

Elements of a New Bandung: Towards an International Solidarity Front

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The World Pre-revolutionary Situation

We stand at the threshold of a world revolutionary situation. We can be certain now that mass mobilizations and serial insurrectional outbreaks will occur throughout this decade and that they will amount to much more than a passing phase of social unrest. Polarization is far advanced in the peripheries of the world economy and it has also made a leap in the centres since 2008. Faith in neoliberal tenets has been shaken by protracted crisis and the continuing rise of China. The pandemic tragedy has further shifted subjective conditions worldwide. The decisive historical moment that will define the twenty-first century and beyond is upon us.

But the fissures in the architecture of monopoly capitalism will not by themselves deliver a world transition to socialism. Imperialism will persist in a neocolonial stalemate. *This can only be broken by coherent ideology, organization, and solidarity on an international level. What is required is a New Bandung movement of Peasants, Workers and Peoples, an international solidarity front rooted in the Third World with a socialist and anti-imperialist perspective.*

After half a century of neoliberal assault, the contradictions have accumulated beyond containment. Imperialism has waged war against the liberation aspirations of the peoples of the Third World in an attempt to turn back the clock of decolonization. It has deployed its full arsenal of monopoly, financial, and military power, unleashed sanctions and surveillance, and carried out invasions, coups, proxy wars, and systematic destabilization. By containing most of the Third World, imperialism has also prevailed over the Soviet system in the East and undermined the welfare state in the West. But the contradictions have continued to accumulate and imperialism has been unable to resolve its economic crisis, which is a permanent crisis of monopoly capitalism.

The pandemic shock has compressed and accelerated the course of contradictions. In 2020, the capitalist economy once again ground to a halt and thrust upon the world the true image of itself. This is a world of giant corporations that play the planet on their fingertips, where billionaires derive great wealth from misery and destruction. A world whose ecological rifts cause serial public health catastrophes. A world in which race, caste, and patriarchy are operating principles of crisis management and segregation. A world in which hundreds of millions of lives among the most vulnerable are wiped out with impunity. A world whose essential labour in production, distribution, and reproduction is grossly undervalued or entirely unpaid. A world in which the bulk of basic needs – food and basic supplies, vaccines, health services, internet, schooling, transport, housing – is at the mercy of monopolies with insatiable accumulation needs. This is a world in which the peripheries still serve at the behest of the centres, as shock absorbers of crisis and as civilizational scapegoats.

The end of the Cold War shifted the parameters of struggle, but the principal contradiction between imperialism and the peoples of the Third World has remained in place. Neither the end of empire, nor the collapse of the Soviet Union, nor the rise of China has displaced the centrality of this contradiction. What has changed is the character of the two aspects of this contradiction: monopoly capital has accelerated on the path of centralization and financialization, absorbing peripheral bourgeoisies into its global strategy, while the peoples of the Third World have entered the phase of generalized semi-proletarianization. The motive force of historical change thus remains essentially the same: the peasants, workers and marginalized peoples of the Third World. And it is here that the flame has been kept alight in the struggle against imperialist assault and deepening polarization.

No sooner had the ink dried on the accords that dissolved the Soviet Union, an indigenous people's uprising in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas punctured imperialist designs and heralded a new epoch of struggle. The Zapatistas carved an autonomous revolutionary territory, defended by arms to this day. Since then we have witnessed two robust revolutionary situations, in Venezuela and Zimbabwe, whose radicalism shifted the relation of forces internally and in whole regions, galvanizing anti-imperialist resistance. And we have witnessed relentless mass mobilizations, armed struggles, and insurrectional pressures in all regions of the Third World: a decade-long People's War in Nepal until 2006; the Arab Spring from 2010; the ongoing protests in Haiti since 2018; the social explosion in South America in 2019; a sustained mass mobilization by farmers and other movements in India since the end of 2020; the list goes on.

The North has not been spared either. Indeed, hope has been raised by the new struggles especially in the United States, the organizing centre of the imperialist system. The intensification of struggles in the midst of pandemic catastrophe has had a singular effect on levels of political consciousness worldwide. In May 2020, a courageous popular uprising against racist police brutality emboldened movements against racism, casteism, and police violence across North and South, from France and Britain to Brazil, Nigeria, and India. This sequence of events demonstrated the latent power of international solidarity among oppressed peoples. It fully vindicated Angela Davis' affirmation, made after the Ferguson protests in 2014, that 'people are ready for a movement.' Yet, the relentless NGO cooption of Northern protests continues to weigh heavily on national politics and international solidarity.

What is really at stake now? The starkest answers have come from Palestine, one of the remaining colonial situations, and Afghanistan, the archetype of modern semi-colonialism. In May 2021, a new groundswell of rebellion across historic Palestine was answered with genocidal violence by the Zionist state with the full support of imperialism. Bombs rained down on the densely populated Gaza enclave killing 260 people in just two weeks, one-fourth of them children, and injuring over 2,000. Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, imperialism has shown how far it is still willing to go to obtain direct control over strategic positions: twenty years of military occupation, one trillion dollars spent, over 100,000 troops mobilized at its peak, and possibly a total of 200,000 dead or injured combined among military, police and the civilian population in the twenty-year period. These

leave no doubt as to what awaits the peoples of the Third World in the twenty-first century: *imperialism will continue to perpetrate and sponsor genocide, without any moral restraint.*

The peoples under neocolonial and other semi-colonial situations are in the same line of fire. This is a fact known too well by indigenous and black peoples subject to ongoing genocide in the white-settler states of the Americas; or the peoples invaded anew by the imperialist war machine and its proxies in the Caribbean, North Africa, the Sahel, the Horn, and Western Asia; or the peoples targeted by racial, caste, communal, and religious bigotry in countries in thrall to ascendant neo-fascist forces; or indeed the peoples subject to endless imperialist sanctions and destabilization, in Cuba, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Iran, and North Korea. Hundreds of US military bases persist in all corners of the earth, stirring up conflicts and pouncing on the frailties of peripheral countries.

It is necessary to draw the correct conclusions about what solidarity is required if the world revolutionary situation is to fulfill its potential. The risk is that the potential of the present be squandered and humanity delivered to barbarism, once and for all. New calls for international unity and organization are being made; and diverse organizations with a claim to internationalism already exist, or are in the making. But an international solidarity front *from* the Third World with a *revolutionary* and *anti-imperialist* perspective remains an open question.

The risk also is that a *pro-imperialist* 'left' prevails with Eurocentric and social-reformist sensibilities, to pay lip-service to the liberation aspirations of the peoples of the Third World. Already an eleventh-hour reform effort is underway to save monopoly capitalism from its obsolescence, promising a 'green economy' and material benefits for the top end of the salaried working classes concentrated in imperialist centres. This, too, will fail and the scapegoats will again be the same. Lenin's century-old condemnation of social reformism is more pertinent now than ever. A full-blown existential crisis is unfolding for the majority of the world's population, the peasants, workers and peoples of the Third World.

Peasants, Workers & Peoples

The capitalist world economy is fulfilling its essential logic perceived long ago by Karl Marx with regards to the inexorable growth of a relative surplus population not directly or regularly employed and paid by capital. By the contemporary distribution of labour regimes around the world, one might be excused for mistaking this obsolescent monopoly capitalism for a post-capitalist system!

Well over half of the world's economically active population is not engaged in waged or salaried employment; it is engaged in self-employment, or unpaid family labour, or is unemployed. And while proletarianization has advanced under neoliberalism by the proportion of waged labour that has increased relative to the unwaged, the growth of the self-employed has trailed closely behind. Global unemployment also continues to grow in absolute terms, while unemployment especially among the youth between 15 and 24 years of age is ravaging the South.

If we further weigh in the large and growing contingents of *under-15* youth populations dependent on the economically active in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, these differences gain a qualitatively new dimension. Perhaps as much as two-thirds of the world's population lives in households that lead an existence with a tenuous, irregular, and sporadic relationship to wage labour. This situation will only intensify as another two billion youths come onboard by mid-century, mainly in the labour reserves of the peripheries. *We thus cannot properly speak of the proletarian condition as a universal feature of really existing monopoly capitalism in this late phase of neocolonialism.*

We must first recognize that imperialism maintains two distinct labour reserves in centres and peripheries. In the imperialist centres, prior to the pandemic, the proletariat consisted of, approximately, 86 percent of the working-age population, followed by 78 percent in Central and Southeastern Europe, 65 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 50 percent in North Africa and East Asia, and as low as 21 percent in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, according to data provided by the International Labour Organization. Conversely, the unwaged working population (the self-employed or unpaid family labour) was lowest in the imperialist centres, around 10 percent, followed by 20 percent in Central and Southeastern Europe, 32 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 26–31 percent in North Africa and East Asia, and as high as 78 percent in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, where, in fact, population growth is highest. The size of the two labour reserves differs dramatically; those in the imperialist centres also have closer interaction with the world's active army of labour – the proletariat proper – which is concentrated in the centres. Very different conditions, of massive and permanent marginality, prevail in peripheral social formations.

If we further consider the intrinsic relationship between productive and reproductive labour across labour regimes, and that reproductive labour is undertaken preponderantly by women, it is evident that well over two-thirds of the world's labour reserves consists of women. This massive contingent of women in the labour reserves is again situated mainly in the peripheries of the world economy, spanning diverse economic activities that branch out from household and care work. *The generalized semi-proletarian condition of peripheral social formations is structurally gendered and reliant on sexually segmented labour regimes and the unpaid reproductive labour especially of women, on a mass scale.* This is where the largest burden of the permanent crisis of monopoly capitalism is systematically deposited, a fact which routinely appears in grim statistics on women's illiteracy and malnutrition, child mortality, and gender based violence against women and girls, as well as against people of non-conformist, non-binary sexual and gender orientations.

The weight of the different economic sectors across the world economy is of further significance: in the imperialist centres, prior to the pandemic, as little as 4 percent of the working-age population was in agriculture, alongside 23 percent in industry and 74 percent in services. This was followed by 19, 26 and 55 percent in agriculture, industry, and services, respectively, in Central and Southeastern Europe; 16, 22 and 62 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean; 28, 23, and 49 percent in North Africa; 34, 29, and 37 percent in East Asia; 51, 20, 28 percent in South Asia; and 62, 9, and 29 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa. *The world's*

agricultural population is almost entirely located in the peripheries, and this is, by and large, a poor, semi-proletarianized peasantry.

It is also the case that, where a strong rural exodus has already occurred in the peripheries, the migrating population has been steered into service provision and petty production where self-employment and informality also prevail. *The service sectors, at the lowest rungs of global values systems, have increasingly become the depository of the world's relative surplus population.* This is the case most starkly in Latin America and Caribbean, but it is the case of most regions where the rural-urban balance was tipped in the twentieth century without the creation of secure employment in urban areas, whether in services or industry.

There is one further dimension of this reality. *The world's industrial workforce is also concentrated in the peripheries of the world economy, possibly as much as 80 percent of it!* It is no longer the case that the imperialist centres detain most of the industrial workforce; they have shifted to high-end services in global value systems. In the peripheries, even where the exodus has flowed to industrial employment, this has by no means implied formal contracts and large organized factory settings; under contemporary global value systems, industrial activity strongly tends to fragmentation and informalization. This holds true for major industrial employers such as India where informality is extreme; and China, the factory of the world, where a floating rural-urban population has been mobilized to serve export-oriented growth.

The overall conclusion to be drawn is this: *the late neocolonial situation is characterized by a generalized condition of semi-proleterianization in the peripheral labour reserves of the world economy.* Social formations in the peripheries obtain particular characteristics from one region to the next, but they are all permanently trapped in a decadent relationship between paid and unpaid labour regimes, straddling countrysides, cities, coastlines, economic sectors, and international borders, among households that spread over great distances in their struggle for wages, petty accumulation, and social reproduction.

Semi-proletarianisation is not a new condition. Lenin had identified it in the countrysides of imperial Russia and drew attention to the political importance of *non-proletarian working people*; Mao carefully noted the *semi-proletariat* in the specific conditions of semi-colonial China alongside other classes. In today's late neocolonial situation, semi-proletarianisation is neither incipient nor conjunctural, it is a generalized and permanently installed condition in the labour reserves of the peripheries. This is also to say that urbanization itself does not complete the process of proletarianization; it yields a massive population of a semi-proletarianized peoples in *both* cities and countrysides, and in flux between the two.

The further conclusion is that, *regardless of the distribution of inter-sectoral relations around the world, the agrarian question under imperialism remains unresolved on a world scale.* Semi-proletarianisation has not resolved the agrarian question; illusions regarding 'depeasantisation' or the end of the agrarian question, or even its relegation to a 'Third World' problem, must be confronted outright. The agrarian question is a global question, while the burden

of its non-resolution is carried mainly by the semi-proletarianised peasants, workers and marginalized peoples that are trapped in degraded countrysides and urban slums, or otherwise risk their lives to migrate abroad. This, after all, is the essential logic of imperialism: to appropriate the labour power, natural resources, and agricultures of the tropical and sub-tropical peripheries, while degrading Third World people's capacities to enjoy the wealth produced by their own labour and natural endowments, and not least expelling the social and environmental costs of this appropriation to the Third World itself.

The semi-proletariat occupies a large range of positions despite its common fate. It includes poor peasants and contract farmers, seasonal agricultural workers, fisherfolk, indigenous, quilombola, pastoral and other traditional peoples, informal urban workers, own-account workers, service delivery workers, home-based workers, homeworkers, and domestic workers. This generalized semi-proletarian condition occupies centre stage in a social formation which includes other class segments and proximate classes, namely: the *lumpen-proletariat* of the permanently excluded and indigent mired in hopelessness, recruited into crime or trapped in sexual exploitation, corralled into fundamentalist organizations or mobilized by predatory social media campaigns, such as against 'corruption'; the *proletariat*, composed of the more securely salaried workers in the private and public sectors, who can be engaged in strike action but cannot by themselves overcome the corporatist perspective; and the *petty-bourgeoisies*, the small capitalist enterprises in urban and rural areas subject to varied politics and accumulation prospects – and to which not a small part of the semi-proletariat aspires.

The semi-proletariat, in all its heterogeneity, constitutes a workforce whose range of socio-political demands is clear: first and foremost, access to land and territory, which is the most concrete element of production, residence and social reproduction; access to markets for petty production and distribution with adequate price structures; access to dignified wages, working conditions, and pensions; access to quality, free basic social services, pre-school, education, health, water, sewage, and public transport; enjoyment of peace and protection from violence, domestic, racial, caste, communal, drug-related, parastatal, and not least the state apparatus itself. These are pressing needs for the majority of rural and urban households in the semi-proletarianized condition.

The range of demands is only surpassed by the diversity of political parties, trade unions, urban social movements, rural social movements, non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, criminal organizations, and charities that seek and find a footing in the social vulnerability and political disorganization of semi-proletarianized social formations. Northern political penetration via the funding of Southern NGOs, trade unions, social movements, charities, and religious orders remains endemic. Fundamentalist religious organizations have also thrived in the late neocolonial situation, whether of Christian, Islamic, or Hindu traditions, across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, to propagate the ideological lumpenization of society. And there is also a galloping social media activism which feeds on and amplifies all tendencies, but remains in the control of corporate monopolies.

The pitfalls of the semi-proletarianized condition also extend to progressive forces. If half a century ago Frantz Fanon had sounded alarm with regards to the role of the petty bourgeoisies in the liberation struggle, the alarm is no less valid today in relation to the petty bourgeois ideologies that consume whole movements and are even nurtured by imperialism. Especially the focus on single issues and consequent political fragmentation have led to an organizational and ideological dead end. This remains convenient and useful to domestic ruling classes and their imperialist patrons. *The missing element is a unifying force with a liberation perspective, capable of articulating the diverse socio-political demands with the resolution of national and pan-national questions and resistance to imperialism.* Under late neocolonialism, there is no substitute for a national liberation perspective in the revolutionary struggle. The real issue concerns its precise class basis and ideological character and its internal and external alliances; the task remains to identify correctly the enemies and friends of the revolution.

Reductionism is rife; and it goes against the grain of the semi-proletarianised condition to disorient national unity and international solidarity. The reductionist dichotomy between the urban and the rural is one of the most established, yet it continues to fail in politics. It is essentially an anti-peasant and anti-indigenous posture based on Eurocentric and economistic notions of who is the natural or potential agent of revolution. It is also a patriarchal posture, blind to the rural-urban linkages between production and reproduction.

The more fundamental dichotomy presents itself as a conflict between 'culture' and 'class'. The fight today over 'identity politics' has added a new degree of complexity. The essential conflict springs from a century-old struggle to transform Marxism into a revolutionary instrument for the Third World, which has always been composed of large peasantries, indigenous, and marginalized peoples under colonial, settler-colonial, and neo-colonial conditions. It is a struggle to overcome what Amílcar Cabral called the 'disconnection' of national liberation from its social structure, which leads to ideological deficiencies. Under really existing capitalism there is no economic or social force that is devoid of culture. And under late neocolonialism, it remains the case that the most exploited are also the most historically oppressed. Removing liberation from class struggle, which after all is a struggle for civilizational renewal, is as blind as denying that oppression has a class basis in imperialism.

Petty-bourgeois, corporatist, and reactionary ideological postures continue to disorient national and international solidarity and a proper analysis of evolving contradictions. *It remains the case that proletarian ideology provides the most complete analytical framework for the comprehension of the full spectrum of contradictions of monopoly capitalism.* No other single ideological source can fulfill the revolutionary task in the twenty-first century. But proletarian ideology can no longer be seen as being most natural to the proletariat; it is not! Nor can it be seen as unobtainable by semi-proletarianized peoples, or even segments of the petty-bourgeoisie. Cooperativism and collective self-reliance, the basic antidotes to monopoly capitalism, require the cultivation of a proletarian perspective which must draw on existing sources of solidarity among semi-proletarianized peasants, workers, indigenous and other marginalized peoples. It

must adapt to the requirements of diverse forms of cooperative production and social reproduction and modes of life that are in force across rural and urban territories.

It follows that, under really-existing capitalism, proletarian ideology can only grow from the existing struggles of semi-proletarianized peasants, workers and peoples. Among the most lamentable of lost opportunities under late neocolonialism has been the failure to recognize the radical potential especially of struggles for land and territory, both rural and urban, and their unification in a national liberation perspective. These are the foremost struggles for production, reproduction, and autonomy by the most oppressed and exploited, against the most reactionary, landed elements in society which today are backed by financial power. The problem extends to the realm of international solidarity in relation to land and territorial movements, peasant and indigenous, where commitment is often conditional and romantic, if not absent.

The same problem is not resolved by the organized peasant movements themselves. There is a strong tendency to reduce the peasant, indigenous, or urban agenda to a food or agroecological question, as opposed to the question of liberation, which is what it has always been for the oppressed peoples of the Third World. Liberation requires an unwavering commitment to the land and territorial questions of the semi-proletariat, which unite cities and countryside, but also clarity on the operation of the supremacist hegemonies surrounding land and national questions, as well as a deeper understanding of the operation of monopoly capital. As important as the questions of food and agroecology certainly are to a revolutionary twenty-first century, all too often they have served to defuse the radical potential of the semi-proletariat and separate the struggles of the most oppressed, those with potentially decisive influence over other struggles.

What unites peasant, workers, and marginalized peoples in the liberation struggle is the control over the means of production and reproduction against the racist, casteist, communalist, and patriarchal orders that prop up the ruling capitalist classes and their imperialist patrons. The particularities of each country and region must be observed, but without losing sight of the challenge of the world revolutionary situation that is upon us. This challenge requires deep reflection and decisive action on national and international fronts.

The challenge also applies to the question of how to relate to the petty-bourgeoisies and other fractions of the capitalist class whose introverted accumulation strategies may have the potential to serve national liberation. Every context will have its own particularities that need to be properly understood. It further applies to the question of how to relate to popular movements and political parties in the imperialist centres, those with potential to commit to genuine solidarity with liberation struggles in the Third World. Historical experience has shown that black and indigenous struggles in the North have a stronger tendency to identify with the liberation movements in the Third World, but this is neither automatic nor given ideologically.

No Recovery Without Reconstruction

Monopoly capitalism is in permanent crisis. This is to say that the rate of profit in value-creating sectors at the centre of the imperialist system has been in decline for decades, since the mid-1960s, which is exactly when decolonization made its decisive advance. There have been only two phases of partial recovery, reaching at most two-thirds of the 1965 level, until the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, which cut profits down to one-third of the 1965 level.

The current expectations for the post-pandemic recovery in the imperialist centre revolve around a medium-term two-percent annual growth rate of Gross Domestic Product. Whether this proves to be higher or lower, it does not refer to the recuperation of profit margins in the value-creating sectors. This is the other major stumbling block for capitalism noted by Marx long ago: capitalists will seek an escape from crisis via technological leaps, and every technological leap will add capital and shed labour in the value-producing sectors, reducing the rate of profit. Today, the recuperation of profits by the monopolies occurs by other means, by degrading the labour process in the peripheries, by seeking financial profits in financial bubbles, and by the escalation of primitive accumulation and war.

The recovery that is to occur will be driven by mammoth fiscal and monetary stimulus packages that together in effect compose the so-called Biden Plan. On the one hand, asset purchases by the Federal Reserve have already doubled to eight trillion dollars, on the back of the gigantic post-2008 asset purchases; on the other, the fiscal stimulus as a percentage of GDP is projected to be twice as large as Obama's after 2008, and larger even than Roosevelt's in 1934. These are unprecedented, direct and indirect, subsidies to the financial and corporate monopolies themselves. And despite Keynesian appearances, international finance capital will continue to rule the roost, until the next epic bubble bursts.

None of this bodes well for the Third World, whose total debt has doubled over the decade prior to the pandemic. Dozens of countries have rushed back to the International Monetary Fund. The question of recovery, therefore, does not refer to an alternative development path. The world's labour reserves will continue to swell, social conflict will intensify, sanctions and pseudo-humanitarian interventions will escalate, while a portion of the labour force in the centres will be repositioned to reap the benefits of the Biden Plan, while it lasts.

China has been the main source of dynamism for the world economy, accounting for over one-fourth of world GDP growth in recent years. But this dynamism has been contradictory and, by its very dependence on Western monopoly capitalism, will necessarily come to an end in its present form. China has uniquely given hope to the Third World by the degree of strategic autonomy it has exercised against the West. Its growth strategy has resulted in a shift in the tectonic plates of trade and investment away from Western monopoly control. China has provided substantial new investments in infrastructural development to fill a critical void, without indulging in debt traps or militarizing economic relationships.

Yet, China's growth strategy has sustained the hyper-consumerist and predatory financial needs of the West while also setting off its own internal disequilibria and

speculative bubbles. It has also relied on the raw material exports and manufacturing imports of the peripheries. This overall pattern, still serving the overriding accumulation needs of the West, has continued to weigh against alternative development paths. Since 2013, China's Belt and Road Initiative has again raised the stakes. It remains possible – indeed, it is imperative – that the relation of forces shifts further in the current crisis, in the interests of China and the whole of the Third World. The growing recognition, by the Chinese leadership itself, of the country's grave internal disequilibria and threats to its socialist character, compounded by its terminal impasse with the West, gives new hope that a more resolute shift towards autonomous development will again occur. It is time that a new era of collective self-reliance is put squarely on the agenda.

This would be in the interest of the whole world, given that the Biden Plan is, above all, a war plan against China and the whole world, not a recovery plan for the world. The US confrontation with China is a strategy of technological domination in the so-called fourth industrial revolution and a battle over the control of global value systems in strategic industries. The technological stakes extend directly to the military field, where all elements of the fourth industrial revolution will be mobilized, artificial intelligence, robotics, big data systems, and integrated logistics. The military encirclement of China and spread of military bases around the world, and the control over terrestrial and maritime trade routes, over energy and other natural resources, will remain central to the US war plan. The new military mega-pact secretly hatched between the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom is precisely the emerging strategy.

Nor can the so-called 'green new deal' envisaged by the Biden Plan be detached from the war plan. Its stated target of 'net-zero' emissions by 2050 can only be achieved by a 'green' assault on the Third World, to carve out extraterritorial carbon sinks via land grabs, against peasants, indigenous and other traditional peoples, and create water-intensive monocultures against the biodiversity of the tropics and subtropics. The plan is a negation of historic climate debt obligations. It is more precisely an escape plan to compensate for persisting carbon emissions by the United States and to guarantee the accumulation needs of its corporate monopolies in the energy sector.

By 2050, the stated target date of the Biden Plan, it is likely that global warming will have already reached 1.5°C degrees above pre-industrial levels if it continues to increase at the current rate, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The impact on terrestrial, freshwater and coastal ecosystems will have already substantially changed the conditions of production and reproduction for the most vulnerable peoples of the tropics and subtropics. These are the regions, especially in Africa and Asia, which are the most vulnerable to crop yield decline due to desertification. Clearly, a rapid and radical change of direction is necessary towards production, consumption, and land-use patterns, one that is not possible under the aegis of the monopolies and their accumulation needs.

There is no recovery without reconstruction. *Reconstruction can mean many things, but it will mean nothing unless it establishes stable and secure living and working conditions for the world's semi-proletarianised peoples.* This can only be

obtained by a new rural-urban equilibrium, which each region and country must seek in accordance with its own production and reproduction needs. This also means that global value systems and associated consumption patterns of privilege, in both North and South, must be overcome. It further means affirming radical sovereignty over the commons in the tropics and subtropics, in the interest of new land rights and new land uses, and on the basis of clear objectives: higher standards of consumption and social reproduction for the semi-proletarianized majorities; sustainable and cooperative production; absorption and stabilization of national and regional workforces; and autonomous industrial and technological development.

Development in the twentieth century was defined in terms of urbanization. This vision is now defunct. In the twenty-first century, development must seek world reconstruction via a peasant path in the countryside and via territorial guarantees for indigenous and other marginalized peoples, which are the only possible guarantees of rural-urban equilibrium, ecological sustainability, and, yes, mutually beneficial North-South relations. The counterpart of the peasant path in urban zones is also, by necessity, the provision of conditions for the development of petty production and social reproduction. In other words, the only starting-point possible for a world transition to socialism is to provide support to the petty production that is already the reality of the large majorities living under monopoly capitalism. Planning methods must be adjusted to this reality, gradually to steer a petty-bourgeois economy into cooperative structures, while linking it up to strategic industrial development.

Towards an International Solidarity Front

Can this change of direction be made without international solidarity? It cannot! International solidarity today remains *ad hoc* and ideologically uncertain. And while innumerable and valiant solidarity struggles exist and continue to sprout in current insurrectional conditions, a coordinated front of social movements and political parties rooted in the Third World with revolutionary and anti-imperialist perspective has not materialized. It is unimaginable that a committed anti-imperialist perspective will arise on its own to coordinate and guide the type of world reconstruction that is required today and confront the known and unknown challenges as they arise.

An international solidarity front of peasants, workers and peoples must come into existence and set its sights on reinitiating and reinforcing a world socialist transition in the first half of the twenty-first century. This should have at its inception a tri-continental framework of political convergence in the spirit of Bandung, to establish principles of international solidarity and prevent against the cooptation of pro-imperialist forces – their funds, capacities, sensibilities, and agendas. The programmatic purpose of an international solidarity front should be to establish a framework of systematic dialogue among movements and parties and provide ideological, political, and logistical support to struggles as they evolve.

In the short term, the strategy should be to convene a New Bandung meeting. This should be a physical meeting of representatives of selected communist

parties with a popular base, national liberation movements with radical credentials, and social movements which represent peasants, workers, indigenous, and other traditional peoples. The meeting may be planned for 2025, timed to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Afro-Asian conference in Bandung. A number of initiatives should be undertaken in the meantime to create the infrastructure for political convergence, including structured dialogue.

An international solidarity front must begin to be visualized. Such a front cannot aspire to a level of centralization that pertains to national political parties or social movements. Yet political coherence must be sought, springing from an assembly of representatives, mandated by their political parties and social movements, and by means of a political commission with pre-defined functions. The building of such an assembly and commission may become the concrete aim of the New Bandung commemorative meeting. The parties and movements invited to participate must have proven mass membership and internal democratic structures and as organizations must not rely on external sources of funding. All such parties and movements must be explicitly guided by an anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, and socialist perspective.

Peasants, Workers & Peoples of the World Unite!!!

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