

**Samir Amin**

**PROGRAMME FOR WFA/TWF FOR 2014-2015**

***FROM THE ALGIERS CONFERENCE (September 2013)***

This symposium resulted in rich discussions that revolved around a central axis: the question of the "sovereign project", understood as the need for the peoples and states of the contemporary world to overhaul their policy choices (economic, social cultural, management of power, etc.) in a way that allows them to distance themselves from the pattern of globalization unilaterally imposed by the monopolies of the imperialist centres of the historically and still dominant Triad, raising themselves to the rank of active agents in shaping the world, in initiating new forms of just and sustainable development.

The symposium provided an overview of the multiple facets of the challenges of building a "sovereign project": defining the means by which economic policies can end the processes of dispossession and impoverishment that are intrinsic to the logic of capitalism, ensuring instead the sharing of the benefits of development in favour of the popular classes; defining the means of exercising political power that paves the way for real and progressive democratization of societies; defining the means for guaranteeing the sovereignty of peoples and states, paving the way for a polycentric negotiated globalisation and not one unilaterally imposed by the powerful for their own exclusive profit.

The discussions revealed that the "sovereign projects" of those countries of the South referred to as "emerging", leaving aside the diversity of their origin and the efficiency of their results, fall far short of the requirements of social development, as they emerge from pathways that are based on the fundamental logic of capitalism, a logic that is itself founded on forms of development of productive forces that are destructive of human beings and nature.

The order in which the five following themes are presented here does not imply an order of priority.

**THEME ONE: What do we mean by "sovereign projects"?**

The very notion of the "sovereign project" must be a subject for discussion. Given the level of penetration of transnational investments in all sectors and in all countries, one cannot avoid the question: what kind of sovereignty is being referred to?

- i. The global conflict for access to natural resources is one of the main determinants of the dynamics of contemporary capitalism. The examination of this particular aspect should not be embedded in other general considerations. The dependence of the USA for numerous resources and the growing demands of China constitute a challenge for South America, Africa and the Middle East which are particularly well endowed with resources and shaped by the history of the pillage of those resources. Can we develop national and regional policies in these domains as the beginning of a rational

and equitable global management of resources that would benefit all peoples? Can we develop new relations between China and the countries of the South that subscribe to such a perspective, linking access to these resources by China with support for the industrialisation of the countries concerned (that which the so-called "donors" of the OECD refuse to do)?

- ii. The framework for the deployment of an effective sovereign project is not limited to the fields of international action. An independent national policy remains fragile and vulnerable if it does not have real national and popular support, which requires it to be based on economic and social policies that ensure that the popular classes are beneficiaries of "development." That is the price of the social stability that is the condition for the success of the sovereign project against the political de-stabilization of the imperialist project. We must therefore examine the nature of relationships between existing or potential sovereign projects and the social bases of the system of power: a national, democratic and popular project, or an illusory project of national capitalism?
- iii. We will attempt to provide, in this context, a "balance sheet" of "sovereign projects" that have been implemented by "emerging" countries. Among other things, we consider:
  - The characteristics of the project of China: their various possible futures. State capitalism based on the illusion of a leader of the national bourgeoisie, or state capitalism with a social dimension, evolving towards a "state socialism", itself a step on the long road to socialism ?
  - Is there a sovereign project being implemented in India and Brazil? Contradictions and limitations.
  - Can we say that there is no sovereign project in South Africa? What are the conditions for a sovereign project emerges in this country? Relationship with the rest of Africa?
  - Can non-continental countries develop sovereign projects? What are their limits? What forms of regional coming together could facilitate such progress ?

*Might Ajaz lead on the development of this theme based on an analysis of the Indian challenge?*

## **THEME TWO: Exiting from financial globalization**

Warning: this is only on the financial aspect of globalization, not globalization in all its dimensions, in particular commercial.

One assumes that this is the weak link in the established neo-liberal globalized system. We therefore consider:

- The question of the future of the dollar as the universal currency, taking account of the growing external debt of the USA
- The question related to the perspectives of "full convertibility" of the yuan, ruble, and rupee (see paper by Samir Amin on the debate about the yuan)

- The issue of "exit convertibility" of certain currencies in emerging countries (Brazil, South Africa)
- Measures that could be taken in the field of management by fragile countries of their national currency (particularly in Africa)

*Can we consider the possibility of a group organized by Nakatani and Wen Tiejun?*

### **THEME THREE: Thwarting the geopolitical and geostrategic plans of the United States and its allies of the Triad.**

Our starting point is the following: the pursuit of global domination by the capitalist monopolies of the historic imperialist powers (United States, Europe, Japan) is threatened by the growing conflicts between 1) the objectives of the triad (to maintain its domination) and 2) the aspirations of emerging countries and the revolt of the peoples who are the victims of "neo-liberalism".

Under these conditions the United States and its subordinate allies (partners in the "collective imperialism of the triad") have chosen the headlong rush ahead through the use of violence and military interventions:

- a. deployment and strengthening of U.S. military bases (Africom and others)
- b. military interventions in the Middle East (Iraq, Syria, tomorrow Iran?)
- c. military encirclement of China, provocations by Japan, issues of the conflicts of China / India and China / South East Asia

But it seems that while violent interventions by imperialist powers remain in fact on the agenda, evidence of them being part of a of a coherent strategy a condition for eventual success, is increasingly hard to find,. Is the US at bay? Is the decline of this power a passing phase or decisive? The responses of Washington, which are apparently, it seems, decided from one day to the next, do not making them less dangerously criminal.

What political (including military) strategies could reduce the USA's project of military control of the planet?

*Possible interest for our friends in Russia (Buzgalin) , Turkey, Egypt and Syria (Fikret and Mamdouh ), China (Wang Hui) on this topic.*

### **THEME FOUR: The civilization project, towards a second wave of the emergence of states, nations and peoples of the peripheries**

Preparations for the future, even if far away, begin today. It is good to know what we want. What model of society do we want? Founded on what principles? The destructive competition between individuals or the affirmation of the advantages of solidarity? The liberty that gives legitimacy to inequality or the liberty associated with equality? The exploitation of the planet's

resources without regard for the future or by taking into consideration the precise measure of what is needed for the reproduction of the conditions of life on the planet?

The future must be seen as the realization of a higher stage of universal human civilization, not merely a more "fair" or more "efficient" model of civilization as we know it (the "modern" civilization of capitalism).

First hurdle for the organization of the debate: the risk of staying on the ground of wishful thinking, a remake of the utopian socialism of the 19th century. To avoid this we should ensure the participation of highly competent people on the following topics:

- What anthropological and sociological scientific knowledge today interrogates the "utopias" formulated in the past?
- What is our new scientific knowledge about the conditions for the reproduction of life on the planet?
- Can we integrate this knowledge in an open Marxist thought?

Second pitfall: avoiding dealing with only these problems while dealing with those concerning the ways and means for advancing in this direction.

In this framework we give space to projects on the emergence of states and of peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin American. The first wave of emergences, which was successfully deployed between 1950 and 1980, was exhausted. The new situation resulted in the imperialist powers seeking to regain the initiative and impose their "dictate" (not the so-called "consensus") of Washington. In its turn this savage globalisation project is imploding, giving the peoples of the peripheries an opportunity to engage in a second wave of liberation and progress. What could the objectives of this second wave be? Different political and cultural visions (reactionary, illusory, progressive) compete here. We will need to study the opportunities.

We subscribe to the radical alternative perspective paving the way for overcoming capitalism.  
*Can F. Houtart take responsibility for developing this project?*

## **THEME FIVE : Organization of struggles: the unity and diversity of active progressive forces**

We come back here to the ongoing and major political questions concerning political parties, unions, movements and struggles, leadership, the vanguard, etc.

These ongoing issues of modern history have always inspired various theoretical and practical responses, even conflicting ones. In certain periods, the ambition to unite all the progressive forces in action has taken front stage. At other times, as in our times, diversity has paralyzed the effectiveness of struggles and left the opposition the advantage of taking the initiative. The present is characterized, in my (Samir Amin's) opinion, by the deployment of the process of "generalized proletarianization, segmented and diversified in the extreme" concretely different from one country to another.

I refer here to my writings concerning these transformations and the audacious strategies needed to address the challenge.

### **MODALITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The project for continuing our discussions, based on our discussions in Algiers, and avoiding reproducing once again another “colloqued'Alger”, is to propose a series of meetings to deepen the analysis and proposals for action on some specific questions. We will keep to the five themes mentioned above for the moment, without prejudice to any to any other suggestions offered by colleagues of our networks.

The format of these meetings should be designed to lead to breakthroughs in our thinking. The number of participants should be limited (15?), chosen on the basis of their competence in the relevant field. Preparation for the meeting will require drafting and circulation of introductory papers for discussion.