

Economic problems of post-colonial development of countries of Global South

Introduction :

The immense economic inequality we observe in the world today didn't happen overnight, or even in the past century. It is the path-dependent outcome of a multitude of historical processes, one of the most important of which has been European colonialism.

The question of the development of the countries of the South has its origins between the 14th and 19th centuries, with the colonization of the world by the Western European states, and more particularly at the time of the industrial revolution in Europe at the end of the 18th century. The Industrial Revolution increased Europe's economic and military power tenfold, led to the conquest of Asia and Africa, and ensured Europe's undivided rule over the world, at least until the First World War.

Colonization is an important historical process of territorial and demographic expansion. It is a phenomenon characterised by migratory flows that involve the invasion, occupation and exploitation of a geographical space, the subjugation and political, cultural, religious and economic domination, and even the genocide, of the populations that had previously settled in that territory. It is an expansionist process of occupation, which consists in bringing other territories under foreign influence.

Despite the overall improvement in living standards through the establishment of hospitals, schools, roads, and the development of agriculture and industry, the colonized found that private and foreign interests benefited more from these new structures than the local population.

For example, in several colonies, the new administrators had eliminated local agriculture in favor of export crops that did not feed the local population. In fact, the colonized nations criticized the fact that there was no real profit for them while the metropolises profited from the natural resources and got richer. In addition, the independence movements criticized social inequalities and laws that favored one part of the population over another.

By the end of the First World War in 1919, the great colonial empires were at their peak. Their strength and wealth came directly from the overseas resources they drew from their colonies. On the other hand, in the inter-war period, the first movements demanding autonomy and independence emerged. Led by educated elites, these movements protested in the name of democratic principles, valued by the metropolises and flouted in the colonies, as well as in the name of national identity, which was also flouted. Despite these protest movements, the metropolises were still very strong on the eve of the Second World War. At the end of the war, demands for freedom and autonomy increased.

Decolonisation is a fairly recent historical phenomenon that stems from colonial conquest. It is the access of a nation to independence and sovereignty over territories formerly administered by foreign colonizing powers. This phenomenon has left deep traces in human history as well as in the global economic hierarchy.

There are two types of decolonisation: violent decolonisation and negotiated decolonisation. In the first case, decolonisation is achieved after many demonstrations, riots or wars. In the second case, the process of autonomy and independence is initiated by negotiations between the metropolis and the colony.

But what are the economic consequences of decolonisation on the countries ?

1- Historical point

Although the beginning of decolonisation is dated 1776, when the United States of America proclaimed its independence, this is only a "precursor". Decolonisation really began in 1945. In 1945, when the United Nations was founded, 750 million people - almost a third of the world's population - lived in territories that were not self-governing and were dependent on colonial powers. Today, there are still 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories with less than two million people living in them. The UN played a historic role in the wave of decolonisation and continues to work towards the decolonisation of these territories.

Since its inception, the UN has welcomed into its membership many nations that have broken free from colonial rule or trusteeship arrangements and have become sovereign and independent states.

With the hope of accelerating the progress of decolonisation, the General Assembly adopted a Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonized Countries and Peoples in 1960. This Declaration asserted that all peoples have the right of self-determination and proclaimed the need for a speedy and unconditional end to colonialism. Two years later, in 1962, the Assembly established a Special Committee to monitor the implementation of the Declaration and made recommendations on its implementation.

The UN also set up trusteeship regimes with the aim of fostering political, economic and social development and developing the capacity of peoples to govern themselves with the aim of achieving true independence. The trusteeship regimes had to ensure that the governments in place achieved these goals, while respecting human rights. All the Trust Territories became independent or associated with neighbouring states.

In 1990, the General Assembly subsequently declared the years 1990-2000 as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and adopted a plan of action to that effect.

2- The affirmation of the Global South

This period saw the affirmation of the Global South as a new political subject. In 1955, the **Bandung Conference** in Indonesia brought together the leaders of twenty-nine African and Asian countries, newly independent or still colonized.

Afghanistan, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast (present-day Ghana), Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, North Vietnam, South Vietnam and Yemen.

All of these countries had similar colonial histories and severe development problems. Together, these countries made up half the world's population, but accounted for only 8% of the world's wealth.

Distancing itself from an alignment with one of the two blocs resulting from the Yalta agreements, it affirmed the right of peoples to self-determination. The objective of development is therefore first and foremost a continuation of nationalist and anti-colonial struggles. Since the 1930s, populist governments in Latin America have also been pursuing

economic strategies aimed at achieving greater independence from the economic and political domination of the United States.

This conference also mentions the problem of underdevelopment as a major issue in the Global South. According to the representatives, political emancipation should be accompanied by economic and social emancipation.

They also proclaim equality between states, sovereignty over national resources, international solidarity and the development of peaceful coexistence.

3- The consequences of decolonisation

The formation of new independent nations created the global south countries (underdeveloped and developing countries). As they emerged, these new countries immediately asserted their independence from the duality of the Cold War blocs.

a) Unstable or confiscated political life

After gaining political autonomy, many of the new nations were confronted with ethnic and religious conflicts, the foundations of which had been laid during the colonial period. Some of these conflicts led to genocide. Democratisation is still difficult. Several countries that gained their independence at that time still have problems with dictatorships and totalitarian governments.

Indeed, the transition from colonisation to independence often leads to a power vacuum and political unrest that tarnishes the early years of independence.

In Africa, the most striking example is the former Belgian Congo, which became Zaire in 1965.

The first head of government, Lumumba, was assassinated in 1961 and a phase of political anarchy only ended with the establishment of a dictatorship with Mobutu.

The new states therefore frequently develop into despotic regimes. Only a minority of decolonised countries, such as India, managed to establish a lasting democracy.

There are many reasons for this: colonisation did not allow people to learn democracy; illiteracy makes it difficult to participate in political life. Moreover, a small elite has appropriated power and wealth. The countries of the global south were dependent on the rich countries because they were still too indebted and dependent on agriculture to develop a

profitable and dynamic economy. In general, global south countries have a high birth rate, a low standard of living and much poverty. For this reason, most of the former colonies have strong political ties with the metropolis. Moreover, the culture and language of the former metropolis still influence these young countries.

Finally, social, ethnic and religious divisions maintain instability. Finally, the intervention of foreign powers is the biggest problem.

The economic effect is that it also destabilizes the productive system, leading to poverty, malnutrition, famine and epidemic. These countries cannot focus on developing their economies if they cannot maintain political stability on their territory

b) A need to build nation states

The challenge for these states is to build a national feeling among their population. This is not an easy task, as many borders (made to order) have created states without a common past.

There have been several attempts to unite these new countries, but apart from the symbolism, these attempts have been in vain.

In the Egyptian revolution of 1952, the Free Officers established a Military Command Council with the aim of abolishing the monarchy. On 23 July 1952, Nasser and his officers overthrew King Farouk. In 1956 he nationalized the Suez Canal. The Franco-British intervention against Egypt federated Arab nationalism.

In Africa, the Ghanaian Nkrumah wanted to rethink African unity around the idea of pan-Africanism. Movement that seeks to unify culturally and politically the African peoples.

Elsewhere, it was communism and revolution led by the people that was to bind the nation state together (Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia)

4- Conquering economic independence

The economic development of the global south implies freeing itself from its dependence on the countries of the North.

a) The economic fragility of the new states

The 1/3 world includes all countries with limited economic development and serious social and health problems.

The starting indicators are poor:

- low average per capita income
- large gap in resources between a minority of rich and a majority of poor
- high fertility and illiteracy rates, or poor or under-nutrition

1st factor: a colonial past to which some economists attribute the current economic difficulties

The economy is dependent, they export raw materials but have not been industrialized (like cocoa in Ivory Coast)

2nd factor: internal factors

The exploitation of resources enriches a power elite that lives on corruption.

Underdevelopment is therefore explained by poor management and a waste of the environment and the ecosystem.

b) Different choices to break dependency

1st choice: in the 1950s and 1960s, Asian countries opted for industrialisation. Most often this involved developing what are known as industrializing industries, those that would allow other sectors to develop in their wake.

The example of the TATA group in India is significant: it launched itself into car manufacturing, trucks and then electronics.

2nd choice: Many have tried a socialist path of development.

It is based on the nationalization of resources, such as gas or oil in Algeria, rice, coffee or sisal in Tanzania .

The revolutionary path has been more dramatic (Bolivia, Congo)

3rd choice: the liberal choice: compete between Europe, USA and China

Countries also need to improve their educational infrastructure. The level of training of human resources plays a role in African economic specialization. In the extractive economy, abundant resources and a relatively unskilled labor force lead to the export of raw materials; this is also the case for agriculture. Transport and communication infrastructures are also very important for trade.

The economic activity of the colonies is based on local natural resources, which means that areas without these resources are totally neglected.

The colonial economy has neglected or even discouraged industrialisation and the processing of raw materials and agricultural products.

c) For a new world economic order

In 1964, a United Nations conference on trade and development met in Geneva (120 states, including 77 developing countries).

The aim was to give the South a satisfactory place in world trade by rebalancing the terms of trade. The UN wanted to promote the control by each State of these resources, which until then had been in the hands of multinational companies.

Countries wanted to express their demands in the area of trade relations, so that the most fragile states could enjoy specific advantages over the already developed states.

In 1960, OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, was created.

In 1963, the Organization of African Union and ASEAN (Association of SouthEast Asian Nations) were created.

The "New International Economic Order" officially came into being at special sessions of the United Nations: in May 1974, a declaration on its establishment and a programme of action were issued, and in September 1975, a Resolution on Development and International Economic Cooperation was approved without opposition, but not without reservations on the part of some countries.

Conclusion :

In conclusion, the countries of the South, after years of colonization, are facing major challenges in developing their economies and asserting themselves on the international scene. Indeed, after decolonisation, these countries, occupied for so long, have faced many instabilities. However, by reorganizing themselves politically and improving the standard of living of their people, they will be able to overcome these economic problems.