

Figure 10.1.2.5. Colonialism

Database: World Problems and Issues

Link type: aggravates problems

Network nodes: 85

UIA database: <http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/uiaf?DD=PR&DR=C0798>



Colonialism is the establishment and maintenance, for an extended time, of rule over a people that is separate from and subordinate to the ruling power. It imposes alien, authoritarian and more or less repressive regimes on materially inferior societies. Colonialism, because it moulds geographically, culturally, politically, socially and economically the life of subordinate societies to meet the needs of the colonial powers, not only violates, in the present, the elementary rights to self-determination but jeopardizes future possibilities of self-centred development. When the international community became aware of the seriousness and extent of the calamity of slavery, it undertook to abolish it but had already opened the door to another form of exploitation and domination: colonization. The slaving powers turned into colonial powers. As in the previous system, the conflicts that preceded and accompanied colonial conquests were brutal and inhuman. Colonization entailed the destruction and modification of the structures of the colonized peoples. The international community, through its deliberative body of the period - the General Assembly of the League of Nations - which was dominated by the Western countries, had authorized those countries to divide up the third world and form colonial empires. They then had the backing of the international community to plunder the third world and to dispossess the colonized peoples of almost all their lands and possessions. It is now neo-colonization that is perpetuating the domination and exploitation of the countries caught up in the machinery of the system. The decolonization movement, after the severing of the bonds of domination and exploitation, posed the problem of the relationships between the former colonies and the colonizer in terms of development, equality and restitution of wealth which, of course, encountered the resistance of the debtor countries. This gave rise to the saying that one of the prerequisites for decolonization was to secure the previously existing status quo. One of the most important factors in maintaining that situation is the cooperation provided by the former colonial powers, which uses a series of constraints to impose its will on the former colony, now a "sovereign state" but actually without means or power. In this unequal relationship between assisted and assister, the latter imposes its will and thus maintains the general orientation of existing or new structures in the economic, social and cultural spheres. Whatever form decolonization took, whether violent or negotiated, it has led everywhere to the same disastrous result of dependence and exploitation, maintaining an unjust world economic order.