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**CALL FOR PAPERS**  
**SMAIAS-ASN SUMMER SCHOOL 2023**  
*16–20 January*

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***Popular Movements Today: Class Struggles in Rural and Urban Peripheries***

Since the crisis of the 1970s, tectonic shifts have been occurring in the world economy. On the one hand, general decolonization in the Third World entered its most advanced phase. Alongside an autonomous Soviet bloc, the emergence of the non-aligned movement forged at Bandung presented a robust challenge to monopoly capitalism. On the other hand, monopoly capitalism relaunched its global strategy by means of new forms of financialization, new leaps in technology and logistics, the generalization of global value systems, and the escalation of competition over energy resources, minerals, and agricultural land. The historic outcome of this contradiction was, in the first instance, the neutralization of the Bandung movement, followed by the integration of the Soviet bloc into the world economy and its disintegration. Most of the world's peripheral countries succumbed to new patterns of dependent integration into the world economy under the control of monopoly-finance capital. The global neoliberal policy framework that prevailed consolidated the general neocolonial transition. Profound shifts in industrial production also occurred, however, in the direction especially of China, to create a new major fault line. China rowed against the current with advanced planning mechanisms in expanding markets, to develop its productive forces at a rapid pace with substantial autonomy from imperialism, and even to eradicate absolute poverty. This experience of China renewed hopes in the South for breaking out of the neocolonial impasse.

Yet, the conditions of work in the peripheries have continued to deteriorate under the same tectonic shifts. As argued in our collective assessments published in the last decade, in *Reclaiming the Nation* and *Reclaiming Africa*, dependent integration and national disintegration have been two sides of the same coin.<sup>1</sup> Importantly, the rural exodus has continued to accelerate, swelling the ranks of the world's labour reserves. This fact alone will weigh heavily over the twenty-first century. Limited absorption capacity in the urban peripheries has created a floating and marginalized population on a mass scale, living and working in perpetual informality and insecurity, among them, first and foremost, historically oppressed peoples and women. Our assessment has been reaffirmed in more recent research published in *Labour Questions in the Global South* and *Farming and Working under Contract*.<sup>2</sup> The deteriorating conditions in peripheral social formations have undermined the exercise of sovereignty itself, rendering societies vulnerable to fundamentalist ideologies, whether of the Christian, Islamic, Hindu, or other traditions, as well as imperialist encroachment and intervention.

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<sup>1</sup> S. Moyo & P. Yeros (eds), *Reclaiming the Nation: The Return of the National Question in Africa, Asia and Latin America* (Pluto Books, 2011), and S. Moyo, P. Jha & P. Yeros (eds.), *Reclaiming Africa: Scramble and Resistance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Springer, 2019).  
<sup>2</sup> P. Jha, W. Chambati & L. Ossome (eds), *Labour Questions in the Global South* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), and P. Jha, P. Yeros, W. Chambati & F. Mazwi (eds), *Farming and Working under Contract: Peasants and Workers in Global Agricultural Value Systems* (Tulika, 2022).

This structural transition has altered the terrain of class struggle on a world scale. Class struggle has always been multifarious. However, the massive growth of labour reserves in the peripheries, straddling town and country, has established a new reality. It is not the case that a purity of class consciousness and organizational form may be postulated *a priori* within linear stages of development. In the peripheries, the struggles of working people today span a wide range of trajectories, stemming from the diverse realities of work and social reproduction and the diverse forms of oppression, including patriarchy and racial and caste supremacy, that serve to divide and rule these semi-peasant, semi-proletarian social formations. Working people thus wage diverse struggles: for land and territory for production, residence, and social reproduction; for markets and credit for petty production and distribution; for dignified work, wages, and pensions; for free basic social services and public infrastructure; for healthy environment and safe and nutritious food; and for peace and protection from state violence and the supremacist and patriarchal structures.

Our earlier collaborative work on social movements, published in *Reclaiming the Land*, also showed that the neoliberal assault on the peasantry had not resolved the agrarian question but had intensified the struggle for land.<sup>3</sup> This evidently applies to the urban question as well.<sup>4</sup> It was further argued that rural movements had become an organizing centre for the semi-proletariat, but that these movements were very diverse in their ideologies, tactics, strategies, and internationalism. This diversity was compounded in many cases by the defeat and/or cooptation of liberation movements and communist parties into parliamentary politics and the nefarious workings of neoliberalism. Rural and other social forces were thus compelled to seek an 'autonomous' path, but also one in which the NGOization of politics was an overwhelming force in itself. With few exceptions at the time – such as the Zapatistas in Mexico, the FARC in Colombia, the War Veterans in Zimbabwe – these organizing centres were facing cooptation. These insights of *Reclaiming the Land* remain relevant today.

Nonetheless, a reassessment of popular movements is in order, including social movements, trade unions, and political parties. Such a reassessment twenty years later must take into consideration the evolving structural conditions, as well as the evolving rural-urban relations and the urban-based popular movements themselves. It must also take into account the advance of fundamentalism which has found fertile terrain in the burgeoning labour reserves and which have, in a number of cases, propelled the rise of fascism under the wing of foreign and domestic monopolies. Similar organic transformations have undermined the exercise of national sovereignty everywhere. The consequences for regional cooperation and international solidarity have also been grave. In substantial swathes of Southern regions, such as the North Africa, the Sahel, the Horn, West Asia, the Caribbean, state fracture and foreign occupation under imperialist forces or their proxies have again relegated countries to a semi-colonial situation. Foreign military bases, especially of the United States and NATO forces, have retained or expanded their presence in most regions of the world, with few exceptions, while unilateral sanctions regimes and destabilization campaigns have continued to present enormous challenges to popular movements. The current conflict in Ukraine is the latest flashpoint whose dimensions are still to be measured but which has all the elements of a tipping point in these tectonic shifts, including a nuclear stand-off.

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<sup>3</sup> S. Moyo & P. Yeros (eds), *Reclaiming the Land: The Resurgence of Rural Movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America* (Zed Books, 2005), republished as *Recuperando la Tierra: El Resurgimiento de Movimientos Rurales en África, Asia y América Latina* (CLACSO, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> See the special issue on 'Social Movements in the Global South', in *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 7(2), 2018.

The 2023 Summer School seeks to contribute to the above reassessment of popular movements and deepen our knowledge of their trajectories and the challenges that they face today. The Summer School will focus generally on the issues raised above and more specifically on the themes below:

1. Theories and perspectives on class struggle;
2. Anti-imperialist struggles and the national question;
3. Socialist transition and internationalism;
4. Communist and national liberation movements and political parties;
5. Neoliberal hegemony and the state;
6. Land and peasant struggles;
7. Urban struggles for land and the Right to the City;
8. Movements and struggles for the rights of migrants, refugees, and stateless people;
9. Trade unions and the changing character of working classes;
10. Black movements and Pan-Africanism;
11. Indigenous and First Nations' movements in rural and urban peripheries;
12. Forms of struggle amongst oppressed castes, ethnicities and minorities;
13. Movements against patriarchy and for women's equality;
14. Environmental movements and ecological crises;
15. Struggles for autonomy and rights over commons.

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The SMAIAS/ASN Summer School values diversity and promotes dialogue between academia and political activists. It brings together young and veteran scholars and political activists from all continents, especially from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and provides for collective reflection and learning. Interested scholars and activists are invited to submit paper proposals (abstracts) of up to 300 words, in English, no later than **1 September 2022**. Proposals should be submitted to [agrariansouth@gmail.com](mailto:agrariansouth@gmail.com), with copy to Dr. Walter Chambati at [walter@aiatrust.org](mailto:walter@aiatrust.org). Women are especially encouraged to participate.

The selection of proposals will be made public by the end of September via our social media, [@AIAS trust](#), [@Agrarian South](#), [facebook.com/agrariansouthnetwork](https://www.facebook.com/agrariansouthnetwork), and websites, <http://aiatrust.org/> and <http://www.agrariansouth.org/news/>. The results will not be communicated individually. Authors of selected proposals will be invited to send their full papers by **6 January 2023**. Kindly note that authors of selected proposals that do not send their full papers by this date will not be included in the final programme.

The Summer School is being planned in remote format for the week of **16–20 January**. Due to the ongoing pandemic situation, a physical meeting is not guaranteed. The papers presented at the Summer School may eventually be selected for publication in *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, subject to normal peer review process.