Workers of the world, unite, you have nothing to lose but your (Global Value) chains: The NICL revisited


Abstract

Twenty-five years ago, I started publishing work that described a New International Division of Cultural Labor (NICL).1 Since that time, the concept has generated further research.2 In this chapter, I run through the idea and why it is in need of revision to describe the current conjuncture, in terms of both work and the environment.

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Global affairs. Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your food! "Venezuela is now the world's most indebted country. No country has a larger public external debt as a share of GDP or of exports, or faces higher debt service as a share of exports. "But, like Romania under Nicolae Ceauşescu in the 1980s, the government decided to cut imports while remaining current on foreign-debt service, repeatedly surprising the market, which was expecting a restructuring. The same study found that 74% of Venezuelans involuntarily lost an average of 8.6 kilos (19 pounds) in weight." In the absence of war or natural disaster, it takes a lot for a fertile country not to produce enough food to feed itself. The political slogan "Workers of the world, unite!" is one of the most famous rallying cries from The Communist Manifesto (1848) by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (German: Proletarier aller Länder vereinigt Euch!, literally "Proletarians of all countries, unite!", but soon popularised in English as "Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!"). A variation of this phrase ("Workers of all lands, unite!") is also inscribed on Marx's tombstone. The essence of the slogan is that...