

Bandung is no longer a proper noun. More precisely, for more than half a century, Bandung has become the name of our common commitment. In 1955, the Bandung Conference brought together representatives from 29 African and Asian countries, establishing the political idea of the “Third World,” which we now know as the Global South. Turning its back on the capitalist West as well as on true socialism, this Afro-Asian alliance is built on much more than mere geography. If apartheid South Africa, colonialist Israel or counter-revolutionary Taiwan were excluded, it was because this summit announced an uncompromising political project: that of transcending the flat geopolitical realisms used until then by great imperial powers to hide their brutality. Its ambition was to unite all those opposing colonialism and imperialism, those searching for a new political, intellectual and cultural autonomy. As Frantz Fanon wrote, “Bandung is the historical commitment of oppressed men to help one another and to impose a definitive decline on the forces of exploitation..”

In the North, this call has been inspirational. Black Americans, in particular, were moved by the future they were offered. “The despised ones, the insulted ones, the wounded ones, the dispossessed ones... in short, it was the human race’s oppressed ones who were gathering. Class, race and religious consciousness manifested itself on a world scale,” wrote Richard Wright, who attended the proceedings. Malcolm X saw a model there. The capacity of previously colonized people to meet, despite their differences, around a primordial struggle against white supremacy was to inspire the Black diaspora; it still enlivens us.

But time passed. The spring of Bandung, still committed to the strategy of nonviolence that offered India its independence, was followed by the summer of armed conflicts. Its relentless sun lit up Algeria, Cameroon, Angola, and Mozambique. The 1966 Tricontinental Conference chronicled the events, thus fuelling the fire of these struggles. But the counter-revolution was not long in coming, and here we are again at the heart of the colonial winter. Neo-colonialism, imperialism’s ultimate stage, is all dressed up, looking like reasonable international institutions: the IMF, the World Bank. Under the name of structural adjustment, they orchestrate a neoliberal type of blackmailing that has pushed Southern states down onto their knees, for the greater benefit of Western capitalists and comprador elites. At the same time, the imperialist wars’ apostles had no hesitation when they exhumed the old notion of a “just war” to provide a better basis for the Northern empires’ rapacity, all the while entertaining the mirage of humanitarianism.

Those who are forced into exile in the West, seeking to flee innumerable devastations, are obstructed by walls, checkpoints, and fascist militias and border guards. State racism has been constantly reinventing itself, hastily and in a climate of fear, while we witness the inevitable intellectual, economic and political decay of white and Christian Europe and America. The cynical and cyclic repressive violence that targets strikers, protesters, demonstrators and rioters is today the ultimate proof of political impotence; flexing police muscles but unable to stem a rebellion that has become chronic.

It is irremediable: European countries are no longer themselves. Empires have dreamed of merging with the world while remaining white; they fulfilled their dream, weapons in hand. They set their roots in Africa, America and Asia but believed that they could preserve their national-racial homogeneity, which was already shady. They overlooked the fact that a child born as the result of a slave’s rape does not share the master’s traits. In Northern countries, racial diversity is now the norm. The politicization of this new condition represents an invaluable challenge. It begs us to think about the meeting of heterogeneous populations linked by common interests: Indigenous people who, throughout the Americas, continue to struggle for their sovereignty; “old” diasporas, descendants of slaves transhipped from the African coast; and new postcolonial diasporas, connected in particular to capitalist exploitation or to political and social exile. Between these new “wretched of the

earth”—thrown by history into the heart of white empires—Bandung of the North wants to facilitate a dialogue.

If these voices are indispensable, it is because the political *status quo* in which we are currently incarcerated is unbearable. Fascisms offer no escape from the neoliberal winter; they rather intensify its most deadly facets. The foolish project of a capitalism existing in one country and benefitting only one race will generate new apartheid and considerable ethnic cleansing. However, will we have the luxury of being content with the current Left’s political offer? In France, Spain, Italy and Belgium, the populist strategy gathered voters, but only at the price of an intoxicated return of national flags still soiled with the blood of our ancestors, and of chauvinistic diatribes that have been welcomed ecstatically by ancient colonial metropolises. A whole section of this particular Left, which denies the existence of state racism, only envisages its unity at the expense of excluding racial minorities and the social concerns they convey—the outstanding proof of that is their xenophobic treatment of religious and migration issues.

Since they are the most familiar with the violence and lies of which the so-called democratic states are capable, it is up to the non-white diasporas to trailblaze new political paths. To achieve this, it is necessary to establish a decolonial international. Its three main axes will be: the fight against a state racism that condemns us to social death; the struggle against imperialism that made capitalism, extractivism and conquest wars the law of the world; and the dissolution of modernity’s ideologies, which have condemned us to live in the perverse and unachievable dreams of white supremacy. In 1955, the Bandung Conference gave body and voice to the peoples who made up most of the world. Pursuing this unfinished work of humanization, the Bandung of the North announces the dawn of a new sun. Let it burn the ancient world and see us reappear, untouched, in the midst of ruined empires.