

Capitalism and Drug Addiction: Marxist Point of View



2022-09-10

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Drug addiction has become the true scourge of human society. Despite the best efforts of bourgeois governments, drug use is slowly but surely increasing, affecting more than a quarter of a billion people [1]. What is the reason for the spread of this rampant social disease?

Bourgeois specialists often point to the fact that drug addiction has existed since the caveman times, and this is partly true. Indeed, humankind since ancient times has known various plants and mushrooms, causing euphoria or hallucinations. But neither the ancient world nor the Middle Ages knew drug addiction as it has existed for the past 200 years. Drug-containing preparations were used either in religious rituals or in medical practice, and the use was strictly controlled by priests or medical “specialists” (often the same person). Whether we are talking about ancient Egypt or ancient Greece, pre-Christian Rus or medieval China - everywhere we find strict regulation of drug-trade by the tribal/priestly caste, who understood the damage of drug addiction to the productive forces of the society (and therefore to them, sitting on its neck).

Capitalism has changed the situation. Drugs became a commodity, a very profitable commodity, with the specific ability to be physically addictive. This fact was first noticed by the English of the East India Company, who in 1772 decided to improve the affairs of the colonial administration in impoverished Bengal by selling opium to China. The Chinese people were literally poisoned by a steady flow of Bengal opium, and British businessmen were known to have responded very aggressively to attempts by the Chinese government to restrict the sale of “overseas dirt” by launching the Opium Wars. After the second Opium War of 1856-60, the flow of opium into China from India took on disastrous proportions, contributing to the transformation of the once-great ancient empire into a thoroughfare run by imperialists of all stripes.

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The same opium business, albeit on a smaller scale, was conducted by the British in Malaya and Siam, by the French in Indochina, and by the Spanish in the Philippines.

In Europe, opium and hashish, introduced at the dawn of colonialism, were only popular with the decaying petty bourgeoisie. Parlour bohemians, artistic intelligentsia and simply those tired of the intolerable heaviness of life in the world got used to opium as they tried to escape from the imperfection of this world in a swirl of narcotic smoke through exotic opium pipes. Quickly, opium and hashish became too expensive for the working class, so workers and ruined peasants overcame the horrors of their intolerable exploitation with cheap alcohol, as Friedrich Engels beautifully describes in «The Condition of the Working Class in England».

Further, opiates began to pave the way for mass acceptance through medicine. Among the many sciences that received a major boost with the establishment of capitalism was the pharmaceutical industry which was desperately seeking an anaesthetic. This was especially important in the context of the many wars of depredation. In 1807, Armand Seguin, a doctor in Napoleon’s army, was the first to isolate and extract morphine from opium for the treatment of wounded and crippled soldiers. Later, with the invention of the injection needle, morphine was widely used not only during wars (American Civil War, Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian wars), after which the number of addicts increased enormously, but also in “civilian

medicine". It was used carelessly; morphine was prescribed for literally all diseases, and doctors themselves were dangerously influenced by the drug (in the 19th century, the medical profession dominated among morphine addicts) [3].

Medicine continued to provide humankind with new drugs. In the late 1870s, cocaine extracted from coca leaves began to be used as an anaesthetic, and in 1898 an even stronger, "heroin analgesia" - heroin - was discovered.

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The transition of capitalism to a monopolistic stage has taken drug addiction to a new level.

More and more people, who have lost faith in the future and are seeking oblivion from the atrocities of the capitalist system, are purposefully using drugs. The incessant raging of wars between imperialist powers created new strains for the army of morphine-dependent drug addicts. Here we should point out that even the Bolsheviks faced a very serious epidemic of cocaine and morphine use in Russian society during the hard period of the Revolution and the Civil War (not to mention the NEP) [4].

Particularly striking was the transformation of drugs from regulated clinical use to a distinct commodity designed to destroy the human personality. In the 1920s international business cartels were forming, specializing solely in the production and smuggling of drugs that were banned for medical use in most developed countries. The new shadow sector of the bourgeoisie now began poisoning not only nations under colonial oppression, but also its own population with the lucrative poison.

World War II slowed this process down somewhat. The severing of trade ties, the severe crisis, militaristic agitation and quite serious repressive measures led to the destabilization of drug traffic and a significant reduction of drug addiction in Europe and the United States. The defeat of fascism, on which the world bourgeoisie had placed its main stakes in the fight against communism, placed the ruling class in a very difficult position. A new ally was needed to destroy the "red menace". And one such ally of imperialism was the young drug mafia.

Warm relations between the class partners were established immediately after the end of the Second World War. When the situation became tense in France and Italy, countries with the largest and strongest communist parties in Western Europe, hardened during the years of armed struggle against fascism, imperialism resorted to the services of organized crime.

In France, the imperialist bourgeoisie found reliable support in its confrontation with the communists in the form of the Corsican criminals, who obligingly engaged in the beating, intimidation and murder of trade union and communist leaders in the south. In 1947, 1948 and 1950, members of the "Union of Corsica" went as far as to completely copulate with the bourgeois leadership of France. At the behest of the authorities, the proud Corsicans disrupted the grandiose workers' strikes supported by the Communists, which reached millions of workers throughout the country. It went so far that members of the Mafia structure not only terrorized the workers in their customary way by trying to force them to abandon their legitimate demands but also provided businessmen with strikebreakers to disrupt the strikes.

In return for these services imperialism, represented by the secret services of the United States and France, the Corsicans were given a carte blanche to carry on the very lucrative business of producing and transporting heroin and opium to the United States. Marseille and specifically the port of Marseilles, where the Corsican mafia reigned unchallenged at the instigation of the reactionaries, became a key point in the international heroin production and distribution network. Later, during the national liberation struggle of the Indochinese people against France and

America, the Corsicans would further solidify their position in world drug trafficking by increasing the flow of drugs from Southeast Asia to Europe and the United States.

Another ally of reaction in Western Europe was the Italian mafia, above all the Sicilian mafia. Let us point out that the Italian scoundrel Salvatore "Lucky" Luciano, boss of the Italian Mafia in the USA, who became famous in the 1930s for his entrepreneurship in Cuba (which, thanks to the assistance of a certain Fulgencio Batista, then-commander-in-chief of the armed forces, turned into one big brothel, bringing multimillion-dollar profits to Cosa Nostra) in 1943 considerably assisted the western allies in the preparations for the invasion of Sicily, for which he was officially released from an American prison and extradited to his homeland in order to stand there at the head of an international network for the transfer of heroin to the United States.

Don Calogero Vizzini, the direct leader of the Mafia in Sicily, was also a confidant of the American imperialists on the island. It went so far as to have Mafia members appointed mayors of whole cities by the Allied administration under his patronage. Vizzini, of course, did his best to help his American friends by intimidating, harassing and attacking representatives of the Italian Communist Party. On 16 September 1944, for example, his thugs shot up a Communist rally, wounding 19 people

Let's not forget the even more fierce scoundrel, the bastard Salvatore Giuliano, a thug in the service of the Sicilian "family". He took an active part in the CIA-inspired secessionist armed struggle in Sicily in late 1945 and early 1946, and after the collapse of the venture to secede the island from the "red" Italy, Giuliano went into hiding, engaging in outright banditry and occasionally providing services to the reactionary forces. Thus, members of his gang were engaged in attacks on polling stations, offices of the peasant leagues and the offices of the Communist Party of Italy in the run-up to and during the local elections on April 20, 1947. Around the same time, Giuliano, a faithful son of his homeland, drafted a letter to Harry Truman asking him to take Sicily under the protectorate of the USA, i.e. to turn the island into an American colony. The counterrevolutionary activity of this "Robin Hood of Sicily" (as he was nicknamed by the bourgeois press) culminated in the attack on the Communist demonstration on May Day in 1947 when 11 people were killed.

The result of all this activity, which also included counter-revolutionary propaganda in the masses, outright forgery and falsification, intimidation and other methods, was to undermine the left-wing forces in Sicily already by 1948. Political power on the island was effectively divided between the Christian Democrats and the Mafia. It is hardly a coincidence that during the second half of the 1940s Sicily, along with Marseille, became a safe haven for processing Middle Eastern opium into heroin and transporting it to the United States. And, even more surprisingly, until the end of the 50s, these activities did not raise any questions either by the CIA or, all the more so, by the police structures of the Italian bourgeois state.

The combined efforts of the Sicilian-Corsican Mafia, which took full control of the drug supply to the United States, resulted in a threefold increase in the number of American heroin addicts (from 20,000 at the end of World War II to 60,000 in 1952). By 1965, this figure had risen to 150,000 [5].

A similar role was played in Japan by the famous "inflexible" yakuza gangsters, who were a reliable social base of reaction, on which Japanese fascism had relied since the 1930s. Yoshio Kodama, an ultra-nationalist "kuromaku" (a kind of "grey cardinal") (by the way, adherence to the most reactionary kind of "patriotism" is a typical feature of yakuza), during the American occupation, was released from prison, where he had been imprisoned on war crimes charges, solely to use his authority and connections in the underworld to help his "Western friends" in their struggle against the workers and communist movement. Kodama controlled terrorists, in the name of "Japan's greatness" under the heel of the United States,

enthusiastically attacked workers' rallies and strikes, served as screechers and even political agitators for the Liberal Democratic Party, funded by Kodama's friend, the millionaire fascist Ryoichi Sasakawa, who was behind the World Anti-Communist League, which brought together anti-communist forces in Asia in the postwar period.

The imperialist occupiers had an equal relationship of trust with Hisayuki Machii, leader of the Korean yakuza, who used the temporarily damaged influence of the Japanese to crush Japan's "black market" in the mid-40s. Machiya's militants, with the full support of the occupation administration, also worked to prevent the strengthening of the Japanese workers and left-wing movement. Later this Korean gangster and his scumbags were directly cooperating with the South Korean secret service. Machiya's men, in particular, were behind the abduction from a Tokyo hotel and attempted murder of Park Chung-hee's oppositional Kim Dae-jung.

In fact, an alliance of fascists, criminals and imperialist "advisers" had unlimited power in Japan throughout the 50s and 60s. It reached the point where, faced with the threat of growing labour unrest in the 1960s, the Japanese government was earnestly asking for help from the mafia organizations in crushing the Japanese people's resentment against exploitation and poverty [6].

Undoubtedly, this class alliance contributed to the saturation of the Japanese islands with drugs, which poured in massively during the Korean War, and also had a beneficial effect on the development of opium and heroin traffic from Japan to the United States.

Imperialism did not disdain even the most unimportant criminal allies. Thus, during the great rise of the Black rights movement in the United States in the late 60s, the FBI promoted the growth and development of drug gangs in the black ghettos of New York, Chicago and Los Angeles by trying, on the one hand, to pit the declarants against black political organizations, among which the ultra-left Black Panther Party was most prominent and, on the other, to discredit the black movement by linking it to heroin addiction.

A similar approach was used by the reactionary bourgeoisie in the Basque Country and in the Catholic neighbourhoods of Northern Irish cities in the early 1980s. In a short time, these most militarized regions of Europe, literally flooded with police and secret service agents, were miraculously transformed into a real hotbed of heroin addiction, which in this case, like the Chinese opium epidemic of the 19th century, served as a means of curbing the revolutionary fervour of young people.

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It must be said that the mafia and the reactionaries remained reliable class partners of imperialism even after the temporary removal of the revolutionary threat. A typical example is the Albanian mafia, which actively penetrated the European market in the mid-90s by relying on the notorious "Kosovo Liberation Army", a Western-controlled nationalist organization fighting the government of independent Yugoslavia, whose budget was actually entirely formed by trafficking heroin from the Middle East.

Another field of activity for imperialism in the construction and organization of an international network of drug trafficking was Southeast Asia, which was also "tormented by the damned communists".

Here the drug trade has a long tradition established by the European colonialists. During World War II, the "glorious" legacy was taken over by the Japanese warmongers who actively promoted the trade and consumption of opium in China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia known as the whole "East Asian prosperity zone". The aim in this case was not profit but drug addiction in order to degrade the morale of the local resistance.

The defeat of Japan created enormous problems for Western imperialists. The struggle of peoples against oppression rose up everywhere. The anti-Japanese guerrilla armies, led by communists, were being transformed into armies of national and social liberation. The triumph of the revolution in China, followed by the defeat in the Korean War, sowed panic in the reactionary camp. It was necessary to look for support to carry out subversive actions against the people's camp, and such support was soon found.

The victory of the Chinese Revolution wrested a great nation from the grip of years of drug addiction. Naturally, a large cohort of drug-trafficking parasites lost their profits and joined the camp of avowed counter-revolutionaries and fighters against communism. This rabble was soon joined by exiled "Kuomintang" fighters from China to wage a "holy war of liberation" against the Reds, supported by the CIA. A counter-revolutionary army, led by General Li Minh and supplied almost exclusively by the opium trade, began to form in the border areas of Burma. In 1952, a large pocket of them attempted to invade China but were crushed and driven out. General Li Ming then allied with local mountain tribes to form a quasi-state in Burma's Shan State, with the stated goal of fighting to "liberate" China from the Communists. The budget of this anti-communist military state was based entirely on the profits from drug sales.

Over the next few years the unrecognized Shan State, with the strongest support from the CIA, became the world's largest opium and heroin factory, closely linked to the fascist pro-American governments of Thailand and Taiwan.

In neighbouring Laos, the imperialists, anxious to destroy the revolutionary movement, placed a major stake in the backward Hmong hill tribe, whose leaders were markedly reactionary. The French were also actively using the Hmong people in combat operations against the Vietminh. The Americans, following them, relied on the highlanders in the war against Pathet Lao and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. The reactionary Hmong did not, of course, fight for the imperialists' interests for free. In return for their services, the French and American aggressors were eager to establish and expand opium production in the Hmong territories. Attracted by the prospect of enormous revenues, the tribal nobility began planting opium poppy crops that were then sold by the peasants to the chiefs in exchange for farm tools, crockery and other cheap implements.

Eventually, the "opium king" who held all the keys to producing and processing opium into drugs by the late 1950s was General Vang Pao, a warlord loyal to the royal throne and American capital who, in 1960, formed the Secret Army, an anti-Communist paramilitary gang, whose mission was to suppress the revolutionary movement of Lao and Vietnamese patriots using money from drug trafficking. On the grounds of fighting his own people, Vang Pao befriended another ardent anti-communist, the leader of the Lao right wing, General Phumi Nosavan. With the help of the CIA, which even provided transport planes to transport drugs, the pair expanded production taking on the honourable mission of processing not only Laotian but also portions of Burmese opium into heroin. From there it went to South Vietnam and then onto Marseille through the well-known Corsicans who acted with the tacit approval of American advisors. Other portions of this heroin went to the Vietnamese population. Somewhat later, this same Laotian heroin was used to poison American soldiers involved in an unjust war.

Thus, due to a combination of drug mafia, fascists and imperialist strategists, by 1970 more than half of all the opium consumed in the world was produced in the so-called Golden Triangle, which was formed between Burma, Laos and Thailand.

The revolution's victory in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia changed the situation but did not eliminate it in the region. Fascist drug traffickers led by Wang Pao fled to Thailand, from where they continued to control heroin production in the inaccessible

mountainous parts of Laos. In the northern part of Thailand, the ageing veteran Kuomintang, led by Khun Sa, entrenched themselves by securely controlling the drug trade traffic from Burma with the full support of the Thai fascist government of General Kriangsak Chamamanan. Subsequently pushed out of Thailand into Burma, opium general Khun Sa joined forces with Shan separatists and the wise men of Lee Minh to declare independence for the Shan State in 1985, becoming the commander of the most powerful armed group in the Golden Triangle.

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We cannot remain silent about Afghanistan, which, thanks to the efforts of U.S. imperialism and local reactionaries, within a fairly short time turned into the centre of the Golden Crescent, the second-largest opium and heroin production zone in the world. In fact, even before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S. administration and the intelligence services of the Shah of Iran supported the local Afghan anti-communist opposition who were armed through the revenue of heroin production and trafficking. With the outbreak of war, this support only intensified.

In this way, for example, Hezb-e Islami, a small grouping of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, transformed itself through drug trafficking into the largest guerrilla force in the country. Hekmatyar's transformation from a small-time rabid fanatic who spat in the faces of girls who dared to remove their veils, into a respectable and prominent Afghan heroin baron was facilitated not only by the CIA but also by the fascist regime of Pakistani General Zia and the reactionary Jamaat-e Islami movement which had strong connections within the officer corps of the Pakistani army. As in Laos, Afghan "freedom fighters" cultivated opium poppies among farmers and then took the purchased opium to Pakistan where it was milled into heroin by local craftsmen under the watchful eye of officials. The most famous among these "devout Muslims" aiding the fight against Red Satan through heroin production is a close friend of dictator Zia, the governor of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, General Fazl Huq, who amassed a frenetic fortune estimated to be several billion dollars through the drug trade.

Of course, this could not fail to have repercussions on Pakistan itself, where the number of heroin addicts has grown from zero in 1978 to three million in 1989.

During the eighth decade of the 20th century, imperialism and global reaction provided increasing support to the Afghan mujahideen. The quantity of Afghan heroin on the European and U.S. markets also increased. In '79 heroin from Afghanistan flooded into the United States via Pakistan, causing a 22% increase in street sales of the drug. The production itself is more than five times bigger than in 1971 (100 tons compared to 575 in 1982). In the early 1980s, monsoon rains wiped out the opium poppy crop for two years running, and the Golden Triangle lost its lead in heroin trafficking to Europe. In the meantime, the Burmese drug was replaced by the Afghan drug. Overall, by 1989, global opium production due to drug mafia activities in Afghanistan and the Golden Triangle has more than quadrupled since 1979.

After the Soviet withdrawal, Afghanistan became an arena of violent clashes between the mujahedin who rushed to divide the spheres of influence in the drug trade. The 1995 seizure of power by US-backed Taliban Islamists, contrary to the assurances of some contemporary scholars, did not change the situation. It was not until 2000 that the Taliban issued a fatwa banning the cultivation of opium poppies. As a result, heroin production plummeted in 2001 and wholesale prices on the regional market soared to record highs. This suggested that this was a major marketing operation that allowed the Taliban to make super profits for some time from stocks of dry opium, which, unlike many other agricultural products, does not require storage. Nevertheless, by 2002 the situation was already improving, the Taliban had been pushed back by Northern Alliance troops into the areas bordering Pakistan and opium poppy cultivation was rapidly re-established.

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A third source of global drug trafficking can rightly be identified as Central America and part of the Andean region, covering Colombia, Bolivia and Peru.

The pioneers of drug trafficking in Latin America can be described as American “volunteers” working in the framework of the Peace Corps in the Andean region back in the mid-60s [7]. It was they, first of all, who established the cultivation of marijuana in the Sierra Nevada and, second, became agents of the American mafia in the region resulting in large marijuana processing centres in Magdalena, Cesar and Guajira, whose production immediately went into the illicit U.S. drug market. By 1974 a crisis in cotton production, which began with the widespread use of synthetic fibre, forced a large number of farmers on the north coast of Colombia to turn to cultivating the drug crop. Meanwhile, the Colombian drug mafia, which developed around purchasing and selling drugs, penetrated deep into the structures of the bourgeois state to provide the necessary comfort in drug production and distribution and in money laundering.

In the mid-70’s the Colombian mafia slowly began to turn to the production of much more expensive cocaine whose production technology was brought from Peru. The Americans had also by then started producing their own higher-quality marijuana. Thus, the “boom” in the use of marijuana in the U.S. gave rise to the growth and consolidation of the Colombian Mafia, whose godfathers were the Peace Corps, closely allied to the CIA and American gangsters.

Directly in Colombia, the drug cartels that emerged in the late 1970s became a mainstay in the struggle of the rather weak bourgeois state against the leftist guerrilla movement. In December 1981, 223 major leaders of the Colombian drug mafia met and each gave 2 million pesos and 10 of their best men to create an organization that would fight the communist guerrillas. Thus was born one of the first anti-guerrilla groups, the «Muerte a Secuestradores», a two-thousand-strong army dedicated to eliminating both the direct members of the insurgency and those who supported it. This was the beginning of the history of the so-called Colombian Paramilitarios, numerous fascist death squads in the service of the drug mafia and the government, whose leaders, like the Castaño brothers, Ramón Isas or Carlos María Jiménez, became big cocaine barons themselves as their units grew.

Over time, the Colombian cartels became so strong that they could afford to enter “big politics”, hoping to squeeze out the “old” Colombian bourgeoisie, which, backed by the U.S., in the late 80s, launched a war against the most dangerous threats against them; in particular, against the famous Medellín cartel headed by Pablo Escobar, whose ascendancy was facilitated by the overthrow by the U.S. military of Manuel Noriega, the Panamanian dictator who had previously actively collaborated with the Medellín cartel.

Noriega’s dictatorship is worth telling about separately. Known to the CIA as an active participant in drug trafficking since the mid-1970s, he was patronized by imperialism for his anti-communist positions. By providing the Americans with a number of minor services in the 1980’s, such as shelter for the Shah of Iran who fled the revolution, this high-ranking drug dealer Noriega became worth his weight in gold to the United States as he provided the rearguard for the activities of anti-communist Nicaraguan thugs known as “contras”. Another patron of the Contras’ fight against the Sandinista Revolution was Honduran general Paz García who, with the financial support of local drug mafia boss Juan Ramón Matta Balceros, took power in 1978 with the so-called “cocaine coup”. These two “great chiefs” opened a new chapter in the collaboration between fascists, the military, the CIA and the drug mafia in the fight against communism.

Throughout the 1980s the role of drug trafficking in financing the activities of the Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries increased as the Reagan administration

withdrew official financial aid under international pressure and outrageous scandals. Eventually, by 1982, the Contras were operating solely on the proceeds of moving Colombian cocaine into the United States. As a matter of fact, Avión de Panama planes leaving Panama would unload weapons for the contras in Costa Rica and proceed to South Florida with a cargo of cocaine, all under the protection of the CIA. Similar functions of transporting weapons and cocaine from Honduras to the U.S. and back were performed by SETCO, owned by Balderos.

Incidentally, it was a representative of the contras, Danilo Blandon, who first began shipping crack, a cheaper smokable form of cocaine, to the USA, intended for distribution in black ghettos in the USA still plagued by revolutionary fermentation. The results have been unprecedented. Crack cocaine has literally exploded the black community, spreading rapidly among teenagers and young adults and causing record overdoses, rising crime, AIDS and other problems. Profits from the trade, of course, went to rearming and intensifying the counter-revolutionary struggle in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Perhaps the most striking picture of a the total communion of fascists, drug mafia and imperialism can be found in Bolivia where General Luis García Mesa Tejada came to power through a coup in 1980. By installing a special political apparatus led by international fascist mercenaries like the Italian Stefano Delle Chiaje and the German war criminal Klaus Barbier, Luis García Mesa unleashed a fierce terror against the leftist opposition in the country. On the other hand, Interior Minister Luis Arce Gomez, associated with the cocaine trade since the mid-1970s, literally consolidated the Bolivian drug mafia under his own leadership, helping to move cocaine to the USA in exchange for help in strengthening the fascist dictatorship. The drug mafia was in fact legalized, becoming almost the main financial and social pillar of the fascist regime. However, the "anti-Communist" figures in Bolivia soon took on the grotesque features of crazy thugs, and the Bolivian cocaine experiment itself raised questions even from Washington supervisors. Eventually, just under a year later, Luis García's fascist-criminal clique was quietly ousted.

Another major functionary who promoted drug trafficking in the 1980s was the head of Peruvian intelligence, Vladimiro Montesinos, whose star shone brightly during the Alberto Fujimori era. Vowed to eradicate the "motherland-weary communists" of the Maoist «Shining Path» and the hevarist Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, Montesinos not only organized a network of death squads that successfully suppressed the revolutionary movement but also developed a boom in the airlift of cocaine supplied by Peruvian drug cartels.

Another powerful figure in Latin American trafficking was the aforementioned Manuel Noriega, who was unexpectedly accused of drug-trafficking links by US imperialists in 1989. Given the CIA's long-standing support for this shady initiative, the accusations seemed bizarre. By the late 1980s, the Noriega regime had become a nuisance to the vast majority of Panamanians. Arbitrary rule by officials clearly linked to the drug mafia, impoverishment and terror against the disaffected led to widespread popular protests in 1987. The prospect of future political upheavals and fear of a strengthening of anti-imperialist forces led Washington to remove Noriega from power on the pretext of "fighting the drug mafia".

In general, as the "red menace" waned, the fight against the drug trade became a convenient excuse for the imperialists to intervene in the affairs of sovereign countries. The first victim of this "war" was Bolivia, where in 1989 the forces of US imperialism carried out a stupendous operation that involved 160 rangers and six attack helicopters and resulted in the capture of one (!!!) 17-year-old cocaine trafficker. Then Colombia and Panama fell under the hammer of "fighting the death dealers", where it ended with government overthrow, street fights and hundreds of victims. During the nineties, U.S. imperialism flooded Latin American countries with its "counsellors" against drugs, who replaced the more irrelevant "counsellors

against subversion". It goes without saying that the true role of these "aides" is not so much to catch drug lords as to control the repressive forces of formally independent countries.

It should be noted that Russian imperialism has been timidly trying a similar technique in Central America in recent years. For example, some 250 Russian servicemen are permanently stationed in Nicaragua as part of "cooperation" against drug trafficking and take part in patrolling the coastal zone. Additionally, a centre is being completed in Managua where Russian specialists will train their Nicaraguan colleagues in successfully combating drug trafficking [8].

The enormous number of scandals related to the US administration's support of the drug mafia in Central America, Southeast Asia and Afghanistan, which shook the American public in the mid-80s, put imperialism in a rather delicate position. A way out was quickly found. Responsibility for the growth of the drug trade was shifted to the "communists" themselves, who acted at the direct instigation of Cuba and the USSR.

Allegations of drug-trafficking links with the Nicaraguan revolutionary government first surfaced in 1984. The evidence was a photograph circulated by the CIA, allegedly showing the unloading of bags of cocaine in the presence of a high-ranking Sandinista official. The fictitious nature of the photograph was quietly revealed in the American Congress three years later but that could not stop the imperialists who had found a new convenient excuse to blame the progressive forces. In the mouths of bourgeois journalists, a new label appears, "narcoguerrilla", which is hung on practically every revolutionary movement of countries in the zone of the cultivation of narcotic plants.

Thus, apart from Nicaraguan and Colombian guerrillas, Peruvian, Thai, Filipino and Indian Maoists, Tamil separatists, and communist insurgents in Sri Lanka, fighters for the Kurdish liberation movement in Turkey and Iraq as well as Palestinian fidas were all classified as "narcoguerrillas." Of course, there was some truth in these accusations, but the guerrilla's contribution to the development of drug trafficking was negligible compared to the activities of functionaries of various reactionary regimes and the secret services of capitalist countries.

The production of drugs, including cultivation of plants, direct production, transportation, distribution and money laundering, simply could not exist on the present scale without the considerable involvement of the military, police, customs officials of central governments and bank officials. As for the latter, the links between the drug mafia and the major industrial-banking monopolies are no longer denied even by the bourgeois experts themselves [9] [10] [11] [12].

Left-wing partisans do not and never have had such extensive international connections and official representatives on the scale necessary to maintain trade.

From the examples above we have seen that the drug trade is not at all an organic commercial phenomenon which has arisen "spontaneously," as some bourgeois experts assure us, adding in no uncertain terms that demand creates supply. Indeed, the capitalist system produces the social depression and frustration underlying drug addiction, alcoholism, debauchery, suicidal behaviour, and similar decadent phenomena. But drug addiction could never have reached such a large scale had it not been for the efforts of monopolistic capital, which was determined to maintain its domination by all means in the face of the rising proletarian revolutionary wave.

Along the way, capital did not shy away from mutually beneficial cooperation with the mafia structures which were a reliable class partner of the ruling bourgeoisie. In this regard, it is not surprising that the drug mafia has the same ideological

attitudes as the dying bourgeoisie. That is, anti-communism of the most reactionary kind, sometimes combined with outright fascism.

Of course, the repressive bodies of bourgeois states have conducted and continue to conduct a formal struggle against drug trafficking, but this showy struggle against petty dealers does nothing to stop the involvement of more and more people in the drug vortex and does not cut the roots of the drug mafia.

Opposite examples can be found in the 20th century: revolutionary China, revolutionary Vietnam, and revolutionary Cuba, which inherited from the “best socio-economic system” tens of thousands of drug addicts and a huge army of drug dealers and traffickers of death. So what? In a fairly short period of time, these countries eliminated drug addiction, cured the addicts and destroyed the scoundrels who profited from degradation. Why? Because for the proletariat who took power in China, Vietnam or Cuba in those years, the drug mafia was not a “class partner”, not an “ally”, but a sworn class enemy. And the degradation of human personality generated by drug addiction was not a tool in the perpetuation of exploitation, but an intolerable and harmful phenomenon for both people and society. Unfortunately, at present these countries have long since ceased to be revolutionary states of the proletariat – and the problem of drug addiction in them is once again becoming topical.

This brings us to the conclusion that drug addiction in its present form has its origins in a dying capitalism, and without the final destruction of this outdated socio-economic system the struggle against drug addiction, the drug trade and the drug mafia is pointless.

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