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Prostitution, la mondialisation incarnée

Joint publication, Vol. XII (2005), n°3

Seldom do analyses of the dynamics of capitalistic globalisation integrate the expansion of sexual markets and their impact on women and children. However, it is in this frigthening development that globalisation finds its most heinous representation. The victory of neo-liberalism in the 1980's is intertwined, not only with the accelerated process of the transactional nature of social rapports- particualry visible in the sexual industry- but is accompanied by an acccrued legitimising of the alienability of physical bodies and of their commodifying. Prostitution and its corollary, the clandestine trade of women and children towars ends reserved for prostitution, are considered as means of economic development by a number of states. This "sector" of th global economy is in full expansion. It is responsible for large population movements and displacements and generates dumbfounding profits. Millions of women and children live in the most unsalubrious and dangerous quarters of metropolises-of their own countries, neighbouring states or further afield. They constitute the most profitable source of private income of the global economy.

Price: 22,50 CHF/15€. 239 pages, ISBN: 2-84950-062-3, CETRI, Ed. CETRI / Syllepse, 2005, can be ordered from CETIM.

Pour un monde multipolaire

By Samir Amin, Collection Construire les alternatives September 2005

The present moment in the stages of liberal globalisation is characterised by the emergence of a triadic collective imperialism (between the USA, Europe and Japan) through which is expressed the fundamental solidarity of the oligopolies' dominant capital and, by the deployment of the hegemonic designs of the USA whom, through its exercised global military might and control, coerces its associates in the forging of a new unipolar world.

Citizens will only be able to attain their goals, fuilfill their projects- aimed at social progress and democratisation- if they are able to impede Washington's projects and impose the recontruction of a multi-polar world.

The analysis is concerned, in the succesive chapter-

sof this book, on the obstructions that impede the anti-globalisation movement in this regard. Will Europe be able to sever links with the stultifying Atlantism that reduces its status to European flap of the American project? Will China pursue its development according to the tenets of market socialism, with an imminent adhesion to the WTO putting in question its potential infuence and reach? Will countries of the South reconstruct a competing and effective alliance to face the challenges? The following analysis italicises the interdependent relationships that associates the political and social options specific to the different nations and regions and their ramifications in terms of geostraegy.

Price: 20€, 230 pages, ISBN: 2-84950-063-1. Forum mondial des Alternatives. En vente en librairie.

Afrique. Exclusion programmée ou renaissance

Joint publication supervised by Samir Amin

The crises confronted by the African societies are no different from the ones which all of humanity come up against. Afirica is not on the fringes of the modern world, contrary to what has been too often stated. On the contrary, its participation in the liberal globalization is, in relative terms, more important than that of other regions. However, because the different African economies are more fragile than others, Africa suffers the destabilizing effects of the unfurling of the "Empire of Chaos" much more violently.

The political strategies recommended by the dominating forces, be they external or internal, have set the goal to increase Africa's integration into globalization through "co-development". These policies are, in reality, just another means to handle the North south conflict. Therefore the projects concerning regionalization are only smokescreens. Given the fact that these policies can only lead to the exclusion of the continent from any real participation in the shaping of the future, will the people of Africa be able to reply in a positive manner by joining the vast "altermondialiste" movement in the building of an alternative project of revival initiated by the end of apartheid in South Africa.

The answers to these questions are the product of the analysis of struggles in Africa. The revival of Africa will depend on the abilities of Africans themselves to make progress simultaneously in three inseparable fields: social progress, democratization and gaining more latitude in international negociations.

Europe - Third World Centre

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Centre

Price 28€, 301 pages, ISBN: 2-7068-1855-7, Edition Maisonneuve & Larose. En vente en librairie.



EDITORIAL

Dear Readers, first of all, we thank you for your loyalty to the CETIM information bulletin. As you can see, we have entirely revised the graphics and layout, mostly to improve its readability. We encourage you to share your remarks and criticism with us by e-mail or by getting in touch with us directly at the Center.

The 2005 World Summit, held in New York last September, triggered much criticism, and rightfully so, for it produced no tangible progress toward the Millennium goals. On the other hand, there are results regarding the proposed reform of the United Nations. Indeed, if the summit's decisions in this area are implemented, they will have significant consequences for international relations. However, everything depends on the negotiations among the member states and the power plays that will arise from the various subjects under discussion, for the ways of implementing these decisions are to be settled during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. You will find our commentaries on this in the article that follows.

As usual, you can read in this bulletin a summary of what happened at the most recent Sub-Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights regarding economic, social and cultural rights and, in particular, the question of transnational corporations. In spite of the willingness of governments to shunt aside the norms adopted by the Sub-Commission, it is gratifying to see that the experts have decided to pursue their work in this area. It must be emphasized that the future of the Sub-Commission was at the heart of the discussions about the reform of the Commission on Human Rights.

The United Nations World Summit

The world summit, held in New York from 14 to 16 September 2005 on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, was devoted to the follow up to the Millennium Declaration and to the reform of the U.N.

This historic summit, which was supposed to announce the results of the U.N. reform effort as well as the progress on the Millennium Goals, generated considerable criticism. Did the mountain turn into a molehill?

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It is hard to answer yes or no, given the diverse points of view and their complexity. Actually, the final document adopted at the summit¹ deals with numerous questions, such as development, security, human rights and the workings of the U.N.

This meeting, which managed to bring together some 150 heads of state and government, was far from providing answers to the crucial and urgent questions that confront humanity. However, it did allow a reaffirmation of the principles of – and the commitments to – the goals expressed in the U.N. charter. Given the current international situation, this, in and of itself, is something of a triumph.

Development: a Priority?

With regard to development, numerous "commitments" were made, stressing, for example, rural and agricultural development, job creation, better management and protection of the environment, the fight against epidemics and the particular needs of Africa.

However, these commitments risk being reduced to pious wishes, like the commitments made at other world summits: no change of orientation is envisioned regarding economic policy and international relations, which remain characterized by the domination of the North over the South. The final document emphasizes development policies such as "economic growth", the "vital" role of the private sector, a "real" liberalization of trade etc. Moreover, oblivious to the teachings of history, international trade is promoted to the rank of "development motor".

Yet these very policies have benefited only a tiny minority, and – according to numerous studies done so far – they have only increased poverty throughout the world, degraded the environment further and pushed natural resources toward exhaustion, to note only some of the most salient of their negative effects.

Further, the final document praises the decision of the G-8 to cancel the debt of the poorest countries. This cancellation is not only subject to conditions, but, should it come about, it would concern only a tiny part of the debt of the countries of the South (\$40 billion out of \$2,500 billion). Then there are the technical details of financing this cancellation, which have yet to be revealed. Further, the IMF and the World Bank are said to be putting pressure on the lending governments to reduce the size of the reduction.

It is worth emphasizing that the final document in no way questions the overall structure of the debt, least of all the international financial system upon which it reposes, which together only sustain the domination/submission relationship. Nothing specific has been proposed regarding the democratization of the World Bank and the IMF except to express, piously, the wish to see "an increased participation" of the developing countries within them.

As for the financing of development, the government representatives were pleased with the OECD predictions according to which public aid to development will have increased by some \$50 billion per year by 2010. However, it is a known fact that, with few exceptions, the rich countries have not only never reached the goal of 0.7% of GDP set more than thirty years ago by the U.N., but that, worse yet, for several years, they have been systematically reducing their contributions to development. It is appropriate to point out here that the effects of neoliberal economic policies are also being felt in the countries of the North. In point of fact, the tax revenue of these countries is falling because of - in particular - the tax breaks given to the commercial sector and to the wealthy, resulting in systematic budget cuts for social spending.

One of the rare positive points among the results of the summit was that it encouraged "the adoption of policies which emphasize accountability, transparent public sector management and corporate responsibility and accountability" (paragraph 24c). But this exhortation is counterbalanced by the encouragement of "responsible business practices [sic], such as those promoted by the Global Compact²" (paragraph 174), which leaves monitoring and enforcement to the corporations themselves.



In order to reform that 'thing', we'll have to replace what's his name Copyright Chappatte in Le Temps – www.globecartoon.com

Reform of the Security Council and of the Commission on Human Rights

The main focus of any reform at the U.N. is obviously the Security Council. The proposals of the Secretary General on this question consist of merely maintaining the control by the great powers over the U.N.³.

While concerns were expressed about the legitimacy of decision making within the Security Council and its unrepresentativeness, the General

¹² Cf. Art. 8.2.b of "Extradition Treaty between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the United States of America", Washington, 31
March 2003

¹³ Cf. Le Monde Diplomatique, April 2005.

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By its books and its work with the UN, the CETIM denounces the generalised bad-development, ecological as much as economic and social, and works to contribute to an exchange of critical views from both Southern and Northern societies. The CETIM is emphasising in particular respect for, implementation and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights, as well as issues related to the right to development.

NEXT CETIM PUBLICATION

LA SANTÉ POUR ET PAR LES PEUPLES

The **CETIM** is collaborating with members of the international network, the People's Health Movement, on a publication: this book will be concerned with the political and economic determining factors of health policies often neglected but often as crucial as the access to health services. At present, health is sacrificed at the altar of North-South rapports and twenty-five years of neo-liberalism have proved disastrous for the health provision of citizens of the world. Most of the text will concern itself with the elaboration of alternative policies aimed at proposals for the large number of stuggles that could perhaps assure adeqaute health services for all. A triumphalist tome resolutely tuned towards action!

Its publication is planned for the first half of 2006.

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- ¹ Cf. A/60/L.1, 15 September 2005.
- ² Launched in July 2000 by the current Secretary General of the U.N., Kofi Annan, the Global Compact is a commitment – on a voluntary basis – of transnational corporations to respect ten principles based essentially on human rights. However, it lacks a clear legal framework as well as a monitoring mechanism for the verification of whether transnational corporations observe the commitments they make. Worse, the respect of human rights thus becomes optional, whereas the standards defining them are applicable to everybody, including transnational corporations. (In this regard, see Building on Quicksand: The Global Compact, Democratic Governance and Nestlé, les Editions CETIM, the Berne Declaration and IBFAN (International Baby Food Action Network), October 2003, as well as our own file on transnational corporations: http://www.cetim.ch/fr/dossier_stm-php.) 3 With regard to this, see the criticism and proposals of the CETIM and the American Association of Jurists, June 2005: www.cetim.
- ⁴ See Bulletin No 23 of the CETIM.
- ⁵ Cf. paragraphs 122 to 136 of "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all», published 21 March 2005.

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57th Session of the Sub-Commission on Human Rights

Held in Geneva from July 25 to August 12, 2005, the 57th session of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (Sub-Commission) examined numerous reports on economic, social, and cultural rights. It also discussed what the proposed reform of the United Nations could mean for the Sub-Commission. Further, the Working Group on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights held its 7th session during the same period.

UN Reform and the Future of the Sub-Commission

Since the publication, last March, of the Secretary General's report on the reform of the United Nations, the proposal to replace the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) with a permanent Council on Human Rights that would be a principal component of the UN system has received approval from numerous UN member states. We have major reservations with respect to this proposal. The loss of the CHR could lead to significant changes in the international human rights protection system, hindering the pursuit of its declared purpose (see CETIM Bulletin No 23). Among such changes, the elimination of the Sub-Commission cannot be ruled out. For the time being, neither the mandate, nor the composition, nor the structure of this new Council is known, but the draft of the final declaration of the President of the General Assembly, submitted to the summit of the heads of state in September, made no mention of the Sub-Commission.1

The members of the Sub-Commission are not unaware of this situation. In reference to the debate on the reform of UN human rights bodies, they adopted, unanimously, a document entitled "Role of an independent expert body within the reform of the United Nations human rights machinery", which will be submitted to the CHR and to the diplomatic representatives of the UN member states.²

In this carefully worded document, the Sub-Commission emphasizes its irreplaceable role in the UN system and lays down "the principles on which the reforms need to be based and the functions to be carried out, including: 1. overall orientation; 2. standard-setting as applied to new norms and to implementation guidelines; 3. identification of gaps in standards and of monitoring methods; 4. identification of good practices."

According to the Sub-Commission experts, "these functions are not performed by the treaty bodies, the special procedures or the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. They can best be performed by an elected, collegial and independent expert body."

The Sub-Commission concluded that "For 58 years, the political standard-setting bodies have felt the need for a body of independent experts. The need for a think tank and an independent group of experts who initiate standard-setting projects as well as the formulation of guidelines and principles to implement human rights rules has not disappeared and will only increase in the future."

Working Group on Transnational Societies and Human Rights

The Working Group on Transnational Corporations (TNC) met this year overshadowed by the CHR's appointment of Mr. John Ruggie to the post of Special Representative of the Secretary General on Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises.³ This appointment speaks volumes about how seriously the member states take this extremely important subject, for not only is Mr. Ruggie considered the "father" of the Global Compact⁴, but, worse, his mandate does not authorize him to undertake anything further in this area (see also our bulletin No 23).

The expert members of the Working Group on TNCs were not daunted by this maneuver last July when holding the group's 7th session, presided over by Ms H.-E. Warzazi. The discussion centered on the following points: the implementation of the Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations with Regard to Human Rights⁵; the protection afforded individuals from damage caused by these enterprises' activities; the compilation of best practices of business enterprises for the promotion and protection of human rights; the role of governments in the protection of these rights; the effects of trade agreements on the enjoyment of human rights; the effects of work place dispute settlement mechanisms and of disputes arising from investments on the enjoyment of human rights; the drafting of a legislative model for corporate activities regulation; a compilation of available information concerning human rights impact studies; the training received by corporate executives in human rights; and the identification of possibilities of redress in cases of violation of these rights resulting from corporate activities.

At the end of its discussions, the Sub-Commission decided to assign two Group members the task of drafting two documents regarding, respectively, the role of the governments in the protection of human rights as they pertain to the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises, and bilateral and multilateral economic accords and their effect on human rights⁶.

Additionally, the Sub-Commission decided that the purpose of the 8th session of the Working Group would be the following: "(a) review of developments related to the responsibilities of business with regard to human rights; (b) consideration of possible situations where business may facilitate respect for, or generate violations of, human rights in different societies; (c) consideration of possible ways and

caused by business activities; and (d) identification of appropriate responses in the case of specific violations of human rights."

means of protecting individuals or groups from harm

Principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and displaced persons

Mr. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro's final report on the recovery of housing and goods by returning refugees and other displaced persons⁷ contains the final version of the Principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and displaced persons.

According to the author, these principles aim to "assist all relevant actors, national and international, in addressing the legal and technical issues surrounding housing, land and property restitution in situations where displacement has led to persons being arbitrarily or unlawfully deprived of their former homes, lands, properties or places of habitual residence."

The Principles emphasize the important role of governments, which are under obligation to "establish and support equitable, timely, independent, transparent and non-discriminatory procedures, institutions and mechanisms to assess and enforce housing, land and property restitution claims." (paragraph 12.1). They emphasize the importance of technical assistance and international cooperation, since governments may not be able to set up various elements, for example "where there has been a general breakdown in the rule of law" (paragraph 12.5). They again stress that the right to recover housing and goods must be central to all programs to re-establish peace.

The author points out that "the Principles incorporate a forward-looking and holistic approach to housing, land and property restitution under international law. This approach is at the same time rooted in the lessons learned by experts in the field, and the 'best practices' that have emerged in previous post-conflict situations wherein restitution has been seen as a key component of restorative justice."

In the section on their scope and application, the document specifies that these Principles "apply equally to all refugees, internally displaced persons and to other similarly situated displaced persons who fled across national borders but who may not meet the legal definition of refugee who were arbitrarily or unlawfully deprived of their former homes, lands, properties or places of habitual residence, regardless of the nature or circumstances by which

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displacement originally occurred."

It is noteworthy that the Sub-Commission adopted these Principles by consensus and recommended that an electronic version of this study appear in the "[UN] Study Series on Human Rights"⁹.

Terrorism and Human Rights

Since the events of 11th September 2001, most governments have adopted anti-terrorism laws and have restricted fundamental rights. If, from time to time, the media report "mistakes" committed against innocent people¹⁰, the recourse to torture and extraditions has taken an extremely unnerving turn according to the Amnesty International report claiming that the United States is detaining 70,000 people in secret outside its territory and does not hesitate to send them to countries that practice torture¹¹.

According to the new extradition agreement between the United Kingdom and the United States, the U.K. does not ask for proof but asks only for "allegations" to facilitate the extradition of suspects¹². More generally, in the rush to push through such legislation, various arbitrary repressive measures, like the U.S.A. Patriot Act have been adopted.

These worrying developments and the "outsourcing of torture"13 have prompted the Sub-Commission experts to adopt several thematic resolutions. One of them pertains to the transfer of persons. In this resolution, the Sub-Commission experts declared that "States must respect and ensure the human rights of everyone within the power or effective control of that State even if he or she is not situated within the territory of that State and notes that this entails the obligation not to extradite, deport, expel or otherwise remove a person from their territory or their control, where there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of irreparable harm, either in the country to which removal is to be effected or in any country to which the person may be subsequently removed; "

Regarding the resolution on the absolute prohibition of torture, the Sub-Commission recalled that "all forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment constitute violations of the peremptory norms of international law."

As for the resolution concerning the prohibition of directed military operations against facilities, transportation media, and sanitation personnel, the Sub-Commission invited the Special Reporter of the Commission on Human Rights on the Right to Health to "to address the issue of the protection of medical facilities, transport and personnel in situations of both international and internal armed conflicts as one of great urgency."

It must be emphasized that the Working Group on Terrorism and Human Rights, created last year by the Sub-Commission for a duration of two years, held its first session this year and, in keeping with its mandate, discussed the development of principles and directives concerning the fight against terrorism and human rights. It should adopt these principles and directives next year.

The Sub-Commission raised other concerns such as corruption and its consequences for the assertion of basic human rights, the right to development, and even the application of norms and criteria relative to human rights in the context of the fight against extreme poverty; however, lacking space, we can go into detail on them.

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Assembly was requested "to review progress on the reform set out above by the end of 2005" (paragraph 153). This is as good as saying that the question will never be seriously discussed.

As for human rights, they received considerable attention in the final document. The member states reaffirmed, among other things, the indivisibility and interdependence of these rights. However, the decision to create a Human Rights Council (paragraphs 157 to 160) is worrisome, for it risks weakening international protection of human rights⁴.

Need one recall that we do not know, for the time being at least, neither the mandate nor the composition of this future body, much less how it is to be set up? Further, it has been left to the General Assembly to settle these questions "as soon as possible during the sixtieth session" (paragraph 160). We would seem to be back to "start", with everything depending upon negotiations among the member states

In the context of the "war on terror" and considering how power is currently wielded in the world, it is disingenuous to hope that this new body will be given a firm mandate, an appropriate supporting framework, a representativeness that is above reproach and the ability to be effective in protecting human rights. At stake, too, are the future of the special procedures (the special rapporteurs, the independent experts and the working groups), the continued existence of the Sub-Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, as well as the participation of NGOs. The special procedures risk disappearing altogether or, like the NGOs, seeing their margin of maneuver substantially reduced. Moreover, the creation of standards of selection for becoming a member of this new Human Right Council, which are at the heart of the debate, will most likely suffer from arbitrariness. The overall risk is thus great that this Council will become a club for the privileged and end up undermining the universality of human rights

Armed interventions, peace processes, management of the U.N.

The member states made important decisions regarding armed intervention, peace processes in certain countries and the administrative management of the U.N.

The proposals of the Secretary General had initially opened the door to the concept of "preventive war", an idea dear to the Bush administration⁵. This fortunately disappeared. The final document provides, on the other hand, for recourse to force in case of "genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity" (paragraph 139). Although

the protection of populations at risk of such crimes is praiseworthy, this protection could easily become selective and manipulated as long as the Security Council is not democratized and the role of the General Assembly not reinforced.

Thememberstates decided to create a Peace building Commission as an intergovernmental advisory body "to address the special needs of countries emerging from armed conflict towards recovery, reintegration and reconstruction". It is worth emphasizing that the final document does not limit itself to announcing the setting up of this commission, but specifies from the outset its mandate, its composition, its financing etc. and provides that it will be operational at the latest on 31 December 2005 (paragraphs 97 to 105). The setting up of this commission and the definition of its activities certainly merits particular attention. One can thus already wonder if, beyond the noble motives invoked, this council does not risk being transformed into another trusteeship council.

The member states also decided to create a Democracy Fund at the United Nations (paragraph 136). It will be interesting to see what sort of democracy this fond supports, considering that the final document affirms the "there is no single model for democracy, that it does not belong to any country or region" (paragraph 135).

The Secretary General himself was the object of much criticism. He was thus asked to "present an independent external evaluation of the United Nations, including the specialized agencies', auditing and oversight system, including the roles and responsibilities of management, with due regard to the nature of the auditing and oversight bodies in question" (paragraph 164.b). It will be interesting to see if the IMF and the World Bank will be audited, for these institutions preach good governance without being themselves subject to it, whereas they seem to be very much in need of it.

The member states also asked the Secretary General to draft a "a system-wide code of ethics for all United Nations personnel", requesting that he "submit details on the ethics office", which he intends to create (paragraph 161.d).

In conclusion, the final document is far from being up to the expectations and needs of humanity. However, the reaffirmation of certain principles such as the provisions of the charter to "deal with the full range of threats to international peace and security" (paragraph 79) and the support of multilateralism (paragraph 78) are of capital importance in the context of the present day. The United States' positions manifestly did not garner instantaneous approval, contrary to what one might have feared. As for the rest, it all will depend on negotiations between countries and on the power play that will take place according to the matters under discussion.

¹ At time of writing, the world summit of the Chiefs of State and of government met at New York, on the occasion of the 60th session of the UN General Assembly, and adopted a declaration in which it was decided to create a Council on Human Rights, leaving the elaboration of its terms to the General Assembly.

² Cf. Annex of the decision E/CN.4/Sub.2/DEC/2005/114.

³ Cf. Resolution of the CHR, E/CN.4/RES/2005/69.

⁴ Partnership between the TNC and UN. Launched in 2000 by the Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, it is based on ten principles, concerning essentially those human rights that must be respected by the STN. To date, no notable improvement has been observed in the behaviour of the TNC. This unwillingness is a result of the fact that this partnership is founded on a voluntary basis and no control mechanisms were put in place for its application (cf. between others "Building on Quiksand: The Global Compact, Democratic Governance and Nestlé", Ed. CETIM, IBFAN and Berne Declaration, October 2003).

⁵ Adopted by the Sub-Commission last year (cf. E/CN.4/Sub.2/2003/12/Rev.2).

⁶ Cf. E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/2005/6.

⁷ E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/17.

⁸ Note that explanatory notes of these Principles are provided in an additional document (cf. E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/17/Add. 1).
⁹ Cf. E/CN.Sub.2/RES/2005/21.

¹⁰ For example, the assassination of a Brazilian national by British police after the London bombings last July, or the long-term detention of individuals, with only presumptions against them, in the United States at

¹¹ Cf. among others *Torture et détention secrète : témoignage de 'disparus' dans le cadre de la 'guerre contre le terrorisme'* 4 August 2005 and "Guantanamo and Beyond: the continuing pursuit of unchecked executive power", 13 May 2005.