Capitalism is prone to crisis and this current crisis is creating the conditions for polarization of social classes within China and the political choices being made in Chinese foreign policy beyond the charade of 'strategic ambiguity'. It is here where the Chinese are faced with the choice between socialist transformations of deepening integration into the world capitalist system. Amin had argued that,

The Chinese ruling class has chosen to take a capitalist approach, if not since Deng, at least after him. Yet it does not acknowledge this. The reason is that its legitimacy is rooted in the revolution, which it cannot renounce without committing suicide. The real plan of the Chinese ruling class is capitalist in nature and "market socialism" becomes a shortcut whereby it is possible to gradually put in place the basic structures and institutions of capitalism while minimizing friction and difficulties during the course of the transition to capitalism...

My central question is this: is China evolving toward a stabilized form of capitalism? Or is China's perspective still one of a possible transition to socialism? I am not asking this question in terms of the most likely "prediction." I am asking it in altogether different terms: what inconsistencies and struggles have emerged in China today? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adapted (to a large extent capitalist in fact)? What advantages do the (at least potentially socialist) anticapitalist forces have? Under what conditions can the capitalist approach triumph and what form of more or less stabilized capitalism could it produce? Under what conditions could the current moment be deflected in directions that would become a (long) stage in the (even longer) transition to socialism? (Amin 2005).

Seven years after writing this, Samir Amin was even more explicit on the path of peripheral capitalism which implied, 'a barbaric exploitation of workers that recalls the nineteenth century; an ecological disaster' and those features of industrialization which emanated from the focus on 'the development of the productive forces'. This author will agree with the assessment which argued that,

The future of China remains uncertain. The battle of socialism in this respect has not yet been won. But neither has it been yet lost. In my opinion, as I have already tried to show above, it will not be lost until the day when the Chinese system renounces the right to land for all its peasants. Until then, the political and social struggles can sway the course of evolution. The ruling political class directs its efforts to controlling these struggles solely through wielding its bureaucratic dictatorship. Fragments of this class also consider circumventing the emergence of the bourgeoisie by the same means. The bourgeoisie and middle classes as a whole have not decided to fight for an 'American style' democracy. With the exception of a few ideologists, these classes accept the 'Asian style' autocratic model without difficulty, provided that it allows the deployment of their consumer appetites. The popular classes fight on the grounds of defense of their economic

and social rights. Will they manage to unite their fights, devise suitable forms of organization, produce a positive alternative approach and define the contents and means of a democracy capable of serving it? (Amin 2011c).

The one area that was excluded by Amin was the possibility of the strengthened solidarity between the popular classes in Africa and the popular classes in China. In the final section we will draw out how the imminent challenges to US financial dominance is creating conditions for greater solidarity between countries of the Afro-Asian Bloc.

Spirit of Bandung and the BRICS Bank

Since the financial crisis in 2008 and the deepening depression, it has become clearer every day that it may only be a matter of time before the US dollar gets replaced as the main currency in international trade. This reality is so evident that in all parts of the world there are pressures for different governments to find an alternative to the US dollar as a reserve currency. In this chapter, we started out with the implications of the currency swap agreements that have been initiated among the countries of Asia. In 2012 the countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa agreed to establish a Development Bank (Campbell 2012).

At the end of the fourth BRICS summit where the leaders met in New Delhi, India, on 29 March 2012 under the theme, 'BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Security and Prosperity', the leaders signed two pacts to stimulate trade in their local currencies and agreed on a joint working group to set up a South-South Development Bank that will raise their economic weight globally. The five leaders issued the 50-point Delhi Declaration declaring their intention to further strengthen 'our partnership for common development and take our cooperation forward on the basis of openness, solidarity, mutual understanding and trust.'

The decision by these societies to establish a 'development bank' was one more indication of the erosion of the power of the Bretton Woods Institutions. Throughout the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America the vigour of Chinese investments has had a fundamental impact in relation to infrastructures (roads, rail, ports, information and telecommunications, air transport, energy and power generation, canals and water management). Already, the Export Import Bank of China and the China Development Bank spend more money in the developing world than the World Bank. The *Financial Times* reported that in 2009 China spent over US \$108 billion while the World Bank spent US \$100.3 billion. This shift in the source of development funds is most explicit in Africa where according to information from the Exim bank of China, in 2011 China invested more than US \$35 billion. According to He

Wenping of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 'China overtook the United States as Africa's largest trade partner in 2009, and the bilateral trade volume surged from \$10 billion in 2000 to more than \$160 billion in 2011' (Wenping 2011).

Slowly, this economic clout of China has served to break the dominance of Western European capital but the deformed patterns of extraction of resources have not changed. It is in Africa where the recent histories of the anti-apartheid struggles enthuse new forms of organizing which is inspiring a new revolutionary era. It is significant it was the home of the Afro-Asian solidarity movement where the Egyptian revolution of February 2011 has pointed to another possibility in the forms of solidarity for the nations that were once dominated by imperialism. The challenges and opportunities of the new revolutionary moment as well as the possibilities of economic cooperation in the Afro-Asian world are similar to the challenges of the 1970s when OPEC first appeared on the international stage. Then, Perez Alfonzo, the Venezuelan diplomat who was one of the founding members of OPEC wrote two years before his death,

I am an ecologist first of all. I have always been an ecologist first of all. Now, I am not interested in oil anymore. I live for my flowers. Still OPEC is a good instrument for the Third World. It just has not been used properly (quoted in Prashad 2007: 190).

Here Alfonzo was confronting the realities of where states in the Third World found themselves at a particular stage of human history. These challenges are also present in Africa as the new explorations for hydrocarbons bring African societies and peoples into the orbit of the oil exploration countries, especially those from Third World societies such as Brazil, India, Malaysia, and China. In a recent book, *To Cook a Continent*, African scholars have been warning about the dangers and consequences of the destructive forms of extraction of resources from Africa. The proposed BRICS Bank will be put on notice that Africans will be vigilant to see that other 'emerging nations' operate in ways that respect Africans as humans. African workers are organizing against capitalists from BRICS that seek to reproduce low wage environments with the absence of the rights of workers. Africans will not replace plunder from Western capitalists by new extractive capitalists from the East and from Brazil. Importantly, African progressives will not support another financial institution that facilitates capital flight from Africa. BRICS can move decisively to ensure that it is committed to the principle of the return of stolen assets and reparations.

Afro-Asian Solidarity in the Era of the Bio-economy

The very success of China as an industrialized state and an economy which registered the fastest transformation holds the seeds of the catastrophic conditions of environmental degradation. Environmental degradation is now so severe that suffocating smog blocks traffic on major highways and transportation arteries routinely in the major urban areas of China. The right to breathe in China is now as important as the right to live in the cities. It is widely known that emissions of sulphur dioxide from coal and fuel oil, which can cause respiratory and cardiovascular diseases as well as acid rain, are increasing even faster than China's economic growth. Major publications of environmental groups can reel off the figures of environmental destruction in China: over 500 million without access to clean drinking water, rampant deforestation, sixteen of the world's most polluted lakes, acid rain over two-thirds of the Chinese territory, 58 per cent of the land arid and semi-arid, the massive use of coal in Chinese industry, and so on and on. This information on environmental degradation is now reinforced by the reality that China is the top greenhouse gas emitting country, which is not only a health problem for the Chinese people but also for its neighbours. Non-governmental organs and grassroots movements in China are at the forefront of challenging the mantra of economic growth that is at the base of this deepening destruction of the earth.

It is in the context of the environmental challenges where the Chinese popular classes are being called upon to join the environmental justice movements of the global South which are calling for a fundamental change in the priorities of the international system.¹² In the past year, prior to the COP 17 meeting in South Africa, the government of China attempted to preempt major struggles over climate change by coming out with a White paper on Climate Change in November 2011 (Peoples Republic of China White Paper 2011). The White Paper advanced legally binding targets for the next five years. These included a 17 per cent cut in carbon emissions, a 16 per cent decrease in energy use per unit of GDP, and a goal of lifting non-fossil-fuel energy usage from its current level of 8.6 per cent, to 11.4 per cent of total energy consumption.

If the relationship between Henry Kissinger and the Chinese leaders were a reflection of 'strategic ambiguity' this White Paper exposed even further the extent to which this 'ambiguity' has trapped the political leadership into an ideological cul de sac. The White Paper on Climate Change reflected the real contradictions within Chinese society with its neoliberal discourse on carbon trading and other ideas on 'Clean Development Mechanism' and carbon offsetting. The neoliberal discourse on clean development mechanisms will provide opportunities for vested interests to control the pace and nature of the projects that are supposed to be designed to tackle climate change.

This requirement for clarity on the paths of environmental transformation in the twenty-first century has also been highlighted by the militarization of the competition for fossil fuels. By 2012, the Chinese oil company, Petro China, overtook Exxon Mobil as the biggest producer of oil and gas. For years, Exxon Mobil was the largest publicly traded company in the US and the biggest producer of oil and natural gas in the world. This competition from a state-owned entity in China is intensifying anti-Chinese sentiments in the West at a historic moment when new forms of energy production were on the horizon. Leading think tanks and foreign policy centres such as the Council on Foreign Relations in the United States have been speculating on the global push for more oil resources and the logic behind Chinese engagement with Africa.

Alessi and Hansen (2012) argue,

China's booming economy, which has averaged an annual growth rate of 9 percent for the last two decades, requires massive levels of energy to sustain that growth. Though China relies on coal for most of its energy needs, it is the second-largest consumer of oil in the world behind the United States. Once the largest oil exporter in Asia, China became a net importer of oil in 1993. The International Energy Agency's World Energy Outlook 2011 projects that China will become the world's largest net importer of oil by 2020. The report estimates the country's net imports for 2011 at nearly five million barrels per day, a number it says will climb to around thirteen million by 2035.

The militaristic planning that flows from these forecasts perpetuates the ideas of the international system as a conflict zone well into the twenty-first century. This author is arguing here that it is a fool's paradise to consider militarizing control and access to energy resources in the twenty-first century because the promise of fusion and twenty-first century technologies will fundamentally alter the modes of production and consumption.

All energy that can be effectively harvested and used by living organisms comes in the form of light, heat, or chemical energy. Of these, the primary sources are light, originating exclusively from the sun, and heat, primarily resulting from accumulated absorption of sunlight by the atmosphere on earth. These primary energies nourish and sustain the planet's creatures, and all fundamental organic processes were derived from them (Bradford 2008: 24).

China has invested heavily in solar energy and other forms of alternative energy resources and since 2009, the top leadership of China has shown a clear commitment towards building a Green Economy. In his book on the *Solar Revolution*, Travis Bradford deepened the analysis of the quantum changes that will be generated by a return to renewable energy sources. "There are two organisms that have stored solar energy and these are plants and animals. Plants absorb their energy directly from the sun through a process of photosynthesis and animals absorb their energy from eating a combination

of plants or other animals. Because plants and animals adapt to specific local conditions over millions of years, these conditions provided the conditions for a wide variety of robust and complex ecological systems.

Most of the countries of the non-aligned movement and of the Bandung spirit are located in the South where the future of solar energy has tremendous potential for transforming the future of economic relations. This solar resource is amplified by the fact that biomass resources are plentiful along the equatorial region. Biomass refers to 'materials that are biological in origin, including organic material (both living and dead) from above and below ground, for example, trees, crops, grasses, tree litter, roots, and animals and animal waste'. Biologists are now grasping the real meaning of 'power plants' as the genetic materials of Africa are being viewed as an unlimited source to feed the energy sources of the planet in the twenty-first century. These power plants form the foundation of what is called biomass resources. Biomass contains stored energy from the sun, and because of the abundance of this energy source there is a new thrust to harness the biomass resources in what is termed the bioeconomy.

In all parts of the formerly colonial societies the states and peoples are developing the technological expertise that will break the dominance of the former imperial states in the era of the bioeconomy. There is an understanding that the pace of urbanization and the coal-driven industrialization cannot continue much longer in China. More importantly, the triple disaster in Japan in March 2011, in which the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant was struck by huge earthquake and tsunami, sharpened the urgency of developing new energy resources beyond fossil fuels, nuclear power and conventional sources. For a long time the Japanese held the view that nuclear power was an alternative to fossil fuel but this triple disaster has confirmed the position of Hermann Scheer who wrote that, 'Nuclear energy technology has created limitless potential for destruction; it is increasingly clear that keeping this potential under control is beyond the power of governments' (Scheer 2006: 37). In the face of this limitless potential for destruction from nuclear power and the realization of the contribution of fossil fuels to global warming, there is research and development into renewable energy sources such as solar energy, wind energy, biomass energy, geothermal energy, tidal energy and hydro power.

To this end one can see the massive investments in research into renewable energy resources in all parts of the world, especially China. This investment and the ambitious plans to achieve energy efficiency in China come at a moment when it was announced that China has been able to develop one of the fastest computers in the world. China now boasts more than seventy-four of the fastest super computers and the technology will enable China to move

in the direction of putting on stream clean energy technologies. However, this chapter argues that the question of cleaning up the environment cannot be resolved as a technical question, but one linked to political struggles.

It is here where the progressive forces must take courage from the new alliances that were built between the least developed countries, the Africa group, the peoples of West Asia and the Latin American societies that are grouped in the Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America. It is in the midst of these major social and economic changes where the ideas of 'peaceful coexistence' and 'peaceful development' will be tested. Samir Amin has inspired the future of this alliance with his appeal for audacity to remove the power of the Western states and monopolies in international politics. It is from Africa where there is clarity on the tasks ahead. Reflecting on the challenges and opportunities, Samir Amin called for 'Audacity and more audacity' His essay was the theoretical guide to support mobilization of the youths in the streets of Cairo, Madrid, Athens and Wisconsin. In calling for the socialization of the 'ownership of the monopolies', Amin spelt out how 'the historical circumstances created by the implosion of contemporary capitalism requires the radical left, in the North as well as the South, to be bold in formulating its political alternative to the existing system'. While economists in North America continuously complain that the barons of Wall Street socialize losses while privatizing profits, Samir Amin spelt out in great details for citizens of all continents,

the alternative social project should be to reverse the direction of the current social order (social disorder) produced by the strategies of monopolies, in order to ensure maximum and stabilized employment, and to ensure decent wages growing in parallel with the productivity of social labor. This objective is simply impossible without the expropriation of the power of monopolies (Amin 2011c).

If one reads an economist such as Samir Amin and others who are progressive (in the US context) such as Robert Reich, one can see that Amin is drawing from the depth of the spirits of Afro-Asian solidarity and the traditions of Bandung. The challenge of the left is to understand the outline of the alternative social project and translate this into practical day-to-day programmes so that wherever one lives and works one should not succumb to the Afro-pessimism that calls for more 'aid' and 'assistance' to Africa. Chou En-lai fought against Han chauvinism and supported liberation and independence with equality for all. The people of China will decide whether they are moving towards modernization and catching up and surpassing the major capitalist powers or building an alternative economic system that can reclaim the earth and start the long road to human emancipation.

Conclusion

When President Sukarno of Indonesia called for a 'New Asia and a New Africa' to be reborn, he was anticipating the new energies of the emancipation movement that was then sweeping the world. In that historic moment of Bandung 1955, Sukarno had said,

Irresistible forces have swept two continents. The mental, spiritual and political face of the whole world has been changed and the process is still not complete. There are new conditions, new concepts, new problems and new ideals abroad in the world. Hurricanes of national awakening and reawakening have swept over land, shaking it, changing it, changing it for the better (quoted in Prashad 2007: 33).

Western Europe and North America had invested in a mode of economic organization that did not want a new Asia and a new Africa. Under the leadership of US capitalists, there was an effort to stop this awakening. Sukarno was overthrown, Patrice Lumumba was assassinated and the wars in Asia held back the capability of the new birth. Despite the intense military, cultural, economic and ideological wars, the peoples of the South resisted, fought and have surged in the twenty-first century. In this new surge, the peoples of East Asia, especially China, Japan and Korea have created a new axis for the international economic order. This new axis has opened new tensions in the international system. In this axis, there are a number of possible openings but Western capital has zeroed in on what is called the Singapore model as the basis for the future survival of Western capitalism in Asia.

Lee Kuan Yew (former prime minister of Singapore) symbolizes the link between the model of authoritarian accumulation built on an intellectual infrastructure that inspires coercion and fear. From this well of thinking there are scholars who now write on the need for closer US-Chinese relations. One author proposed a new term Chinmerica to highlight the interdependence of the United States and China, especially the reality that it is the Chinese government that is the principal holder of US Treasury bonds. China has emerged as the largest creditor to the United States when the world economy was on the brink of collapse. In reality, when one stripped away the language of 'complex cooperation' it could be said that the Chinese Communist Party was the safety valve for the US capitalist classes. This new changed situation was most evident in 2009 when Lee Kuan Yew visited Washington and praised China for moving in the direction of Singapore in relation to the model of economic development. Singapore now sits at the crossroads between the US military projections in Asia and the nationalism of overseas Chinese which is now being harnessed by the social classes in China who admire the Singapore model.

Despite the dependence of the US on Chinese purchases of US bonds, the jingoistic impulses in the US ensured that there was a steady stream of anti-Chinese statements from politicians who declared that the undervalued Chinese currency had a negative impact on US jobs. Anti-communism, chauvinism and racist sentiments provided a combustible situation that required clear and sensible leadership in the USA and China. For the working peoples of the US, opposition to racism and militarism was necessary in order to challenge the militarization of the society in the midst of a capitalist depression.

The tensions associated with the new military postures have been intensified by the crisis of Western capitalism with the deployment of NATO as the principal force for the projection of the power of Western capitalism. The limits of this projection have been revealed in Afghanistan and in Iraq. From Africa there is the clear evidence of the military engagement of Western capital; the recent 'humanitarian' deployment in Libya sharpened the need for unity and clarity inside Africa on future engagement with the international centres of power. African activists and thinkers have drawn from the rich history of struggles and are now inspired by the revolutionary openings in Africa where there is a new *African awakening*. In this awakening, this scholar has commented on the implications for new forms of politics and the ideas that can hasten the transformation of Africa. I have advanced the ideas of *Ubuntu* and sharing as elements of a twenty-first century ethos that arose directly out of the struggles against apartheid.

The former prime minister of India, J. Nehru, was an opponent of apartheid and colonialism. His vision was clear that there cannot be peace in the world when half of the world is free and half is enslaved. Nehru was emphatic that 'freedom is for all, peace is for the entire world'. Since the era of Nehru and Chou En-lai, there has come a new generation of leaders and thinkers who have turned their backs on the spirit of Bandung and yearn for recognition as superpowers.

Throughout the era of the expansion of neoliberal capitalism, the peoples of Latin America carried forward the ideas and principles of Bandung and came out with the call for 'another world'. This call was nurtured by numerous social movements that benefited from the radical traditions of the non-aligned movement and the tenacity of the Cuban Revolution in resisting US blockades and mischief-making. After fifty years of seeking to isolate Cuba, it is the US that is now isolated in the Americas with the rise of states such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela calling for the building of twenty-first century socialism.

These new calls for socialist transformation are occurring at moments of dynamic technological change when it is now possible to conceptualize

new forms of organizing economic and social life. Within the progressive social justice movements there is a network that is associated with *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (Mitchell 2003). However, some of the activists within this movement have not paid equal attention to the conditions of more than five billion citizens who continue to make their livelihood from agricultural production (Amin 2004). The future of agriculture and the forms of ownership in the agricultural sector are issues that demand urgent attention so that the promise of the twenty-first century is not one of a new scramble for land and resources and the deepening of capitalism in the Third World. He Wenping of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) has called for a new research agenda and the deployment of Chinese 'soft power'. Her scholarship is now leaning in a direction where there is engagement between Chinese scholars and African scholars and this call is an important direction that can be supported with concrete relations between scholars and thinkers who want to escape the dominance of the European conceptions of development. Thus far, Chinese social scientists have stood aloof from the platforms of the South-South solidarity that has been refined in the context of the anti-globalization movements. After years of building peoples movements on many fronts from Port Alegre in Brazil there is now a clear platform for Afro-Asian Solidarity. New networks for peace, environmental justice, labour rights and the rights of women have converged into the South South Peoples Solidarity Forum. In their self-description they maintained,

South South Peoples Solidarity is a platform of progressive social organizations, movements and individuals from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America striving for a world of peace, security, equality, dignity and human-centered sustainable development. It aims at furthering exchanges of information and experience among its members, promoting joint researches on people's alternatives to neo-liberal globalization and facilitating networking for joint actions and progress on alternatives. The platform is open to all progressive organizations, movements and individuals from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America for strengthening South-South people's solidarity in the common struggle for justice, peace, security, national independence and peoples' sovereignty, democracy and social progress, for a better world for all.¹³

Samir Amin has not only called for audacity in conceptualizing new paths forward but he has also outlined a clear understanding of solidarity in the twenty-first century based on democratization. He maintained that:

Democratization is a process which could not be reduced to a static and definitive formula, like the one evoked by 'representative democracy' (multiparty-ism, election, human rights). Democratization – synonym of people's power – concerns all aspects of social life, and not exclusively the management of its politics. It concerns all relations between individuals, within the family, in places of work, in their relations with the economic, administrative and

political decision-makers. These relations are both individual and collective (class relations which are by nature unequal in the capitalist society, founded on the private appropriation of the means of production by a minority, excluding the people). Those limits are limits of democracy – whenever it exists – in capitalism. Democratization implies that one surpasses those limits, and thereby going beyond capitalism along the road of building the socialist alternative (Amin, n.d).

I agree with the proposition that democracy-building at all levels of social reality constitutes the objective of democratic and progressive people's movements concerned and associated with the new forms of solidarity of the twenty-first century. Throughout this chapter, this author has drawn attention to the fundamental changes that have occurred in the past thirty years. Within the corridors of power in the West there is the raging discourse that China is the new exploiter in Africa and the Third World. In a discussion on whether China is the new imperialist in Africa, Stephen Marks stated in *Pambazuka News*,

It would be wrong to suggest that China's impact only raises problems, or is merely a re-run of past imperialisms. The fact that Western corporations and government now face competition can give African states more room for manoeuvre, and an alternative to accepting the dictates of the IMF. Naturally, NGOs, human rights campaigners and trade unionists have concentrated on cases where this room for manoeuvre has been exploited by repressive regimes seeking to avoid pressure exerted on Western governments to impose some minimal human rights or environmental conditions. But that does not mean that the 'Chinese option' could not also be exploited to widen the room for all African states, not only those abusing human rights (Marks 2006).¹⁴

Our chapter started from the proposition that transformations take millennia. This is a different starting point from those who would want to make definitive statements on the basis of the relationships between China and the rest of the Third World in the last twenty years. When asked in the 1960s what he thought of the French Revolution, the former Chinese prime minister, Chou En-lai, replied: 'It is far too early to say', in recognition that social revolution and transformation from one mode of production to the next is a process.

This process of democratization dictates that initiatives for new financial relations in the form of currency swaps or new financial arrangements cannot build solidarity within the framework of the Bretton Woods thinking about depoliticization. While supporting the new initiatives of the ASEAN financial arrangements, I would like to underline the argument that

Development cannot be reduced to its apparently major economic dimension – the growth of GNP and the expansion of markets (both exports and internal markets) – even when it takes into consideration the 'social' dimensions (degrees

of inequality in the distribution of income, access to public services like education and health). 'Development' is an overall process that involves the definition of political objectives and how they are articulated: democratization of society and emancipation of individuals, affirmation of the power and autonomy of the nation in the world system (Amin 2011b: 131).

It was this conception of solidarity and development that was articulated at Bandung. One can now see that after fifty years of dictatorship, societies such as Indonesia have been recovering their nerve and have associated themselves with the need for national control over resources. Many societies in Asia such as Malaysia, Korea and Vietnam have worked hard to transform (through education of the people) their human capital base during the past decades. These societies are now positioning themselves to utilize greater amounts of technology as reflected in recent investments by multinational corporations in such areas of microchips (Intel) and the aerospace sector. In a sense, state-led education for transformation is now viewed by global capital as 'high tech/skilled' in the same way Cuba's society in areas like biotechnology is viewed by global capital. China is now teetering between the building of the internal capacity to end the low wage economy and the Confucius type ethos that seeks to entrench old hierarchies.

The multidimensional crisis in Western Europe has clarified to the peoples of the world that even when countries prompt sufficient domestic transformation processes which attract the attention of global capital, the process of transformation is endangered if there is dependence on the financial oligarchs of the West. This has been the concrete experience of Ireland. This was a country that implemented processes of structural transformation and attracted the attention of global capital. Yet, because this process was left to the vagaries of the 'financial markets', the processes of domestic transformation have now come to haunt the Irish as they are faced with the same austerity measures that are being deployed against European workers. The failure of Ireland's society to learn the lessons which Asia learned from their 1997 crisis is proving to be very costly for the people of Ireland and other societies that believed that European capitalism could grow forever.

From the experiences and lessons of the past fifty years it can now be understood that the initial engagement of Nehru and Chou En-lai offered lessons in cooperation that need to be revisited in order to study how to end the militarism that makes a mockery of the Bandung plans for peaceful co-existence. From these contexts, one can ask and answer the question about what forms of Afro-Asian, Latin American and African cooperation can be created which would help societies to navigate global capital forces in ways which would enable processes of domestic structural transformation. The same boldness and audacity that was associated with the call for the

New International Economic Order can now be engaged with the concrete experience of the new boldness with the currency swaps and the BRICS banks. Africans will be forced to engage in new discussions of an African Monetary Union as the collapse of the dollar and the euro force alternatives on the world. Some answers to the alternatives have been generated since the period of the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980. Now it is possible to frame the future paths of the unity of the peoples of Africa in response to the question: what should not be done?

The peoples of Egypt have given one answer and the present revolutionary process in Africa will impact transformations in all parts of the world.

Notes

1. For the amounts held by the major holders of US Treasury Securities see 'Major Foreign Holders of Treasury Securities', Department of the Treasury/Federal Reserve Board, April 2012, <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/data-chart-center/tic/Documents/mfh.txt>. China's foreign exchange reserves increased by US\$197.4 billion in the first three months of 2012 to US\$ 3.04 trillion by the end of March.
2. Essentially, a currency swap is a transaction between two nations to exchange the interest and principal payments on loans issued by two different nations. The two countries gain access to foreign exchange reserves. This limits the nations exposure to exchange rate fluctuations because they can pay back the liability associated with its currency instead of in dollars.
3. For an account of the anti-communist speeches that preceded the speech by Chou En-lai, see Jack (1955).
4. See Samir Amin's interview with Herrera (2005).
5. For a bibliographic essay on the writings on the New International Economic Order see Hoskins (1981)
6. See J. Nehru's speech in, *The Conference of Heads of States or Government of Non-Aligned Countries: Belgrade September 1-6, 1961*, Belgrade, pp. 107-17.
7. For one study of the non-aligned movement from the point of view of the US establishment see Jackson (1987).
8. See Samir Amin's interview with Herrera (2005).
9. For an analysis of the thinking behind Greenspan and the neoliberal doctrines see Johnson and Kwak (2010).
10. For an analysis of the Japanese project of depoliticization see Miyagi (2008).
11. According to the *Washington Post*, there were 157,558 Chinese students in the United States in the academic year 2010-11. The number of students from China makes up 22 per cent of all international students. (This group grew 23 per cent in one year for all Chinese students and 43 per cent for undergraduates.) Other popular countries of origin are: India with 103,895 students, South Korea with 73,351 and Canada with 27,546. See Johnson (2011).
12. According to Prashad (2013), the global South is a term that properly refers not to geographical space but to a concatenation of protests against neoliberalism.

13. See the homepage of the South South Peoples Solidarity Forum: <http://www.south-solidarity.org/>. Also available is the final declaration of this South South Solidarity Forum, <http://www.southsolidarityforum.org/documents/homepage/publication01.pdf>.
14. See also Brautigam (2009) and Horace Campbell (2008).

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