

The Connection between the Non-Aligned States (The Third World) and the Cold War.

Summary of The World Since 1945 (pages 87-99)

Decolonization happened rapidly after 1945 & presented challenges to the imperial powers most notably in the spread of social (as in anti-capitalist) revolution.

Imperial powers often responded with force, although the British withdrew peacefully from India whilst attempting to influence the terms of independence, they went to war in Malaya and the French resisted the end of empire by fighting too in Indo-China and Algeria. The Americans withdrew from the Philippines (acquired by Treaty from Spain in 1898) in 1946 but Washington worked with the new regime to head off a revolutionary guerrilla movement.

In sum, **despite losing their colonies the West were able to influence the former colonies in ways which offset the effects of decolonization** because however much Third World leaders attacked the West they need the markets and investments which former colonial powers provided.

Though some revolutionary regimes did come to power (China is the obvious example) most former colonies, being undeveloped, **remained economically dependent on the West.**

Most revolutionary movements in the Third World identified with the Soviet Bloc (the People's Republic of China assumed a more independent stance) which threatened Western interests. So, Washington, London and other capitals developed counter-revolutionary strategies to destabilize unfriendly left-wing regimes.

In 1945 Western Europe and the US still claimed most of the Third World in one form or another (e.g. through domination of the foreign trade of Latin America despite the independence of this region from Spain and Portugal since the 19th century). The Third World (a term invented in the west) was integrated into the world economy but on **unequal terms** - usually resulted in under developed infrastructure and domestic industries and thus poverty (i.e. the breeding grounds for social discontent and revolution).

The end of WW2 meant the continued usefulness of the Third World for the West because:

- Resources were needed for **European reconstruction**
- **Substitutes were needed for raw materials** and commodities that had come from Eastern Europe in the past but which were monopolized by the USSR after 1945
- The extent to which European states could maintain good relationships with colonies or former colonies would **protect all the money already invested in them** and lead to profit making opportunities in the future.
- For the UK and France colonialism and neo-colonialism meant a way of **maintaining their status as great powers** in the face of American rivalry.

Western states had to protect their investments and did so through foreign-aid strategies designed to protect infrastructure (ports, roads, schools, hospitals, hydroelectric projects) in order to allow private enterprises to thrive.

- For example, the **British Overseas Food Corporation** was created in WW2 to raise agricultural production for export in West African colonies.
- The French government described its aid programme for the French Union as designed to 'increase agricultural and industrial production in the perspective of a European community'.
- The **Colombo Plan** was also launched in 1951 for the Asia-Pacific region (mainly by the white governments of the British Commonwealth such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada).
- The US also launched the **Point Four** programme in 1949 under Truman to develop agricultural output and distribute technical know-how on improving economies in general – Iran was the first government to do so on 9th October 1950.

It should be noted that most Western aid was '**tied**' – money was granted on condition it be spent on goods and services in the donor country. This served to perpetuate the under-developed status of the Third World.

The USSR was not an early post-war player in the colonial world since they were not in a position to be able to give much aid (e.g. communists in Vietnam proclaimed an independent government in 1945 and became involved in a war with France but the USSR only got involved several years later).

In the immediate post war period the Soviets prioritized **Eastern Europe**. These satellite states were independent nations but dependent on the USSR. Until Cuba signed a treaty with the USSR in 1960 the only non-European satellites were the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea).

The first Soviet programmes of economic assistance for non-communist countries began in the mid 1950s. However, in 1948 Eastern bloc weapons reached **Israel** during its war of independence. But the first substantial package of military aid was to **Egypt in 1955** via USSR sales through Czechoslovakia as a front. Statistics suggest from the mid 1950s to 1978 Moscow provided \$46.8 billion worth of aid to the underdeveloped countries (\$29 billion of this was military aid) whilst (in the slightly longer period) of 1945 to 1978 the USA offered \$94 billion of aid (about \$80 billion in military aid). Although not strictly comparable (due to different definitions of what constitutes aid and the time periods in question) these figures do give some idea of the relative scale of the USSR's efforts compared to the USA's.