SOC100 - HW3

1. What is the Third World? What political and economic project did it propose and how did it fail?

The definition of Third World kept changing from its existence to this day, because it is a classification, not a specification, i.e. there is not any set of distinct, set in stone rules to be a Third World country.

During and shortly after the cold war first world countries(US and its allies) and second world countries(‘USSR’ and its allies) used the “Third World” term mainly for countries which had no political connection with either of first world or second world countries.

Other than political aspects, being a Third World country was associated with being a poor country because majority of the Third World countries back then were former colonies of first world and second world countries. Therefore, cold war era Third World countries were underdeveloped, new and young countries with almost no experience of self-governing.

After cold war era the terms “First World” and “Third World” changed to developed, developing and underdeveloped countries. Note that since USSR fell, “First World” was used for developed countries instead of “Second World”.

Third world countries wanted first and second world countries to not interfere with their domestic affairs. They formed NAM(Non-Alignment Movement) for administering this wish.

Economy-wise third world countries were struggling as they were so young and inexperienced. Therefore, they wanted economic help from first world countries(especially from US). They could not ask for help from USSR since it fell. Third world countries also “tried” to produce everything themselves and minimize import while maximizing export. They believed this would make them develop, however only China really succeeded in this even though it is a Second World power.

The term “Third World” and its tasks are disappearing since the world is getting connected. This connection is making the countries inseparable since both sides have a mutual relationship with one another. For example, one provides raw materials, cheap labor etc. while the other provides market for manufactured goods, and if you combine this fact with things like World Trade Organization you will see that both of the countries are getting richer. Obviously this could lead to increase in global inequalities but “Third World” did not aim for bringing global equality.

1. With globalization and the intervention of the IMF in countries of the South, development took a new meaning, i.e. "integration in the world market". Describe the policies associated with this new orientation in matters of trade, industry, healthcare, education, etc. Discuss if this new model has fulfilled its developmental promises for countries of the South?

After the collapse of Third World, the idea of global south and global north emerged. Basically, global north was and still is much more developed than global south. However, the economic classes of north and south changed differently. For example, while the working class of global north gained(sometimes lost) so little purchasing power, working class of global south gained a lot more purchasing power.

The main reason of this change emerges from international companies. These companies try to increase their profits by finding the cheapest labor, tax, raw materials, and they sell their products on the global market for major profits. Now, this has many consequences.

First consequence is the job opportunities for the working class of the global north and south. As more factories and job opportunities open, working class of the south gets payed and even increase in numbers since companies buy peasants’ unregistered/inherited land from government to produce raw materials. Since companies mostly open their companies in the south, working class of the global north increasingly become jobless and disappear.

Second consequence is the difference of money payed in global south and global north. Companies pay taxes for producing, exporting, and selling(probably in low amounts) products to southern countries. However, companies pay taxes for importing and selling(in vast amounts) products to northern countries. The tax getting payed to north is a lot more than south since majority of the sales are being done in north. Moreover, even though companies pay wages to workers in the south(which is quite low since they have low minimum wage), companies keep the revenue to “themselves”. In return this money gets used for further development, but in the end the money gets stockpiled in the north.

Basically, while the globalization increase labor in the south, it is still cheap labor that contributes to almost nothing in that country compared to origin country.