

FIROZE MANJI

INDEPENDENCE, NATION-STATE AND DEVELOPMENT: NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF COLONISATION AND DECOLONISATION¹

Thank you for inviting me to speak at your conference which marks a critical and tragic event in our respective histories, the 125th anniversary of the Berlin Conference that resulted in the carving up and colonial occupation of the African continent.

We are facing an extraordinary and probably unique time in the history of humanity. We are in the midst of a major financial crisis, a major economic crisis, a crisis that began brewing in the 1970s. We are also facing a major environmental crisis which, if the scientists are right, could rapidly lead to the destruction of the planet. This climate crisis is not the product, as it is frequently presented, as the result of 'human activity', but because of the tyrannical drive for maximising the rate of profit that is at the heart of the capitalist mode of production in the present era, an era of the oligopolies – a few thousand corporations that control and dominate all aspects of production internationally.

But we are also facing another crisis that is too often given too little recognition, and one which could – and should – inspire us with hope: that is the crisis of credibility – a lack of confidence – that is growing about the ability of the current system, the ability of our ruling classes, to provide adequate and meaningful solutions to the impending meltdown. Whether we are talking about the economic crisis or the climate crisis, we have reached a point at which capitalism is unable to resolve those crises – at least not without releasing its barbaric brutality and destruction upon the world, and in particular on the global South. The fact that billions are today starving, not because of the lack of availability of food but because of its cost; the fact that capital is having to use military force as we have seen in Iraq and Afghanistan; the fact that even when faced with 'natural disasters' such as the recent destruction heaped on Haiti, capital has had to respond with military occupation; the fact that in the face of financial meltdown, capital's solution has been to pour tens of trillions of dollars into the pockets of financial institutions that were the cause of the crisis but to no effect; the fact that faced with a climate crisis it has been unable to agree to a strategy in Copenhagen for

reducing carbon emissions; these are all evidence of the dilemma that capital itself faces, and that what it proposes as 'solutions' have today less and less credibility amongst citizens. All that we are offered by our political elites are the well worn tired mantras and formulas that actually got us into this mess. As Einstein famously expressed it: «You cannot solve the problem with the same kind of thinking that created the problem». The assertion of an alternative to the crass ideologies of a worn out elite is the challenge that confronts us.

But are we up to the challenge? While on the one hand this growing disillusion about the credibility of solutions offered by capital is a source of immense hope for those of us who believe another world is possible, at the same time it is a fact that never before in the last century have we on the left been so weak, so fragmented, and – let us be honest – so discredited by the collapse of the former Soviet Union and so-called existing socialism in Eastern Europe, a collapse that was as much a result of internal as it was external factors. The left has little organic connection with social movements or rising popular organisations and activist groups. Without being able to offer a coherent and meaningful alternative ideology, without being able to generate an inspiring vision of the world as it could be, it is hardly surprising that many organisations operate on the basis of a profound – if implicit – belief in TINA – that there is no alternative to capitalism. And in much of Africa, that is manifested in the belief that the solution to the ills we face can be resolved by tired old mantras about 'development', without recognising that development is only an ideological framework for ensuring the perpetuation of capital's domination of the peripheries – the so-called 'developing countries'. The challenge we face is that of building a credible way forward and demonstrating that a socialist alternative is not only desirable, but necessary, and that it can be built without the kind of bureaucratic despotism with which it has been so often associated with in the past.

¹ Keynote address to the Annual General Meeting of the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation, January 2010.

Other speakers at this conference have dealt with the consequences of the Berlin Conference, the reigns of terror, genocide, occupation and subjugation of vast territories of Africa, carving out in proportion to the balance of forces between the respective imperial powers. This tyranny was unleashed, it should be remembered in the wake of some 400 years of slavery that devastated the continent and resulted in the deaths of millions of Africans in the course of the Atlantic slave trade.

In this paper, I want to take as my starting point the events that followed the 2nd World War (2WW). There were a number of important moments that contributed to the transition from colonial rule to the hegemonic domination of Africa by the oligopolies supported by their respective states.

First, you will all be aware of the Marshall Plan, a plan that brought about the means for resuscitation of Europe. The Marshall Plan is frequently portrayed as an act of largesse on the part of the United States, a neighbourly act to help friend that had fallen on hard times. But people forget that the Marshall Plan was undertaken under conditions of the capitalist market, and in such markets, there is no such thing as a free lunch. Recall, that up to the end of the 2WW, the US had almost no presence in Africa. The outcome of the inter-imperialist rivalries that were set forth from the Berlin Conference was that the territories 'belonging' to each power was available for the exclusive exploitation of each individual European power. Each European power had privileged – and sometimes unique – access to 'their' African countries to exploit labour, agricultural produce, natural resources and in which to sell their commodities. US capital had little access to the treasures of Africa – that is, until after the 2WW. The real penetration of US influence and of US corporations into Africa began in the post 2WW period. The market transaction that occurred associated with the Marshall Plan can be interpreted as follows: in exchange for bailing out Europe with a modest sum of cash, the US would be allowed access to Europe's former colonies. And that was indeed what happened. But US capital understood very early on that colonialism was not the most efficient way in which to exploit the colonies, and the imperial project needed to be modernised. What was required was to ensure the establishment of client states allied to the interests of imperialism, with a middle class that would see its interests and benefits accruing from its alliance with capital. But that was easier said than done. The European imperial powers had to be persuaded: France was deeply reluctant to let go of its colonies, until the anti-imperial wars in Algeria more or less forced its hands; the Portuguese were adamant about holding on to their colonies – indeed they did so for so long that the anti-colonial struggles in led, in the 1970s to the overthrow of the Portuguese dictatorship at home, leading to the rise of social revolution there. And the British were also reluctant until, following the rise of Kenya's Land Freedom Army (the 'Mau Mau'), persuaded them that decolonisation and the creation of client states along the lines proposed by the Americans was going to be needed.

The second moment that informed the subsequent history of the continent was the unforeseen strength and momentum of the anticolonial movements that burst forth in virtually every single African country in the aftermath of the 2WW. This was an extraordinary phenomenon: across the continent ordinary

people began to organise to demand an end to the tyranny of the colonial yoke, to demand freedoms to organise, agitate, to speak, to have homes, land, decent work conditions, to be free of repression – in short, demanding to determine their own destiny. Faced with this upsurge, the US and its European allies were faced the challenge of how to contain the aspiration of these movements. What was to emerge was a three-pronged strategy: First, resources were allocated to nurture a new middle class through the provision of scholarships abroad, ending the exclusion of Africans from engaging in commerce, access to capital to enable African businesses to develop, enabling Africans to gain access to legislative bodies and into the senior ranks of the judiciary and indeed into the business sector. This would be ensure that a class allied to the interest of capital would be established. Secondly, and at the same time, force, assassinations, covert operations, misinformation operations, imprisonment, disappearances, and where necessary, civil wars provoked by the sponsoring and arming of terrorist groups (e.g RENAMO in Mozambique, UNITA in Angola etc) were used to eliminate and isolate wherever possible those radicals who were emerging in the anti-colonial movements: the justification for that was provided by the mantras of the 'cold war', such that anyone opposed to imperialism was, by definition, considered to be an agent of the Soviet Union (or China or Cuba etc). This justified the elimination of a generation of some of Africa's leading engaged intellectuals and political thinkers². (The isolation of radicals was consistent with the assault taking place concurrently domestically in the US with the McCarthy suppression of the left). And the third prong of their strategy was the cultivation of 'moderate' leaders and political parties who were likely to be the compliant leaders of the post-independence regimes. But the mass upsurge taking place across the continent was placing even the most compliant of the newly formed nationalist parties under pressure. Their response was to propose that the support of the movement for the nationalists was to be the way forward for the freedoms and rights that the masses were demanding. The outcome of the battle for independence was not a foregone conclusion. In some cases, as in Kenya, the nationalists were able to win on the basis of the crushing of the militant Land Freedom Army by the British, the presentation of radical rhetoric embodied in the commitment to 'African Socialism', combined with a 'pragmatism' that allowed private property and capitalism to be guaranteed safety, provided there were substantial benefits for the newly emergent ruling classes. In other cases, radical nationalism was able to win the day – at least temporarily. These were subsequently 'dealt with' through assassinations, coups d'état, misinformation campaigns, and in some cases frank military intervention, while in other –as in the case of Tanzania – prolonged isolation that brought the economies of the countries to their knees.

But the nationalist movements that were swept into power in the wave of the mass uprisings were faced with having to deliver in some meaningful way. In a sense they had a social contract with the masses. Once thrown into power, the nationalist leadership (composed usually of representatives

² See Victoria Brittain: Political assassination as a strategy against liberation movements. Pambazuka News 2006-10-19, Issue 274. <http://pambazuka.org/en/category/features/37899>

of the newly emerging middle class) saw its task as one of preventing «centrifugal forces» from competing for political power or seeking greater autonomy from the newly formed «nation». Having grasped political self-determination from colonial authority, it was reluctant to accord the same rights to others. The new controllers of the State machinery saw their role as the «sole developer» and «sole unifier» of society. The State defined for itself an interventionist role in «modernisation» and a centralising and controlling role in the political realm.

Born out of a struggle for the legitimacy of pluralism against a hegemonic colonial State, social pluralism began to be frowned upon. The popular associations which had projected the nationalist leadership into power gradually began to be seen as an obstacle to the new god of «development». No longer was there a need, it was argued, for popular participation in determining the future. The new government would bring development to the people. The new government, they claimed, represented the nation and everyone in it. Now that political independence had been achieved, the priority was «development». Social and economic improvements would come with patience and as a result of combined national effort involving all classes («harambee», in Kenyatta's famous slogan). In this early period after independence, civil and political rights soon came to be seen as a «luxury», to be enjoyed at some unspecified time in the future when «development» had been achieved. For the present, said many African presidents, «our people are not ready» — echoing, ironically, the arguments used by the former colonial rulers against the nationalists' cries for independence a few years earlier.

What they promised was that in exchange for their support, the new governments would provide universal healthcare, universal education, and — in place of the demands for «rights» and «freedoms» that were the rallying cry of the independence movements, they offered a proposition that was first coined by the US in the early 1950s: «Development». The future was no longer about self-determination, no longer about freedom, but rather this ill-defined concept. The political agenda was transformed.

It remains one of the most remarkable, and yet least acknowledged, achievements of independence governments that, within the space of but a few years, access to health services and to education was to become effectively universal. No matter how much one may criticise the forms of services provided,, it is a tribute to the capacity of the State to implement such far-reaching social programmes. While NGOs may today debate and shower praises on each other for their own capacities to «scale-up», the new governments at independence implemented programmes of «scaling-up» in a manner that no NGO has ever dared contemplate. The impacts of these interventions are undeniable and were to be reflected in the subsequent dramatic changes in average life expectancy, in infant and child mortality rates, and in the improvements in nutritional status of the young. Huge improvements in all these parameters were to be observed throughout the continent by the end of the 1970s as a result of these social programmes. Aggregate figures for Sub-Saharan Africa show, for example, that life expectancy increased from 38 years in 1960 to 47 years in 1978, despite the fact that GNP per capita increased only modestly from US \$ 222 to US \$ 280 (World Bank, 1981).

All such expansion was financed in the early 1960s to 1970s by the newly emerging «Development» agencies such as the British Overseas Development Agency (later the Department for International Development), USAID, DANIDA, SIDA, FINNIDA, and the numerous other acronyms. This was known as the period of «modernisation» in which the imperial countries had no qualms about supporting repressive regimes and one-party states. For them, the strong (and of course compliant) state was the means by which «development» was to be delivered.

Our countries began to be called «developing» or «underdeveloped» in contrast to what the imperial countries called themselves — «developed». In other words, we were cast as being all things that Europe and the west considered itself not to be. This was a continuation of the racist perception that justified colonialism in former years. Then we were considered «uncivilised», and Europe's task was to bring «civilisation». On this basis, the so-called «developing world» and its inhabitants were (and still are) described only in terms of what they are not. They are chaotic not ordered, traditional not modern, corrupt not honest, underdeveloped not developed, irrational not rational, lacking in all of those things the West presumes itself to be. White Westerners were still represented as the bearers of «civilization» and were to act as the exclusive agents of development, while black, post-colonial «others» were still seen as uncivilized and unenlightened, destined to be development's exclusive objects.

But the «belle époque» of capitalist growth that had marked the period since the 2WW was about to come into crisis by the 1970s. Worldwide recession hit the capitalist world. Much of development had been financed by low interest loans with favourable lending terms. Countries were encouraged to build up debts. The private sector was encouraged to take loans that would be underwritten by the state. By the end of the 1970s, interest rates had mounted. What had appeared to be development on the «never-never», was now proving to be a major liability as increasing proportions of the GDP was being consumed in paying interest on loans. The capitalist crisis could only be resolved in the interests of monopoly capital through a series of radical restructuring measures. First Thatcher transformed UK by imposing defeats on the trade unions and the implementation of a series of neo-liberal measures involving privatisation of the commons and cutting of social expenditure. Then Reagan ascended to the White House in the US, and together they set about implementing through the World Bank, IMF and other international finance institutions, a radical measure of structural adjustment programmes.

Central to the neoliberal ideology was the concept of the minimalist state, a concept the realisation of which radically altered the landscape of development practice in Africa and throughout the post-colonial world. According to the neo-liberal consensus, the most important function of economic policy is to safeguard the «right» of a minority to accumulate profits at the highest rate possible (euphemistically referred to as «growth»). Only when this freedom is unrestricted, it is said, will others in society benefit from any associated spin-offs (the trickle-down effect). The purpose of «development» is, therefore, to guarantee «growth» so that ultimately other freedoms can be enjoyed at some indeterminate time in the future. State expenditure, according to this dogma, should

be directed towards creating an enabling environment for 'growth', and not be 'wasted' on the provision of public services that, in any case, can ultimately be provided 'more efficiently' by private enterprise. These are the mantras that came to be woven through almost every report on economic development since – whether from the World Bank, IMF, WTO, or from bilateral development agencies in the North. This is the «madness» that Amartya Sen points out, makes socially useful members of society such as school- teachers and health workers feel more threatened by conservative economic policies than do army generals. It is the madness that contributed to social calamities such as the genocide in Rwanda.

The indebtedness of African nations gave the multilateral lending agencies the leverage they needed to impose their neo-liberal policy prescriptions, in the spirit of universality, across the board. The Bretton Woods institutions (with the support of the bilateral aid agencies) became the new commanders of post-colonial economies. Through the myriad structural adjustment programmes they initiated throughout the continent they could determine both the goals of development and the means for achieving them. Adjustment legitimised their direct intervention in political decision-making processes. These institutions soon came to determine the extent of involvement that the state should have in the social sector, and insisted on the state imposing draconian economic and social measures that resulted in a rise in unemployment and the decline in real incomes of the majority. The result was to transform and restructure the social basis of power in African countries, strengthening those forces or alliances that would be sympathetic to the continued hegemony of the multilaterals and of the multinationals in the emerging era of 'globalisation'.

In short, within a short period of time, African countries found that their social and economic policies were being controlled no longer by the citizen, but rather by the international finance institutions in the interest of enabling the transnational corporations to increase their rate of profit.

So in the 1990s, the focus of attention of the international community was placed upon 'good governance', persuading African governments to permit political pluralism in the form of 'multipartyism'. But democratisation of the structures of the state had not occurred, and was certainly no longer in the interest of the ruling elites. The state's role in the social sector had been effectively gelded in the process of structural adjustment. State actors' decisive role in determining economic policy had been appropriated by the multilateral institutions and, instead, they found themselves the focus of blame for the failed neo-liberal policies that had previously been imposed upon them by their critics. What was there left that could be offered that might stave off the possibilities of social upheavals. Pluralism in the political arena seemed the only possibility. But, far from legitimising any struggle for basic rights or for greater accountability of the state and its structures, the result has been to bring into the public domain the seething divisions between sections of the ruling class competing for control of the state. With their constituencies usually in the rural areas, the inevitable consequence was to bring the explosive tensions of tribalism into the urban context.

And what of the welfare initiatives that accompanied the good governance agenda? The market and voluntarism have

a long association; the first and most celebrated period of 'free trade', from the 1840s to the 1930s, was also a high point of charitable activity throughout the British empire. In Britain itself, the industrial revolution opened up a great gulf between the bourgeoisie and the swelling ranks of the urban proletariat. In the 1890s, when industrialists were amassing fortunes to rival those of the aristocracy, as much as one third of population of London were living below the level of bare subsistence and death from starvation was not unknown. At this time, private philanthropy was the preferred solution to social need and private expenditure far outweighed public provision. It is hardly surprising, then, that the phase of neo-liberalism saw the rise of the development NGOs, the charitable successors of the missionaries who sought to provide services where the state was retrenching.

The bilaterals and multilaterals set aside significant volumes of funds aimed at 'mitigating' the 'social dimensions of adjustment'. The purpose of such programmes was to act as palliatives that might minimise the more glaring inequalities that their policies had perpetuated. Funds were made available to ensure that a so-called 'safety net' of social services would be provided for the 'vulnerable' – but this time not by the state (which had after all been forced to 'retrench' away from the social sector) but by the ever-willing NGO sector. The availability of such funds for the NGO sector was to have a profound impact on the very nature of that sector. This was a period in which the involvement of Northern NGOs in Africa grew dramatically. The number of international NGOs operating in Kenya, for example, increased almost three-fold to 134 organisations during the period 1978 to 1988.⁴⁵ According to the Overseas Development Institute, NGOs in 1992 distributed somewhere between 10% and 15% of all aid transfers to «developing countries». While most of this money comes from private donations a significant proportion also comes from official sources. Britain's Department for International Development (DFID) allocates around 8% of its aid budget to NGOs. The US Government transfers nearly 40% of its aid programme through NGOs. The scale of official funding has increased considerably over the past two decades. In the early 1970s less than 2% of NGO income came from official donors. By the mid- 1990s this figure had risen to 30%. In the ten years between 1984 and 1994, the British Government increased its funding of NGOs by almost 400% to £68.7m. NGOs in Australia, Finland, Norway and Sweden all saw similar increases in official funding from the early 1980s onwards. As a consequence of increased levels of funding and increased attention, the number of development organizations in Western countries mushroomed and many established NGOs experienced spectacular growth. The number of NGOs active in African countries has grown equally. About 40 percent of the development NGOs working in Kenya today are foreign organizations, 204 out of a total number of 511 according to the most recent survey.

In the era of globalisation, African states have increasingly lost authority to determine both the direction of social development and also the content of social policy. Externally imposed constraints on health, education and welfare measures and social programmes, tax concessions on profits, liberalisation of price controls, and dismantling of state owned enterprises – all have contributed to widening of internal disparities. And faced with the growing dominance of the mul-

tinational corporation in the domestic economy, there remain few legitimate ways for the indigenous capitalist class to accumulate. Their choices are limited either to becoming agents of the multinationals, or turning to crime, corruption, drug- trafficking, sex exploitation, illegal migration and illicit arms. As UNDP points out, criminals are «reaping the benefits of globalisation.» The deregulation of capital markets and developments in information and communications technologies «make flows easier, faster and less restricted» for drug-trafficking, laundering money and weapons.⁵⁰ As the distinction between social organisation for criminal activities and for political purposes has become blurred in African society, civilians are increasingly being caught in the crossfire or becoming the targets either of armed opposition groups or of the increasingly desperate state machinery. Continued impoverishment, growing conflicts, the state reneging on its social responsibilities, it is into this arena that development NGOs have been plying their trade. Africa's decline contributes to the continued justification for their work. NGOs will «do better the less stable the world becomes ... [because] finance will become increasingly available to agencies who can deliver «stabilising» social services.» As African governments increasingly become pushed into becoming caretakers of what might be described as the peripheral Bantustans of globalisation, are we seeing a return to the colonial paradigm in which social services are delivered on the basis of favour or charity and their power to placate?

NGOs are acknowledged today as «the preferred channel for service provision in deliberate substitution for the state». Official aid agencies have come to expect NGOs to act as a substitute for state welfare programmes, a solution to welfare deficiencies at a time when structural adjustment was hugely increasing the extent of welfare needs. Development NGOs have become an integral, and necessary, part of a system that sacrifices respect for justice and rights. They have taken the «missionary position» – service delivery, running projects that are motivated by charity, pity and doing things for people (implicitly who can't do it for themselves), albeit with the verbiage of participatory approaches. It would be wrong to present the relationship between Western NGOs and official aid agencies in the 1980s as the product of some conscious conspiracy. The pre-condition for NGOs' co-optation to the neo-liberal cause was merely a coincidence in ideologies rather than a purposeful plan. In charitable development, the proponents of neo-liberalism saw the possibility of enforcing the unjust social order they desired by consensual rather than coercive means. The role NGOs have played in expanding and consolidating neo-liberal hegemony in the global context may have been unwitting. It may not have been as direct or as underhand as some of the activities willingly taken up by colonial missionary societies and voluntary organisations. But that is not to say it is any less significant. Indeed, one could argue that it has actually been far more effective.

Development has thus become an intimate part of the ideology of modern capitalism. It has penetrated so deep that you are considered crazy if you dare suggest that this particular emperor has no clothes.

Yet the evidence is there. 2008 saw record levels of hunger for the world's poor, of harvests for agribusiness, and of profits for the world's major agfri-food corporations. Real wages for the majority of the people of the third world are lower

today than they were 20 years ago, and lower than in the 1970s. A recent report from Christian Aid has this to say about the real flow of wealth from developing countries to the North: Between 2002 and 2007, developing countries transferred cumulatively an amount of \$563bn in ODA to developed countries. Net flows to low income developing countries however are marginally positive, but no where on the scale necessary to reduce poverty substantially.

The scale of negative resource transfers (from developing to developed) is even more staggering measured in terms of total net transfers. Put differently, developing countries became net capital providers to rich countries, and not the other way round as theory predicts. Cumulatively, this amounted to \$2,577bn in the period 2002–2007. Add to this, the volume of capital flight, especially illicit capital flight from developing countries (estimated annually between \$150bn–\$250bn), and the scale of «reverse aid» is staggering.

This is equivalent to thirty-seven Marshall Plans every five years from the South to the North, from the peripheries to the centre.

And just to put the figures in perspective: The UN Millennium Development Campaign issued a statement recently stating that in the last 50 years, the North has transferred \$2 trillion in aid to the South. At the same time, over the last one year alone, the same Northern countries have given \$18 trillion to the financial institutions and banks to bail them out of a financial crisis of their own making!

Development has become a system by which the North enriches itself off the misery of the South, and calls this charitable aid!

FINDING COMMON INTERESTS

So where does that leave us in terms of finding common interests? Just as there was in the post second world war period, there is today an extraordinary resurgence of movements across the continent. These movements organise around a variety of issues – some around labour rights, others around environment, others around the struggle for women's rights, others bring together shack dwellers, yet others bring together landless peoples, others around access to health-care or ARVs, others around water or electricity privatisation, and so on.

What all these movements have in common is the aspiration of their members towards self-determination and emancipation from the various forms of oppression and exploitation that they face. They are diverse in their political aspirations, but they have a common implicit (and sometimes explicit) belief that has been captured by the World Social Forum's slogan «Another world is possible».

It is these social movements where there are potentials for building an agenda based on common interests. They will want solidarity. But what does that mean? Solidarity at heart is the recognition that one's own freedom is dependent on the freedom of others, and theirs dependent on ours. It is not about fighting other people's battles, but understanding that we face common enemies. It imposes on us the challenge of taking on the oppressor not just in distant lands but principally on our own doorstep. The building of movements of solidarity – just as happened with the anti-apartheid movement and the anti-war movement at the time of Vietnam – these are all examples of how we can make it more difficult

for our ruling classes to benefit from continued oppression. The anti-war movement in the US was strongly motivated not so much against the horrors that were being perpetuated by the US on the Vietnamese, but much more so the refusal of Americans to continue to give up their own lives to the carnage that brought no direct benefits. Self interest, I would suggest, is the true heart of the basis for building solidarity. I would argue that there is an inherent contradiction between those who struggle for emancipation and self-determination and those who are engaged in the charade of «development». That is not to say that there are not many «good people» who form the troops of development agencies, nor is it to say that those who work for such agencies are not fuelled themselves with a passion for social justice. But it is the objective, not the subjective, factor that is important. Development has been, and remains today, a central tenet for making the bitter pill of capitalist exploitation palatable.

The heart of the problem is that the development agencies are engaged in what Paolo Freire referred to as false charity: True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the «rejects of life», to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so these hands – whether of individuals or entire people – need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world.

Let me end by posing the hypothetical example of what we would do faced with slavery in its heyday. Would the development brigade be out there building wells and schools and health centres for slaves? Would they be getting their projects funded by persuading the slave owners and traders to engage in corporate social responsibility? Would some of them be engaged in promoting fair trade, making sure that those who sold their slaves got a good return – perhaps even branding the slaves with a «fair trade» mark (it is interesting that the development brigade are heavily preoccupied with «branding» – a brutal way of burning ownership of slaves, cattle and other beings as private property)? Put in those terms, the idea sounds absurd. Would we describe such activities as an expression of solidarity with the slaves?

Or would we side with the slaves who decided to challenge the abhorrent system? Would we confront the corporations who profited from it? Would we challenge the use of public funds to subsidise this kind of exploitation?

If «development» is to be meaningful, then it has to be seen as a process through which people gain an authority of their own destiny. If 50 years of development have resulted in the mass of the people of the South less able to control their destiny than before, then development has failed.

But the «slaves» are in revolt. Across the South there are movements emerging that are beginning to provide a challenge to the political order. Even in the most «stable» of the countries, opposition to existing powers are beginning to take shape. These are exciting times, but also ones that are filled with uncertainty. It is difficult to make predictions about what will be the outcome of the present crisis of capitalism. There are parallels, for sure, with the long crisis of capitalism that occurred in the 1870s: that crisis resulted in a massive growth of monopolisation, concentration and financialisation of capital and the bursting out in to globalisation in the form of

colonisation – the event marked by this conference. The the subsequent period was marked by the a series of major developments: the First World War, the explosion of the Russian Revolution, the massive economic crisis of 1929, the rise of Nazism in Europe, the outbreak of the 2WW, the victory of the Chinese revolution, and the destructive ventures of the US in Korea and Vietnam. It is quite likely that the current crisis will give birth to transformations of equal moment. None of that is immediately predictable, but they are not entirely independent of the subjective element. Do we have the will to influence what will happen as capitalism seeks to use its destructive powers to resolve the present crisis of capitalism? Much will depend on the capacity of the South to organise and provide leadership in the building of another world, but it will also depend on the capacity of progressives in the North to engage their own ruling classes and limit their capacity to unleash terror and barbarism on the South.

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