

# Balance sheet of 70 years of 'national liberation' struggles, Part 3

4402 reads

## THE STILL-BORN NATIONS

*Throughout the 20th century, all the 'new nations' are no sooner born than dying. At the beginning of the century there were about 40 independent nations in the world, today there are 169, to which we have to add the 20 coming out of the explosion of the USSR and Yugoslavia.*

*The fiasco of the chain of 'new nations' created throughout the 20th century, and the certain ruin of the most recent ones, are the clearest expressions of capitalism's bankruptcy. From the beginning of the century the order of the day for revolutionaries has not been the creation of new frontiers, but their destruction through the proletarian world revolution. This is the central axis of the present series on the balance sheet of 70 years of 'national liberation' struggles.*

*In the first article of the series (International Review 66) we demonstrated how 'national liberation' acted as a deadly poison for the international revolutionary wave of 1917-23; in the second part (IR 68) we showed how 'national liberation' wars and the new states form inseparable cogs of imperialism and imperialist wars. In this third part we want to demonstrate the tragic economic and social disaster caused by the existence of the 150 nations created in the 20th century.*

*Reality has pulverised all the brave words about the 'developing countries' which were supposed to become new, dynamic poles of economic development. All the blather about the new 'bourgeois revolutions' which were supposed to bring about an explosion of prosperity based on the natural wealth contained in the former colonies has ended up in a gigantic fiasco: one in which capitalism has shown itself to be incapable of making use of two thirds of the planet, of integrating into global production the billions of peasants it has ruined.*

## THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE 'NEW NATIONS' ARE BORN: THE DECADENCE OF CAPITALISM

The essential criterion for judging whether the proletariat should or shouldn't support the formation of new nations is this: what is the historical dynamic of capitalism? If it is one of expansion and development, as in the 19th century, then workers could support it - but only for certain countries, which really represented a movement of expansion, and on condition of maintaining the autonomy of the proletarian class. However, with capitalism's entry into its epoch of mortal decadence, that is, since the First World War, this support no longer has any validity and must be emphatically rejected.

"The national programme could play an historic role only so long as it represented the ideological expression of a growing bourgeoisie, lusting for power, until it had fastened its class rule, in some

way or the other, upon the great nations of central Europe and had created within them the necessary tools and conditions of its growth. Since then, imperialism has buried the old bourgeois democratic programme completely by substituting expansionist activity irrespective of national relationships for the original programme of the bourgeoisie in all nations. The national phrase, to be sure, has been preserved, but its real content, its function has been perverted into its very opposite. Today the nation is but a cloak that covers imperialistic desires, a battle cry for imperialistic rivalries, the last ideological measure with which the masses can be persuaded to play the role of cannon fodder in imperialistic wars” [1] [1].

This historical and global criterion is quite opposite to those based on abstract speculation and on a partial and contingent vision. Thus, the Stalinists, Trotskyists and even certain proletarian groups have cited, in support of the call for ‘national independence’ for countries in Africa, Asia etc, the argument that these countries have important feudal and pre-capitalist leftovers. From this they deduce that the ‘bourgeois revolution’ and not the proletarian revolution is on the agenda.

What these gentlemen deny is that the integration of all of the essential territories of the planet into the world market closes off the possibility of capitalist expansion, resulting in a permanent and insoluble crisis. This is a state of affairs which dominates the life of all countries: *“If it survives, the old formation retains control over society, guiding it not towards new fields of development of the productive forces, but, in line with its new and henceforth reactionary nature, towards their destruction”* [2] [2].

Another argument in favour of the creation of new nations is that they possess immense natural resources which could and should be developed to free them from foreign tutelage. This argument falls into the same localist and abstract vision. Enormous potentialities certainly exist, but they cannot be developed because every country is dominated by decadence and chronic crisis.

From its origins, capitalism has been based on furious competition, as much at the level of nations as of individual firms. This has produced an unequal development of production according to country. However, while *“the law of the unequal development of capitalism, on which Lenin and his epigones based their theory of the weakest link, was expressed in the ascendant period of capitalism through a powerful push by the backward countries towards catching up with and even overtaking the most developed ones ... this tendency tends to reverse itself as the system as a whole reaches its objective historical limits and finds itself incapable of extending the world market in relation to the necessities imposed by the development of the productive forces. Having reached its historical limits, the system in decline no longer offers any possibility of an equalisation of development: on the contrary it entails the stagnation of all development through waste, unproductive labour and destruction. The only ‘catching up’ that now takes place is the one that leads the most advanced countries towards the situation existing in the backward countries - economic convulsions, poverty, state capitalist measures. In the 19th century, it was the advanced country, Britain, which showed the way forward for the rest: today it is the third world countries which, in a way, indicate the future in store for the advanced ones. However, even in these conditions, there cannot be a real ‘equalisation’ of the situation of the different countries in the world. While it does not spare any country, the world crisis exerts its most devastating effects not on the most powerful, developed countries, but on the countries which arrived too late in the world economic arena and whose path towards development has been definitely barred by the older powers”* [3] [3].

This is concretised in the way that “the law of supply and demand works against the development of new countries. In a world where markets are saturated, supply exceeds demand and prices are determined by the lowest production costs. Because of this, the countries with the highest production costs are forced to sell their commodities at reduced profits or even a loss. This ensures that they

have an extremely low rate of accumulation and, even with a very cheap labour force, they are unable to realise the investments needed for the massive acquisition of modern technology. The result of this is that the gulf which separates them from the great industrial powers can only get wider” [4] [4].

Therefore *“the period of capitalist decadence is characterised by the impossibility of any new industrial nations emerging. The countries which didn’t make up for lost time before World War I were subserviently doomed to stagnate in a state of total underdevelopment, or to remain chronically backward in relation to the countries at the top of the sand-castle”. In this framework, “in the 20th century protectionist policies have been a total failure. Far from allowing the less developed economies to have a breathing space, they have led to the asphyxiation of the national economy”* [5] [5].

## **WAR AND IMPERIALISM EXACERBATE BACKWARDNESS AND UNDER-DEVELOPMENT**

In these global economic conditions, war and imperialism -fundamental features of decadent capitalism - are imposed as an implacable law on all counties and act as a millstone around the neck of the new nations. In the situation of stagnation, which reigns over the world economy, each national capital can only survive if it arms itself to the teeth. As a consequence, each national state is obliged to make the appropriate alterations to its economy (creation of heavy industry; location of industries in strategic areas, which has grievous results for global production; subordination of the infrastructure and communications to military activity; enormous ‘defence’ costs, etc) - all of which produces serious consequences for the whole national economy in countries whose social base is underdeveloped at all levels (economic, cultural, etc):

- the artificial injection of very advanced technologies into this social fabric results in a squandering of resources and an increasingly aggravated disequilibrium of economic and social activity;

- likewise, the necessity to confront spiralling costs, which can never be paid, produces growing indebtedness and ever-increasing fiscal pressure: *“The capitalist state, under the imperious necessity to establish a war economy, is a huge insatiable consumer which creates its buying power through massive borrowing that drains all national savings, under the control of and with the self-seeking assent of finance capital; it pays for all this by mortgaging the future incomes of the proletariat and small peasants”* [6] [6].

In Oman, the defence budget absorbs 46% of public spending, in North Korea it is not less than 24% of GNP. In Thailand, in 1991 production fell, agriculture only grew by 1% and the education budget was cut, but *“the military have shown their willingness to cooperate with Europe and the United States in the modernisation of the army and have even more clearly allied themselves with the Western camp, proposing to buy German transport helicopters, various Franco/British-built Lynx helicopters, a squadron (12 planes) of F16 fighter bombers and 5(%) American M60, A1 and M48 AS tanks”* [7] [7]. Burma has an infant mortality rate of 64.5 per 1000 (it is 9 per 1000 in the USA), a life-expectancy of 61 years (75.9 in the US), while only 673 books were published (for a population of 41 million) *“From 1988 to 1990 the Burmese army grew from 170,000 to 230,000) men and its arsenal was also improved. In October 1990 it ordered 654 Yugoslavian planes and 20 Polish helicopters. In November it signed a \$1200 million contract - its foreign debt is \$417.1 million - with China to buy, amongst other things, 12 F7 planes, 12 F6 and 60 armoured personnel carriers”* [8] [8].

India is a particularly serious example. The huge military machine in this country is in a great measure responsible for the fact that *“between 1961 and 1970, the percentage of the rural*

population which lived below the physical minimum rose from 52 to 70%. While in 1880 each Indian had available 270 kgs of cereals and dried pulses, by 1966 this had fallen to 134kgs" [9] [9]. "In 1960 the military budget was the equivalent of 2% of GNP or \$600 million. In order to renew its arsenal and military equipment arms factories have multiplied, increasing and diversifying their production. A decade later, the military budget is equal to \$1600 million or 3.5% of GNP ... to this we can add the strengthening of the infrastructure, in particular strategic routes, naval bases

*The third military programme, which covers 1974 to 79, will absorb \$2500 million annually" [10] [10]. Since 1973 India has produced an atomic bomb and developed a programme of nuclear research, power stations for the fusion of plutonium etc. This has produced one of the highest percentages of GNP dedicated to 'scientific research' in the world (0.9%!).*

The disadvantage of the new countries compared to the more developed ones is accentuated by militarism. The 16 largest countries of the third world (India, China, Brazil, Turkey, Vietnam, South Africa etc) went from having 7 million soldiers in 1970 to 9 million in 1990, an increase of 32%. On the other hand, the four most industrialised countries (the USA, Japan, Germany and France) reduced their number of troops from 4.4 million in 1970 to 3.3 million in 1990, a reduction of 26% [11] [11]. It's not that the latter have relaxed their military effort: they have merely made it more productive by economising on human expenses. The opposite tendency has been unfolding in the less developed countries: despite increased spending on sophisticated technological weapons, they have had to increase their dependence on manpower.

This necessity to give priority to the military effort has grave political consequences, which further aggravate economic and social chaos, and the general weakness of these nations: it imposes an inevitable and forced alliance with the remnants of feudal society and all the other backward sectors, because it is more vital to maintain national cohesion in the face of the imperialist world jungle than to ensure the 'modernisation' of the economy, which becomes a secondary and indeed utopian objective compared to the requirements of imperialist competition.

The survival of feudalism and pre-capitalist formations expresses the burden of the colonial and semi-colonial past, which has left these countries as specialised economies dependent upon the production of minerals and basic agricultural products, thus monstrously deforming them: *"Hence the contradictory phenomenon whereby imperialism exports the capitalist mode of production and systematically destroys pre-capitalist economic formations - while simultaneously holding back the development of native capital by ruthlessly plundering the colonial economies, subordinating their industrial development to the specific needs of the metropolitan economy, and bolstering up the most reactionary and submissive elements in the native ruling class ... In the colonies and the semi-colonies there were to be no fully formed, independent national capitals with their own bourgeois revolutions and healthy economic bases, but rather stunted caricatures of the metropolitan capitals weighed down by the decomposing remnants of the previous mode of production, industrialised in pockets to serve foreign interests, with bourgeoisies that were weak, born senile, both at the economic and at the political level" [12] [12].*

The old metropolises - France, Britain etc - along with their competitors - the USA, the USSR, Germany, exacerbated these problems by ensnaring the 'new nations' in a thick spiders web of investments, loans, occupation of strategic enclaves, "treaties of assistance, cooperation and mutual defence", integrating them into their international organisations for defence, commerce etc, all of which has tied them hand and foot and created a practically insurmountable handicap.

The Trotskyists, Maoists and all types of third worldists call this reality 'neo-colonialism'. This term is a smokescreen that hides **the decadence of world capitalism and the impossibility of the**

**development of new nations.** They blame the problems of the third world on 'foreign domination'. Foreign domination certainly blocks the development of these new nations, but it is not the only factor and above all it can only be understood as a constituent element of the global conditions of decadent capitalism, dominated by militarism, war and stagnant production.

To complete this tableau, it should be said that the new nations are born with an original sin: their territories are incoherent, made up of a chaotic mixture of ethnic, religious, economic and cultural remnants; their frontiers are usually artificial and incorporate minorities from neighbouring countries. All of which can only lead to disintegration and permanent conflicts.

A revealing example of this is the gigantic anarchy of races, religions and nationalities which coexist in such a strategically important region as the Middle East. Along with the three most important religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam (and each of these is sub-divided into a multitude of sects in conflict with each other: there are Maronite, Orthodox and Coptic Christian minorities, Alawite, Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims) - *"there also exist ethnic-linguistic minorities. In Afghanistan there are Persian speakers (Tadjiks) and Turkish speakers (Uzbeks, Turkomans) as well as other more particular groups ... The turbulent politics of the 20th century have produced minorities of 'stateless peoples'. There are 22 million Kurds: 11 million in Turkey (20% of the population), 6 million in Iran (12%), 4.5 million in Iraq (25%), 1 million in Syria (9%), without forgetting the Kurdish diaspora in Lebanon. There is also the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon and Syria. And finally, the Palestinians, who constitute another 'stateless people', 5 million are divided between Israel (2.6 million), Jordan (1.5 million), Lebanon (400,000), Kuwait (350,000), Syria (250,000)" [13]* [13].

In these conditions, the new nations are a caricature of the general tendency towards state capitalism, which does not overcome the antagonistic contradictions of decadent capitalism, but acts as a heavy fetter, exacerbating the problem even more: *"In the most backward countries, the confusion between the political and economic apparatus allows and encourages the development of a wholly parasitic bureaucracy, whose sole concern is to fill its own pockets, systematically to pillage the national economy in order to build up the most colossal fortunes: the cases of Battista, Marcos, Duvalier, and Mobutu are well known and far from unique. Pillage, corruption and extortion are endemic in the underdeveloped countries, at every level of the state and economy. This situation is obviously a still greater handicap for these economies, and helps to push them still further into the mire"* [14] [14].

## **A CATASTROPHIC BALANCE-SHEET**

Thus, all the new nations, far from reproducing the development of the youthful capitalism of the 19th century, have from the beginning run up against the impossibility of real accumulation and have sunk into an economic morass and a wasteful and anarchic bureaucracy. Far from providing a framework where the proletariat could improve its situation, the latter has found itself up against constant pauperisation, the threat of starvation, militarisation of labour, forced work, banning of strikes etc.

In the 60's and 70's politicians, experts, bankers went on ad nauseam about the 'development' of the countries of the third world. From being 'underdeveloped countries' they were presented as 'countries on the way to development'. One of the levers of this so-called 'development' was the concession of massive credits, which accelerated above all after the recession of 1974-75. The great metropolises bestowed buckets full of credit to the new countries so that they could buy brand new machinery and installations. The only problem was that what these factories produced could not then be sold on a world market that was already suffering from generalised overproduction.

This did not produce the slightest development (as can be clearly seen today), but instead mortally indebted these new countries and plunged them into endless crises throughout the 80's.

Our publications have made clear this widespread disaster; it is enough to record some figures: in Latin America GNP per head fell in 1989 to the level of 1977. In Peru income per capita in 1990 was that of 1957! Brazil, which in the 70s was presented as the 'miracle economy' suffered in 1990 a 4.5% fall in GNP and inflation of 1657%. Argentina's industrial production fell in 1990 to the level of 1975 [15] [15].

The population, and especially the working class, has suffered cruelly. In Africa 60% of the population were living below the vital minimum in 1983, and in 1995 the World Bank says it will be 80%. In Latin America 44% are poor. In Peru 12 million people (out of a total population of 21 million) are chronically poor. A third of the population of Venezuela do not have enough income to buy basic products.

The working class has been viciously attacked: in 1991 the government of Pakistan closed or privatised public enterprises, throwing 250,000 workers onto the streets. A third of public employees in Uganda were made unemployed in 1990. In Kenya *"the government in 1990 decided not to fill 40% of the vacant posts in the public utilities, and decreed that those who used public services would have to pay for them"* [16] [16]. In Argentina the proportion of national income taken up by wages has fallen from 49% in 1975 to 30% in 1983.

The clearest manifestation of the total failure of world capitalism is the **agricultural disaster** which the majority of the independent nations of the 20th century have suffered: *"Capitalism's decadence has simply pushed the peasant and agrarian problem to its limits. From the worldwide viewpoint, it is not the development but the under-development of modern agriculture that has been the result. The peasantry today constitutes a majority of the world population, as it did a century ago"* [17] [17].

The new countries, through the state, have created a web of bureaucratic organisations for 'rural development', extending the relations of capitalist production to the countryside and destroying the old forms of subsistence agriculture. But this hasn't produced the least 'development' but instead total disaster. These 'development' mafias, which unite the headmen, landowners and rural usurers, ruin the peasants, forcing them to introduce export crops which they buy at absurdly low prices, while charging the peasants extortionate prices for seed, machinery etc.

With the disappearance of subsistence crops: "The threat of hunger is as real today as it was in previous economies; agricultural production per head is below its 1940 level ... A sign of the total anarchy of the capitalist economy: since World War II most of the one-time productive agricultural countries of the third world have become importers. Iran, for example, imports forty per cent of the foodstuff it consumes" [18] [18].

A country like Brazil - with the largest agricultural potential in the world - has seen *"since February 1991 shortages of meat, rice, beans, milk products and soya oil"* [19] [19]. Egypt - the granary of empires throughout history - today imports 60% of basic food items. Senegal only produces 30% of its consumption of cereals. In Africa food production is hardly 100kgs per head, whereas the vital minimum is 145kgs.

Furthermore, the channelling of production towards mono-culture for export coincided with the general fall in prices of raw materials, a tendency aggravated by the accentuation of the economic recession. In the Ivory Coast income from the sale of cocoa and coffee fell by 55% between 1986 and 1989. In the countries of West Africa the production of sugar fell by 80% between 1960 and

1985. Senegal, a producer of peanuts, earned less in 1984 than in 1919. Coffee production in Uganda fell from 186,000 metric tons in 1989 to 139,000 in 1990 [20] [20].

The result of this is the increasing destruction of agriculture, both subsistence agriculture and industrialised export agriculture.

In this context, the majority of African, Asian and Latin American countries have been forced by falling world prices, and the massive indebtedness in which they were trapped in the 70's, to extend even more their industrial export crops.

This has meant the massacre of forests, Pharaoh-like projects for draining swamps and costly irrigation schemes. As a result, harvests are being continually reduced and the soil has been almost totally exhausted; deserts are advancing, and the once generous natural resources have been annihilated.

This catastrophe is of incalculable proportions: the Senegal river in 1960 had a flow of 2400 million cubic meters; by 1983 it had fallen to 7000. In 1960, 15% of Mauritania was covered by vegetation, by 1986 it was only 5%. In the Ivory Coast (a producer of precious woods) the area covered by forest has fallen from 15 million hectares in 1950 to only 2 million in 1986. 30% of the cultivatable soil in Nigeria has been abandoned, while cereal production on what is left declined from 600kgs per hectare in 1962 to 350 in 1986. UN figures for 1983 shows that the Sahara desert is advancing towards the south by 150 km a year [21] [21].

The peasants are expelled from their land and crowded into in the shanty towns of the great cities: *"Lima, which in the 1940's was a garden city, has used up all its subterranean water supplies and is being invaded by desert. Its population grew sevenfold between 1940 and 1981. It now has a surface area of 400 square kilometres and accounts for a third of the Peruvian population. The former oasis is now covered by rubbish dumps, cement and advancing sand ... On the rubbish dump of Callao barefoot children and entire families work in the middle of a hell infested by millions of flies and an unbearable stench"* [22] [22].

*"Capital likes its pre-capitalist clients just as the ogre 'likes' children: it eats them. The worker of a pre-capitalist economy who has had 'the misfortune to have dealings with the capitalists' knows that sooner or latter, he will end up, at best proletarianised and at worst - and this has become more and more frequent since capitalism slid into decadence - reduced to misery and bankruptcy in the now sterilised fields, or marginalised in the vast slums of urban conglomerations"* [23] [23].

This incapacity to integrate the peasant masses into productive work is the clearest demonstration of the bankruptcy of world capitalism, whose essence is the generalisation of wage labour by uprooting the peasants and artisans from the old pre-capitalist forms of labour and transforming them into proletarians. In the 20th century this capacity to create new jobs has been blocked and turned back on a global scale. The new countries overwhelmingly express this phenomenon: in the 19th century the average rate of unemployment in Europe was between 4-6% and could be absorbed after the cyclical crises; while in the countries of the third world it reaches 20-30% and has become a permanent structural phenomenon.

## **THE FIRST VICTIMS OF THE WORLD-WIDE DECOMPOSITION OF CAPITALISM**

The first victims of capitalism's entry into its terminal stage of world decomposition from the end of the 70s have been the chain of 'young nations' which during the 60's and 70's were presented to us

as the 'nations of the future' by the champions of the bourgeois order - from the liberals to the Stalinists.

The terrible situation into which these 'nations of the future' have sunk has been pushed into second place by the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in 1989. The countries which lived under the Stalinist boot belong to the group of countries which arrived too late on the world market. They manifest all of the features of the 'new countries' of the 20th century. However, their specificities [24] [24] have made their collapse much more serious and chaotic, and the repercussions of this are of far greater historical and global importance, especially as regards the exacerbation of international imperialist chaos [25] [25].

Nevertheless, without underestimating the particularities of the Stalinist countries, today the other underdeveloped countries express the same **basic** characteristics: chaos, anarchy and generalised decomposition.

### **The explosion of states**

In Somalia the northern tribal chiefs announced on the 24th of April 1991 the partition of the country and the creation of the state of 'Somaliland'. Ethiopia has been dismembered; on the 28th of May 1991 Eritrea declared 'sovereignty'; Tigre, Oromos and Ogaden have totally escaped the control of the central authority. Afghanistan has been divided up between four different governments: the one in Kabul, a radical Islamic one, a moderate Islamic one and a Shi'ite one. Almost two thirds of Peru is controlled by the narco-mafias and the guerrilla mafias of Sendero Luminoso or Tupac Amaru. The war in Liberia has caused 15,000 deaths and more than a million people have fled (out of a total population of 2.5 million). Algeria, because of the open confrontation between the FLN and FIS (behind which lurks an imperialist struggle between France and the USA) is sinking into indescribable chaos.

### **Collapse of the army**

The soldiers' revolt in Zaire, the explosion of the Ugandan army into a multitude of gangs who terrorise the population, the widespread gangsterisation of the police in Asia, Africa and South America express the same tendency - though in a less spectacular way - as the present explosion of the army in the ex-USSR.

### **General paralysis of the economic apparatus**

Food supplies, transport and services are collapsing and economic activity is reduced to the barest minimum: in the Central African Republic - the capital, Bangui *"has become to-tally isolated from the rest of the country; the ex-colony lives on subsidies from France and the traffic in diamonds"* [26] [26].

In these conditions of widespread starvation, misery and death, life has no value. In Lima very fat people are being kidnapped by gangs who kill them and sell their grease to pharmaceutical and cosmetic companies in the United States. In Argentina half a million people live by selling their livers, kidneys and other visceral organs. In Cairo (Egypt) a million people live in the tombs of the Coptic cemetery. Children are kidnapped in Peru and Colombia and sent to the mines or agricultural exploitation where they work in such conditions of slavery that they die like flies. The fall of the price of raw materials on the world market leads the local capitalists to use such atrocious practices in order to compensate for the fall in their profits. In Brazil the impossibility of integrating the new generations into wage labour has resulted in the savagery of the police gangs and thugs who are paid to exterminate street kids who have been pulled into mafia-like gangs involved in all kinds of



traffic. Thailand has been turned into the world's largest brothel, and AIDS is widespread: 300,000 cases in 1990, and this is forecast to rise to over 2 million in the year 2000.

The wave of emigration which has accelerated since 1986, principally from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, demonstrates the historical bankruptcy of these nations and through this, the bankruptcy of capitalism.

The disintegration of these social structures, which were born as degenerate cells of a mortally ill body - decadent capitalism - literally vomits human masses fleeing from disaster to-wards the old industrial countries. These countries, for some time, have had the 'closed' signs up and only offer these starving masses the language of repression, threats and deportation.

## **HUMANITY DOES NOT NEED NEW FRONTIERS BUT THE ABOLITION OF ALL FRONTIERS**

The new nations of the 20th century have not enlarged the proletarian army, but - and this is most dangerous for the revolutionary perspective - they have placed the proletariat of these 'new nations' into conditions of extreme fragility and weakness. The proletariat is a minority in the great majority of the underdeveloped countries, hardly making up 10-15% of the population (whereas in the large industrialised countries it is over 50%). The workers are dispersed into centres of production which are often far away from the nerve-centres of political and economic power. They live immersed in an enormous mass of marginals and lumpens who are very vulnerable to the most reactionary ideas and who are a very negative influence on them.

Also, the way in which the collapse of capitalism is manifested in these countries makes it much more difficult for the proletariat to become conscious of its tasks:

- the overwhelming domination of the great imperialist powers increases the influence of nationalism;
- widespread corruption and the incredible waste of economic resources hides the real roots of the bankruptcy of capitalism;
- the openly terrorist control by the capitalist state, even when it has a 'democratic' mask, adds weight to democratic and union mystifications;
- especially barbaric and archaic forms of exploitation facilitate unionism and reformism.

This situation does not mean that the proletariat in these countries are not an inseparable part of the struggle of the world proletariat [27] [27], or that they don't have the strength and potential necessary to fight for the destruction of the capitalist state and the international power of the workers' councils: *"The strength of the proletariat in a capitalist country is infinitely greater than its numerical proportion in the population. This is because the proletariat occupies a key position in the heart of the capitalist economy and also because the proletariat expresses, in the economic and political domain, the real interests of the immense majority of the working population under capitalist domination"* (Lenin).

The real lesson is that the existence of these 'new nations', instead of contributing anything to the cause of socialism, has done just the opposite: it poses new obstacles, new difficulties to the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

*"It is not possible to maintain, as the anarchists do, that a socialist perspective could remain open even though the productive forces were in regression. Capitalism represents an indispensable and necessary stage for the establishment of socialism to the extent that it brings about the sufficient de-*

*velopment of the objective conditions. However, just as in the present stage it has become a brake on the development of the productive forces, the prolongation of capitalism beyond this stage could bring about the disappearance of the conditions for socialism. It is in this sense that the historical alternative of socialism or barbarism is posed today” [28] [28].*

The new nations favour neither the development of the productive forces, nor the historic tasks of the proletariat, nor the dynamic towards the unification of humanity. On the contrary, they are - as an organic expression of the agony of capitalism - a blind force which leads towards the destruction of the productive forces, towards difficulties and dispersion for the proletariat, towards the division and atomisation of humanity.

*Adalen, 8.2.92*

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[1] [29] Rosa Luxemburg, The crisis of social democracy (The Junius Pamphlet), chap. 7.

[2] [30] Internationalisme, ‘Report on the International Situation’, June 1945.

[3] [31] International Review 31, ‘The proletariat of western Europe at the heart of the international generalisation of the class struggle’.

[4] [32] IR 23, ‘The proletarian struggle in the decadence of capitalism’.

[5] [33] *ibid.*

[6] [34] Bilan 11, ‘Crises and cycles in the economy of dying capitalism’.

[7] [35] El Estado del Mundo, 1992.

[8] [36] *ibid.*

[9] [37] Revolution Internationale 10, ‘India, an open cemetery’.

[10] [38] *ibid.*

[11] [39] These facts have been taken from statistics on the armies in the publication El Estado del Mondo. The choice of countries and the calculations of percentages are done by us.

[12] [40] IR 19, ‘On imperialism’.

[13] [41] El Estado del Mundo.

[14] [42] IR 60, ‘Theses on the economic and political crisis in the USSR and the eastern countries’.

[15] [43] El Estado del Mundo.

[16] [44] *ibid.*

[17] [45] IR 24, ‘Notes on the agrarian and peasant question’.

[18] [46] *ibid.*

[19] [47] El Estado del Mundo.

[20] [48] From the book by Reno Dumfound, Pour l'Afrique, j'accuse

[21] [49] *ibid.*

[22] [50] From the article 'The cholera of the poor', in El Pais, 27 May 1991.

[23] [51] IR 30, 'Critique of Bukharin', part II.

[24] [52] See IR 60, 'Theses on the economic and political crisis in the USSR'.

[25] [53] On the other hand, the equation Stalinism = communism, which the bourgeoisie uses today to convince the proletariat that there is no alternative of the capitalist order, is more persuasive if it amplifies the phenomena in the east, while relativising or even trivialising what is happening in the nations of the 'third world'.

[26] [54] El Estado del Mundo, 1992.

[27] [55] The great concentrations of workers in the industrialised countries constitute the centre of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat: see IR 31 'The proletariat of western Europe at the heart of the international generalisation of the class struggle'.

[28] [56] Internationalisme 45, 'The evolution of capitalism and the new perspective'.

## Deepen:

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