Nearly all the discussions to date about BRICS have been uncritical. Many well-known analysts have greeted it with outright enthusiasm, on the mistaken perception that it represents a new power bloc that will democratise the world order or offer an emerging economic market for financial investors. A recent *New York Times* editorial claimed, for instance, that the BRICS countries “aimed at challenging the American-led global economic order”, while the *Mail & Guardian* pronounced, “South Africa is the nation that stands to benefit the most”.

This volume aims to fill a gap in studies of BRICS. It offers a critical analysis of the rise of the BRICS countries’ economies within the framework of a global capitalism that is increasingly predatory, exclusionary and unequal, no more so than in the BRICS countries themselves. The authors reflect upon the rise of a Global South (and East), which is sometimes cooperative with and sometimes antagonistic to the traditional powers of the US, Europe and Japan. Most importantly, BRICS’s rise occurs in the context of the expansion of capitalism in the 21st century, and also in the midst of world capitalism’s worst crisis since the 1930s.

The point of this analysis is, firstly, to promote debate between social movements, organised labour and other activists in the struggle for social justice and for alternatives to the current international capitalist order. BRICS is a new area of concern for many. The second goal is to generate critical debate on contemporary themes and theoretical discussions. The book will be required reading for those who wish to have an alternative perspective on this Global South partnership.
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