

Global Economic & Political Interests

Problems & Prospects for The African People

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Outline

- Setting the context
- Africa & reconfiguration of power relations
- Popular forces: problems & prospects
- Strategic considerations for CSOs; ATN in perspective
- Conclusions

Setting the Context I

A General Point of Departure

- Historical establishment of global orders;
 - ⇒ contention and collaboration
 - ⇒ hegemony and historical conjuncture
- **Key actors**
 - ⇒ classes (components of civil society)
 - ⇒ states (embodiment of political authority)
- **Processes and institutions:**
 - ⇒ markets
 - ⇒ Diplomacy

Setting the Context II

Power configuration: from *Pax Britannica* to *Pax Americana*

- rivers of blood: Great Depression & 2 World Wars
- the post-War order, UN & Bretton Woods Institutions
- (late) decolonisation: Bandung to the NIEO's defeat
- waves of democratisation & a global civil society's emergence
- late late industrialization & NIC players
- the Cold War and the “end of history”
- WTO: “rupture” & continuity with the WB & IMF...

Africa & Reconfiguration of Power Relations

- From South-South cooperation to *emerging economies* deities:
 - ⇒ BRIC(S), MINT....& all that jazz: the good, the bad & the ugly
 - ⇒ G20 & the savour of power: a further expression of expansion mainly in form
- Transnational corporations
 - ⇒ increasing powers *against* states through trade (& investment) agreements
 - ⇒ Expansion of scope of presence with privatisation & states' quests for FDI
 - ⇒ increasing real-time "*borderlessness*" for capital, with digitization
 - ⇒ Outright criminality, such as IFFs
- Location of CSOs within the *alter-globalisation* movement
 - ⇒ Universalisation of resistance practices & narratives
 - ⇒ Expanding knowledge & experiences base
 - ⇒ Fractured hegemony, globally, with continuing economic, political & ideological crisis

Popular Forces: Problems & Prospects I

Problems

- **The 1%'s depth of material & institutional resources**

- ⇒ Financial muscle

- ⇒ State apparatus

- **Relatively lacklustre nation-states' leaderships & states' vision**

- **“Common sense” of the system's *essential immutability***

- ⇒ content: the six blind men & the elephant

- ⇒ methodology: sophisticated concentration on the trees

- ⇒ “received wisdom” & the case of the 8 monkeys

- **The dilemma of NGOism: *altruism-cum-proposal-driven activism***

- ⇒ The “development sector” as an *othering-twin* of the neoliberal order

- ⇒ At the same time, fostering civic engagement..

- ⇒ A new bureaucracy resting on technical prowess...or social movements rooted in the mass?

- **Alternatives of the radical-right rising**

Popular Forces: Problems & Prospects II

Prospects

- Living examples, particularly from the Latin American *pink tide*
- Building on flashlights of popular alternatives from below: from the social forum process to occupy
- An emerging challenge of the dominant narrative in mainstream politics in the West (e.g. the Corbyn & Sanders moments)
- Expanding organisation & networks: continentally & globally
- Restive populations & the current wave of democratic struggles
- A new envisioning of possibilities (e.g. the CFTA)
- Learning from history...

Strategic Considerations for CSOs...ATN I

- **Between changing the rules & fighting to change the game**
 - ⇒ Not separated by a Berlin Wall, but working towards beyond the “NOW”
 - ⇒ How do we integrate the two sides of this coin of structural change?
- **Building bridges within & *beyond* trade & development issues**
 - ⇒ Within the CSOs’ community, across spheres of work: establishing an overarching vision & thread
 - ⇒ With as broad a spectrum as possible of both state & non-state actors
 - ⇒ Expanding counter-hegemonic spaces & building a “new (inter-)national historic bloc”
- **Ensuring more palpable life of the networks’ work in nation-states**
 - ⇒ How do we further joint work that unite a renewed thrust for the second liberation of Africa, *within our countries*?
 - ⇒ Could we build on the niches for *massification* of our intervention, without losing the access to instituted power?
- **Politics, social movements & the challenge of working on two legs**

Conclusion

- We are living through a historic conjuncture
 - ⇒ Reconfiguration of global orders are possible only within such moments of structural crisis
 - ⇒ This entails contestation, collaboration & negotiation
 - ⇒ Such moments could be long drawn with phases
- It is the most significant conjuncture since that of 1913-1945
 - ⇒ Africa lost out of the reconfiguration of that moment, to colonialism
 - ⇒ The macabre penumbra is darker now...the forces of status quo have a clearer big picture than those for change
- There are however opportunities within the gloom of uncertainties
 - ⇒ An era of crises & *revolts*, globally
 - ⇒ Support for post-capitalist alternatives in central metropolises
- The flux of this contradictory moment is sharply reflected in Africa
- It might still be....*"morning yet on creation day"*

Thank you so much for listening...

....Amandla!