

Samir Amin: A Neo-Marxist Thinker in Search of a Socialist Alternative

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ABSTRACT: Marxist philosophy as well as ideology, dissatisfied with the existing world order, proposes an alternative world order based on dialectics in that it critiques the existing world order as inadequate, fraught with contradictions and illegitimate and in its place, it seeks to propose an alternative world order, favoring emancipation against exploitation through structural/revolutionary changes. Samir Amin, a neo-Marxist scholar and activist, proposes such as a world order. Taking a cue from world system analysis, he finds global capitalism as a system responsible for the underdevelopment of the Global South. For the development of the underdeveloped south, he sought to connect development with planning. He liked the Bandung Model of Third World development but later became critical of the Third World bourgeoisie who, according to him, preferred to imitate the Western model of development. Practically speaking, he found the Chinese Model of development attractive and suitable for Third World countries. However, he found the US world order contradictory but suggested an alternative world order and seeks to chalk out a list of programs including global social movement for realizing such a socialist world order.

Key Words: Capitalism, Hegemony, Marxism, Socialism, World Order, etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Generally “World Order” means the principles and values according to which the world as a whole is organized and structured. World Order is one of the most talked-about concepts in our times; yet, it is controversial in nature because the very word “order” has connotation that is status-quo-oriented, preferring order to justice. Nevertheless, scholars as well as activists with normative commitments who seek to bring fundamental changes in the existing world order have also appropriated the concept of world order and proposed alternative world orders based on their own value preferences and ideological commitments.¹ Marxist philosophy has always envisioned world order in terms of a dialectics, seeing inadequacy in the existing capitalist world order and proposing an alternative to it as a potential world order. It views that the existing world order cannot be changed and a new world order cannot come into being because the existing world order is fraught with contradictions and polarizations. Instead, it proposes class struggle as a counter-force to existing order, culminating in a socialist revolution that will destroy the existing order and replace it with a socialist world order in the long run.

Speaking more concretely, Marxist philosophy has conceived the concept of world order in terms of dialectics in that it critiques the existing world order as inadequate, fraught with contradictions and illegitimate

¹ For details, see Richard A Falk and Samuel K. Mendolovitz, eds., *The Strategy of World Order*, eds., (New York: World Law Fund, 1966) and Stanley Hoffman, “Report of the Conference on Conditions of World Order—June 12-19, 1965, Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio, Italy” in Stanley Hoffman, ed., *Conditions of World Order* (Boston; Houghton Mifflin, 1968); Robert W. Cox, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Sebastian Conrad and Dominic Sachsenmaier, eds., *Competing Visions of World Order: Global Movements and Movements 1880s-1930s* (New York: Palgrave, 2007); and Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order: Power, Values and the Constitution of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

and in its place, it proposes an alternative world order, favoring emancipation as against exploitation through structural/revolutionary changes. Thus Marxism stands for a materialist conception of world order.

Samir Amin is one of the most prominent Marxist scholars and activists of our times. He has made a critique of the existing world order as capitalist, polarized, imperialist, hegemonic and exploitative and suggested an alternative world order that has the potential to overthrow the existing capitalist world order for emancipation of the people. More particularly, he has emerged as the most prominent activist from the Global South to propose an alternative world order for the welfare of the peoples both in the South and the North.² Indeed, Samir Amin, a neo-Marxist scholar is a seminal thinker and activist since he has exerted unique influence on a generation of Marxist and non-Marxist thinkers in the twentieth century. Only Immanuel Wallerstein, another Marxist sociologist, may be able to surpass him in scholarly writings and articulation of new ideas purported to effect a transformation from a capitalist to a socialist world order. Anyway, Samir Amin has been able to capture the imagination of a generation of thinkers and activists, who have been working hard to both envision and actualize a socialist alternative to emancipate the downtrodden people from the clutches of capitalist exploitation that characterize the present day world order.

Part I of this paper explores the intellectual journey of Samir Amin from his early youth to his role as the Director of the Third World Forum. Part II focuses upon his view of the world order in the age of decolonization during the 1950s and 1960s and the alternative that he offered as part of his dialectical thinking in regard to world order. Last but not least, part III deals with his view of world order in the age of globalization since the 1980s both as critique of the neo-liberal world order and the alternative that he has envisioned.

Part I: Samir Amin's Intellectual Journey

Born in 1931 and brought up in Egypt, Samir Amin came to hold a progressive worldview in his early youth during World War II. As a child, he observed the exploitation seamen by ship owners in Port Said, a major seaport of Egypt and became "convinced at the early age just how despicable was the social system associated with it."³ His family being progressive, he had supported the Soviet Union in World War II, even when Germany seemed to be winning the war and many Egyptians showed sympathy with the Nazis. His family also gave him access to progressive literature which led him to develop an interest in politics. Even as a baccalaureate student, he read all the classics of Marxism and used them to understand history better. The French school Lycees from which he graduated taught him interesting Marxist literatures such as *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, *Civil War in France*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and Stalin's *History of the Bolshevik Party* and so on. He even attempted to read Marx's *Capital*, though he could not understand it.⁴ The objective conditions that prevailed in Egypt during his childhood also moved him toward the direction of communism. He observes, "I saw the connection between the wretched social situation of the Egyptian people and the country's submission to imperialist domination. I soon defined myself not only as communist but also as anti-imperialist."⁵ Moreover, he "embraced communism as a protest against the ignominy of social injustice and the national, imperialist dimension of this revolt came only later."⁶ The progressive attitude of the French curricula of the Lycee and similar attitude of the teachers also helped him in embracing both communism and anti-imperialism in his teen age years.

Having completed his high school education in Egypt, Samir Amin went to France in 1947 for higher education but immediately joined and became active in the French Communist Party. He received his diploma in Political Science in 1952 and in Economics in 1953. But Amin finally decided to study for a doctorate in Economics and enrolled at the University of Paris. He decided to study the problem of "underdevelopment" in Asia and Africa in the context of the emergence newly-independent through national liberation movements and of the dominant capitalist world system. However, he became critical of the literature of the "pioneers" of development trapped in conventional logic and patterns of bourgeoisie economics and sociology.⁷ He used Marxist analytical tools to understand the problem of development facing the newly independent countries. In this light, he decided to contribute to the Marxist analysis of the origins and course of "underdevelopment."⁸ Amin observes, "I had a clear idea of what I wanted to do to examine the birth of underdevelopment and its implementation as a product of worldwide capitalist expansion- and not as a backward form of capitalist development."⁹

² For details, see Samir Amin, *The World We Wish To see: Revolutionary Objectives in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: The Monthly Review Press, 2008).

³ Samir Amin, *A Life Looking Forward: Memoirs of an Independent Marxist* (New York, 2006), p. 16

⁴ Samir Amin, *A Life Looking Forward: Memoirs of an Independent Marxist*, p. 24

⁵ Samir Amin, *Re-Reading the Postwar Period: An Intellectual Itinerary*, trans. Michael Wolfers (New York, 1994), p. 22

⁶ Samir Amin, *Re-Reading the Postwar Period: An Intellectual Itinerary*

⁷ Amin, *Re-Reading the Postwar Period*, p. 25

⁸ Amin, *Re-Reading the Postwar Period*, p. 42

⁹ Amin, *Re-Reading the Postwar Period*, p. 42

Samir Amin wrote his doctoral dissertation rather quickly without any illusory quest for “perfection” sustained by an excess of footnotes” because he “preferred to be a militant whose writings aim to carry the debate forward.” He finished doctoral dissertation in early 1957, married with his fiancée Isabelle in Paris in August, and returned to Egypt in September. He claims that the insight that he developed in his doctoral dissertation was well ahead of his time. It critiques “the contradictory dynamics inherent in capitalist accumulation.”¹⁰ It was later published under the title *Accumulation on a World Scale*. Amin argues that the conventional theory of development claims that “underdevelopment” is nothing more than delayed development. *Accumulation* was among the first text to interrogate this conventional idea of development propounded by bourgeois economics. He claims that he was the first to see underdevelopment as a product of capitalism and Latin American Dependency Theory that became famous later did not emerge until the late 1960s. No doubt, Samir Amin studied development problem and showed that development was a product of capitalism. However, a review of progressive literature in the early 20th century shows that scholars, socialist thinkers and statesmen had already explored the intricate connections between development, capitalism and imperialism. Karl Kautsky had already shown the intricate relationship between the underdeveloped counties and the developed imperialist counties and thus “set up the basis for post-war theories of imperialism, such as those of Baran, Frank, Wallerstein, Emmanuel or Amin which portray it as a relatively static system of exploitation by the West of the non-West variously of unequal exchange, dependency or underdevelopment.”¹¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, a former nationalist leader and Prime Minister of India also explored the intricate connection between the development of capitalist countries and the backwardness of Asian, African South American and East European countries. In 1934, Nehru wrote:

The growth of inequality in the distribution of wealth, added to some other factors, led to the new struggle between labour and capital in the industries. The capitalist in these countries eased the tension by various concessions to labour-higher wages, better living conditions, etc.- at the expense of the exploitation of colonial and backward area. In this way the exploitation of Asia, and Africa and South America and Eastern Europe helped accumulate wealth and pass on a bit to their workers. As new markets were discovered, new industries were developed or old industries grew.¹²

No doubt, his doctoral dissertation investigated the problem of development systematically but it was not as novel an idea as he claims it to be. Nevertheless, his idea of “development and its impossibility under the contradictions of capitalism is a major contribution to the development of the alternative model of development in post-World War II period.

Upon his return from France, young Amin took up a job in the division of planning under President Gamal Abdul Nasser in Egypt. The 1950s was an interesting “era of the triumphant ideology of development and historic attempt to implement development policies in the Third World.” He wanted to work as a development administrator. Meanwhile he continued his theoretical work and came to agree with the Maoist critique of the Soviet Union. In fact, he ceased to believe that the Soviet Union was a socialist country. At the same time, he proposed the world system framework for analyzing accumulation much before world-systems analysis became a school of thought. Meanwhile Nasserism in Egypt turned out to be reactionary.¹³ Hence, he did not work in Egypt any more. He left for France and got a job in a the ministry of France but decided not to work there long because doing so would mean using energies and intellectual capacities for running capitalism.¹⁴

Against backdrop, he took up a job in the ministry of planning in Bamako, Mali, a progressive state in Africa. He felt comfortable working there since he developed a new model of planning for this newly-independent state of Africa. While working in Mali, he came into contact with many officials from independent African states but became disenchanted with countries practicing African socialism. At the same time, he investigated the capitalist development model working in Ivory Coast but realized its limits. He became disenchanted with Mali whose leaders were responsible for undermining the development plan he chalked out. He also faced a host of difficulties that undermined the development plan. International situation also went against Mali. Amin writes,

The international conjecture of the 1960s.....also played a role that should not be underestimated. France was not the only external partner to have certain attitudes capable of hindering a positive outcome of the Malian

¹⁰ Samir Amin” A Brief Biography of Samir Amin” in *A Bibliographical Dictionary of Dissenting Economists*, ed., Philip Avestis and Malcom Sawyer

¹¹ Robert Young, *Post-Colonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford,: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 110-111

¹² Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History* (Oxford, 2002), p. 884

¹³ Amin, see *A Life Looking Forward: Memoirs of an independent Marxist*, p. 101

¹⁴ Amin, see *A Life Looking Forward: Memoirs of an independent Marxist*, p. 107

Project. The Eastern bloc countries also bore some responsibility for bending the stick too far in other direction.¹⁵

Amin joined the United Nations Commission for Africa in 1964 and from 1966 he simultaneously began an academic career in France where he worked as a full professor for almost five years (1966-1979). While teaching in Dakar, Senegal where he was stationed, he mostly taught development planning and thus sought to challenge the self-regulating nature of market. Instead, he wanted his African students to substitute market with planning. While he was teaching in France, the Student Revolution of 1968 took place but he admits that it took him by surprise. He thought that the young people had been depoliticized but events of 1968 proved him wrong. He regards the 1968 as a “revolution” but a cultural revolution. He feels that 1968 was inspired by Maoism which was simultaneously a critique of Sovietism to him. At the same time, “Third Worldism” that characterizes activist politics in the West since the late 1960s, Amin thinks, was started by the Revolution of 1968. Western Third Worldism was positive since it had the potential to strengthen international awareness. He observes,

Yet Western third worldism also did have a positive side; in so far as it had the potential to strengthen an international awareness that what happens in the countries of the periphery-which contain three-quarters of the world’s population-is important for the future of humanity as a whole, whether it is a question of the effect of capitalist expansion or of social struggle against its devastating consequences. In this way, third worldism helped correct the principal deformation generated by imperialism; that, the idea that only happens in advanced capitalist countries is relevant for the shaping of the future.¹⁶

Amin seeks to include the masses of the North for the struggle of an alternative. Meanwhile he had joined the *Monthly Review* in 1963 and contributed to its development.

After leaving France, Amin took up a job as the Director of the UN African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) in Dakar, Senegal and stayed in that position for ten years (1970-1980). He feels that this phase in his professional life has been very important since it provided him an opportunity to develop it and, as a result, the influence of the IDEP was great in the early 1980s. Though the IDEP disappeared in the late 1980s, it provided an opportunity to launch the Third World Forum for Amin and his colleagues.

Finally, he left the UN job in 1980 and ever since served, working as the Director of the Africa Office of the Third World Forum which is an international non-governmental organization for research and debate. He seeks to mobilize world opinion to realize an alternative world order that he has been envisioning since his youth. He wants the Third World Forum to study problems facing the world from the standpoint of the world system, work for the South as a body what the Trilateral Commission does for the rich North and encourage discussion for a polycentric world order not dominated by three or great powers and military superpowers “so that Asia, Africa and Latin America are offered real prospects of development that take account of the existing inequality”¹⁷ Already, “the forum has helped to challenge the North’s monopoly on theoretical reflection concerning globalization and its uneven impact on its geographic components.”¹⁸

In the course of time, Amin has turned out to be most influential neo-Marxist thinker that the Global South has produced in the second half of the twentieth century. In fact, his rich crops of writings, scholarly commentaries and activism for the emancipation of the downtrodden people have made an epitome of neo-Marxist thinkers in the Third World. His major scholarly contributions can be classified into four areas: (i) a critique of the theory and experience of development; (ii) an alternative proposal for the analysis of the global capitalist system; (iii) a re-reading of the historicity of global formation; and (iv) a reinterpretation of what he calls a “postcapitalist societies.”¹⁹

Part II: Samir Amin’s view of the World Order

Capitalist world order is inherently polarized in nature and it results in the expansion of capitalism based upon accumulation on a world scale. This has been the case for the last five hundred years and “will continue for the future as long as the world remains organized on capitalist principles.”²⁰ Polarization worsens from one phase to the next phase in the evolution of capitalist world order. The world entered a new phase of global capitalism that witnessed the emergence of the United States as the global hegemon in 1945. World War II had provided the US with an unexpected opportunity to escape from the deep crisis of the 1930s, accelerate the modernization program, and acquire leadership in all fields. Both Europe under the Marshall Plan and Japan under the Peace Treaty of 1951 experienced speedy development on the Fordist Model. US hegemony was accepted by both Europe and Japan. NATO became both a shield against the so-called threat of Communism

¹⁵ Amin, *A Life Looking Forward*, pp. 147-149

¹⁶ Amin, *A Life Looking Forward*, p. 197

¹⁷ Amin, *A Life Looking Forward*, p. 107

¹⁸ Amin, *A Life Looking Forward*, p. 107

¹⁹ Samir Amin, *A Brief Biography of Samir Amin*, p. 50

²⁰ Samir Amin, *Re-Reading the Post-war Period*, p. 79

and a tool for capitalist integration. Capitalist world economy expanded with post-War II boom²¹ and social democracy which resulted from a historic compromise between labor and capital was accepted with this capitalist framework.²²

The Soviet Union, still, isolated, sought to catch up with the West but was forced to enter into a new arms race to challenge the US monopoly in the military field. Only after the death of Joseph Stalin, it broke out of its isolation and sought to forge an alliance with the Third World.²³ The Soviet state reverted to state bourgeoisie, increasingly practicing oppression and exploitation. It also used its foreign policy for its own narrow interests.²⁴ Wages were not redistributed to benefit the workers who were underpaid. One thirds of the production was used to cater to the needs of workers. A second third was used to cater to the consumer demands of the privileged strata of the state and the other third was used to run the military and administrative sectors.²⁵ The Soviet system ceased to be a socialistic state as Mao complained. The Soviet Union would revert back to capitalism in due course of time.

The Bandung Era (1955-1975) gave birth to the “Third World” and “the world system was organized around the emergence of the Third World.”²⁶ The national liberation movements acted as progressive forces since they acted as obstacle to the US hegemonist strategy. These forces also brought a fundamental change in the structure of the world since they ended the colonial phase in the world system. And “[f]or the first time in history, the system of sovereign states were extended to the whole planet.”²⁷ The Third World operated on the basis of the ideology of development rooted in Keynesianism. Alternative vision that Amin envisaged at the beginning was the bourgeois development model championed by the Bandung Model.

However, Amin argued that the three post-war models experienced crisis as early as 1968-1971 because three models of regulated accumulation experienced structural crisis.

Amin states,

Investment and growth rates were suddenly cut in half, unemployment began to soar and poverty spread. The ratio measuring inequalities in the capitalist world rose from 2:1 around the year to 1900 through 30:1 in 1945 and up to 60:1 at the end of the post-war growth; the global product from 60 per cent to 80 per cent during the last two disaster of the century. Globalization was fine for some. But it was a disaster for the majority – especially peoples in the South undergoing one sided-structural adjustment, or peoples in the East locked into dramatic involution. Development went by board.²⁸

However, he also identified the origin of the crisis in the crisis of the US dollar and US military intervention in Vietnam that the US experienced in the second half of the 1960s. The oil crisis of 1973 and the US defeat in Vietnam in 1975 confirm this as a crisis in the relationships between the North and the South, manifesting a crisis in imperialism.²⁹

Amin also came to realize that the Bandung Development Model has been exhausted and the Third World bourgeoisie had forfeited their historic role. The bourgeoisie of the Third World are not like the bourgeoisie in Europe or in Japan. They have no other objective than copying the Western Model of consumption. Their schools reproduce the models of labor organizations that suit Western technologies.³⁰ That the aspirations of the Third World bourgeoisie were not realizeable reflected the historic incapacity of this class and this has been demonstrated by the collapse of the North-South dialogue.³¹ In fact, the call for the New International Economic Order (NIEO) by the national bourgeoisie marked the end of the Bandung Model because the NIEO called for adjustment by the bourgeoisie in the rich North who were not willing to compromise. As a result, a unilateral adjustment program had to be followed by the peripheries. The final result of this strategy has been their incorporation into the world economy and their subordination to the imperialist center.

Amin was not alone in diagnosing the problem of development within the context of the world system. A number of scholars also came forward to analyze the problem of development from radical Marxist

²¹ Samir Amin, *De-Linking: Toward a Polycentric World* (London: Zed Press, 1985).

²² Samir Amin, *Obsolescent Capitalism* (New York: 2003), p. 11

²³ For details, see Samir Amin, *A Life Looking Forward*, p. 47

²⁴ Samir Amin, *The Future of Maoism*

²⁵ Samir Amin, *The Future of Maoism*, p. 110

²⁶ Samir Amin, *Re-Reading the Postwar Period*, p. 14

²⁷ Samir Amin, *A Life-Looking Forward*, p. 47

²⁸ Samir Amin, *Obsolescent Capitalism*, p. 15

²⁹ Samir Amin, “Crisis, Nationalism and Socialism” in Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds., *Dynamics of Global Capitalism* (New York, 1982), p. 176

³⁰ Samir Amin, *Imperialism and Unequal Development* (New York, 1977), p. 89

³¹ Samir Amin, “Crisis, Nationalism and Socialism” in Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds., *Dynamics of Global Capitalism* (New York, 1982), pp. 192-193

perspectives and suggested alternative models of development.³² Later on Immanuel Wallerstein³³ also came with a more sophisticated analytical tool to explain the problem of development from the standpoint of world systems theory informed by neo-Marxism.

In this backdrop, Amin proposed the Maoist development model.³⁴ He believed that it was the only path that provided the chance of autonomous development (self-reliance). The Chinese Model gave priority to agriculture and industry played a subordinating role.³⁵ This would entail “both an authentic transition to socialism and form a national liberation delinking from the imperial system.” Amin stated. “Thirty years of the Chinese experiment demonstrates that there is an alternative choice and it is possible to have untied to the demands of accumulation in the world system.”³⁶ In support of the Chinese Model, Amin argued that China “has transformed itself from an underdeveloped agricultural society into a semi- industrialized country.”³⁷ He added, “In 1950 China’s infrastructure was among the most backward in the Third World; today it ranks somewhere in the middle.”³⁸ Amin made a comparison between China in 1950s and other developing countries in the Third World but finds that China made progress in equalizing income between the rural and urban areas. He gave credit to the Communist Party of China and claims that had the party not adopted the Maoist Model, China would be just as poor as Bangladesh and half of the population would be living in permanent state of hunger.³⁹

Amin thought that the Chinese Model inspired the vanguards of movements in varying degrees both in the West and among intellectuals, students and masses in the Third World. Given the nature of the bourgeoisie and the world system, he did not see many prospects for the Third World if they did not delink their economies from the world capitalist system. However, he believed that Maoism was the only viable strategy for the transition to socialism under given conditions.

Part III: Samir Amin’s Views of Alternative Orders from the 1980s

Amin developed a critique of the world that came into being from the middle of the 1970s and offers visions of an alternative world order. He finds that the “Third World bourgeoisie cannot conceive of development other than by integration in the global system.”⁴⁰ They think of catching up with the rich north but it is not possible. Rather, the widening gap between the center and the periphery is a product of the dynamics of the world economy. Amin has accounted for five monopolies retained by the center for this widening gap in the context of the globalization of production. These are (1) technological monopoly, (2) monopolistic control of worldwide financial markets, (3) monopolistic access to the planet’s natural resources, (4) media and communication monopolies, and (5) monopolies over weapons of mass destruction and other advanced means of destruction.⁴¹

Amin believes that the structural crisis in the world economy ushers in a new stage of world domination which results not in the reduction but in an aggravation and polarization. Indeed, the changes that the world economy experienced from the middle of the 1970s have created a disorder in the world order not only in economic sphere but also in political and social and cultural spheres through a process of aging. As a result, chaos has been part of the global disorder with its implications in other areas such as politics, military conflicts, ecology, women’s rights and ethnic conflicts. The utopian vision of a world run by the market calls for increasing military interventions by the United States. The financialization of the world economy and short-termism create more uncertainty in the world system and it cannot be stabilized by itself.⁴² The Triad- bloc-consisting of the US, Europe and Japan are giving leadership in the maintenance of the chaotic world system as well as order but cracks are already apparent in the Triad.⁴³ Nevertheless, a collective vision of the Triad has imposed something like a collective imperialism but it is not something like super-imperialism

³² Paul Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* (New York, 1959); Andre Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (New York, 1967) and Emanuel Arrighi, *Unequal Exchange: A Study of the Imperialism of Trade* (New York, 1972).

³³ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, 3 Vols. (New York, 1974, 1980, 1989).

³⁴ The Maoist Model and the Chinese Model are here used interchangeably.

³⁵ Samir Amin, “Crisis, Nationalism and Socialism” in Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds., *Dynamics of Global Capitalism* (New York, 1982), p. 193

³⁶ Samir Amin, “Crisis, Nationalism and Socialism” in Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds., *Dynamics of Global Capitalism* (New York, 1982), p. 193

³⁷ Samir Amin, *The Future of Maoism*, p. 41

³⁸ Samir Amin, *The Future of Maoism*, p. 44

³⁹ Samir Amin, *The Future of Maoism*, p. 48

⁴⁰ Samir Amin, *Delinking*, p. 111

⁴¹ Sami Amin, *Capitalism in the Age of Globalization* (London, 1977), pp-3-5

⁴² Samir Amin, *Obsolescent Capitalism*, p. 52

⁴³ Samir Amin, *Obsolescent Capitalism*, p. 72

Because it unresolved intact and unresolved the dichotomy between the economic and political dimensions of the system. The economy is globalized but states (in the plural) are still the main framework of political life. This is new contradictions.⁴⁴

Amin believes that the system will weaken further because more contradictions will appear with the working of the capitalist world economy. He adds that whereas previous imperialism had been conquering forces in history, the same cannot be true with the case of collective imperialism in the twenty-first century.⁴⁵ The relative economic strength of the US hegemony has declined over the years, producing a huge deficit in the external trade balance and US public debt has increased from US\$ 1trillion to 5.5 trillion in 1999. As a result, US economy depends more on military aggrandizement than upon any advantages of the American economic system. This may explain why the US declared aim of the US strategic hegemony is not to tolerate any power of resisting its injunctions. As part of this strategy, the US has five aims:

(i) to neutralize and subjugate its partners in the Triad (Europe and Japan), reducing to a minimum their capacity to act outside the American fold; (ii) to establish military control over NATO and to Latin Americanize the fragments of the former Soviet Union; (iii) to hold undivided sway over the Middle East and Central Asia and their oil resources; (iv) to break China, subordinate other large countries (India, Brazil) and to prevent the formation of regional blocs capable of bargaining over the terms of globalization; (v) to marginalize in the South that are of no interest.⁴⁶

In this backdrop, Amin believes that socialism is the only future alternative path since capitalism has been exhausted as a system. He observes,

The point, rather, is that the world capitalist system has reached the end of its historical trajectory and can no longer produce anything positive. Human civilization is therefore at a dangerous crossroads: it can avoid destruction only by embarking on a new road, an alternative.... which may be synonymous with the long road to world socialism.⁴⁷

Amin chalks out program for realizing a new socialist world order. He wants to create a new basis for solidarity among the peoples of the South. First, it would be necessary to create national, popular, democratic front and it will involve democratization. It is not possible to create solidarity among states any more. Hence, "the solidarity that is needed to-day will have to be built primarily by the peoples themselves."⁴⁸ Amin suggests imposing control over international capital transfer, foreign investment regulation, maintaining national agricultural development policy and keeping it outside the agenda of the WTO, regulating international debt through civilized legal mechanism, respecting and maintaining cultural diversity and finally creating a united front of the South to overcome US imperialism.

As part of the alternative world order, Amin seeks to use the United Nations in humanist perspectives. He acknowledges the limitations of the United Nations system since this body has been dominated by US hegemonism. But he is hopeful that the UN can help the world develop in that necessary and desirable direction only if its components- various nations- pave the way by transforming themselves.⁴⁹

To achieve an alternative world order, he proposes strengthening global social movements. He thinks that "Another World is Possible" and "the World is not Sale" are not empty slogans; rather, they have already achieved public sympathy throughout the world. He acknowledges limitations in realizing a multi-polar world but still he believes that it is still possible within our capacity to realize this dream. He toys with the idea of creating the Fifth International.⁵⁰ At the same time, he wants the World Social Forum to complement the Davos. He also wants the World Social Forum to help the Fifth International.

II. CONCLUSION

World order thinking has been part of the Marxist school of thought. While speaking dialectically, Marxism seems to analyze the gap between the world order that exist and the potential one that it seeks to achieve for emancipation. Amin has been a seminal Marxist thinker of our times. He started his world order thinking in his early youth because he found the real world order exploitative, capitalist, imperialist and inhuman. He received his education in France where he could settle down with a good life of an academician but he chose to fight for the socialist world in which he believes. This also explains why he could not make a compromise in his commitment to his cherished goal. His world order thinking took formal shape in the 1950s and 1960s. He had been impressed with the Bandung Model for a certain period of time but he subsequently lost faith in this. Instead, he reposed his faith in the Maoist Model, which, he believed, would be good for the world,

⁴⁴ Samir Amin, *Obsolescent Capitalism*, p. 52

⁴⁵ Samir Amin, *Obsolescent Capitalism*, p. 52

⁴⁶ Samir Amin, *Obsolescent Capitalism*, p. 80-81

⁴⁷ Samir Amin, *A Life Looking Forward*, p. 240

⁴⁸ Samir Amin, *Beyond US Hegemony: Assessing the Prospects for a Multi-polar World* (London, 2006), p. 107

⁴⁹ Samir Amin, *A Life Looking Forward*, p. 214

⁵⁰ Samir Amin, *The World We Wish to see*

especially for the Global South. Meanwhile he lost faith in the socialistic model of the Soviet Union. However, his world order thinking experienced a shift since the world changed from the 1970s. He thinks that global capitalism has already exhausted itself because of further polarization and contradictions that it has generated. The Triad has been maintaining control over the present world order but its control is shaky. Globalization has created more problems than solutions in the existing world order. In this light, Amin seeks the prospect for an alternative socialist world order which, he thinks, is realizable despite US resistance. The new world order will be multi-polar and it will be based on solidarity more among peoples and less among states. He calls for regulation over capital flow, foreign investment and international debt. Amin calls for the Fifth International and for this, he wants to strengthen the World Social Forum. Finally, he calls for the Global social movement to achieve a new world order in which he believes.

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