

AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

A NEW MENACE IN AFRICA

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FOR several centuries the maritime nations of Europe exploited the peoples of Asia and Africa and interfered in numerous ways with their cherished freedoms. For several centuries the governments of Spain, Portugal, Holland, Belgium, England, France, Germany and Czarist Russia have at different historical periods created vast and mighty empires in Asia and Africa. Through armed invasion and conquest they forced the people of Asia and Africa to surrender to the expansionist policies of European capitalism. Through military plunder the people of India, Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, the East Indies and other territories lost their national independence and became colonies of foreign powers. Through force, fraud and violence, the people of North, East, West, Central and Southern Africa were relieved of their political and economic power and forced to pay allegiance to foreign monarchs. By means of unequal treaties the conquered countries were transformed into profitable fields for the investment of foreign capital. The economic wealth and resources of these colonies were exploited by and turned over to the imperialist powers for use not in the interest of the indigenous populations, but for the benefit of the metropolitan people.

In this way the spices of the East Indies, the rubber and rice of India, the gold and diamonds of South Africa, the cocoa and manganese of the Gold Coast, all found their way to the ware-houses of Europe. By means of forced labour and extremely low wages the native populations were reduced to poverty and misery whilst the metropolitan populations flourished out of the raw materials seized from the colonies. To the people of Asia and Africa imperialism meant, and still means, the exploitation of the mineral and agricultural wealth of their countries by foreign powers without their consent and without compensation. It means the destruction of the economic power of the indigenous populations through the imposition of trade monopolies and excessive taxes. It means low wages and long hours of work. Above all it means the denial of political and economic rights and the perpetual subjugation of the people by a foreign power.

In exploiting the mineral and agricultural resources of a colonial country the imperialists have always tried to avoid making the issue appear one of an open clash of interests between themselves and the colonial people. Both in Asia and Africa imperialism consistently sought to divide the indigenous population by allying itself with the most reactionary elements amongst the very population it wishes to exploit. In India the feudal princes, the big landlords and industrialists became the most faithful and loyal friends of British imperialism. A similar pattern prevailed in China, the East Indies, Malaya and in other colonies. In South Africa where there were no vested interests amongst the indigenous people the position was somewhat different. British imperialism allied itself with the big farming

interests, secured the support of the European section of the population by imposing a rigid colour-bar and by elevating the Europeans to a higher political and economic status. In practice imperialism is, therefore, a kind of alliance between a foreign ruling power and local reactionary elements for the exploitation by the former of the mineral and agricultural resources of a colonial country. It is precisely because of this fact that imperialism has always sought to prolong reactionary institutions in the colonial countries long after such institutions have ceased to be useful.

Concessions granted to these elements for supporting foreign rule as well as developmental schemes designed primarily to facilitate the exploitation of the natural wealth of the exploited country, have frequently been cited to highlight the so-called benefits of imperialism to the colonial people. The buildings of seaports and harbours, the construction of communications, the building of hydro-electric plants, of conservation and irrigation schemes, the mapping of mineral resources, have been specifically mentioned as some of the positive steps adopted by imperialist powers to raise the living standards of dependent peoples. In point of fact these projects all serve to facilitate the exploitation of the dependent country and its people, and the export of its wealth to Europe.

THE DECLINE OF EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM

Quite naturally the colonial people all over the world have in various ways waged ceaseless battles against foreign domination. In many areas this battle has been decisively won whilst in others it still rages. The imperialist countries have been driven out from practically the whole of Asia and the Pacific regions. China, India, Ceylon, Burma and the United States of Indonesia have won their national independence. In Africa a large number of territories have thrown off the imperialist yoke and are now independent states. Egypt, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Ghana are no longer dependencies of foreign powers. In Algeria, Nigeria, Somalia and Uganda self-government in the near future is anticipated. All over the world the people are astir and the struggle for political progress is gathering momentum by the day. Imperialism has been weighed and found wanting. It has been fought and defeated by the united and concerted action of the common people. Its decline and fall was sealed by the Afro-Asian conference which was held in Bandung in April, 1955, where twenty-nine independent countries of Asia and Africa, which had recently emerged from colonial oppression, pledged themselves against colonialism and proclaimed the unity of the people of Asia and Africa in the struggle against this menace.

A NEW DANGER

Whilst the influence of the old European powers has sharply declined and whilst the anti-imperialist forces are winning striking victories all over the world, a new danger has arisen and threatens to destroy the newly-won independence of the people of Asia and Africa. It is American imperialism which must be fought and decisively beaten down if the people of Asia and Africa are to preserve the vital gains they have won in their struggle against subjugation. The First and Second World Wars brought untold economic havoc especially in Europe where both wars were mainly fought. Millions of people perished whilst their countries were ravaged and ruined by the war. The two conflicts resulted, on the one hand, in the decline of the old imperial powers.

On the other hand, the U.S.A. emerged from them as the richest and most powerful state in the west, firstly, because both wars were fought thousands of miles away from her mainland and she had less casualties. Whereas the British Empire lost 1,089,900 men only 115,660 U.S.A. soldiers died during the first world war. No damage, whatsoever, was suffered by her cities and industries. Secondly, she made fabulous profits from her allies out of war contracts. Due to these factors the U.S.A. grew to become the most powerful country in the west.

Paradoxically, the two world wars, which weakened the old powers and which contributed to the growth of the political and economic influence of the U.S.A. also resulted in the growth of the anti-imperialist forces all over the world and in the intensification of the struggle for national independence. The old powers, finding themselves unable to resist the demand by their former colonies for independence and still clinging desperately to their waning empires, were compelled to lean very heavily on American aid. The U.S.A. taking advantage of the plight of its former allies, adopted the policy of deliberately ousting them from their spheres of influence and of grabbing these spheres for herself. An instance that is still fresh in our minds is that of the Middle East where the U.S.A. assisted in the eviction of Britain from that area in order that she might gain control of the oil industry which prior to that time, was in the control of Britain.

Through the Marshall Plan the U.S.A. succeeded in gaining control of the economies of European countries and in reducing them to a position analogous to that of dependencies. By establishing aggressive military blocs in Europe, the Middle East and in Asia, the U.S.A. has been able to post her armies in important strategic points and in preparing for armed intervention in the domestic affairs of sovereign nations. The North Atlantic Treaty organisation in Europe, the Baghdad Pact in the Middle East, and the South East Asian Treaty Organisation are military blocs which constitute a direct threat not only to world peace but, also to the independence of the member states.

The policy of placing reliance on American economic and military aid is extremely dangerous to the "assisted" states themselves and has aggravated their positions. Since the Second World War Britain, France and Holland closely associated themselves with American plans for world conquest and yet within that period they have lost empires in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, and they are fighting rear-guard actions in their remaining colonial possessions. Their salvation and future prosperity lies not in pinning their faith on American aid and aggressive military blocs but in breaking away from her, in repudiating her foreign policy which threatens to drag them into another war, and in proclaiming a policy of peace and friendship with other nations.

U.S. OFFENSIVE IN AFRICA

American interest in Africa has in recent years grown rapidly. This continent is rich in raw materials. It produces almost all the world's diamonds, 78% of its palm oil, 68% of its cocoa, half of its gold and 22% of its copper. It is rich in manganese, chrome, in uranium, radium, in citrus fruits, coffee, sugar, cotton, and rubber. It is regarded by the U.S.A. as one of the most important fields of investment. According to the "Report of the Special Study Mission to Africa, South and East of the Sahara", by the Honourable Frances P. Bolton which was published in 1956 for the use of the United States Congress Committee on Foreign Affairs, by the end of World War II United States private investments in Africa amounted

to scarcely \$150 million. At the end of 1954 the total book value of U.S.A. investments in Africa stood at \$664 million.

Since then the American Government has mounted a terrific diplomatic and economic offensive in almost every part of Africa. A new organisation for the conduct of African Affairs has come into existence. The Department of State has established a new position of Deputy-Assistant Secretary for African Affairs. The Bureau of African Affairs has been split into two new offices, the office of Northern African Affairs and that of Southern African Affairs. This reorganisation illustrates the increasing economic importance of Africa to the U.S.A. and the recognition by the governing circles of that state of the vital necessity for the creation and strengthening of diplomatic relations with the independent states of Africa. The U.S.A. has sent into this continent numerous "study" and "good-will" missions, and scores of its leading industrialists and statesmen to survey the natural wealth of the new independent states and to establish diplomatic relations with the present regimes. Vice-President Nixon, Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic Party candidate for the American Presidency in the last elections, and scores of other leading Americans, have visited various parts of the continent to study political trends and market conditions. Today, American imperialism is a serious danger to the independent states in Africa and its people must unite before it is too late and fight it out to the bitter end.

IMPERIALISM IN DISGUISE

American imperialism is all the more dangerous because, having witnessed the resurgence of the people of Asia and Africa against imperialism and having seen the decline and fall of once powerful empires, it comes to Africa elaborately disguised. It has discarded most of the conventional weapons of the old type of imperialism. It does not openly advocate armed invasion and conquest. It purports to repudiate force and violence. It masquerades as the leader of the so-called free world in the campaign against communism. It claims that the cornerstone of its foreign policy is to assist other countries in resisting domination by others. It maintains that the huge sums of dollars invested in Africa are not for the exploitation of the people of Africa but for the purpose of developing their countries and in order to raise their living standards.

Now it is true that the new self-governing territories in Africa require capital to develop their countries. They require capital for economic development and technical training programmes, they require it to develop agriculture, fisheries, veterinary services, health, medical services, education and communications. To this extent overseas capital invested in Africa could play a useful role in the development of the self-governing territories in the continent. But the idea of making quick and high profits, which underlies all the developmental plans launched in Africa by the U.S.A., completely effaces the value of such plans in so far as the masses of the people are concerned. The big and powerful American trade monopolies that are springing up in various parts of the continent, and which are destroying the small trader, the low wages paid the ordinary man, the resulting poverty and misery, his illiteracy and the squalid tenements in which he dwells, are the simplest and most eloquent exposition of the falsity of the argument that American investments in Africa will raise the living standards of the people of this continent.

The American brand of imperialism is imperialism all the same in spite of the modern clothing in which it is dressed and in spite of the sweet

language spoken by its advocates and agents. The U.S.A. is mounting an unprecedented diplomatic offensive to win the support of the governments of the self-governing territories in the continent. It has established a network of military bases all over the continent for armed intervention in the domestic affairs of independent states should the people in these states elect to replace American satellite regimes with those who are against American imperialism. American capital has been sunk into Africa not for the purpose of raising the material standards of its people but in order to exploit them as well as the natural wealth of their continent. This is imperialism in the true sense of the word.

The Americans are forever warning the people of this continent against communism which, as they allege, seeks to enslave them and to interfere with their peaceful development. But what facts justify this warning? Unlike the U.S.A. neither the Soviet Union, the Chinese People's Republic nor any other Socialist state has aggressive military blocs in any part of the world. None of the Socialist countries has military bases anywhere in Africa, whereas the U.S.A. has built landing fields, ports and other types of strategic bases all over North Africa. In particular it has jet fields in Morocco, Libya and Liberia. Unlike the U.S.A. none of the Socialist states has invested capital in any part of Africa for the exploitation of its people. At the United Nations Organisations the Soviet Union, India and several other nations have consistently identified themselves unconditionally with the struggle of the oppressed people for freedom whereas the U.S.A. has very often allied itself with those who stand for the enslavement of others. It was not Soviet but American planes which the French used to bomb the peaceful village of Sakiet in Tunisia. The presence of a delegation from the Chinese People's Republic at the 1955 Afro-Asian conference as well as the presence of a delegation from that country and the Soviet Union at the 1957 Cairo Afro-Asian conference show that the people of Asia and Africa have seen through the slanderous campaign conducted by the U.S.A. against the Socialist countries. They know that their independence is threatened not by any of the countries in the Socialist camp but by the U.S.A. who has surrounded their continent with military bases. The communist bogey is an American stunt to distract the attention of the people of Africa from the real issue facing them, namely, American imperialism.

The peoples of resurgent Africa are perfectly capable of deciding upon their own future form of government and discovering and themselves dealing with any dangers which may arise. They do not require any schooling from the U.S.A., which — to judge from such events as the Little Rock outrage, and the activities of the Un-American Witch-hunting Committee — should learn to put its own house in order before trying to teach everyone else.

The people of Africa are astir. In conjunction with the people of Asia, and with freedom-loving people all over the world, they have declared a full scale war against all forms of imperialism. The future of this continent lies not in the hands of the discredited regimes that have allied themselves with American imperialism. It is in the hands of the common people of Africa functioning in their mass movements.