

COMMUNISM: THE TOOL OF RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM

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IN the last year of the war I was appointed by the Czechoslovak Government in Exile, of which I was a member until that time, the Government's delegate for the liberated territories I flew, therefore, in August, 1944, from London to Moscow. With me were twenty-one political, military and administrative aides and experts. Our function was the re-organization of the civil administration of the Czechoslovak territories subsequently liberated by the Red Army. We were to build this new administration as representatives of a sovereign state, naturally in agreement with the representatives of the Red Army.

The revival of civil administration in the Czechoslovak liberated territories was agreed upon in an international treaty between the Soviet Union and the Republic of Czechoslovakia. The Red Army was at that time at the frontiers of our state, while the Western Allied armies were still a considerable distance away. Such a treaty with the Soviet Union seemed at that time the only practical solution.

The implementation of this treaty put me and the members of my delegation among the first to cope with the problem of cooperation with the Soviet authorities and the Red Army on a concrete and actual basis. What were our experiences?

Upon our arrival in the territory first liberated, all members of the Government's delegation naturally considered the treaty in question as one between two allied nations. The reconstruction of the civil administration was an internal Czechoslovak affair. Naturally, the Government's delegation had to consider the needs of the Red Army fighting on our territory. The organization of the civil administration in itself was completely an internal Czechoslovak affair, and had to be built in its fundamental principles in accordance with the needs of the independent and sovereign state of Czechoslovakia. The Government's delegation was convinced that its interpretation was correct, but soon realized that it was not so, and that on the Russian side, the treaty, especially the practical implementation of the treaty, was of a different nature.

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The headquarters of the Red Army on Czechoslovak territory considered the Czechoslovak Government's delegation from London only as a tolerated ornament, and implemented its own policy on Czechoslovak territory. I must admit truthfully that they were much less interested in the propaganda of communist ideology than we had expected. The conflicts that arose from different interpretations of the treaty were only to a small extent due to ideological differences. The Headquarters of the Red Army left this work nearly completely to the Czechoslovak Communists. But their interests moved in a completely different sphere.

To illustrate the views of the Red Army Headquarters with regard to the mutual treaty and their understanding of its interpretation from the point of view of the sovereignty of both treaty partners, I should like to present the following instances: The Red Army had precise plans of big Czechoslovak plants and factories. Before any strategic advance on another part of the territory, they checked on stores of raw materials, finished goods, etc. Immediately after the towns were taken, all factories were placed under Red Army control, and stores were confiscated. It was not important to them whether the property in question was German, Czech, or Slovak. Nor was it important to them whether the materials were for military or for civilian needs. All goods, raw materials and money were simply confiscated by the Red Army.

Every effort to resist this procedure was in vain. When Czechoslovak military units tried to occupy and confiscate some of the factories for their own needs, they were faced with the danger of a military clash with the units of the Red Army. I asked for a change in this procedure. I also asked for information about the principles of Russian booty law, so that I could judge for myself in individual cases the correctness of the Red Army's procedure. My protests were ignored, and the principles of the booty laws were marked as "Secret" and therefore were not given to anyone outside Red Army Headquarters.

In spite of this looting, there still remained a substantial quantity of goods not confiscated by the Red Army. Therefore, under pressure from the Red Army, a currency exchange rate between the Russian ruble and the Czech crown was established, which enabled the Red Army soldiers to buy those goods for ridiculously low prices. And because the new money was printed in Russia, there was no control over how much of

it was brought by the Red Army into Czechoslovak territory.

Besides this legal and illegal confiscation of properties, the individual soldiers and officers of the Red Army were given occasions for similar confiscation at will. And so, in the rear of the advancing Red Army moved incalculable numbers of motor cars, and later trains, carrying to Russia huge quantities of goods, raw materials, food, furniture, carpets, etc. All interventions and protests by the Czechoslovak Government's delegation were in vain.

The Red Army did not come to Czechoslovakia as though it were in an allied country which it was liberating, but rather as though it were an enemy country which had to be occupied and economically weakened, if not bled to death. The Red Army was, generally speaking, unconcerned about the political consequences of this procedure, as proved by the fact that the individual looting of the Red Army soldiers did not stop, *even at the doors of members of the Czechoslovak Communist Party.*

The allied treaty on the reconstruction of civil administration in the liberated territory showed itself lifeless. The Red Army simply ignored the Czechoslovak authorities, followed its own needs and interests, and put the confiscation practice with regard to all kinds of property high above all ideological principles and Communist propaganda. We, who had left London in a strong belief in the possibilities of cooperation with the Red Army and the Russian authorities and who had rather anticipated possible ideological conflicts and differences, were confronted with a completely reversed situation. There was no cooperation, no relationship as between Allies, but rather a hostile and alien relationship dictated only by the material needs of the Russians and the Red Army. Conflicts that arose from this state of affairs were conflicts not with the Communist ideology, but with the Russian plundering imperialism. This was for us a new and surprising experience that we could not explain. Not until some time later, and after witnessing similar procedure in other liberated Central European states, was I able to analyse the reasons—reasons that are still valid, albeit in a different form.

The economic situation in Russia before the war was very bad. It was a logical consequence of the whole revolutionary, and post-revolutionary, practice. It was the aim of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 to take over the means of production from the hands of private owners and place them in the hands

of the industrial and agricultural proletariat. In order that the revolution should achieve and maintain this aim, it was necessary to liquidate the entire class of previous owners of these means of production, and to destroy completely the entire administrative, military and police machinery of the state. This succeeded completely in Russia. Not only was the somewhat weak stratum of industrialists liquidated, but the state machinery was completely destroyed, and, somewhat later, the strata of the small and medium farmers.

The result of this revolutionary process was the complete collapse of the economic life of Russia, accompanied by a terrible impoverishment of the whole Russian nation. The reconstruction of the economic life was accompanied by a number of obstacles, and even to-day it is hampered, for instance, by a lack of skilled workers. It is not propaganda, but fact, that immediately prior to the war, the buying capacity of the Russian workers was at least one-third less than that of the workers in the eastern and southern European states. There was an obvious lack of consumer goods on the market, and the living conditions were more than horrible, in comparison with other European states. The possibility of the Russian citizen to compare his situation with that of workers and farmers in other lands became dangerous to the communist party, which wielded political, and, in consequence, also economic power and responsibility in the nation. Therefore, the Russian policy in the 25 years after the revolution was one of ruthless isolation of the Russian nation from her neighbors.

In spite of the ruthlessness with which Russia attempted to create in this isolation, with her own means, a more bearable economic life, the Russian Communist Party had to admit that she did not succeed in this endeavor. It was clear even before the war that Russia could not, with her own power and her own means, reach—much less surpass—the economy of the neighboring nations. Yet, without equality of the Russian economic level with that of other nations, the fate of the Russian Revolution was still not quite stable. Therefore, Russia sought a way out of her isolation. The war situation created by Hitler in 1939 presented such a way out.

Russia had seen clearly for a number of years the coming conflict between Nazism and the Democracies. The ideological principles of this conflict were of no interest to Russia. The Russian Communists were unconcerned about the outcome

of such a conflict between Nazism and the Democracies. They were concerned with one fact only—that they should be on the side of the victors, and thus be enabled to loot the heritage of those conquered, and thereby improve the economic situation at home. Unbiased opinion favored a German victory rather than a victory of the Western Allies. Germany was much better prepared for war, both militarily and psychologically. As a logical consequence, therefore the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was signed, which meant practically an agreement on the division of loot after the war, that is, after the expected defeat of the Western allies, and especially England. The defeat of England would open perspectives of Russian penetration into the old British colonies in Asia, to exploit their economic resources for a better economic situation in Russia. If Germany had not committed that fateful mistake—the attack on Russia—Russia would have attacked England in the same way as she attacked Japan in the last phase of the American assault. The German attack on Russia changed Russian tactics, but not their final aims. Soviet Russia appeared at the German assault on the side of Democracy. This fact was of no importance, because Communism is as near to democracy as to Nazism and Fascism. Soviet Russia was unconcerned about the victory of Democracy or the defeat of Fascism, but was interested in the defeat of one of her rivals on the military field—in this case, Germany or Japan. This defeat was to have served Soviet Russia as a source of economic booty beyond the Russian borders, and as a future source of labor drawn from nations under their influence, for the bettering of their own economic situation. It offered a possibility of a typical imperialistic-colonial policy, completely unconcerned with which nation would fall under the yoke.

The Soviet Union succeeded. The end of the war created conditions for the establishment of a sphere of influence in the whole of Central Europe. Central European and Balkan states were first economically plundered, and their national wealth was to a great extent, and under various pretenses, transported to Russia.

Russian influence then set up, in all these states, exclusive Communist Governments, with one aim only: to force the people to step up production in their own lands, and deliver the finished goods to the Soviet Union. In so far as it is possible, the Soviet Union delivers the necessary raw materials for the production

tion. It delivers for the highest possible prices, and accepts the finished products for the lowest prices. A typical instance of this policy is the delivery of wool, cotton and leather for the Czechoslovak textile and footwear industry, Bata, which come in poor quality but at prices high above the world price level. The finished textiles and shoes are of course sold to Russia for ridiculous prices that do not cover the production costs.

The end of the war enabled Russia to penetrate into Central Europe. There she gained a tremendous booty at once, and with the establishment of Communist Governments she acquired a steady flow of valuable, yet cheap, merchandise for Russia. And now a situation arises in which the economic situation of Russia is steadily, and to a great extent, improving, while the economic situation of her neighbors behind the Iron Curtain daily becomes worse. With this in view, the Russian and Central European economies must ultimately, and soon, reach the same level.

Russia lives to-day at the expense of the Central European states. She receives cheap consumer goods which she herself has never produced, and presents the Russian people with a proof of the usefulness of the communist policy. But this is a typical policy of exploitation. The only difference between the prerevolutionary and present period is that the Soviet Union maintains to have abolished the exploitation of one class of their own nation. Instead, she has actually introduced a wholesale exploitation of small nations.

This was the aim of Russia's war policy, and this aim has not changed. Russia remains faithful to this aim after the war, and has changed only her tactics. The Western nations honestly believed that Russia was fighting on the side of the Western Democracies a relentless ideological battle against Nazi dictatorship, and for the freedom of small nations. They were surprised and disturbed at the change in Russian policy after the war. If they had studied more thoroughly the Soviet-German treaty signed before the outbreak of the war, they would have understood that to Russia this was not a war of ideals, which were, especially after the war, a propaganda weapon only. The main meaning of Russia's policy was, and is, Russia's imperialism—colonizing the neighboring nations for the benefit of her own needs. Russia was not so much interested in a communist victory as in victory of Russian imperialistic policy, and this is the main difference between Lenin and Stalin. Lenin

believed that the Russian Revolution and the Russian communist state were only a means towards the victory of communism in the whole world. Stalin is convinced that communism is only a means towards the strengthening of the Russian Empire—a means for improving the economic life of Russia at the expenses of the neighboring states, and, if possible, at the expense of the whole world.

Russia's penetration into Central Europe and its colonization of Central European nations was well planned. Russia stopped precisely there, where she encountered resistance. The colonization of Central Europe was done very thoroughly. The living standard of Central European nations is a clear proof of Russia's exploitation. Russian methods of exploitation are no better than those once used in African and Asiatic colonies. The only difference is that the European nations have tried to improve the living standards in their colonies and prepare them for a political and economic independence, while Russia's colonial policy adds suffering to exploitation.

Naturally the colonization of Central Europe could not produce everything that the two hundred million citizens of Russia need. And therefore after exploiting Central Europe Russia turned to another scheme, the colonization of Asia. The communist victory in China will soon produce the same results, as the occupation of Central Europe. China too, and later other nations of Asia, will be used as a source of raw materials and cheap labour for Russia's benefit. The colonization policy of some European nations in past centuries will be but a shadow of Russia's present imperialistic and colonial policy.

Like every other policy of expansion, Russia has encountered obstacles among her own people. This obstacle seems small, but deeply rooted, and presents the gravest danger to Russia's policy yet encountered. This is the case of Tito and Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia passed through the same process after the war, as the other Central and Southern European nations. As in Poland, Czechoslovakia and other states, the Red Army helped to power the Communist Government of Yugoslavia. As in those other states the government was expected to exploit the economy and labour for the benefit of Russia's colonial policy. But in this instance Russia met with the fanatic resistance of the whole nation, including the Yugoslav communists. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia follows the economic policy of Russia's communist party: to put the means of production into the hands of the whole nation. But this policy was

understood to be for the benefit of their own people. Jugoslavia resisted therefore the demands of Russia's imperialistic colonial policy and as a matter of fact intended, together with other states, to create an independent communist federation, which would take not only Jugoslavia but also the other Balkan states from the Russian sphere of influence, and from an exploitation of their economies by Soviet Russia.

Jugoslavia's case is beginning to influence all nations subjugated behind the Iron Curtain. The lowering of the economic standard of the entire nation—while small groups may temporarily benefit—creates sources of dissatisfaction and resistance. Russia is breaking them up with an iron fist—see Hungary and Bulgaria—knowing the dangers involved in this process. The enemies of Russia's colonial policy are not only anti-communists, but communists too, and sometimes very important ones. Titoism is using old bolshevik slogans to prove the deviation of Russian communism from its original principles. The resistance to Russia's imperialistic colonial policy is crystalizing along two fronts: Tito's front in Europe and Trotzky's followers in Asia. Both those fronts are more dangerous to Russia than the Western democracies, and therefore they will have to face Russia's frontal assault. The resistance against the exploitation of one nation by another is as strong as once was the resistance of one class in Russia against the exploitation by another. Jugoslavia with Tito is to-day, and tomorrow some other Asiatic nations will be, in the same position against the Soviet Union, as was the Russian Communist Party in 1917 against the Czar and the Government of Kerensky.

It seems to me that the Western democracies have no clear understanding of the logical intertwining of developments, daily occurring behind the Iron Curtain and in Asia. A quiet resistance is growing up behind the Iron Curtain against Russia's imperialistic policy. Small nations live there in an economic situation, that secretly produces elements of a terrific dissatisfaction. The lowering of living standards amongst many European civilized nations reaches a degree that will produce the atmosphere for desperate acts of resistance. What was once bearable to a Russian is not bearable to a European. Besides the material consequences it is necessary to consider the moral humiliation of the now subjugated nations, who once were free and used to a certain way of life. Next to the lower economic standard of life, the subjugated nations have to submit to a culture that never achieved the height of their own.

Behind the Iron Curtain grows a fight of the small against the big, the weak against the strong. A fight, once started by the Russian Communist Party, has now turned against it. This Party is now the symbol of economic and moral subjugation of small European nations, and may be tomorrow also a symbol of subjugation of small and big nations of the Asiatic continent. It is a struggle for the democratic rights of small nations in their relationship to the all-powerful Soviet Union. This must also lead to a struggle for democracy within the nations. The old principle that without personal liberty there is no liberty of the nation and state will be the main issue in this struggle.

From this point of view it is necessary to bear in mind that the struggle against Communism is the principal mistake of Western democracies. A struggle fought along these lines may influence the belief of small nations in Asia and the huge masses of workers in Europe that this is a struggle of rich nations and classes against the social and economic ideology of communism. Russian communism has long ceased to be the leader of the struggle for a new social order. Russian communism is but a cloak for Russian imperialism, which is more reactionary in its consequences than the imperialism of old Czarist Russia. Russian communism in its present stage of development is no longer a revolutionary force, but very distinctly counter-revolutionary. The practical results of its policy and work are the economic, social and moral subjugation of small nations. Tito's struggle is not resistance against the social and ideological construction of communism, but only against the Russian imperialistic and colonizing policy. Tito himself does not cease to stress, that he remains a communist. He strongly objects to Russia's exploitation of Jugoslavia's economic and labour sources in the name of communism.

It is, then, from this point of view that Western propaganda beyond the Iron Curtain should be guided. It is necessary systematically to point out to the small European, as well as Asiatic, nations that the Russian policy is using communism only as a means to undermine nations, gradually to draw them into Russia's sphere of influence, to create from them colonies stripped of rights, and to utilize their labour to improve the economic situation of Russia. Such propaganda would definitely find people willing to listen to facts, examine their own experiences, and draw the right conclusions, whereas the present anti-communist propaganda often achieves the opposite results.