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THE CONVULSIVE HISTORICAL MOMENT: CONSIDERATIONS FROM A NEORADICAL THIRD WORLD PERSPECTIVE

Herb Addo

I. Introduction and Determination¹

A concerned critic, for good reasons, once remarked, "In Addo's hands, History is absurdity. Global life is drama. The Third World role in both is a farce."

What this discerning critic did not say in his much appreciated statement is that, to me, (1) History is not just any old absurdity, but a patently silly absurdity; (2) global life is not only just a drama, but a dark drama; and (3) the Third World role in both is not just any old invigorating happy-laughing farce, but a huge bad-humored farce.

My purpose here, therefore, is to concentrate intensely on the "bad-humored farce" aspects of my convictions as they relate to my belief that for the Third World, indeed, global life in the development of the capitalist world-system has always been a dark drama, the darkness of which has been concealed by clever histrionics and obscurantist props. I intend to do this by discussing the much publicized end of the Cold War and revealing the unadorned, the naked, the raw plot that is continuously being enacted at the painful expense of the teeming millions in the Third World. But, before I move further, I must immediately enter three necessary points.

A. The Living World and the Logic of the “Unseen Hand”

Until very recently, the world was just that—the world. It was considered to be no more than a mere inter-national or inter-state system, with each part having its own more or less different sociocultural, economic, and political forms, competing for what was thought to be in their different interests. Collaborating only where and when they had to, this world could only best be conceptually described as basically anarchic, passing, when necessary, through a period of largely unintended interdependence. Now, in this late moment of the century, we are told that the much-vaunted state is losing a great deal of its autonomy and, consequently, the world is threatened by the malady of globalization.

From basic inter-state anarchy, through unengineered and cascading interdependence, to the demise of the state, to the coming of globalization—all this insinuates that a logical graduating sequence of sorts is at work.

This “unseen hand,” it seems to me, is the self-realizing logic of historical capitalism. The drive is to change the world systematically to make it increasingly amenable to the efficient but unequal accumulation of capital, dense in the center, thin in the periphery. Our world is, therefore, no longer an unnameable incoherent entity, a “just the world,” but a clearly identifiable one: the capitalist world-system, a long-term and large-scale system that is historically unique to itself.

B. The Cultural Core of Happenstance as the Original Causality

It will be very wrong for any serious consideration of the center-periphery historical connection to begin with the belief that, in its unenviable plight, the periphery of the capitalist world-system was totally created, *de nouveau*, by the center of historical capitalism; and, so, also would it be to think that the center was totally created by the exploitation of the periphery. This is all true even though, in causal terms, one cannot think of the periphery without thinking of the center: the two parts of the system are intractably articulated, one with the other, Historically. But, before History, there were, as now, many cultural forms.

At the very beginning of the creation of this unique historical system, the innocent center was literally going about its business, when it stumbled upon the unaware periphery-to-be. The one cultural form, realizing that it could take advantage of the other cultural forms to restore its threatened cultural feudal-self, did so; and, by acting this way, unconsciously transformed itself for the "better," materially. Also in the process, it consciously learned to take advantage of the encounter and, consequently, transform, for the worse, the other feudal selves in the way.

All this is interesting to know, but what is notable is how this unequal relationship persists even today and how we should begin to think of the idea of change in/of this system. Can change be appreciated outside of the initial cultural difference that triggered this well-articulated relationship? No! Therefore, it stands to reason that any engagement with the idea of change in/of the system must be grand culture-based, other partial claims to causal primacy notwithstanding.

For my purposes, grand culture is dependent upon the functional aspects of life that belong to a definable society — its economics, politics, religions, ideas, habits, laws, and morals. To cut long matters short, allow me to fall back on something I thought of a few years ago. It is my sense that some cultures are offensively aggressive, expansive, and domineering; they are dedicated to the forceful eradication of other cultures through total enculturation. These cultures are unapologetic believers in the "civilizing mission," and tend to be totalitarian in their political interaction with others. I submit that, in this millennium, the Christian and the Islamic religions come close to this type.

Other cultures, while still offensively aggressive, expansive, and domineering, act in a limited fashion. They tend to leave less disturbed some parts of the differentness of the other, insofar as that does not undermine the new and unequal relationship. These cultures are authoritarian. The Oriental religions of Hinduism and Buddhism, perhaps, display such political properties in their ideo-cultural encounters with others.

Still other cultures are exclusivist. For, while they may have their fair share of aggression, they are only defensively aggressive toward other cultures and only to the extent that they seek to distance themselves so as to prevent the subversion or contamination of their own cultures... if they can. It is safe to say that

the animist religions along the West African coast produced such cultures.

Let me say, then, that it is the intellectual component of cultural Europe's ideo-cultural politics of totalitarianism that we should examine critically in any serious investigation into the significance of any change in/of this unique historical system that I have been talking about.

C. Groping Toward Comprehensions

It is true that the Cold War Order (CWO) is over; so, it must be followed by another phase—call it a New World Order (NWO). This NWO has been heralded by many “big people,” including U.S. presidents, secretary-generals of all conceivable international institutions, eminent scholars, and journalists. It has caused great consternation for many university professors. They are doing the “never done for a long time.” They are dusting and revising their lecture notes, I hear, for students are asking the most impertinent questions imaginable, such as, “What is this NWO?” “What is it really like?” For American students, the question is, “What is the bottom line in this thing called NWO?”

Given all of this, we must know that historical changes of the proportion we are talking about do not take abrupt turns. We are living in a new world, and yet we are not. Our historical moment is convulsive precisely because we are caught between the twilight of the CWO and an unclear, misty dawn of a probable NWO. Our story is not difficult to tell. Since we have lost one world and must live in another that is not fully here yet, we are in limbo, a hiatus of sorts, living either contentedly or in fear. I call such a period a historical “band of transition.” I accept the heraldings of the NWO to be valid on their face value, so let us be a little curious by delving into the nature of the tangibles and the intangibles of the unavoidable historical “band of transition.” I know it is not going to be easy, but, as I see it, we have no choice but to take a plunge into the metaphysics of it.

II. The Paradox of the “Band of Transition”

The problem with such heraldings of historical NWOs is precisely that it is difficult to know for sure whether the combined

effects of the evidence of change necessarily amount to the transformation of the world. In the current instance, the question is whether the world-capitalist Cold War Order is changing into a new order that is fundamentally different. This is precisely because the changes involved tend to send mixed signals with respect to the probable/possible transformation of the system. What we are faced with, then, is the burden of discerning the quality of change involved. The problem could be expressed as thus: Is the heralding of a NWO misconstrued in that the changes we are witnessing, as far-reaching as they may appear, are no more than the system of signals that world-capitalism is now poised to take advantage of the unique coincidence of the decline of U.S. hegemony and the devastating dissolution of the Soviet Union?

If the answer is affirmative, we can say that the capitalist world-system is undergoing a self-contained change: a change of itself, within itself, for itself. This would make the tonality of the quality of this spectacular set of changes fall into the category of the evolutionary — a discernible change, a step-level change perhaps—but a change that does not transcend the self of the system, its world-view, and its fundamental logic but, rather, reinforces it. However, should the opposite be the case, and should it turn out that the changes at this historical juncture are the system's fundamental logic and its supporting world-view, then we can confidently say that the familiar world-capitalist CWO is yielding its place to a true NWO: a grand valid transition toward a true transcapitalist transformation. Which is it? To and for whom? These are the questions!

III. The Third World Perspective

What is to follow, in its general guise, may be called the **Radical Third World Perspective**. By this, I refer to the collectivity of positions that observe and analyze the development of the capitalist world-system from the point of view of the periphery. Essentially, the perspective sees the fundamental logic of the global capitalist system as the ever-increasing efficient accumulation of global capital and its concentration in the center. Consequently, the system would therefore be transforming itself only when drastic changes occur that lead to the stoppage of the

historical leakage of increasing amounts of capital from the periphery to the center of the capitalist system.

The Third World perspective rejects fruitless searches for final causes in the identification of the spatiotemporal origins of the particular world-system, within which context we should necessarily locate the understanding of our current global situations in order to explain the developments that are affecting us immediately at this precise historical juncture. For it is axiomatic now that it was Europe's search for extra-European solutions to its fifteenth-century socioeconomic crises, as Immanuel Wallerstein must be tired of arguing, that undergirded what I have described as "Columbus's 1492 successful misadventure." This point is important to the Third World perspective because it makes clear that the Third World nations (as presently constituted by Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and mainland Asia) are not some embarrassing appendages to the real world-capitalism, but, in fact, are very much functional parts of the system's self-creation and propulsion.

This perspective, therefore, would regard any analysis of the immediate post-CWO period that takes this period to be autonomous unto itself without reference to prior phases or stages in the long evolution of world capitalism to be a false start. The immediate post-CWO period is not the first period in this history said to have heralded a NWO. Each changing phase in this evolutionary process from nascence to the present has been touted as presaging something new, meaning something different for all those involved in the system, the top dogs as well as the underdogs. In fact, there have been five successive phases in the development of global capitalism since the late fifteenth century, and each phase had its own time-bound, more efficient means of exploiting the Third World. The CWO was the fifth phase in the evolution of the capitalist world-system. In this chain of successions, the only thing that remains the same is the changing continuity of the exploitation of the Third World by ever-refining imperialist ways and means. This is to say that no matter what changes occurred in the past, the exploitation gradient appears to remain relatively the same.

A. Dissension Within

1. A Neoradical Angle

It is not difficult to sympathize with the plight of the Third World peoples and the perspective adumbrated above. But, those who do so almost always commit some gross methodological errors—that is, a fallacious Eurocentric view of History as a progressivist universal process. This mistake, if it does not ignore or exclude it entirely, at best buries the contingent—the human agency—deep in the huge structure of global capitalism. But, the practical assessment of the transformational potential of a transitional phase demands knowledge of the contingent factor, its velocity, and its direction. This is critical to radicals and radical thought. It is in this context that misleading historical ideas and concepts such as universalism, determinism, development, progressivism, and dialectics must be exposed and condemned for what they are: deceptive and dangerous.

Eurocentric progressivist universalism believes that History is movement from one historical stage to another until History itself stops, dies, or ends; but not before final History has spread itself universally all over the world in the mode of Western European history, this final History having succeeded in obliterating all other histories and replacing them with itself totally. The core belief in this piece of pernicious thinking is the belief that History moves in a series of dialectical steps whereby existing histories, by virtue of the resolutions of the conflicts and tensions within them, are vanquished. In all this, the march toward finality is to be led—by example or force—by Western socio-economic political culture of liberal democracy.

This view of History has some great names attached to it. The constellation includes Adam Smith, Kant, Hegel, and a host of others whose lineage can be traced to the classical Greeks, our own modernization theorists of the CWO, and, very specifically and especially, Francis Fukuyama, a most ingenious exhumers of Hegelian metaphysics for our times. Marx and Nietzsche, for different reasons, could not stand this ambition of History ending on a liberal democratic note, so they opted, respectively, for communism and fascism as the deterministic universalist notes on which History will have to end.

Since fascism was not fashionable after WWII, many of the adherents of the Radical Third World Perspective were to be found in the Liberal and Marxist camps. Radicals in both camps subscribed to the progressivist universalist notion of historical developments and the concomitant notion of dialectical motions of History. It is on these two points that the Neoradical Third World Perspective begins to part company.

2. Twenty Rhetorical Questions Defining a Neoradical Third World Perspective

Upon investigation, it turns out that adherents to the Radical Third World Perspective pose the following questions, which underscore their peculiar insertion into the order of the world-system.

- a. Why must History end?
- b. Must History be linear?
- c. Must it be progressive?
- d. Where is culture in all this?
- e. What will be the resultant cultural forms as the Western liberal democratic culture impacts upon non-European cultural forms?
- f. Or, is it that these latter cultures are so benign that no possible interaction with liberal democracy could result in any mode other than a replication of itself, having vanquished all the other cultures?
- g. In other words, is the "liberal democratic seedling" so resistant that it can be transplanted successfully by thriving intact in any and every cultural environment?
- h. Is it possible that some corrupt cultural hybrids can occur?
- i. How seriously are we to take the notion of the dialectical motions of History?
- j. How much does this notion account for, and how much does it conveniently leave out?
- k. Is this notion of History unfolding itself not two-dimensional, too mechanistic, and too rudely deterministic in its compass, and, therefore, too shallow?

- l. Can the notion of Historical universalism not be a clever ruse to deceive some of the non-European cultures into permanent states of subservience and insecurity?
- m. How can anybody be sure that the “band of transition” is not preparing us for a New World (Dis)Order, in which the confrontation for hegemony would be between modified fascism and modified communism and, again, largely at the expense of the Third World?
- n. How do all these questions impinge upon, by way of informing, the subjective desirability and the objective probable feasibility of the Third World development project?
- o. Knowing how badly the development project fared during the CWO by reading the paradoxical signs that the “band of transition” sends, are we to be optimistic or pessimistic about the prospects of the project in the impending NWO?
- p. It is often said that even Third World Radicals have captive minds. This being true, should not the conjuncture be used at least as an attempt to retrieve their minds by revising their memories within historical capitalism so as to sharpen their introspection and critical intelligence?
- q. Ever-conscious of rising global consciousness and also cognizant of the weaknesses of their own cultural-societies, where should Radicals locate themselves—“home” or “outside”?
- r. Should Radicals not leave the developmental future open, seeing that they must believe in the legitimacy and the viability of multiple routes to and forms of comparable modernities?
- s. Should Radicals not avoid sensational titles such as “Capitalism in Crisis,” “The World in Chaos,” and “The World in Turbulence,” since capitalism develops from crisis to crisis and the world is always in some kind of chaos or turbulence, especially for the Third World?
- t. Finally, but not exhaustively, should Radicals not refuse to enjoin such screamings as “Cascading Interdependence” and “Unstoppable Globalization,” knowing that what is interesting about these actualities is not their vogueish realizations at the end of this fifth phase of global capitalism, but

how their seeds sown long ago at the beginning of historical capitalism were nursed by the system's evolving processes and structures?

The reader must surely realize that, for our present purposes, I cannot express in any satisfactory detail my responses to all the twenty rhetorical questions raised above that were meant to set my Third World Neoradicalism apart from merely a puzzle-solving variant of Third World Radicalism. For this reason, I suggest, then, that the best way to proceed would be to indicate the severity of the fractures in the bonds between the two variants of Third World Radicalism by responding to only two of the rhetorical questions.

Question (k) raised the matter of the inadequacy of the dialectical methodology. In this regard, what is obviously and urgently needed is a Historical methodology that avoids the two main faults of dialectology. First, it relegates some cultures in the capitalist world-system to the status of needing ordained exploitative tutelage in order to be deemed ready and so be allowed to join the presumed progressivist march of History. The problem here is that the judgments used are Eurocentrically derived and externally imposed; thus, they may not be valid in all aspects of relevant cases. Second, the dialectical methodology is only two-dimensional when what we really need is a three-dimensional methodology to enable us to get a proper handle on Historical movements. The alternatives must not divorce the struggle between the thesis and the antithesis from the verity of the expected synthesis. Historical synthesis should be seen, felt, and lived. It is for these reasons that I propose the trialectical approach to the critical appraisals of historical motions, and their synthesizing outcomes.

Trialectics dwells not on mere claims to change — no matter how obvious and momentous these changes may be — but on the meanings of such changes for the many whoms (defined in terms of economic, political, social, religious, and aesthetic aspects of the totalizing idea of Grand Cultures) in this world of multiple cultures. The methodology does not take the apparent dialectical resolutions of some “major” historical changes for granted, and it does not rush to praise or condemn such historical resultants. Instead, it simply asks this all-inclusive question:

To the extent that the world appears to be changing, is it really changing, and, if so, for whom?

With respect to development projects, question (o) queried whether Third World Radicals have good reasons to be optimistic or pessimistic. My Neoradical response is that, since there is very little reason to be optimistic, I have to be pessimistic, but not pessimistic in the dictionary sense of the word. Rather, I am a **creative pessimist**. A creative pessimist is not an abject pessimist who throws his or her hands in the air and cries, "Oh, there is no hope," and resigns or disengages from "the humanization struggle." Such persons are not cowards, nihilists, or scornfully disinterested in the betterment of the human condition. On the contrary, they are fully involved in the struggle. Creative pessimists do not take victory for granted and, therefore, are not foolishly optimistic at each and every turn in the long and arduous struggle. On the other end is foolhardy optimism—the order of the times. There are few conferences, seminars, symposia, colloquia, or roundtables on the human condition from which participants are not expected to emerge without optimism even when there are no grounds for such a mood. "Conditions in Europe are very much reminiscent of Hitlerite Germany, but I am optimistic," I heard someone say at a conference in 1992. "Conditions have worsened for the growing vast majority in the Third World in the past thirty years, but I am hopeful," I heard another person opine in 1993. Of course, there are always reasons for some degree of cheerfulness, but what is in short supply are the autocritical appraisals for the proclamations of self-confident optimisms.

Creative pessimism is the antidote to such mindless and false exuberance. The emphasis is less on the sadness and more on the originative. I believe that when things are not going as well as planned or expected, one has every reason and right to be pessimistic—not in the vulgar sense of debilitating, resigned, cowardly, and motivated disengagement from the struggle but in the critical sense of retreating to assess the efficacy/non-efficacy/inefficacy of accepted doctrines, dogmas, premises, tactics, strategies, and the ends themselves. A certain courage and honesty is needed to be pessimistic in this sense when the order of the day is that to be "acceptable" and "highly regarded." It is this kind of critical stance borne of praxis and

theoretical experience that yields the creativity that is needed to redefine the goals, tactics, and strategies of the humanization project.

Allow me to end this section, as a beleaguered student of international political economy, on a note of great importance to me: if ever the politico-behavioral idea of realism had a realistic and satisfactory meaning and relevance, it has to coincide with creative pessimism.

IV. The Hypothesis of Refining Continuities and Change

A main argument of this contribution is that the recent changes in the capitalist world-system constitute a “band of transition” of a kind, but not of the fundamental type that intervenes transformationally between the Old World Order and a superseding New World Order. The system is certainly in transition, but this is internal to and compatible with the basic logic of the system. Whatever changes that are occurring will reinforce the system to make it more truly global both in domain and in its traditional historical effects upon the periphery. To the point then: while it is conceded that the recent global changes amount to the constitution of a new post-CWO World Order, it is questionable as to whether the combined meanings of the startling changes at this historical juncture amount to a promised transformation of the capitalist world-system itself.

My hypothesis is, therefore, that in the context of the tensions between structure-maintaining and structure-elaborating forces in the adaptation struggles at the global sociocultural level, the global changes we are witnessing are of the structure-elaborating kind. These changes amplify global capitalist structures by refining the inherent processes of its operation. For most of the periphery, this is an intensification of the integration of the periphery.

This hypothesis straddles the subtle—and not so subtle—difference between the French saying that “the more things change, the more they remain the same” and another saying to the effect of “let us change things, so that things will remain the same.” The French saying does not necessarily have to have the premeditated motive to consciously change only the appearances of retained sameness, but the second saying does.

A. What Exactly Is Changing?

Analysis of the “band of transition” demands that we know what is changing; that is, exactly what is restructuring from what into what. This is a necessary step toward the unraveling of the transformational potential inherent in the significance of the confusion called transition crisis.

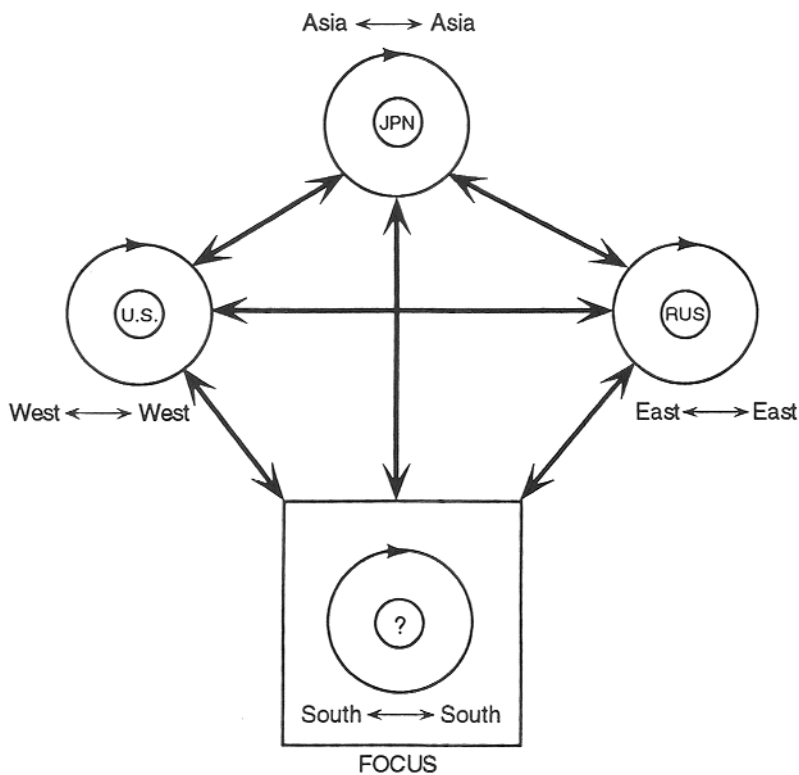
Exactly what is changing and being restructured, I propose, is the internalities of the old system itself, nothing more and nothing less. Here, there is nothing more mysterious than the recrafting of the system’s main functional/definitional geo-circuits and the relationships between these main parts of the total system: the West↔West, Asia↔Asia, East↔East, and South↔South circuits on the one hand, and the West↔Asia, West↔East, West↔South, Asia↔South, Asia↔East, and East↔South relationships on the other. These are the paramount global structures. In their comprehensiveness, they are undergoing transitional changes in their international and transnational forms. Common to all of them is the irresistible pull to service the logic of capital accumulation.

The following illustration represents what I shall be discussing immediately below: the four geo-circuits of change and the six relationships between them as these changes impact upon the South, or the Third World. The inner circles show which particular country each of the four different geo-circuits essentially revolves around; and, as can be seen in the case of the South↔South, there is doubt about which is the core country, so it is represented by a question mark.

B. Geo-Circuits of Change

1. West↔West

The changes in this circuit center on the essentialities and the nervous consequences of the sighted end of unchallenged U.S. supremacy. The irony is that this loss of command coincides with the complete prostration of Russia. The reality that we are witnessing, then, is the rationalization of the hegemonic structure of the capitalist world-system, the paradoxical singularization and the simultaneous desingularization of it.



Mainframe Geo-Circuits and Interlinking Relationships within the Global Capitalist-System

With the vanishing of the Left as a political force in the West, there is a congealing of opinion at the political center, pushing all positions to the “politically correct Right” that borders dangerously on the quasi-fascist dislike for dissent and differences. For the West↔West circuit, these changes amount essentially to one thing: the world has been made much safer for the entrenchment of conservative capitalist development. This situation will create an atmosphere of extreme intolerance in the West for those parts of the world that just cannot get their capitalist acts together for one unexplored reason or another. So, what we are saying is that nothing much has really changed in the West↔West circuit and the capitalist world-system faces little opposition in its original systemic ambition to become truly global.

Hot wars will continue to be very highly unlikely between Western states. The West is too conscious of its common heritage or its endowment of dominance of the world-system to make such wars even imaginable: the commonality of interests in commanding the rest of the world is too clear and too important to make such ugly eventualities ever leave the realms of extremely low and very vague possibilities. There will, however, be pseudowars of many kinds that are best described as serious divergences in positions, opinions, and views (e.g., trade wars, cultural wars, environmental wars, wars over political directives on some sensitive issues such as the presumed loss of national autonomies, or on policies directed toward other parts of the world), but all of these probable pseudowars will be resolved peacefully in the end, far short of hot war solutions.

We have already seen some of these pseudowars in controversies over the Maastricht Treaty in the European Community, Canada-U.S. disagreements over acid rain and aspects of NAFTA, and U.S.-Europe disagreements in the last GATT negotiations. What is of great significance in the configuration of changes marking the anticipation of a NWO is that, for the West, these changes have placed the rest of the world firmer in its hands and much more securely than ever before in modern history. This has to be read against the background of the West's conception of the rest of the world as no more than an underdeveloped Europe, a mere external frontier for the cultural expressions of the Western self.

2. East↔East

This circuit poses a most worrisome set of problems. The explosion of independent states in Eastern Europe promises a great deal of international and intranational situations of internecine strife. Wars are already going on in this part of the world; but these wars will spread and intensify, and they will do so all around. Livelihood problems caused by the mad rush to establish market economies in the East will lead, sadly, to fascist-inclined unstable governments buoyed by nationalistic resentment. Such a painful loss and unwanted gains are reminiscent of interwar Germany, we should not forget.

In all fearfulness, the wars I predict — and most of us must expect — in Eastern Europe will be nationalistic, racist, and/or ethnic in their dimensions. We must always remember that the roots of some of these conflicts run many centuries deep, made no easier to deal with by the many years of Soviet Russia's domination and the use of many parts of Eastern Europe as reluctant pawns in the settlements of past major wars. Resentments hang heavy in Eastern Europe, and, therefore, we must understand and prepare our minds to address in anticipatory ways these wars which, when they start, could spread like wildfire and make the current atrocities in the former Yugoslavia look tame. All this can only encourage the emergence of Hitler-like and fascist modes of societal organizations. In each such case, the democratic ideal will be paid lip service, as a postponed ideal, brought about by the exceptional circumstances of the "current situation." The "current situation" can, and in these instances will, last for many years while the commanders of the capitalist world-system debate and argue the questions of "What is happening?" and "What must be done?" While the carnage goes on, there will be analysts and observers galore, all blinded by the presumed efficacy of the march of humanity on the progressive road to the much awaited end of history.

A special problem in this circuit will be Russia and its political, economic, and military superordinate attitudes toward the rest of the Eastern European countries. It would be naïve to think otherwise since old historical ambitions and experiences die hard. The only reason why Russia's traditional reaction to its historically created "besieged mentality" has not manifested itself so clearly as yet is that Russia is preoccupied by its own severe internal instability.

The prevailing confusion in Russia will eventually end, but it will take a long time since there is no magic formula for radically transforming societies as old and dysfunctional as Russia. It may rightfully well be that frustrations with the socio-economic reforms will splinter Russia itself into many fractious parts. Civil war could ensue. But, whatever happens in Russia, she could, like the East European countries, end up with extreme right-wing authoritarian governments. This has to be necessarily so because democracy, as the West defines and practices it, is a "cultural seedling" that cannot be easily trans-

planted. There is nothing culturally or historically specific about Russia and the Russian temperament that will make Western-style democracy instantly viable. The likes of Vladimir Zhirinovsky are those destined to rule Russia, as sad as that may be to some of us, but this is the ugly possibility that some of us, including Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, see.

Nothing in what I have said in this connection should suggest that the communists cannot make a remarkable comeback. They are in the wings and waiting for their chance to return in a modified left-inclined totalitarian form. But this is only to be expected, as the situation in Russia is fluid and will continue to be so for much longer than most in the West would allow themselves, in the comfort of their universalist expectations, to suspect.

3. Asia ↔ Asia

For me, this circuit consists of the islands of the Pacific Rim countries, from Japan through the newly industrializing countries (NICs) of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong — excluding the Philippines for the moment — Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. By all considerations, these countries have recorded some of the most impressive economic developments in the years since the Second World War. It was not long ago that it was fashionable to ridicule the quality of exported industrial products made in these countries. Nobody laughs any longer for the obvious reason that the long distance these countries have traveled in the short time since 1950 and through the Cold War is not amazing—it is phenomenal!

What brought about such dramatic rise(s) in economic status? There are many reasons, of course. Among them are the ideological protection (military and political) of these countries during the heady days of the Cold War; the safe havens provided by these countries for Western capital to propel the development of externally oriented industrialization in these countries, during the deindustrialization period, described as New International Division of Labor; and the indefatigable convictions of the elite of these countries (aided, abetted, or imposed by the U.S.) in the efficacy of the free market route to socioeconomic development, superintended by the differently modified authoritarian states.

This is what I prefer to call “contained liberalism,” meaning the spirit of theoretical liberalism interpreted and applied to suit the cultural sensibilities of the eschatological core of the Asian culture.

But all these considerations are not peculiar to this circuit. Many countries in the South received the same, or at least similar, considerations, for which they have very little to show. Raul Prebisch’s Import Substitution Industrialization strategy failed in Latin America, and Sir Arthur Lewis’s Industrialization by Invitation failed in the Caribbean.

Japan, of course, had a long-standing ambition to be an industrial power. The protection that the U.S. offered Japan after the war and the generous economic and political considerations Japan received from the U.S. to cure perceived Japanese militarism afforded Japan the conjunctural opportunity to build upon its old industrial bases and to escalate its determination to develop economically in order to match the West. As it developed, Japan was not only admired by the other countries in this circuit as a “big brother” kind of inspiration, but it also “assisted” those other countries in various ways, particularly by investments.

What I have suggested so far does not go far enough to explain Asia’s phenomenal achievements in economic progress. They are too conjunctural to provide a satisfactory explanation. The Cold War met these countries as historical products of particular kinds. The implications of the Cold War, meaning the intense Western impact on these countries, served to release latent forces inherent in the societies of these countries that proved to serve their brand of capitalism very well.

My point is that history is the resolution of the tensions and conflicts within and between cultures. In such resolutions, what emerges are two extreme and ideal cultural forms: authentic cultural hybrid forms and corrupt cultural hybrid forms. The authentic forms are those cultures that manifest greater strength prior to intercultural engagements; the corrupt forms are those which emerge (much) weaker than they were before the encounter.

It is, therefore, my contention that the intense Cold War interaction between the West and the Asian circuit rendered countries in this circuit capitalistically-authentic cultural hybrid

forms. The conditional forces released were what Alvin So and others, including Winston Davis, call neo-Confucianism: the ethics of thrift, family cohesiveness, and hard work, seen as virtues in themselves. These are the eschatological legacy of these countries' cultural inheritance. They existed long before the Cold War released them for capitalist purposes. Being authentic hybrids, the cultures in this circuit have their confidence located in themselves. They know which societies and cultures they want to transform or build: their own. They may appear to be imitating, but what they really do is take foreign ideas and domesticate them by adapting them to suit their culturally determined purposes and ambitions. They tend to avoid vulgar mimetisms. Such authentic cultural hybrids do not reject any aspects of their cultures; they modify or change only what they need to in changing circumstances and for much-considered reasons.

In such cultures, "dialectics" mean additions to and reinforcements of existing cultural strengths and the simultaneous reductions, even removals, of perceived existing cultural weaknesses. Dialectics do not mean the violent resolutions of contradictory historically emerging and existing forces, be they determined or not: *yin* is not so much opposed to *yang* as it is complementary to it, and vice versa.

If one were to raise the issue of the inherent contradiction to this culture in being a Christian and a Buddhist at the same time, the answer would be a puzzled question. The response would be, "Where is the contradiction, if one is a Buddhist in the morning, a Shintoist in the evening, and a Christian in the night?" This would be the question in the minds of the cultures that make up this circuit. For them, theirs is correct thinking, so long as it does not undermine the historical cultural-selves and ambitions of the circuit. The purpose has been to develop so as to beat the West at its own capitalist game but not extinguish the cultural-selves and values of the countries in this circuit.

The "band of transition" between the CWO and the anticipated NWO comes at a time when the Asia↔Asia circuit is well poised under Japan's big brotherhood to work together to take advantage of whatever the changes mean to further the interests of their brands of capitalism. Is the co-prosperity sphere's ambition to be realized and consolidated in the NWO?

4. South↔South

This is my main geo-circuit of focus; and here, the guiding question is whether anything has changed—or will change—for the better for this structural circuit in the so-called NWO. The answer to this question is a paradoxical “yes!” and “no!” The interesting thing here is the curious conciliation of the two enigmatic sides of the answer to the above question. But, we must not move with undue haste in this regard.

The question that is often asked when one refers to the idea of the reality of the South, or the Third World, as opposed to the idea of the North, is, “But is the South, or the Third World, a homogeneous entity?” The answer to this question is simply this: Should and need the South be homogeneous in order for it to be an identifiable part of the capitalist world-system, an active and indispensable part of it? Of course, the South is not homogeneous in anything, be it race, culture, religion, or geographic proximity; but, at the same time, the societies of the South have a lot in common in the definition of historical capitalism, its nascence, development, structures, and processes, and in the unequal distribution of its proceeds on the global scale. Essentially, the definitional commonality is what I describe as the “Third World plight”: the raw boost that the societies of the South gave to the development of nascent capitalism, the continuity of the South’s subordinate historical role in the system, and the continuing exploited contributions from the South toward the concentration of accumulating capital in the center of the system. An essential element in the conception of the South is the intractability of moving the South from its perceived uncivilized, backward, underdeveloped, or developing status into developed modernity. These terms, I make clear, are mere convenient euphemisms, all meaning the same thing: as yet un-Europeanized and, so, inferior societies. Developed modernity equates in most minds with maximum Europeanization. Policies of the many kinds pursued assiduously toward this end since the end of the Second World War have all failed and miserably so. Another definitional element of the South is the long reluctance on the part of the West to regard and accept the South as a subject, and not as mere abject object, of world-history; or, in another language, as other than an embarrassing

and painful, but sadly irremovable, blemish on the face of the world. When I refer to the South as a structural circuit in the capitalist system, therefore, I refer largely to the areas of Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Mainland Asia plus some of the Pacific Islands such as the Philippines and Papua New Guinea.

It is not difficult to know where to place the oil-rich Middle East countries. Despite their enormous riches and fast material modernization, the average Western mindset finds it difficult to see and accept them as modernizing countries. Their religion, Islam, alone denies them such description, in the thinking of the many who hold on to the historical fear of and unwilling antagonism toward Islam as the religion of the devil, as Norman Daniel's illuminating discourse on the Crusades makes clear. No amount of material gains, no life-serving improvements, and no amount of capital controlled by these countries can entitle them to entries into developed modernity. At best, so long as they remain faithful to Islam, they can only be developing Orientals. Both the persistence and the virulent resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism only serve to confirm this general denial. To such minds, it is as if Andalusia still exists and the Crusades are still going on. Here, the only acceptable ticket for entry into developed modernity are the nonthreatening and/or nonoffensive eschatological cultural forms of non-Western societies. And in any case, the enormous wealth of these countries is largely directed — if not, in fact, largely controlled — by global capital, which is primarily Western-owned. The Middle Eastern countries and the Near East country of Iran are, therefore, classified as countries of the South, even if they themselves think otherwise.

Global capitalism has, of course, "always" known about the South. It was its business to know. But it was the Cold War that gave the South a strange kind of formal recognition — an elevation from the curious case of having always been part of the world and yet not being recognized as such, to the "grand" status of wanting to be and being courted to be a recognized part of the "real world." The Cold War meant that a hot war could not be fought across the great line that divided the West from the East on the European continent. That being the case, then, the Cold War, which was waged to determine who was the real global capitalist hegemon, had to be fought on the planes of the

political, economic, and propaganda to win minds and hearts in the Western and Eastern European parts of the world and elsewhere. The “elsewhere” was the South.

So, the South↔South circuit was first noticed “seriously” at the beginning of the Cold War as a real part of the world; and it was the Cold War and the Order it enunciated that propelled this circuit into global prominence. I shall go as far as saying that the Cold War as we know it was fought because the Third World, or the South, was there to be fought over. The South caused the Cold War!

What of the clamor of the former colonial territories for independence, and getting it? What of the Bandung Conference of 1955 and its spirit, followed by the Belgrade Conference of 1961? What of the consequences of the political stance of the Non-Aligned Movement and its many conferences, which later incorporated some of the older independent states of Latin America to assume the economic force of the Group of 77 to demand something called a New International Economic Order in the early 1970s? Why is it that after the first generation of the outspoken leaders in this circuit passed away or retired — Nehru, Nkrumah, Nasser, Mao, Sukharno, Nyerere, Boumedienne, Echeverría, Cabral, etc. — no others have risen to reclaim, refine, and enhance the struggle for genuine recognition? Is it that the succeeding leaders in this circuit have nothing more to be vociferous about? Is it that they lack the legitimate anchors of courage and conviction? Or, is it that their confidence has been severely depleted as they watch(ed) the realization of the counterfinality of what their predecessors told them: “We shall do in decades what took others a hundred years to do to bring about the bridging of the North-South historically created development gap.”

What happened here is that as time wore on, this optimistic and euphoric promise first turned into a diluted hope and then into its opposite by the onset of a counterfinality. The famous North-South gap has widened further and, for the vast majority, the social, political, and economic conditions have fallen below where they were before independence. In this circuit, it is a lucky person indeed who can find an honest job that pays well enough to keep body and soul together. There are runaway inflations, crippling each of the economies and making salaries

and wages senseless and embarrassing things to receive. The embryonic setups of and for industrialization purposes, for which they invested a lot of their own money and so much of high-interest borrowed international capital to finance, lie in ruins or have become badly maintained "white elephants" begging to be pawned cheaply to international capitals. In terms of infrastructure, the sight is sad enough to be mournful in that infant mortality rates are rising and universities, schools and education, hospitals, roads, electrical supply, and quality of drinking water (and water for anything else) are deteriorating all round. The number of street and dustbin children and adults is increasing at worrisome rates, especially in the seats of governments and other big cities. All this goes on while, in many parts of the South, some, a few, grow inordinately rich and many grow filthy poor, internally mirroring in these societies the external North-South gap without any qualms while, in the process, the Southern rich blame the North for their small shares of the exploited proceeds. But why is all this so?

With the possible exceptions of China and the Middle East, nothing and nobody appears to have been in charge of the cultural-societies in the South since the dawn of global capitalism and their systematic unequal incorporation into the evolving system. Of course, there was initial resistance to the incorporation, but I am not talking about this. I am referring to the absence of embodied thoughts and ideas of clever corrective adaptation to beneficially utilize the evolution of world-capitalism. Unlike the case of the Asia↔Asia, in this circuit, indigenization or domestication of "new" foreign ideas and the sensible rejection or modification of older cultural ones are thought to belong to the realm of impossibility. This is wrong, of course.

All through the twentieth century, the languages of resisting or correcting capitalist incorporation and exploitation have been cast around imposed or borrowed idioms of the dominating capitalist culture. It does not at all appear that those who are expected to think about the existence and future of the South are aware of the relationships between power and discourse as Foucault, Alatas, Said, and Cox, among others, have presented. There is little appreciation for the basic point that thought is always for someone and for something. Because of this, minds

in this circuit appear to be captive minds — reactive, uncritical, and imitative in approach to ideas and concepts emanating from the West and the East of Europe, when the East “existed.” Such minds indulge, at best, in problem-solving rather than critical thinking. Such minds see themselves as part of the solutions and never as part of the problems.

Latin American countries have been independent for many years, but they have not yet managed to develop their societies either in accordance with prescription from the center or their expectations. Argentina has been “poised to take off” since 1910; Brazil saw its miracles come in the 1960s and go, leaving it more burdened by poverty for the many; Venezuela and Mexico thought the oil boom period of the early 1970s was their chance to “take off,” and they did, only to come crashing down in the early 1980s; Trinidad and Tobago thought the same and met the same fate; and now we know that any progress Cuba made since 1958 could not have been authentically sustained.

On the entire African continent, there is hardly any country that has made discernible progress worth referring to. Nigeria thought it could make it with oil money, but it failed. Libya and Algeria may be trying to make it, but can they?

Most of the economies of African and Latin American countries have deteriorated, as I stated before. A good indication of this sad phenomenon is the rate of currency devaluations. One example that I know well will illustrate. In 1972, the Ghanaian currency (cedi) was exchanging at two cedis to one U.S. dollar. In 1994, it stands at 500 cedis to one U.S. dollar. Ghana is not a rare exception. It is close to the norm in this circuit.

During the Cold War, it became fashionable, as a progressive strategy, for the countries of the South to come together to form mainly economic, but sometimes political, groupings/unions of various kinds. In Latin America and the Caribbean, economic integration groups emerged, stagnated, and then lingered benignly on. In Africa in the early 1960s, the notion of African Unity, as Kwame Nkrumah presented it, was debated by regionally splintered Cold War state-groupings, and finally realized itself as the watered-down version of the Organization of African Unity, which appears to have taken an oath of do-nothingness in African interest. Many forms of “economic integration” were formed in all parts of Africa — North, South, East,

West, and South-West. The performance of each was, at best, a lackluster, meaningless imitation of the European Community: the impulse was to follow form, not content.

In the Cold War years, Africa limped along from crisis to crisis—famines, civil wars, opaque forms of governance accompanied by severe brutalities to citizens, to the savage deterioration of Somalia as a state. Latin America fared only slightly better, oscillating as it did between brutal and callous military governments and weak and nervous civilian ones, each of them indulging the privileged at the expense of the masses.

The Asian mainland of the South↔South circuit has not been that different. Burma was hardly heard of. Vietnam was at war with the mighty U.S. and its reluctant sympathizers. China had been liberated from Koumingtang and allied to the Soviet Union, the two of them only to fall out with each other in the early 1960s. The Cultural Revolution followed with its calamitous effect on China's development. Surkhano of Indonesia was most prominent in defining the limits of his idea of Indonesia. The Golden Triangle became "famous" for its opium trade. India was struggling to remain "Indian" in the midst of all its fractured complexities and contradictions. And there were other wars, of course: Indo-Chinese wars and Indo-Pakistani wars, Sino-Vietnamese wars and Vietnamese-Kampuchean wars.

The claims of neutrality in the Cold War contest were false in each and every case in the circuit. Each country was aligned very clearly with either the West or the East and, in many cases, with both at the same time. The demand for a New International Order was a call for a globally managed world-capitalism without any possible exploitation of the South. It was a call for "capitalism for all," with very special considerations for the countries of the South.

In the "band of transition," I am inclined to have little doubt that China will tone down its brand of socialism while it opens its society to attract foreign capital. Most significantly, China will revive its neo-Confucian cultural legacy to foster rapid economic growth in the manner of Japan and the Asian NICs. Politically, what will appear to be emerging is a contained-type of liberalism, and this will unfold very slowly. I see the same kind of development for the Indo-Chinese parts of South Asia, Vietnam, Kampuchea, Thailand, Laos, and even Burma.

India, which did not appear to be bothered too much by the Cold War, will continue to work politically and economically along the same paths as before, trying to improve on its not too successful development record. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives will realize the significance of their shared civilization to allow for serious cooperation. Wars in South Asia are highly probable. Could it be vaguely possible that Iran will lose interest in the Middle East and turn Eastward to team up with Afghanistan?

China will continue to keep a wary eye on these developments while it continues to be suspicious of Japan. As the above illustrations indicate, there is no single country in the South↔South circuit around which the circuit could revolve. China will try to occupy this spot. For while it sees itself as an Asian power, it will attempt to champion "the traditional causes" of the South in order to keep them alive by various means.

It is true that the Asian mainland component of the South has a lot to sort out and to sort through, but the cultures involved are still authentic enough to enable them to adapt creatively to the demands of the "transition band" toward the NWO. It is the Latin American, Caribbean, and African components of this circuit that will pose problems. This is so because the impact of the global capitalist culture has rendered their cultural hybrid forms highly corrupt: they have emerged from the encounter with capitalism much weaker in terms of resisting its exploitation or adapting creatively to it.

C. Circuit-Linking Relationships

1. The West↔East Interlinking Relationship

The first question to be asked with respect to this primary interlinking relationship should be: Is the Cold War over, then? And the answer should be an emphatic "yes," as we knew, understood, and feared it, of course. But I predict that, in place of the Cold War, cause for a new war will emerge in the East↔East geo-circuit. This war will be precipitated by the East's inability to peacefully fulfill the promised expectations in the post-Cold War's New World Order. This new war, I suggest, will be joined by the West.

I shall call this impending war **Retrieving the European East for Capitalism and Democracy**, in short, the **REECD War**. To be clear, I am suggesting that the REECD War will take the place of the Cold War, as the future's global *cause célèbre*. It will be a tepid war, both cold and hot. REECD's mission will be to promote conservative capitalism while frowning on ethnic-cleansing wars in the name of humanity, peace, and democracy. In the terms of essential contrast, the CWO's *raison d'être* of an ideological determination to force the "evil empire" from the face of the earth would not have been modified much from that of REECD's. It will be fought in order to make Eastern Europe "peaceful" so as to allow the expansion of "democratic" capitalist development of the neoliberal kind in Eastern Europe.

The East's resentment toward Western Europe will be mainly due to its economic problems, which, after all is said and done, translate into unpayable debts to international finance and its agents. Every state in Eastern Europe, including Russia, is already heavily indebted in this transition phase. These countries will be "polandized" in the sense of producing for exports in order to import consumables. Such situations can only—and definitively will—call for the IMF's and World Bank's imposition of the much-dreaded Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) which, as we all know, only make bad social conditions worse. Because such a program literally saps capital from countries under its regime, it is bound to fan the flames of neofascist inclinations. Such tendencies will find support in some Western European countries, such as Germany, France, Britain, Spain, Italy, and Portugal, where fascist memories are still alive and imaginations are sprouting.

2. *The West↔Asia Interlinking Relationship*

Western Europe, no doubt, helped the Asian circuit by assisting and protecting the Asian countries, as I define them here, a great deal during the CWO. The Western European mindset can now accept these still curious Oriental peoples as economic "equals" who now must pay back the economic help they received by opening their economies wide to allow in many different kinds of Western capitals and goods. The symbolic "Japan-bashing" that has been going on will escalate beyond mere symbolism

into a formal policy. But, through the use of the clever-adaptation inscrutability, which only the neo-Confucian authentic cultural hybrid form can assume, there will be a concession here and a resistance there to meet Western European economic demands. This matter will essentially be a periodically erupting issue belonging to the “band of transition.” I expect that it will be realized by this circuit that the mutuality of “win-win strategy” in the long term will not harm their stupendous economic development.

The co-prosperity sphere will materialize in the NWO, but it will not be offensive to the West. It is the sociopolitical aspects of this interlinking relationship that will create problems.

The Western European mindset is not attuned to understand what I have called “contained liberalism,” meaning the acceptance of the spirit of theoretical liberalism but interpreted and applied to suit the sensibilities of the eschatological core of the Asian culture. Asians will continue to marvel at the excessive isolationist-individualistic core of Western liberalism and the vulgar perils therein. The Western mindset, while it battles the sad effects of its brand of liberalism, will continue to look down upon Asian contained liberalism, as exemplified, for example, by Fukuyama’s description of Japanese democracy as infantile and herd-minded. In this regard, the Asians will not budge much to any changes that the NWO may demand. For they believe and will continue to insist that their mode is closer to—while that of the West has strayed from—the liberal anchor of a belief in “freedom with responsibility.” In short, there will be some significant sociocultural changes in this circuit, such as major concessions to feminism and appreciation of leisure in the Western senses, but they will fall short of what Asians would consider Western excesses and vulgarities.

3. Asia ↔ Eastern European Interlinking Relationship

Insofar as this interaction is concerned, the two unmovables of (a) Asians’ determination to remain Asian and (b) the Eastern European and Russian ambitions to become culturally Western European and to be accepted as such will maintain the benign sense of mutual disrespect for each other on the sociocultural plane. Economically, however, Russia and Eastern Europe will,

as they have already started to do, encourage Asian capital to come to their countries. The Asians will also consider Russia and Eastern Europe as the new frontier and will aim to exploit this circuit to the best of their accustomed economic advantage in the NWO.

4. The Global Impact on the South↔South Circuit in the New World Order

(a) The East European Impact on the South

This impact will be much less in the NWO than it was in the CWO; this can only be expected. For even when this encounter was at its height, it was shallow in its influence. Apart from the adoptions of socialism and its structures, which were also superficial in influence, nothing linked the two circuits. Even when Russia and Eastern Europe had the most contact with the South↔South circuit nothing much of economic and cultural consequences seemed to have occurred, except in the glaring cases of China and Cuba. Not having been colonialists in the modern world-system, the South has no reason to look to this circuit after the CWO, surely not when Russia and Eastern Europe are showing characteristics of the syndrome of Third World plight themselves.

If anything at all, the two circuits are rival competitors for the post-CWO promised "peace dividend." In this competition, both circuits start off as pawns of international capital except that the East↔East circuit is, in the "transition band," seen more positively by international capital. The reason being that the East stands a better chance of being saved from itself and for History.

(b) The Asian Circuit Impact on the South

During the last twenty years or so, this relationship was mainly economic. However, in the true neo-Confucian manner, this was done silently in the ideo-cultural fashion befitting a near-exclusivist cultural manner. The principle was to export capital and goods but not Asian culture. What was true in the CWO remains true in the "band of transition," and will continue to remain so in any NWO.

(c) The Western European Impact on the South

With the collapse of communism, the West has the South where it has always wanted it, and, in fact, where it has always had it, except more securely now.

The West's dominance over the South, begun so long ago, is now complete with the end of the CWO, except, perhaps, in the cases of China and India. This domination has been achieved in true extra-totalitarian ideo-cultural style. The South has nowhere to escape to.

The "transition band" coincides with the IMF's SAPs for practically all countries of the South, again, perhaps, except China and India. The countries of the South have managed to pawn themselves to the West's largely owned international capitals. A better understanding of the South's plight is not so much that it has been captured in the "band of transition" by the West's capital as it is that the South has finally surrendered to the West. A dead South is of no use to the West, and the North knows the South's legendary ability to recover. The South has demonstrated this ability over and over again in modern history, and the West is aware of this.

The previous forms of exploitation were comparatively unrefined: raw plunder; settlements at the original natives' expense; vastly unequal trade in valuables; and the uncritical adoption of the developmentalist philosophies crafted by Western and Eastern European thinkers.

Now, at this latest "band of transition" phase between the CWO and NWO, yet to be fully known, the imperialist exploitation mechanism will be highly refined. This already includes taking advantage of the fascinating improvements in information technology. The exploited proceeds are transmitted due West electronically. Today, as it will be even more refined in the NWO, IMF and World Bank officials are based in most (every?) Third World countries, making sure that each Southern society meets its obligation to the system.

V. CONCLUSIONS

A. Concluding Considerations

From the Neoradical Third World Perspective, all that I have argued in this essay confirms that the transition band's signals add up to underline the fact that the capitalist world-system is undergoing a self-contained change of itself, within itself, and for itself. The NWO, therefore, cannot amount to a transformation of the system. It amounts instead to a reinforcement of it. The changes elaborate the old structures by refining them so as to make global capitalist processes more efficient in their operations.

From my perspective, then, if in the past we used the term *neocolonialism*, we did not know its full meaning and significance. The NWO will be a fully blossomed and most efficient phase in the totalitarian domination and the most refined form of exploitation of the Third World, principally by the West.

My perspective makes it plain to me that the Third World should abandon the developmentalist false routes to modernity. The Third World should employ the method of creative pessimism to appreciate what I have described elsewhere as the efficacy of multiple cultural routes to comparable modernities (MCRCM), modernities that their cultures, such as they are, can sustain authentically. All that MCRCM means is that the Third World must start realizing that not all of them can or need to develop by the expensive and the easily exploited routes of industrialization. Some industrialization will always be needed and necessary for their societies, but the thrust of their concern should be to concentrate on the provisions of life-enhancing basic human needs for their peoples. This view clearly needs further elaboration and this will be provided at an appropriate time and place.

However, the pathetic case of Africa in the NWO has yet to unfold fully. There will be more Somalias, Rwandas, Liberias, and Ethiopias whether we need them or not. Africa will continue to incur global scorn, pity, and genuine bewilderment. What to do in and about Africa, then?

After some lengthy and serious considerations and meditations, all I can think of is that if Africa's intellectuals have any

pride left in themselves and if they have any love and concern for historical Africa still lingering in their hearts and minds, then Africa's thinkers, hearers, seers, and sayers must consider the serious applications of Neoradical Creative Pessimism as a way of thought whose time is now. Even in this most refined phase of imperialism there ought to be room for clever-adaptation in this regard, for, as Mahmoud Mamdani says so encouragingly, "Not even the Sun is Always Dead at Midnight." This better be true, or else cultural Africa will really be history—"dead as the dodo bird"—or, as we say in the Caribbean, "crapaud smoke we pipe."

Finally, all this is important because it is not so much the material things Western Europe has taken from Africa or Latin America or the Caribbean as much as it is the ideas that they have planted in our minds to make the pursuit of their imagined Historical Universalism sustainable in their fantasies and at our expense.

B. Considering Roundtable Questions

This roundtable recognizes that we are at a unique moment in history. This is true; and few, if any ever, have lived in unique historical moments and have had the vision to know these moments as such. Our challenge as the roundtable sees it, therefore, is "to understand and then transform [the complex dialectics involved] into a positive and lasting initiative for human well-being." Toward this end, some direct and sharp questions are posed. I shall respond to these questions based on the spirit and thoughts of this essay.

1. What Is the Nature of These Times?

From my Neoradical Third World Perspective, the nature of our times is a flux called the "band of transition," which indicates very strongly and unambiguously that we are entering a new phase in the evolution of global capitalism, a New World Order in which the system will reveal more of its mature self to the benefit of the West↔West and the Asia↔Asia geo-circuits at the expense of the other two geo-circuits, East↔East and South↔South. The impact of the other circuits will hurt the

South↔South geo-circuit, but it will be devastating for the African, the Latin American, and the Caribbean components of this circuit in varying degrees.

2. Will Disorder Prevail?

Definitely. Disorder will prevail in and between all the geo-circuits: quasi-fascism in the West; neofascism and wars in the East; famine, loss of entire "states," wars of many variations, and polarization of the wealth in the South; and the REECD-caused NWO will replace the CWO, which just ended.

3. Should One Country Act As Sole Guardian of Peace?

No one country can play this role because of the paradoxical singularization and the simultaneous desingularization of the global hegemonic structure. But the U.S. is the most powerful country in the world; and in the NWO, as is already becoming manifest, it will remain for many years as the dominant among a concert of powers composed by the Group of Seven. It is this group, followed by other nations of some prominence, that will assume guardianship. And, depending upon where you stand, sometimes they will be right and sometimes wrong.

4. Will a Global Governance Emerge?

It is said that we never had a world government. This is true, of course, in the sense of a declared formal world government. But in the real sense of governance, it all depends on where we place the emphasis on our conceptual definition of government. In the final analysis, it all hinges on how we rank governmental structures, processes, and the effectiveness of governmental functional capabilities. All through the history of world-capitalism, there have been some representations of structures, processes, and undeniable attempts at functional effectiveness. All through the history of world-capitalism, hegemonic powers have behaved as though world government existed. The rules of the global capitalist game have been used all along by the well-placed powers to manipulate the system to their own benefit and to bring some semblance of order. This is unavoidably the

case in any kind of system. Will the NWO be different? It will; and then again, it will not. It will not be different because it is a “world-historical” system like any other in the past; but then it will be different in many crucial ways. I shall mention only two characteristics: vastly improved self-knowledge and an assertive self-confidence. Thus, while we can say that claims to hegemonic control of the capitalist world-system in the past were less than real, we can safely say the reverse will be the case with the NWO. It will be more real than pretentious. This will make the control of the system more conscious of itself and more determined in the realization of the historic motive of unfair accumulation in the center and away from the periphery. It is necessary to repeat this because it is the core of the master argument fashioned as the Third World perspective on the development problematique.

5. Can the United Nations Organization Emerge As a Voice for the Diversity of World Cultures and an Advocate for the Needs of Human and Other Lives on This Planet?

The U.N., having been created as an embryonic “world government,” is here to stay. If it had not been there, it would have been created. Now that it is here, the U.N. will be ignored most of the time and used when convenient. It will be used mainly to validate G-7 decisions, but once in a while, will also serve as the forum for the diversity of views.

Note

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