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Fighting for People's Minds

IDEOLOGICAL INROADS OF IMPERIALISM IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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AT PRESENT the main content of the anti-imperialist national-liberation movement is the struggle for economic independence. In this struggle the peoples of the developing countries receive support and assistance from the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

In contrast to this, imperialism has made every effort to hold up the process of securing economic independence by the countries of the Third World. They are trying to prevent them from cooperating with the socialist camp and with the international working class movement and to force on them the capitalist road of development. To this end they make use of economic, political and ideological methods and sometimes they resort to military pressure. Such actions are not an unusual occurrence. Suffice it to recall the threats hurled by James Schlesinger, the former U S Defence Secretary, at the Arab countries. He declared that the United States would possibly employ armed force if the Arabs introduced an embargo on oil exports to the Western countries. In pursuit of similar goals, the Pentagon has been building and expanding military bases in the Indian Ocean, building up its military presence in the Persian Gulf, and so on.

However, even the warlike imperialist circles realise that they can no longer count on success if they employ their traditional cruel methods. That is why they have increasingly been giving preference to the more sophisticated "flexible" methods which include making ideological inroads into the developing countries of Asia and Africa.

The imperialist states have created a tremendous propaganda machine for this purpose. Take, for instance, the widely ramified

United States Information Agency and the "Voice of America," the British Thompson Fund and the British Broadcasting Corporation, and the Friedrich Ebert Fund of Western Germany. The scale of the propaganda services maintained by the Western powers is increasing with every year. It would be quite right to say that imperialism has launched an ideological offensive against the developing countries. It is flooding them with thousands of millions of copies of books, pamphlets and leaflets, conducting regular radio transmissions in the local languages at the rate of several hundred hours and supplying thousands of films. The "Voice of America" alone broadcasts for 845 hours a week in 38 languages. The overall volume of the BBC's foreign broadcasts reaches 700 hours a week. The avalanche of information produces a stunning impact on radio listeners, televiewers and film goers.

What is the main content of Western propaganda and what are the methods of ideological influence used by the West on the developing countries?

The Western propaganda machines are trying to persuade the Third World countries that the capitalist system which is responsible for the exploitation of the working people, for the plunder of the peoples and for the impoverishment, suffering and hunger of millions of people no longer exists. They claim that it has been replaced by a "new" and "democratic" capitalism which is seeking to achieve "welfare for all." The imperialists assert that it displays understanding of the needs of the peoples in the newly-free countries and is prepared to assist them in assimilating the "democratic foundations" of Western civilisation.

In their effort to give capitalism an attractive appearance, the advocates of imperialism keep harping on the thesis of the "generosity" of the big imperialist powers and their "disinterested" aid to the developing countries. However, they keep silent about the political, economic and other strings attached to this aid." Readers and listeners are kept ignorant of the fact that Western "aid" is ultimately aimed at retaining the developing countries as suppliers of raw materials for the United States, Great Britain, the FRG and the other Western countries, and at artificially retarding the rate of development of heavy industry and other vital economic sectors in the former colonies and semi-colonies in Asia and Africa.

The Nigerian weekly **Tide** aptly described the true aim of such "aid" as follows: since the imperialists are no longer in a position to exploit their former colonies and to influence their foreign policy with the help of old methods, they have sought to achieve the same goals through "aid." The main purpose of this "aid" is to bind the developing countries to the world system of capitalism and to prevent their advance along the non-capitalist road of development.

Anti-Sovietism is a favourite ideological weapon of Western propaganda agencies. Through it, they hope to hold up the growth of the influence exerted by socialist ideas on the young states and to discredit the foreign policy of the USSR.

The imperialists are placing special emphasis on inventions about the "aggressive character" of the USSR and about its "trying to place the whole world under its control." They claim that the Soviet Union intends to force its way of life on other peoples. In the recent period the Western reactionaries have intensively been spreading slander about "the Soviet threat in the Indian Ocean," and about "a Soviet military base" in Somali, etc. Ignoring repeated official statements and denials, certain organs of the Western press have again and again circulated these rumours. The journal **Mambo** of Kenya stated in June 1975 that the imperialists needed a hullabaloo in connection with the supposed Russian base in Somali to draw public attention away from their actions in Africa and the Indian Ocean. The journal demanded that the imperialists should leave Africa alone so that "it would be able to choose its own friends."

The advocates of imperialism have declared that Soviet foreign policy is "identical" to that of the United States and Great Britain and that it "reflects the great power interests of the USSR." In an endeavour to prove their thesis, which is totally untenable, they have borrowed "arguments" from the arsenal of Peking propaganda, adopting the Maoist conceptions about the "two super-powers" and "poor and rich nations." Arsen Ratsifehera, a prominent public leader of the Malagasy Republic, stated:

"In keeping with these theories, the USSR, the world's first socialist state, has been equated to the US imperialists and such socialist

countries as Bulgaria, the GDR and Hungary, which, like the USSR, have achieved impressive progress in all fields of life through the selfless efforts of their own peoples -- to Great Britain, France and other capitalist countries, which built their prosperity on the ruthless exploitation of their own and other peoples."

The progressive forces in the developing countries have administered a determined rebuff to all attempts to subvert the friendship and trust between the peoples of the developing countries, on the one hand, and the socialist countries, on the other. Many leaders of the developing countries, above all Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, Saleh Rubeya, the Chairman of the Presidential Council of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and H. Assad, the President of Syria have constantly exposed the hopeless attempts of the imperialists to draw a parallel between US and Soviet foreign policy.

Another method of Western anti-Soviet propaganda in the developing countries is to disparage Soviet reality. Unable to ignore the tremendous achievements of the USSR and the other socialist countries in all fields of economic, scientific and cultural development, the imperialist ideologists have tried to advance the thesis about Soviet methods of economic development being "unsuitable" for the countries of the Third World. However, despite all the efforts of reactionary propaganda, the statesmen and public of the developing countries have been displaying a mounting interest in Soviet experience in socio-economic changes in the formerly backward territories of Central Asia and Transcaucasia.

The West has spared no effort to discredit Soviet military aid to the developing countries, to distort its character and to ascribe to the Soviet Union the desire to cement its positions in these countries. It has gone to extremes to drive a wedge between the Soviet Union and the progressive Arab states. The weekly **Falestyn as-Saura** has justly pointed out:

"These attempts are directed against the interests of the Arab nation. . . The advancement of close cooperation and the establishment of firm friendship with the countries of the socialist camp headed by the USSR is the only way to build up Arab military and economic might. It is precisely this way that guarantees a continuation of the triumphant

Arab struggle against imperialism and Zionism."

It should be noted that "psychological warfare" against the Arab peoples is being waged along several lines. The propaganda agencies of the United States and Israel are trying, among other things, to instil in the Arabs the idea that they are "helpless" in the face of the combined forces of imperialism and Zionism. They have sought to frighten the Arabs and to inspire a lack of confidence in their potentialities, a sense of hopelessness and despair.

The imperialists and Zionists are eager to sow discord between the Arabs and the other developing countries, and to undermine in the future the powerful international support rendered to the just cause of the Arab peoples, as was demonstrated during the October battles in 1973.

The work of espionage and sabotage services play a special role in the ideological penetration of the imperialist powers into the Third World countries. The radio service of the People's Republic of the Congo stated:

"Imperialism has many means at its disposal to subvert the revolution. They can send their agents to our countries under the guise of helpful friends... They can recruit agents among the local nationals and demand that the latter should talk loudly about revolution and at the same time act as foreign agents. . ."

The weekly **Herald Tribune** which comes out in Ghana has given the following appraisal of the work of imperialist intelligence services. Acting under the cover of such organisations as the Peace Corps, the United States Information Service, etc., CIA agents penetrate into different sections of society and into remote areas to gather information about the sentiments of the people, and their attitude towards the policy of the government, and also information of a military character. . . The efforts of the CIA are above all directed at the overthrow of the governments which are pursuing an anti-imperialist foreign policy and a policy of socio-economic transformations.

The ideological onslaught of imperialism has been meeting with increasing resistance on the part of the peoples of the developing

countries. They are vigilantly' watching the intrigues of the propaganda services of the United States and other Western countries, and they have been combining their efforts in the struggle for further success in the national-liberation movement and for economic and social progress.

In their struggle the peoples of the developing countries are being backed by the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist Community. In his statement in New Delhi, Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, said:

"The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet state have always sided with the fighters for national freedom and independence. This political course is conditioned by the whole of our world outlook, which rejects exploitation of man by man and oppression of one nation by another."

The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries have proved time and again that they are true friends of the peoples who have discarded the yoke of colonialism and dependence on the imperialist powers. The developing countries have built or are building close on 2,800 industrial and other projects in the key sectors of their national economy with the technical and other assistance of the socialist countries. These projects have opened up broad vistas of industrial development for the young states of the Third World and are expanding and strengthening the state economic sector. More than 20,000 students and post-graduates from about 100 countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are studying at the higher educational establishments of the CMEA countries. The volume of trade of the socialist countries with the Third World has been steadily expanding. These and other facts have torn to shreds the "arguments" concocted by reactionary propaganda. They have convincingly shown that the young national states will secure real independence only through the assistance and support of the socialist countries.

The imperialists have been steadily building up their efforts in the ideological struggle against the ideas of socialism and social progress, and have been waging it with the help of increasingly sophisticated methods. Western reactionary propaganda has been poisoning the international atmosphere, it has been resisting the furtherance of detente and has been trying to thwart the solution of problems

confronting the young African and Asian states in the field of economic and social development. At the same time, it is necessary to emphasise that the peoples of the developing countries who have learnt from their own experience the true value of the fine words they hear, the widely publicised programmes, etc. have been able to distinguish between their true friends and those who pretend to be friends in order to achieve their selfish aims.