

Bookend to Bandung: The New International Economic Order and the Antinomies of the Bandung Era

The opportunity to rethink the historical record of the 1970s from the perspective of the developmentalist aspirations of the global south is welcome. A decade often cast as a historical exception and interruption—wedged between the development orthodoxy of the 1960s and the neoliberal turn of the 1980s—the 1970s now increasingly appear to mark the dawning of a sustained crisis of accumulation in the capitalist world system. Undoubtedly, the 1970s witnessed utopian aspirations for the developing world, as evidenced by the “Third Worldist” tenor of the 1974 New International Economic Order (NIEO henceforth) with its calls for aggressive redistributionist policies and increased national autonomy. It can be tempting to read such aspirations as a novel political experiment in international power-from-below, undercut, lamentably, by the turn to neoliberalism at the end of the decade. However, despite the important currents of ambition and innovation within NIEO (rightly elaborated in many of the other contributions to this issue), I argue that the NIEO is better understood as the final expression of a period that might be called “the Bandung era.”¹ Such a periodization, I contend, enables us to consider the dynamic relationship between the state and capital in the era of decolonization and during a period of considerable capitalist expansion.

The 1974 UN Resolution declaring the establishment of a New International Economic Order envisioned a rebalancing of global power relations and a reconstitution of the institutional role of the United Nations. Flushed with enthusiasm from the wave of decolonizing independence movements throughout Asia and Africa, the state managers from across the so-called Third World understandably turned to the UN as a site where a new internationalism might emerge. I will argue below that a contemporary critical reexamination of the NIEO and the 1970s can offer, among other things, a complicated example for theorizing the relation between capital and the state. For now, however, let me simply say that although an economic order of the sort envisioned by the NIEO would have certainly been new, the proposal outlined in the resolution was not; both the framework and the specific demands itemized in the NIEO Declaration passed by the UN General Assembly should be understood as an evolution and more precise articulation of a Third Worldist program that can be traced back to the 1955 Asian-African Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, if not earlier.²

The 1974 UN resolution establishing the NIEO benefited from nearly twenty years of historical hindsight following the Bandung gathering. This two-decade period witnessed an extraordinary (and, in the mid-1970s, still ongoing) wave of political

decolonization giving rise to a heterogeneous array of new nation-state formations across the Third World. By way of illustration, the anticolonial struggles in Vietnam—from the enthusiasm about Dien Bien Phu in 1954, to the potent but rather darker U.S. evacuation from Saigon in 1975—offer a parallel chronology to the one I trace below, suggestive both of underlying continuities within the period and the sense that, by the mid-1970s, the utopian aspirations of decolonization had begun to founder against a growing disillusionment within and about the postcolonial world. Perhaps more extraordinary, this same era witnessed an unprecedented period of global economic expansion under the broad leadership of the United States. The years immediately preceding the NIEO, however, were marked by an unsettling series of economic crises symptomatically visible as oil shocks, the dissolution of the Bretton Woods currency regime, rising national inflation and unemployment rates, and more. Buoyed by their awareness of both boom and crisis, the drafters of the NIEO resolution could offer a relatively more precise articulation of both underlying principles and concrete political/economic measures that might lead toward an equitable redistribution of wealth and power than could their counterparts at Bandung. (Though it should be said that contemporary readers will likely be struck by the ambitious but rather scattershot approach articulated in the NIEO resolution, which is far more of a political statement than a policy document.) Here I will point out, however, that much of the basic argumentative framework of the NIEO Declaration can already be located in the 1955 “Final Communiqué” from Bandung (which functions as a culminating conference resolution of agreed-upon principles and policy proposals from the twenty-nine participating nations). Hence it is worth returning to that document to see how a Third Worldist vision of development may have appeared at the start of this twenty-year period.³

While the span of time separating the two documents witnessed the formal decolonization of dozens of new nation-states (celebrated in the prelude to the NIEO Declaration as the “greatest and most significant achievement during the last decades”⁴), both documents rely on a shared foundational principle: the forceful condemnation of colonialism in its many forms and the urgent assertion of the right to self-determination, state sovereignty, and national independence as the *sine qua non* of international development. The Bandung Communiqué declares, “Colonialism in all of its manifestations is an evil which should be speedily brought to an end.”⁵ The conference “declared its full support” for the principles of human rights as set forth in the UN Charter and the Declaration of Human Rights and asserted that the “rights of peoples and nations to self-determination” constitutes a “prerequisite of the full enjoyment of all fundamental Human Rights.”⁶ The NIEO Declaration likewise begins its list of founding principles: “Sovereign equality of States, self-determination of all peoples, inadmissibility of the acquisition of territories by force, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.”⁷ It goes on to condemn “neocolonialism in all its forms” and takes the further step, more radical than the Bandung agreement, to assert the “full and permanent sovereignty of every State over its natural resources and all economic activities,” including the “right to nationalization or transfer of ownership to its nationals.”⁸ From this foundational anticolonial principle of state sovereignty issues a host of

policy-oriented principles that constitute the shared platform of both Bandung and NIEO. These include an itemized list of developmentalist protections and stimuli around trade, the international monetary system, price controls, technology transfer, raw material export, manufacture and industrialization, oil production and the role of producer's associations, and others.

My first point, then, is that between Bandung and NIEO we find considerable underlying continuities, both in the remedies proposed and, more important, in the shared premise that decolonizing and recently decolonized nations have an inalienable right to the full set of capacities that inhere to state sovereignty and self-determination. The second point, however, is that despite the forcefulness with which self-determination is asserted as an unassailable truth, the notion of "independence"—whether conceived in terms of autonomy as a political or economic actor—remained maddeningly elusive for those nations who had recently or who soon hoped to declare formal independence from their colonial rulers. The slogans of "independence" and "liberation," among the most powerful social ideals of the twentieth century, were gradually emptied of substance during the Bandung era, even as the nationalist champions of self-determination rallied huge movements under those banners. The imbalanced international system of states, and the myriad difficulties in establishing politically coherent regionalist or Third Worldist blocs, served to perpetuate and extend the enormous power differential between stronger and weaker states. More important, as the NIEO's allusion to neocolonialism implies, the uneven geographical development between global north and south meant that patterns of accumulation and international class relations continued to structure the economic prospects of newly independent states, much as had been the case under direct political rule. Independence remained a politically potent ideal, but the Bandung era puts paid to any straightforward conception of self-determination. Instead, the complex array of historical forces structuring the Bandung era provides a useful example through which to understand the dialectical subject/object relation to capital at play in the period.

A first moment in this dialectic might begin with the following: what appears as singularity in the Bandung era reveals itself to be difference. For instance, Bandung has become almost synonymous with the emergence of the Third World or the Non-Aligned Movement as a coherent social and political bloc. A presumed unity, forged by the shared historical legacy of colonialism, allows the participating Bandung nations to speak collectively of "common interest and concern."⁹ However, even a cursory review of the historical record reveals that this coherence was illusory from the start; broad schisms were already visible in 1955. A mere eight years after partition, the subcontinent rift between India and Pakistan remained acute. More broadly, stark geopolitical divisions within the conference arose between those nations whose leaders advocated for nonalignment (India and Ceylon most notably) and those who had entered into the South East Asian Defense Treaty Organization (SEATO) (Pakistan, Turkey, the Philippines, Thailand, and Japan). In this split we see emerging alignments that undermine any coherent notion of a Third World as distinct from the First and Second. The contentious presence of China's Zhou Enlai further stoked Cold War concerns such as those voiced by a Philippine newspaper that Bandung would "furnish a convenient point of departure for the propaganda of the puppet

Peiping Communist Regime.”¹⁰ Indeed, Washington ultimately encouraged the SEATO nations to attend in order to counter communist arguments and to advance concrete proposals for economic development. These schisms would only intensify in the years after Bandung. The military conflicts between India and China in 1962, India and Pakistan (1956, 1965, 1971), Pakistan and East Pakistan/Bangladesh (1972), among others, undermined any simple sense of South Asian unity. Likewise, despite the fervent hopes of the Pan-Africanists, the decade and a half of African decolonization following Bandung produced no unified continent-wide (let alone Afro-diasporic) political bloc. While both Bandung and NIEO undoubtedly afford historical examples of a Third Worldist collective articulating matters of shared and common importance, the unity was always extremely fragile and in fact riven by competing national, regional, and internationalist interests.

An analogous dynamic is evident within the very concept of the state itself. That is, what appears as the unity of nation-state actors at Bandung reveals, on closer examination, the antagonistic difference of internal class struggle, sometimes filtered through the apparent difference of ethnic division.¹¹ States must be understood as political actors, whose individual choices produce causal effects in the world. However, it makes more sense to talk about the choices and actions of state managers than to talk of states or national interests as such. The concept of a state manager, which I adopt from Alex Callinicos (who himself draws heavily from Fred Block and Chris Harman), allows us to see the fundamentally distinct but structurally intertwined interests of those political figures who manage the state and those capitalists whose primary motive is private accumulation. The relationship between capital and the state, then, is understood as bidirectional and mutually conditional. This model posits that the interests and actions of state managers and capitalists typically, but not invariably, align. This alignment stems not from the conspiratorial plotting of the capitalist class to control state policy through direct coercion or cooptation (though surely this happens at times); rather, capitalists gain *de facto* political sway because of their disproportionately large role in the state economy, meaning that state managers are inclined to adopt policies that favor capitalists out of a desire to reproduce the social order as a whole. State managers can, of course, emerge from the capitalist class and more or less directly represent that class’s interests (setting aside, for the moment, the fact that the capitalist class itself is riven by internal competition and cannot be considered a homogenous actor). Likewise popular pressure from workers or from the dispossessed masses can, at times, reorient policies of state managers toward the interests of working-class majorities against a narrow capitalist class. The state remains a site of intense class struggle in this model and an institution whose capacities to effect change make it a worthy object over which to struggle. By and large, however, without exerting direct political control, and simply through the independent pursuit of private accumulation, the capitalist class tends to impersonally sway the policies of state managers in its favor simply by dint of its perceived indispensability to the collective well-being of the society as a whole.¹²

With this framework in mind, then, we undo any easy sense of what it means to say that India, Indonesia, China, or Egypt acts, or chooses, or desires, or expresses anything. The speeches of Nehru, Sukarno, Chou Enlai, Nasser, and the other new

leaders at Bandung make repeated reference to the revolutionary yearnings of the 1.4 billion people—nearly two-thirds of the world’s population, they stress again and again—who live in Asia and Africa. Those figures, on the one hand, are marshaled to assert a political leverage in their relations with the First World, a collective authority that Sukarno terms “the *Moral Violence of Nations*.”¹³ On the other hand, the unrest hinted at by those population figures poses an even greater problem for the new leaders of the decolonizing nation-states, scrambling to make good on the promise of independence movements and to address the surging popular demands for jobs, education, health care—in short, the lures of “modernity.”¹⁴ Even those state managers who represent leftist political movements and whose individual histories of revolutionary struggle would suggest opposition toward the interests of capital in favor of popular struggles become snared in the dilemma of the state manager sketched above: the structural interdependence between the state and capital means that even revolutionary independence leaders find themselves dependent upon capital to address the economic needs of the society. The real and formal subsumption of Third World populations into capital as commodity subjects appears, to the state managers, as the only available answer to the radical demands for “modernity” that have been coupled with “independence.”

However, even this sense of “only available answer” needs to be tempered. As Aijaz Ahmad convincingly argues in his analysis of the Bandung era, “Three Worlds Theory” in all of its variants privileged the nation-state and international systems over class struggle or systems of production. Ahmad asserts that the notion of Three Worlds is “an ideological formation which redefined anti-imperialism not as a socialist project to be realized by the mass movements of the popular classes but as a developmentalist project to be realized by the weaker states of the national bourgeoisies in the course of their collaborative competition with the more powerful states of advanced capital.”¹⁵ Such a claim sheds light on the various degrees to which Soviet calls to support “national-revolutionary” movements in the colonies—beginning as early as the famous Lenin–M. N. Roy exchange during the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920—guided or misguided communist parties and working-class struggles throughout the Third World during the period of decolonization.¹⁶ This edict urged leftist movements to forge alliances with not only peasant and petty bourgeois elements but also the nationalist bourgeoisie itself in the hope that a socialist “stage” of revolution might be achieved after an initial nationalist victory. Such a stagist model, as Ahmad emphasizes, fundamentally reorients the transformative horizon of leftist movements. Workers of the world would have to wait for their day of unification; for the time being the dual focus would be on national liberation from colonial rule and building systems of international alignments. International working-class parties during the Bandung era aimed to keep nationalist bourgeois regimes militarily neutral and economically aligned (however tenuously) with socialist states. Armed struggle was to be reserved only for the removal of colonial regimes; peaceful parliamentary politics within the nation-state became the preferred site of leftist engagement. This turn by socialist working-class movements to form political alliances with nationalist bourgeois regimes must be understood as a choice, a deliberate and coordinated strategy, which led ultimately to the containment and erosion of socialist

parties in Nasserist Egypt, Nehruvian India, and most disastrously to the massacre of as many as a half-million PKI members following the coup of Sukarno in Indonesia. All of which is to say that if the state managers of nationalist bourgeois regimes saw an embrace of capital as the only available answer, that was in part because the socialist “opposition” elected to broadly support such a choice through cooperative national engagement in the hope (vain hope, it turned out) that national democracies might enter the stage of people’s democracies, and eventually enter into socialist blocs capable of outcompeting the capitalist First World.¹⁷

With these contradictory pressures in mind, the opposite side of the dialectic now becomes evident. We saw above how what appeared to be singularity revealed itself as difference (a unified Third World bloc better conceived as competing national interests, the unified state better conceived as competing class interests, and a further division between state managers and a nation’s class interests). In a second movement, what appears to be difference reveals itself as unity. That is, what appears as a heterogeneous collection of independent states, each with its own class, ethnic, cultural, and political distinctions, turns collectively (via their various state managers) to the World Bank and UN to both provide an entrance into a singular world capitalist market and to establish some constraints and protections on that market that would enable rapid development.

Bandung’s state managers, with their nationalist victories largely secured, looked outward—signing bilateral trade and defense agreements with the First and Second Worlds, forging relationships with the international financial institutions, and casting their sovereign votes at the United Nations—to mediate their national positions within a capitalist world system. It is noteworthy, then, that among the primary recommendations from the Bandung Communiqué is the following:

The early establishment of the Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development; the allocation by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [World Bank] of a greater part of its resources to Asian-African Countries; the early establishment of the International Finance Corporation [a member of the World Bank Group].¹⁸

Prioritized within the Bandung economic platform we find explicit appeals to the UN and the World Bank, petitioning for the establishment of an international framework for development lending. In one sense this appeal amounts to the recognition that national development requires an international structure. Further, the call to establish a World Bank and UN development program usefully illustrates the impersonal systemic pressures for state managers to align with the interests of capital, as Callinicos and Block contend. The World Bank has always trumpeted its apolitical lending, concerning itself only with the quality of the investment rather than the political orientation of the recipient country. And the UN, with its one-nation-one-vote structure, would have appeared to the Bandung participants as a welcoming, liberal institution, capable of accommodating dissenting voices and making possible the collective aspirations of Third World states over and above local political differences. But by turning to these institutions in their call for national development, the state managers of the Bandung nations, many of whom held left, anticapitalist if not

socialist politics (or managed states with powerful communist parties), found themselves compelled to participate in a world capitalist market, and in turn to embrace the programs of a nationalist bourgeoisie in the hopes of generating sufficient economic growth to pursue their development agendas. This structural interdependence between state managers and capital, as we saw above, has the effect of exacerbating at the level of the state what is always a fundamental contradiction in capital: the tendency of workers to see their own material interests as tied to and dependent upon the well-being of their employers rather than to recognize their shared interest with an exploited proletariat class both inside and outside the wage labor market. Whether the state managers aligned politically with the First or Second Worlds, the populations they represented were inevitably pulled further and more completely into a unified world capitalist market, increasingly (and violently) subsumed into a relation with capital as commodity subjects.

Richard Wright's thoughtful account of the Bandung Conference, *The Color Curtain*, sheds light on this dynamic in at least three ways. First, Wright addresses the structural implications of this entrance by Asian and African nations into a unified world capitalist system. Second, he makes clear that the redistributionist agenda at the heart of the NIEO Declaration was fully on the table at Bandung. Third, the tone and tenor of Wright's account offers insight into the social imperatives that underpinned the Bandung era; the aspiration, urgency, and dynamism of the decolonizing era Wright's prose eloquently conveys (an issue I will return to in closing).

Summarizing the ethos of Bandung (and I extend this to the NIEO as well), Wright described the urgency of popular demand from what he terms the "geopolitical center of gravity on the earth."¹⁹ In attempting to assert that the newly decolonizing leaders at Bandung found themselves in a position of unprecedented historical strength, Wright simultaneously (and perhaps unwittingly) demonstrates the degree to which the political fates of the Bandung state managers were inextricably linked to the advanced capitalist world. Wright howls, "BANDUNG WAS THE LAST CALL OF WESTERNIZED ASIANS TO THE MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE WEST."²⁰ Yoking the "Westernized Asian" state managers to the "moral consciousness of the West," Wright emphasizes both the decisions to be made by "Western" leaders and the principles upon which such decisions would be made. The pressure comes from Bandung, but the choice to act remains located in the West. By framing the issue in this way Wright directly anticipated the redistributionist agenda of the NIEO:

To have an ordered, rational world in which we all can share, I suppose that the average white Westerner will have to accept [a more equitable distribution of global wealth] ultimately; either he accepts it or he will have to seek for ways and means of resubjugating these newly freed hundreds of millions of brown and yellow and black people. If he does accept it, he will also have to accept, for an unspecified length of time, a much, much lower standard of living.²¹

Such a passage, it must be said, illustrates Wright's miscalculations, both politically and theoretically. Not only does he overstate the collective power of the "newly freed hundreds of millions of brown and yellow and black people"; he fundamentally

misunderstands the nature of capital in his projection of the West as a rational actor, willing and/or able to redistribute its wealth and lower its standard of living, ignoring what Marx calls the “coercive laws of competition” (misconceptions that persist in the NIEO Declaration as well).²²

Nevertheless, Wright ably captures the Bandung-era logic in its conception that the failure to immediately and substantially redistribute global wealth would portend disaster for both the capitalist First World and for national independence leaders and parties. Such a failure might open the door to a Chinese-style communist revolution across the Third World (this nearly happened, it could be argued, in Indonesia). However, Wright argued that a reactionary formation was far more likely: “*a racial and religious system of identification manifesting itself in an emotional nationalism which was now leaping state boundaries and melting and merging, one into the other.*”²³ Groping for solutions that might avoid such racism, xenophobia, and fundamentalism (not to mention Chinese communism), Wright ultimately advanced a project that looked very much like the NIEO: a substantive redistribution of wealth, geared toward the rapid industrialization of Asia and Africa made possible through currency and trade restrictions that would allow the relative autonomy of something akin to an import substitution industrialization (ISI) regime. It relied on the liberal democratic institutions of internationalism (principally the UN) and looked to establish a role for developing nations within the division of labor of a world capitalist market. This broad program, I want to emphasize, appeared to Wright and the state managers at Bandung—just as it would twenty years later to the architects of NIEO—as the most feasible framework for economic growth on a scale and pace adequate to address the problem of what came to be called underdevelopment.

There is no space here for a full elaboration of an important corollary point about the kind of theoretical perspective that becomes possible in a given historical context. However, a few brief remarks about the surge of Marxist intellectual work in the Bandung era can usefully conclude this discussion of what I have identified as a second movement in the dialectic, by which what had appeared as difference reveals itself as unity, most notably here a pull toward ever-increasing subsumption under capital. The NIEO certainly had a genealogy in dependency theory. That body of writing represented but one among many strands of contemporaneous Marxist and Marxian engagements with questions of imperialism, a world capitalist system, and the persistence/production of underdevelopment. Anthony Brewer, in his valuable assessment of Marxist theories of imperialism, notes this upsurge, suggesting that nearly “half of the total volume of Marxist writing surveyed in [*Marxist Theories of Imperialism*] was published within in a few years, around 1970.”²⁴ Thinkers including Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy, Andre Gunder Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein, Ernesto Laclau, Robert Brenner, Giovanni Arrighi, P. P. Rey, Arghiri Emmanuel, and Samir Amin, to name just a few, all wrestled seriously with the ongoing and seemingly widening gap between wealthier and poorer nations. It would be impossible to adequately capture both the commonalities and profound differences among these thinkers in the space I have here. Briefly, then, I point out that a considerable portion of the Marxist thought from this era takes up for the first time the idea of a unified capitalist totality that in its systemic operation actively produces and perpetuates geographical difference.

Rather than leveling all barriers and flattening distinctions, as the early Marxist theorists of imperialism predicted, capitalism comes to be seen by these theorists as a structure that produces a planetary uneven geographical development analogous to the class polarization that stems from the exploitative pattern of accumulation in fully industrialized and proletarianized sectors of the world economy. Whether in Frank's notion of the "development of underdevelopment," Wallerstein's core and periphery in world system analysis, Emmanuel's notion of "unequal exchange," Amin's work on unequal development and unequal specialization, or the ideas of other theorists listed above, we see a shared concern with the question of how persistent difference is actively produced in a unified capitalist world system. Much could be said about the ways in which the Bandung or NIEO programs do and do not follow from the conclusions of this rich body of contemporaneous Marxist thought (for the most part they *do not*). For our current purposes I simply point out that the Third Worldist development projects of the Bandung era invariably find themselves embedded within this dialectic of unity and difference.

As Marx writes in a pair of brief but illuminating comments about his method in *Capital*, dialectics accounts for transience and fluidity because it recognizes that any actually existing historical formation implies a simultaneous recognition of its inevitable destruction. A dialectical framework "does not abolish these contradictions but rather provides the form within which they have room to move."²⁵ The point, therefore, in swinging back to our second movement emphasizing the structural unity of a world market over and above the differences within a group of now-independent nation states is not to imply that capital mechanistically and comprehensively determines the outcome of actions taken by individuals or nation-states within its orbit. On the contrary, my analysis is intended to illustrate that the contradictions and competing interests within the Bandung era afford participants "room to move," but move within a set of structural constraints defined by the historical possibilities of the age.

For instance, the unity produced by a relation to capital shared by all the Bandung actors nevertheless reveals broad differences in the relative capacity for agency. The United States, to take the obvious example, emerged as the world's principal hegemon in the decades following the Second World War. While the state managers of the United States surely faced the same structural interdependence with a national and international capitalist class described above, the U.S. state managers held, by virtue of their hegemonic role within the world system, an enhanced capacity to influence system-wide outcomes. Constrained though they surely were, their room to maneuver was comparatively greater than that of the Bandung state managers.²⁶ And although the maneuvering of the United States was neither entirely in the interests of capital nor entirely in the interests of that nation's population, its tendency was to deepen and reinforce a singular world capitalist market and to shore up its geopolitical position as imperial hegemon. We can find such a dynamic in the history of the Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development (SUNFED), for which the Bandung participating nations advocated in their Final Communiqué quoted above, and which might be seen as a predecessor to the NIEO.

SUNFED is telling about U.S. commitment to the sorts of development projects

envisioned by Bandung and NIEO. Although decolonizing nations in the 1950s clearly favored a UN body to coordinate development programs, the United States insisted that any such program be housed within the World Bank. In 1960, as a way to contain demands such as those voiced at Bandung, the World Bank established the International Development Agency (IDA), which henceforth came to represent the de facto public face of the Bank as a development agency (as opposed to a reconstruction bank). Burke Knapp, one of the senior-most officials in the World Bank, recounts the IDA's formation in a 1961 oral history:

The issue, therefore, between SUNFED and IDA became rather acute at one time, and it was the United States government primarily that decided to go for an agency under the management of the World Bank rather than one under the management of the United Nations. The considerations were twofold: one, that an agency administered under the United Nations would presumably be dominated by the underdeveloped countries if the voting was on a unit basis, complicated by the fact that in the United Nations the Soviet Union and the rest of the iron curtain countries would be members and participate in the management. And for rather obvious political reasons, the United States felt that it would rather contribute its money to something under sounder professional and technical management than could be expected under United Nations administration.

Now, of course, the under-developed countries themselves tend to favor SUNFED for the simple reason that they want to escape some of the rigorous administration and management of these funds, or, as they would put it, they would like to have a much larger voice in policies of the institution and the administration of funds.²⁷

Knapp's basic paternalism and fetish of technical management notwithstanding, the passage illustrates both the substantive political pressure emerging from the decolonizing states represented at Bandung and the concerted and effective efforts of the United States to contain such demands. Between 1947 and 1971, the World Bank's membership nearly tripled, rising from 46 to 116. Because the Bank used a weighted voting mechanism based on the size of each member nation's capital contribution, the United States has always held veto power and a defining influence on Bank policy. Allowing the issue of development funding to be determined by a body such as the UN, which has a one-nation-one-vote policy (let alone a representative political mechanism that might be weighted by population size), would have almost ensured a loss of direct U.S. control. Faced with this prospect, the United States stepped in to ensure its oversight (technical and otherwise) of the developmental aspirations of the Third World. That the NIEO, twenty years later, was able to reclaim the UN as its principal institutional site of engagement represented a political advance over this earlier episode of containment. However, the intervening twenty years did much to shore up an international system and to more inextricably entangle the decolonizing nations within a capitalist world market. The passage by the UN General Assembly of the NIEO Declaration in 1974—signifying precisely the more activist, Third Worldist

UN that Knapp hoped to avoid by circumventing SUNFED—proved far less transformative than predicted by either the Bandung attendees or the U.S. advocates for the World Bank.

There is no unbroken, causal chain of events that moves us from Bandung, through this power-brokering over the creation of SUNFED, and finally to the UN Resolution declaring a New International Economic Order. I have tried to indicate, however, that the continuities undergirding the era are strong, and that to extract or isolate the NIEO without considering its intimate relation with the historical forces and contradictions of the Bandung era would be self-defeating. In assessing the redistributive project that encompassed the era, we are forced to take into account the tangle of historical determinations at play in such a moment: the class dynamics of both the world market as a whole and its various national configurations, as well as the role of the nation-state and relative autonomy of state managers to act independently or within international configurations of geopolitical power. In all of these scales or spheres, we find fractures, fierce internal competitions, discontinuities, and contradictions. The antinomies of differentiation and unification are in constant motion, never solidifying into a static or unbending relation but instead affording “room to move,” even as that capacity is itself unevenly distributed. My thinking here is guided by Ahmad’s indispensable insight that the era is defined by its turn to the state and the interstate system as its final political horizon—the gradual displacement of a socialist workers movement in favor of a developmentalist project. We find one expression of this shift in the foundational principle of independent statehood asserted so fervently by both the Final Communiqué and the NIEO Declaration. If this turn to the state was evident at the moment of Bandung, it was all but complete by the moment of the NIEO Declaration. Whereas the popular movements of liberation, even if tethered to an idea of *national* liberation, were a palpable political force guiding the decisions of the state managers in 1955, the NIEO chose to pursue the aims of redistribution via the UN resolution, international law, and human rights discourse.²⁸ These political strategies, as others have noted, are the tools of the weak; they lack the political imperative captured by Wright’s resonant description of Bandung as “the geopolitical center of gravity on the earth.”²⁹ The NIEO, while pursuing (and in some ways advancing) the broad agenda of Bandung, adopted the tools of state managers acting narrowly through international governance institutions, considerably divorced from what might be seen as popular movements for liberation. The NIEO, then, can alternatively seem like the culminating expression of this era, or its shrunken last gasp. From a retrospective, leftist vantage the trajectory from Bandung to NIEO appears to be one of loss rather than gain.

But to recount only the history of loss and retreat is not enough. Indeed a contemporary reexamination of NIEO is welcome in part because it affords an opportunity to consider the intellectual, cultural, and social dynamism of the Bandung era as a whole, evident in both the Asian-African Conference and the NIEO Declaration. I cite Richard Wright’s *Color Curtain* above, which articulated a compelling, if flawed, account of the political stakes of Bandung. Wright, of course, finds powerful intellectual counterparts in the cultural theorists with whom we associate the Bandung era:

José Carlos Mariátegui, George Padmore, W. E. B. DuBois, Aimé Césaire, Franz Fanon, and C. L. R. James, among many others. The contemporary flowering of Marxist theories of imperialism cited above serves as another mark of the era's intellectual fecundity. Moreover, this period gave rise to an astonishing range of literary, artistic, and cultural production, far too long and complex for me to catalog here. Popular and social formations mobilized massive anticolonial and anti-imperial movements across the planet; liberation was the era's enduring slogan. Collectively, this work articulates a vision of transformation, optimism, possibility, and critique that animated the Bandung era. At its best, and/or in some cumulative way, this rich corpus captured the devastating violence and exploitation of imperialism and imagined a radically different vision of the social.

The NIEO was born of this Bandung-era legacy and was the inheritor of its utopian dynamism. It goes without saying that the state manager architects of the NIEO, just like the heads of state at Bandung, could not escape the historical contradictions and determinations of the era, visible, I have claimed, in the antinomies of unity and difference. But if the NIEO's demand for redistribution via UN resolution appears initially as a retreat from the mass-movement radicalism of Bandung, a closer look reveals that the pressure for state managers to embrace a capitalist world market and the institutions of internationalism was fully present in the deliberations at Bandung. A careful analysis of NIEO, then, reveals a great deal about the limits of Bandung's radicalism, just as a careful look at Bandung enables us to better understand the utopian aspirations of the NIEO. For better or worse, then, these two moments stand as bookends of an era, conditioned by and responding to the competing pressures of decolonization under capital.

NOTES

1. On the term "Bandung era," see Neil Larsen, "Imperialism, Colonialism, Postcolonialism," in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 32. Vijay Prashad reads the NIEO as "the highest point of the Third World Project." Vijay Prashad, *The Poorer Nations: A Possible History of the Global South* (London: Verso, 2014), 3.

2. We might trace one direct lineage in the various Pan-African congresses held in London (1910), Paris (1919), London, Paris, and Brussels (1921), London, Paris, and Lisbon (1923), New York (1927), and Manchester (1945). See George Padmore, *Colonial and Coloured Unity: A Program of Action: History of the Pan-African Congress* (London: Hammersmith Bookshop, 1947). Sukarno opened his speech at Bandung by noting how many of the Bandung attendees were also present at the 1927 "League against Imperialism and Colonialism" in Brussels. George McTurnan Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference, Bandung, Indonesia, April 1955* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1956), 40.

3. I discuss the Bandung conference elsewhere, though I approach the material with a different method and emphasis of reading here. Bret Benjamin, *Invested Interests: Capital, Culture, and the World Bank* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 117–34.

4. Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, Gen. Ass. Res. 3201 (S-VI), May 1, 1974 (hereafter, NIEO Declaration).

5. Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference*, 81.

6. *Ibid.*, 80.
7. NIEO Declaration.
8. The term “neocolonialism” came into broad usage only after the publication in 1965 of Kwame Nkrumah’s book by the same name. Nkrumah, of course, was the first president of an independent Ghana and celebrated attendee at Bandung (Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: Last Stage of Imperialism* [New York: International Publishers, 1966]). The NIEO echoes the United Nations’ Charter for Economic Rights and Duties of States, passed in 1974 as well with an overwhelming majority of 120 to 6. This charter likewise declares the rights of states to nationalize foreign property, upending the existing regime of international property rights law of which the United States, according to Stephen J. Korbin, had been “the principal guarantor.” The early to mid-1970s represents the high point of such nationalizations, most notably in manufacturing and the mining and petroleum industries. The number of expropriations jumped from only 6 in 1960 to 68 in 1974 and 83 in 1975. These numbers fall precipitously by the end of the decade, and the 1980s see single-digit or zero expropriations annually. Stephen J. Korbin, “Expropriation as an Attempt to Control Foreign Firms in LCDs: Trends from 1960–1979,” *International Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (September 1984): 333–36. Michael S. Minor, “The Demise of Expropriation as an Instrument of LDC Policy, 1980–1992,” *Journal of International Business Studies* 25, no. 1 (1994): 180.
9. Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference*, 76.
10. *Daily Mirror*, March 19, 1955, Manila, in *Asian-African Conference: Views and News*, (National Committee for the Commemoration of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Asian-African Conference, 1985), 14.
11. This essay does not take up the complex relation between class and the ethnic and racial divisions in decolonizing nations. Were I to do so, I might start with the lucid analysis of George Padmore.
12. Alex Callinicos, *Imperialism and Global Political Economy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 84–93. Fred Block, “The Ruling Class Does Not Rule,” in *Revising State Theory: Essays in Politics and Postindustrialism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 51–68.
13. Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference*, 46.
14. See C. L. R. James’s brilliant essay “Lenin and the Problem,” in Anna Grimshaw, *The C. L. R. James Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 331–46, on popular education and political institutions, for an illustration of this contradiction between leader and people.
15. Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), 293.
16. Although the rhetorical shift from “bourgeois-democratic” to “national revolutionary” tries to distinguish between more and less revolutionary forms of national liberation, the Congress admitted that all such national movements essentially are of a bourgeois character. “Minutes of the Second Congress of the International, Fourth Session,” July 25, 1920, Marxist Internet Archive, accessed July 22, 2014, <http://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/2nd-congress/cho4.htm>.
17. Ahmad, *In Theory*, 304–6.
18. Bandung Communiqué, April 24, 1955, accessed September 28, 2014, http://franke.uchicago.edu/Final_Communique_Bandung_1955.pdf.
19. Richard Wright, *The Color Curtain: A Report on the Bandung Conference* (Jackson, MS: Banner Books, 1995), 12.
20. *Ibid.*, 202.

21. Ibid., 203.
22. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, 3 vols., ed. Ben Fowkes and David Fernbach (London: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1990), 1:433.
23. Ibid., 1:140.
24. Anthony Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism: A Critical Survey* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 182.
25. Marx, *Capital*, 1:103, 1:198.
26. See Perry Anderson, "American Foreign Policy and Its Thinkers," *New Left Review* no. 83 (September–October 2013).
27. Oral History Interview, J. Burke Knapp, July 1961; 01 1961 project; WB IBRD/IDA 44 Oral Histories, 36–37.
28. See Ahmad's discussion of Nehru's participation at Bandung in light of internal Indian electoral pressures, especially from communist challenges, in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Ahmad, *In Theory*, 297–304.
29. Wright, *The Color Curtain*, 12.