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EXPORT OF REVOLUTION:
COMMUNIST REALITY OR CAPITALIST SLANDER?

Massive Soviet and Cuban participation in the Angolan civil war has resulted in the victory and diplomatic recognition of the MPLA government (Popular Movement for Liberation of Angola). As a consequence, U.S. government officials as well as Kremlin-watching analysts and reporters have revived the long-dormant issue of communist export of revolution.¹

In November of 1975, then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger complained about the Soviet-Cuban intervention saying that it was difficult to reconcile this with the U.S.-Soviet Declaration of Basic Principles of Mutual Relations signed in 1972 and that "we will never permit detente to turn into a subterfuge of unilateral advantage."²

When Dr. Kissinger attempted to raise the subject of Angolan intervention during the 1976 SALT negotiations with the Soviet leaders, however, they apparently shrugged off any linkage between the two topics. Moreover, in a strong personal attack on the Secretary the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), Pravda, questioned his logic and sharply denied any Soviet expansionist aims in Angola while admitting to their full support for the national-liberation revolution there.³

There are present in Angola several hundred Soviet military advisors and a Soviet air-lifted Cuban army of more than 15,000, all equipped with Soviet-made sophisticated weapons. Many military advisors were also sent by the German Democratic Republic along with additional military and economic help from other communist-controlled countries.

¹See David Binder's well-documented article, "Kissinger Believes Cuba 'Exports' Revolution Again," New York Times, February 5, 1976.

²See New York Times, November 26, 1975 and Washington Post, January 22, 1976.

³See Pravda, February 1, 1976.

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The conclusion from such gross evidence must be made that, as in many other instances, we and the Soviet Union are faced with a serious semantic misunderstanding of the terms "intervention" and "expansion."⁴

If we consult any communist source, we find that export of revolution as a concept or communist participation in an effort of the kind is simply denied. For instance, in a 1974 interview given by Fidel Castro with the American reporters, Frank Mankiewicz and Kirby Jones, Castro responded to charges that Cuba exports revolution to other countries. Professing not to know what was meant by "export of revolution," Castro answered with these rhetorical questions:

'Do we sympathize with revolutionaries? Yes, we do. Have we aided revolutionaries as much as we have been able? Yes, we have.'

When asked under what conditions he would support other revolutionaries, Castro answered:

'It is essential that they be fighting. If they are not, then we don't. When they do fight, we back them.'⁵

Castro's denial of communist export of revolution coupled with frank admission of 'supporting revolutionaries' engaged in anti-imperialist struggle is, of course, solidly backed by authoritative Soviet spokesmen. They base their argument on Lenin's teachings formulated soon after the October Revolution. To our way of thinking, this denial sounds like a play on words, but subsequent communist actions do not corroborate this.

For instance, a prominent CPSU apparatchik G. A. Arbatov, Chief of the Institute for the Study of the USA, uses a subtle semantic distinction between the words "export" and "support." At the same time, he disclaims any communist responsibility for "instigating" (podtalkivaniye) revolutions throughout the world by armed force.

The problem of forms and ways of assistance by the victorious working class to the revolution in other countries is the fundamental problem of any socialist state's policy, the basic problem of proletarian internationalism.⁶

The working class's revolutionary success in any country where it has conquered power, and even built a new society, is not an end in itself. The proletariat's historical mission and internationalist duty as defined by V. I. Lenin consists in

⁴See Jeremiah O'Leary, "10,000 Cubans Fight, Advise in 8 African Nations," Washington Star, January 22, 1976, p. 3.

⁵See AIM REPORT, January 1975, p. 5, ad in the Washington Star, March 2, 1975.

⁶G. Arbatov, Ideological Struggle in Contemporary International Relations (in Russian), Moscow, 1970, p. 285.

doing the maximum achievable in one country for the development, support and stirring up of revolution in all countries.⁷

The Communists may reject the theory of "instigation of revolution at bayonet point" (to use Lenin's expression) in a country where objective and subjective prerequisites, or "a revolutionary situation" (in Marxist-Leninist terminology) are absent. Communist logic nevertheless requires rendering all conceivable assistance to the revolutionary forces wherever they are already engaged in struggle.

This assistance and support are openly admitted in numerous Soviet writings. As one author states:

Since the first days of its existence the Soviet Union has been rendering all conceivable assistance to the revolutionary forces of the entire world. The character and forms of this assistance depend upon many conditions.⁸

The Communist support of revolution, he states further, under certain circumstances includes military assistance,

whose character and forms depend upon the international situation. Imperialism's aggressive policy, its armed attack on a socialist country or on a country which has won national independence may require armed resistance. In that case the question may arise of rendering military assistance to the victims of imperialist aggression.⁹

He lists Soviet military assistance to such "victims" as Spain, during the Civil War; the people's democratic countries in Central and Eastern Europe; the communist revolution in China; African peoples; Arab states; Cuba; and "especially to the people of Vietnam, victims of criminal aggression of American imperialism."¹⁰

Secretary General Brezhnev is quoted as describing Soviet assistance to peoples struggling for their national, political, and economic liberation as an intrinsic component of the U.S.S.R.'s internationalist duty:

!During the first years of Soviet Russia's existence, her influence on the course of world events was determined mainly by the force of her revolutionary example. As the Soviet Union's economic and political power grew, not only the attraction of our example increased but also political,

⁷Ibidem (emphasis in original).

⁸V. N. Yegorov, Peaceful Coexistence and the Revolutionary Process (in Russian), Moscow, 1971, p. 110.

⁹Ibidem.

¹⁰Ibidem.

economic as well as military assistance to peoples engaged in the struggle with imperialism.¹¹

This Brezhnev speech acknowledging communist support of revolution on a global scale was made before the official inauguration of the detente policy, which, as far as U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations are concerned, has been incorporated into several documents, especially the Declaration of Basic Principles of Mutual Relations signed in May 1972 in Moscow. It has been clear since the Yom Kippur War that the Soviet Union in no way interprets these documents--contrary to widespread opinion in the U.S.--as prohibiting or even restricting its global promotion (not "export," of course) of the revolutionary process.

In his speech during the CPSU Twenty-Fifth Congress, February 24, 1976, Brezhnev clearly restated the communist position:

Some bourgeois politicians affect astonishment and make a fuss about the solidarity of Soviet communists and the Soviet people with the struggles of other peoples for freedom and progress. This is either naivety or most probably deliberate obfuscation. For it is as clear as can be that detente and peaceful coexistence relate to interstate relations. Detente in no way rescinds, or can rescind or alter the laws of the class struggle. No one can count on communists, in conditions of detente, reconciling themselves with capitalist exploitation.

Nor should the Soviet (or Cuban, East German, Czechoslovak, etc.) support of "the national liberation" struggle in former colonies be considered as the chief element in their support of revolution. The revolutionary process now taking place on a global scale is a multifaceted phenomenon and is by no means limited to communist military aid to guerilla activities in Africa, Asia, and South America, however extensive it may be. The tendency to confuse revolutionary activity with its final, armed struggle stage has recently been exposed by a life-long expert, General William Yarborough:

All too often American policy makers are overly preoccupied with the hardware and finite tools of the military trade. That is to say, psychological, political and economic warfare--the prime instrument of Soviet aggression--seems of ancillary importance to many United States leaders. Cuban forces in Angola, having translated their unremarkable military talents into a massive psychological offensive, next moved into the 'civic action' phase of political warfare. Under the banner of Marxism, Cuban forces became the forward edge of the medical, agricultural, educational and administrative assistance the Angolan economy needs so badly.¹²

¹¹Ibidem, p. 111.

¹²See Trial in Africa: The Failure of U.S. Policy (Washington: Heritage Foundation), 1976, pp. 17-18.

This same author also rightly blames the U.S. preoccupation with military hardware for its misreading of the actual Soviet motives for precipitating the so-called Cuban missile crisis in 1962, namely to maintain Cuba as a revolutionary base.

After taking the strongest possible measure short of actual war, United States experts innocently accepted the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba as the victory they had sought. The fact that the missiles were gone but that Cuba still remained as a virulent and contagious point of Soviet political and psychological aggression was seen as a little cause for alarm.¹³

This "innocence" reached its peak in statements of the new U.S. ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young, who, to the dismay of some State Department officials, saw in the presence of Cuban "experts" in Angola a contribution to that country's stability. It "stabilizes," in fact, the Marxist-Leninist control over Angola to the great detriment of American national interest.¹⁴

The military aspect of the communist "export of revolution" should obviously not be exaggerated lest we lose sight of its other, often more crucial forms. World revolution, or the world revolutionary process as it is usually called in the communist sources, is a fusion of different, often heterogenous mass movements characteristic of the contemporary epoch. Twenty-six years ago the CPSU Program, which is still in force, described this epoch as

one of transition from capitalism to socialism, of conflict between the two antagonistic social systems, of socialist and national-liberation revolutions, of capitalism's destruction and liquidation of the colonial system.

Thus, the world revolutionary process can be roughly divided into three main sectors: confrontation of the two socioeconomic systems--socialist and capitalist--the working class revolutionary struggle within the capitalist system, and the national-liberation struggle in colonial areas and developing countries.

Conflict between the two systems is regulated by the principles of peaceful coexistence. While this concept includes limited intersystem cooperation for the purpose of avoiding nuclear conflict,

it not only does not exclude class struggle and revolution but it actually facilitates their development.¹⁵

¹³Ibidem.

¹⁴Cuban "stablizing influence" in many Arab and African countries has been reported by U.S. intelligence for several years. See New York Times, November 30, 1975.

¹⁵Fedoseyev, P.N., Dialectics of the Contemporary Era (in Russian) (Moscow), 1966, p. 118.

Consequently, even the peaceful elements of economic cooperation and competition between the socialist and capitalist system which include foreign trade, even the transfer of advanced technology, credits as well as agreements in the field of arms control are an inherent part of the communist commitment to "promote, support and stir up revolution" in capitalist and developing countries.

On the basis of his knowledge of the Western capitalist--whom he called disparagingly blind-deaf mutes, Lenin predicted in 1921 in a note to Foreign Commissar G. Chicherin:

They will supply us with the materials and technology which we lack and will restore our military industry, which we need for our future victorious attacks upon our suppliers. In other words, they will work hard in order to prepare their own suicides.¹⁶

In quoting Lenin, Mr. Sulzberger, the New York Times foremost foreign correspondent, only stated the obvious: "after a decade of what is called detente...Lenin looks like a stunningly accurate seer."

Actually, this quote is only an abridgement of Lenin's notes, which were published in 1962 by the Munich Institute for the Study of the U.S.S.R.¹⁷ Lenin expected the Western capitalist, in their rush to conquering Soviet markets, to supply the Soviet Union with advanced technology of critical importance in its efforts to become the first military power in the world. He also expected them to "furnish credits" which would enable the Soviet Union to pay for its trade with the West. Lenin predicted that the Western capitalists would close their eyes to the reality of the communist commitment to "world-wide support of revolution," driven by their "thirst for profits." While his observations proved indeed prophetic, he could not imagine in his wildest dreams that by 1977 the capitalist system's credits subsidizing the building of socialism and communism in the Soviet Union and other communist-controlled states would reach the astronomical sum of nearly sixty billion dollars.

There is an underlying fallacy about East-West trade heavily subsidized, as it is, by Western credits. It has been a widespread belief--and in fact is trade policy in many capitalist countries--that trade relations with the communist partners have a beneficial impact. It has been argued that the communists acquire a vested interest in economic cooperation, thus softening their ideological antagonism. This "linkage" of Western accommodation in the field of trade and credits and expected Soviet willingness to abandon its support of revolution and hostility toward the capitalist system is not just an American fallacy. However, one of its greatest promoters was Dr. Henry Kissinger, who despite all evidence to the contrary clung to it until the very end of his tenure

¹⁶See C. L. Sulzberger, "Hot Detente or Cold War?" New York Times, February 16, 1977.

¹⁷See its Bulletin, May 1962, No. 5, pp. 22-24.

as Secretary of State. Even Moscow's blatant export of revolution via Cuba to Angola did not weaken his hopes. For instance, in a 1975 report to the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in Brussels, he insisted that

in the middle and long range all will be well, because Soviet economic difficulties will force Moscow to accept detente.¹⁸

Not only has trade and easy credit failed to induce the communist-controlled states to adopt a friendlier attitude toward the capitalist West, but this policy could have very damaging consequences for the capitalist (free-enterprise) economy. This conclusion was reached separately by two recent studies on the Soviet bloc state's indebtedness to the West.¹⁹

Estimating Soviet indebtedness to the West at eleven billion dollars in 1975, the first study argues that

it would appear suicidal to subsidize the Soviet economy as long as it serves only to compensate for the drain on resources caused by military expenditures.²⁰

From the Soviet point of view the author observes

Western cooperation was not only to serve to make the Soviet economy viable, it was devised also as a substitute for internal reform, as a means of preserving the existing political status quo in the area and as a helping hand in the retention of political control within the ruling group.²¹

Professor Portes' study deals with the indebtedness of the entire Soviet bloc, which he estimates at about forty billion dollars plus an additional twenty billion dollars in loans for which no deliveries of Western goods have yet been made. Poland alone owes Western capitalists about ten billion dollars, which by 1980 will have to be "rescheduled," a banking term for making new loans to save old ones from default.

However, the communist-controlled states need not worry about their credit rate. Portes argues:

¹⁸See article by Drew Middleton, New York Times, December 12, 1975, p. 7.

¹⁹See Dr. Alexander Wolynski, Western Economic Aid to the USSR (London: Institute for the Study of Conflict), 1976. Also, an as yet unpublished study for Professor Richard Portes of London University reported by Bernard D. Nossiter in "Threat to West Seen in Rising Soviet-Bloc Debt," Washington Post, March 3, 1977, p. 17.

²⁰Wolynski, Western Economic Aid to the USSR.

²¹Ibidem.

the debt is now so big that it gives the borrower, not the lender, the leverage. The Soviet Union and the satellites can borrow without fear, confident that neither Western banks nor the Western exporters can easily cut them off. A collapse of loans would damage some banks and a sudden loss of Eastern orders could hit some manufacturers.²²

The linkage method is actually working in reverse: communist world-wide support of revolution is facilitated by capitalist trade and credits.

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request of The Heritage Foundation

²²Nossiter, Washington Post, March 3, 1977, p. 17.