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Heading South

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Heading South

John C. Hawley

ABSTRACT

Terminology is always a site of politics, and “global South” is no exception. Many of the places proposed as likely areas for discussion in the pages of this new journal are not, in fact, south of the equator. Nor are other areas that are, in fact, south of the border necessarily as appropriate for discussion in this journal. Yet it is appropriate to reach for another terminological alleyway like this one to help us reimagine, yet again, the peoples and topics in question. “Postcolonial,” either with or without a hyphen, is contentious; “commonwealth,” of course, has been long abandoned (and for starters, is totally Anglo-centric). “Non-aligned” is, perhaps, somewhat closer, but a good number of the “southern” peoples are, in fact, aligned. But the spirit of Bandung suggests that there is a general sense among the peoples in question that they recognize each other, and that they share a common destiny of being the industrialized world’s underdogs. Can this sixth sense also give hope for a broader and non-eurocentric cosmopolitanism, even a “subaltern” cosmopolitanism. Can a recuperation of the histories of such “other” mercantile and cultural interchanges, such as that of the Indian Ocean world, enliven and empower these groups to render a “flat” world something that is not inevitably one in which they are, once again, those who are pressed beneath the iron?

Fifty years after the Bandung conference, have things really changed for its participants and for those they have come to symbolize in the larger world? Representing more than half the world’s population at the time, the 29 countries challenged the world’s colonizers: alternative hegemonic blocs might, in fact, be possible. Cooperation among the non-aligned, a sharing of technological and other expertises *among* the clients of the dominant first and second “worlds,” might enable the relatively powerless to pull together as a counter-vailing agent—no longer simply clients of the two sides in the cold war. At the

time, Nehru told his assembled colleagues that he was proud that his country belonged to neither bloc:

If we have to stand alone, we will stand by ourselves, whatever happens (and India has stood alone without any aid against a mighty Empire, the British Empire) and we propose to face all consequences. . . . I know also that if we rely on others, whatever great powers they might be, if we look to them for sustenance then we are weak indeed. (Nehru 70, 72)

He rejected those social scientists who spoke of his nation, and others like it, as irrelevant to “history”; in the arts, he would not have acknowledged the inevitability that the Caribbean, India, and Africa could only produce “minor” literatures: “I submit that moral force counts and the moral force of Asia and Africa must, in spite of the atomic and hydrogen bombs of Russia, the U.S.A. or another country, count.” Bold words, though finally more an idealistic plea than a gauntlet: to the outside world (please, *let* this moral force “count”) and to those assembled at the conference (hang tough, do not be seduced by the baubles that the powerful will use to seduce you, as they seduce their own citizens—the bread and circuses routine).

Inevitably, we must ask who has been doing the “accounting” in the years since Bandung, and what does the ledger reveal? One’s mind flashes forward through the decades since 1955, observing on the one hand the arguable in-consequence of the conference, the corruption and incompetence of countless ministers and bureaucrats of states represented in the meeting, the grinding poverty persisting in many of the countries that participated; and observing on the other hand the collapse of one bloc and the rise of American hegemony, the collapse of the World Trade Center and the rise of fundamentalist belief systems that care little for any nation, the startling threat to the environment that is widely accepted as unavoidable by “developers” of whatever nation. Where is the moral *force* to which Nehru referred?

Perhaps its flame is kept alive at the United Nations? In its Millennium Project, the United Nations’ Development Group set a number of highly ambitious goals to be achieved by 2015, including the following: halving the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day; halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger; ensuring that all boys and girls everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling; reducing by two-thirds the under-five mortality rate; reducing by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio; halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other major diseases; integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reversing the loss of environmental resources; halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; making a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers (by 2020); develop-

ing further an open, rule-based, predictable, nondiscriminatory trading and financial system; addressing the special needs of the Least Developed Countries, landlocked, and small island developing states; dealing comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries; implementing strategies for decent and productive work for youth; providing access to affordable essential drugs; and making available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies (“Millennium”). One cannot simply echo the tired cynicism of Alphonse Karr: *plus ça change, plus ça la meme chose*—and yet, 2015 is less than a decade away. A good deal *has*, in fact, changed—but to what effect, and to whose benefit? This, as I understand it, will be a question central to this new journal.

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace uses 12 markers to rank the likelihood that a state will fail (demographic pressures, refugees and displaced persons, group grievance, human flight, uneven development, economic decline, delegitimization of state, public services, human rights, security apparatus, factionalized elites, and external intervention). By these measures, the most likely to fail, in order, are: Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Iraq, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Chad, Yemen, Liberia, Haiti, Afghanistan, Rwanda, North Korea, Colombia, Zimbabwe, Guinea, Bangladesh, Burundi, the Dominican Republic, and the Central African Republic. The next 40 hold no surprises: Kenya ranks 25th, Ethiopia 30th, Tanzania and Guatemala 31st, Pakistan 34th, Egypt 38th, Saudi Arabia 45th, Indonesia 46th, Turkey 49th. Almost without exception, they all rank 9 out of 10 in the measure of “uneven development.” In stark terms, while India and China show signs of growing economic strength, they have a long way to go, and the others have generally receded further from economic independence.

Conversely, in A. T. Kearney’s and *Foreign Policy*’s fifth annual globalization study, using four dimensions of analysis (*economic integration*: trade, foreign direct investment; *personal contact*: telephone, travel, remittances and personal transfers; *technological connectivity*: internet users, internet hosts, secure servers; and *political engagement*: international organizations, U.N. peacekeeping, treaties, government transfers), there were a few surprises. Singapore retained first place; Ireland dropped to second (it had tied last year for first); Switzerland retained the third spot, but the United States fell three places, to fourth. These were followed by: Netherlands, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Austria, Finland, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Australia, Norway, Czech Republic, Croatia, Israel, France, Malaysia, Slovenia, Germany, etc. Malaysia maybe is a surprise, coming ahead of Germany? A few subsequent points of interest: the highest Latin American country was Panama, coming in at 24th (and ranking two spots ahead of Spain); the next was Chile at 34th, then Mexico at 42nd, and Argentina at 47th. Uganda was the highest African nation, ranking 33rd; Tunisia was 37th and Botswana 38th; Morocco 40th and Senegal 41st; Nigeria 44th and South

Africa 48th, Kenya was 49th. Among the largest changes since the year before: Croatia rose seven ranks; Uganda rose 5; Botswana fell 8; Morocco rose 7; Sri Lanka rose 8; Argentina fell 13 (to 47th place); Kenya rose 5, as Russia fell 8 (to 52nd place, between Colombia and Peru); China rose 3 – to 54th place (economists make the point that China's barely sustainable growth rate of 9% per year has not seemed to have trickled down very meaningfully to the vast population, though some individuals are surely getting wealthy, and a caste system as in days of yore seems to be reemerging); India (despite its marriage to Silicon Valley, etc.) stayed just where it was: 61st. And, for the fifth year in a row, Iran took last place, at 62. It was interesting to note that the United States was 61st in trade, 58th in remittances and personal transfers, and 57th in treaties. Bangladesh, on the other hand, ranked 10th in remittances and personal transfers (Morocco ranked 4th, Uganda 3rd, and the Philippines 2nd). South Korea ranked second in internet users. Portugal was first in U.N. peacekeeping (the U.S. was 28th).

Meanwhile, the so-called G-24 (the Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs and Development) is pressing for more power for its members in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The G-24, taking its cue from Bandung, attempts to sharpen its focus in the area of finance. It is made up of the following countries: Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Argentina, Brazil (57th on the globalization index), Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, India, Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Syria (off the globalization chart). China is a Special Invitee and addresses the plenary sessions of the group. This seems evidence, though multiply interpretable, that William Easterly may have a point: in his jeremiad bemoaning the self-serving nature of the Group of 8's involvement in the United Nations' Millennium Project, he offers one ray of hope. "Poor countries," he suggests, "are making progress on their own, without waiting for the West to save them" (64). Piece-meal projects (one thinks of the Grameen Bank, deworming drugs, bed nets, etc.) have proven to be far more effective, in his view, than the grand Robert-Owenesque dreams. Alexander Gerschenkron and Alice Amsden note, however, that "the later a country industrializes in chronological history, the greater the probability that its major manufacturing firms will be foreign-owned" (Amsden 286). Countries such as China, India, Korea and Taiwan have adopted an independent approach ("New Electronic"), and countries such as Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Turkey are more integrationist—but both finally rely on the level of local capabilities.

If anyone is listening, Samir Amin once again channels the spirit of Bandung and offers the world's leaders two options. The first is a polycentrism that reduces the centers of decision-making to five: the U.S., Europe, the U.S.S.R. (his book was published in 1990), China, and Japan. The second option ("the

only one acceptable”) envisages, in addition to these five centers, “the crystallization of new forces organized at various regional levels of the Third World (Latin America, the Arab world, Africa, Indian and South-East Asia)” (228). Over the years since Bandung, attempts by members of this *sixth* group of countries to coalesce into meaningful partnerships have failed to achieve meaningful traction. One hears less talk about blocs competing against each other, and more of a “flat” world in which competence will be rewarded by the marketplace.

A journal such as the one we are here inaugurating may therefore be expected to enter the fray as a gadfly, as a mouthpiece or an advocate, as a kind of conscience, lest the steamrollers be met with a naïve smile of unabashed welcome. Imagination in such an enterprise is important. Looking, for example, at a Hobo-Dyer world map, one is forced to re-think one’s place in such projections. One version of the map has Africa at its center; the other has the Pacific Ocean at the center, with south at the top. The refocusing is disorienting. But what is the measure of “south,” anyway? If the equator is to set the boundary, then more than half of African nations are disqualified; central America and one-fourth of South America are ruled out; so is India and the entire subcontinent. Yet, do Americans not generally think of everything south of its borders as “southern”—whatever else that may imply for them? And Australia, on the other hand, is incongruously included in the actual list of south-of-the-equator. Perhaps the term refers, then, to “colored” nations. In any event, the trick is to re-envision what has for some time been referred to as the “postcolonial” world. There seems little doubt that the people of “the south” recognize each other—and recognize, as well, that Hobo-Dyer is on very few walls. So far.

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