Chapter 8

The Rise and Fall of the Third World

The origins of decolonization

**A - The effects of the Second World War:**

War has weakened the old colonial powers of Europe: colonies realized that their conquerors are not invincible.

The local intellectual elites, trained in the great European democratic ideas, returned this legacy to the colonizers.

However, during the war they remained faithful and in 1945 they returned under their pre-war guardianship authorities.

But this fidelity had a price: the improvement of their situation.
The origins of decolonization

B - The role of nationalist movements:
Nationalist movements, mostly born in the interwar period, accentuate their criticism of the colonial system.
They find in the past customs, languages, religions, all the elements of a national identity that serve to fight against the power of Europe on its own ground of freedom, equality and democracy.
For some, these movements require autonomy (the French West Indies) and for others independence (India, Indonesia, Indochina, ...).

C - International support:
The U.R.S.S. condemns colonialism which is in the Marxist ideology, an expression of capitalism. In fact, it wants to weaken the western bloc and bring the new independent countries into its camp.
The US, a former emancipated colony, favors the idea of independence, but does not want it to benefit the Soviet camp.
The U.N. proclaims in its charter of 1945 the equality of peoples and their right to self-determination. This organization rapidly became the forum of these new nations.
**Stages and forms of decolonization**

Decolonization begins in **Asia** (India, Indonesia, Indochina), and in the **Middle East** (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine), then it touched **North Africa**: Tunisia, Morocco; Algeria, to reach finally, **Black Africa**, with the exception of the Portuguese and Spanish colonies.

**A - Peaceful decolonization:**
- India, along with Gandhi and Nehru, gained independence through non-violence in 1947.
- French and British Black Africa is also free of violence (except in Kenya).

**B - Violent decolonization:**
- Indonesia was forcibly freed from the Netherlands in 1949.
- French Indochina gained independence after a long war (1946-1954).
- In Algeria, war between 1954 and 1962.

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**The third world**

**A - Fragile States:**

All newly independent States have low levels of development. The majority of them have the same economic and political difficulties.

**B - A common will: Bandung (1955)**

- 29 mostly newly independent countries from Asia and Africa met at the Bandung Conference in Indonesia. They want to show that there can be a neutral "third way" between the two blocs. This event is of great importance because it was the first manifestation of the will of the Third World to exist.
- At the Belgrade Conference (1961), the Non-Aligned Movement was born, in line with the spirit of Bandung.

**C - A Difficult Unity:**

- These countries quickly fell under the influence of developed northern countries: some joined the communist camp (Cuba), Others moved closer to the capitalist camp (Black Africa), while others became the victims of wars waged by foreigners on their land (Vietnam).
Problems faced by the third world

The leaders of the young states face huge problems, notably:
• Low industrialization
• Insufficient food crops
• Uncontrolled population growth
• Great political instability
• Lack of administrative leaders
• Frail infrastructure (school, health system, communication, etc.)
• Lack of capital, skills and skilled labor.
• Lack of democratic tradition that led many of these countries to commit themselves to authoritarianism: a single party rule...
• Lack of national unity and stress between divided groups of different culture, language, religion

Influencing international relations

• From 1915 to 1955, the "third world" formed by the newly independent countries asserted itself against the two worlds of East and West. How can it influence international relations?
The political assertion of the Third World

The conference in Bandung (1955) brought together 29 countries (23 from Asia and 6 from Africa), representing more than half of the world's population but less than 10% of the wealth.

It affirms respect for State sovereignty, solidarity, the rejection of violence, racism and the need for development aid.

It leads to the unanimous condemnation of colonialism and marks the end of the complex of inferiority of the colonized with the idea of being able to create a "third way" neutralist.

Economic demands

A. Third World Countries at the UN (1964)

- Majority members of the United Nations General Assembly, they obtained the creation of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
- They propose that industrialized countries should give 1% of their GDP for the development of the Third World

B. Creation of the New International Economic Order (NIEO)(1973)

- At the Algiers conference, the Third World countries expressed their demands: an adjustment of the rules of the world market.
- Some gather in economic organizations in 1960, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in order to make better use of a wealth controlled by Western companies, OPEC increases oil prices in 1973.
- The economic crisis, after 1973, accentuated the divergence of interests between States, and the new economic order did not succeed.