

The Blue Maoist Jacket

Professor Amin loved China. He was always proud to wear his old blue jacket of the times of Mao, and he loved to refer to the Bandung Conference (1955). As a young communist, he was excited to get involved in a working group in preparing for the Bandung Conference, which signified a spirit of anti-imperialism, independence, as well as south-south cooperation.

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In his last interview conducted by our team in Beijing, May 2018, Professor Amin warned that China should not be so naïve as to join

financial globalization, which was dominated by the triad “US, Europe, and Japan”. The legacy of land revolution and financial sovereignty should be under Chinese people’s control. Beware of the re-appearance of ‘comprador’, he remarked.

In his paper “China 2013”, Professor Amin argues that it is too general and abstract for us to discuss the question “Is China capitalist or so-



cialist?” He remarks that the crucial characteristic of China is holding the principle of public ownership of land that “land is not a commodity”. This principle makes peasant petty production continue to play a dominant role in contemporary China.

We strongly support his argument. As a matter of fact, since 2000, we have been actively involved in the rural reconstruction movement in China. As a response to the problems caused by industrialization and modernization in the Global South like China, rural reconstruction has been developed as a political and cultural project to defend peasant communities and agriculture. These grassroots efforts are separate from, parallel to, or in tension with projects initiated by the state or by political parties. As an attempt to construct a platform for mass democ-

racy and to experiment on participatory, urban-rural integration for sustainability, rural reconstruction may become an alternative politics of “de-modernity”.

The movement has helped advance ecological civilization as a people’s endeavor to promote village co-operatives, organic farming, and eco-architecture. The effort also encourages migrant laborers’ organizational renewal by strengthening their basic rights in the coastal regions. In addition, it promotes fair trade and consumer participation in urban areas, drawing on the integrated efforts of rural villagers and urban citizens, including women and the aged, as well as input from intellectuals and urban youth.

The movement has reached out to share experiences with popular

movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. These facilitations have paved the way for organizing five South South Forums on Sustainability in Hong Kong and in Chongqing from 2011 to 2018. The Forums propose consensus of the “Three Ss for Sustainability” based on an ecological civilization of the South, namely, Sovereignty, Solidarity and Safety. The world can return to ecological civilization only through empowering people’s sovereignty over the common, both natural and human, autonomous from the capital’s as well as state regime’s forceful expropriation, and strengthening South-South solidarity.

Professor Amin’s blue jacket shows not only his love for the Chinese people, but also his dedication to people’s internationalism. We will carry on his legacy.