



CALL FOR PAPERS
SMAIAS-ASN SUMMER SCHOOL 2024
5–9 February

Rural and Urban Industrialization: Towards a Great Leap Forward

The challenges of the twenty-first century amount to no less than the survival of the majority of the world's working people on a warming planet. This is the century of massive growth of labour reserves concentrated in the peripheries, compounded by accelerated global warming. For this reason, it is also the century of the permanent crisis and decline of the capitalist system. This system, which for five hundred years has had the most profound effect on the development of the productive forces, has finally fallen victim to its own logic driven by labour exploitation and the concentration of the productive forces or their control in the centres and the appropriation of the resources of the peripheries. This system has reached the stage of maximum polarization.

The systemic transformation necessary to overcome this crisis requires the development of the productive forces in the peripheries in a sovereign strategy to provide dignified living conditions for the majority of the world's working people, at the same time as it limits global warming to sustainable levels. This transformation can only occur if control over agricultural, mining, energy and other vital resources of the peripheries is wrested from monopoly capital and put to the service of sovereign industrialization. The search for a new combination of private, cooperative, collective, and state property, under rational central planning systems, remains essential to this task.

The conditions for peripheral industrialization are given by historical capitalism. After centuries of primitive accumulation, industrial revolution, and colonial rule, systemic polarization obtained its final configuration in the transition to monopoly capitalism at the turn of the twentieth century. Deep contradictions followed: on the one hand, the global dynamics of proletarianization and urbanization under divergent conditions in centres and peripheries; on the other, the advance of socialist revolution and national liberation. These contradictions gave way to a systemic rivalry between West, East and South, whose basic dynamics remain in force to this day.

The advance of socialist revolution and decolonization meant that, for the first time, the development of the productive forces could be pursued as an affirmation of sovereignty against imperialism. The whole of the Third World, whether in the spirit of Bandung or outside it, set its sights on industrialization and pursued national planning to varying degrees. In some cases, important advances were made in incorporating the capital goods sector and components of the second industrial revolution into the national productive forces. Yet, the relative weaknesses and internal contradictions of peripheral societies remained subject to the strategies of monopoly capitalism, in the form of the US-led collective imperialism of the Triad (USA, EU, Japan). Imperialism could still retreat, adjust, and relaunch its strategy of containment of the South – with the notable exceptions of the revolutionary states of China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba.

This containment was pursued by promoting a few robust capitalist growth trajectories in East Asia, involving deep agrarian and structural reforms, but with limited sovereignty under US military occupation and patronage; and elsewhere the blocking of agrarian and structural reforms, combined with the export of capital, new technological leaps, and ultimately the creation of integrated global value systems in all economic sectors under the control of monopoly-finance capital. Overall, the escape route via Green Revolution and dependent industrialization prevailed in most of the peripheries. This was to be anchored in the US Dollar, Wall Street, NATO, and the establishment of hundreds of military bases around the globe. The net result of the postwar period has been the emasculation of the sovereignty regime and the expulsion of half the world's population to marginal conditions of production and social reproduction in both rural and urban areas under the weight of a system of generalized and financialized monopolies.

Imperialist strategy ensured a generalized neocolonial transition by the 1980s and the persistence of polarized accumulation in the neoliberal policy framework. But it also ensured the persistent crisis of monopoly capitalism which had already set in since the mid-1960s. It is said that, eventually, the West 'won the Cold War'. But even with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the undermining of national sovereignty in the South, it remains the case that the postwar sovereignty regime conquered by national liberation movements against imperialism has not been overturned, even if today it is frayed and violated; and that the socialist planning systems of East Asia and Cuba, with all their differences, remain vital. The Chinese experience especially has inaugurated a new system of central planning with a market orientation which has radically transformed the productive and social structure of the country within a generation, in a new and unparalleled 'great leap forward'. China is now competing directly with the Triad in advanced technologies, even surpassing it in renewable energies, while integrating the whole world in a new economic relationship through trade and investment and assuming responsibilities of global leadership.

This renewed rivalry sets the stage of the systemic transformation that must now occur. In certain respects, the new rivalry is taking place under more favourable conditions for the South, if we consider that the national sovereignty regime is entrenched, that imperialism is in decay, and that there is a wealth of central planning experiences from which to learn, not least the current Chinese experience. The domestic bourgeoisies are also more developed and diversified, but also more absorbed into monopoly-finance capital. Moreover, there are, to varying degrees, modern infrastructures and industrial plant across the South. However, the secular growth of labour reserves and the disorderly urbanization, combined with accelerated global warming – whose consequences are being felt most dramatically by the rural and urban working people of the peripheries – means that the challenge of systemic transformation is unlike any other in history. A *global* great leap forward must be made within a generation.

Research within the Agrarian South Network in recent years has considered a wide range of questions related to land, labour, agricultural production, gender, race, ecology, and popular movements. These have been the subject of our annual Summer Schools, special issues in our journal, and South-South book publications. The latter have included, most recently: *Farming and Working under Contract: Peasants and Workers in Global Agricultural Value Systems* (Tulika Books, 2022), *Labour Questions in the Global South* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), and *Reclaiming Africa: Scramble and Resistance in the 21st Century* (Springer, 2019). The centre of gravity of our analysis remains the agrarian question, which itself remains the centre of gravity of the systemic transformation required today. The great leap forward required on a global level must continue to search for the necessary rural-urban equilibrium in material and political terms for the resolution of the national question in the peripheries and affirmation of popular national sovereignty. This entails the search for a 'peasant path' of rural reconstruction, for the foreseeable future, in synergy with sovereign industrialization.

The Summer School will entertain the full spectrum of issues raised above with special interest in the following themes:

1. Trajectories of industrialization and dependence in the peripheries
2. The theory of delinking and collective self-reliance today
3. The theory of socialist primitive accumulation today
4. Land and agrarian reform in industrial transition
5. Collectivism and cooperativism in agricultural and industrial enterprises
6. Central planning for rural-urban linkages in industrial transition
7. Labour, gender and race in industrial transition
8. Rural and urban social reproduction, health and education in industrial transition
9. Infrastructural development and the prospects of China's Belt and Road Initiative
10. Industry 4.0 and challenges for peripheral industrialization
11. Light, heavy, and defense industries in peripheral industrialization
12. Roles for small industries, artisans, and 'indigenous' knowledge
13. Fiscal, monetary and trade policy for rural and urban industrialization
14. Finance and debt in industrial transition
15. Regional and continental integration in industrial development
16. Minerals and natural resources in industrial development
17. Fossil fuels and renewable energy in industrial transition
18. Climate change and the ecological challenges of industrial transition

The SMAIAS/ASN Summer School values diversity and promotes dialogue between academia and political activists and cadre. It brings together young and veteran researchers and activists from all continents, especially from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and provides for collective reflection and learning.

Interested researchers and activists are invited to submit paper proposals (abstracts) of up to 300 words, in English, no later than **1 August 2023**. Proposals should be submitted via the online form here: <https://forms.gle/MCgtYYboFrgFajXd9>. Women are especially encouraged to participate. The selection of proposals will be made public by the end of August via our social media. The results will not be communicated individually. Please consult our social media below.

Authors of selected proposals will be invited to send their full papers by **1 December 2023**. Kindly note that authors of selected proposals who do not send their full papers by this date will not be included in the final programme.

The Summer School will be held in hybrid (physical and virtual) format in the week of **5–9 February 2024**, at the Sam Moyo African Institute for Agrarian Studies, in Harare, Zimbabwe. Funding for physical participation is limited. Participants who wish to join physically in Harare are encouraged to access own institutional funding.

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.

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