

The Tsar's New Clothes III – “Great-Russian” Nationalism – the Holy Mission of Russian Imperialism

Proletarians of all countries, unite!

The Tsar's New Clothes III

“Great-Russian” Nationalism – The Holy Mission of Russian Imperialism

Putin's reactionary thought is an eclectic and practical mix of different reactionary philosophers. Central is “conservatism” and “Great-Russian” nationalism and militarism. He promotes “united” and “traditional” Russia against the “corrupted” west. Putin describes this as “patriotism”, as the one true, only ideology for Russia, an ideology that according to him, needs to be depoliticised, as it is “rational”. He says that “patriotism means to devote oneself to the development of the country”ⁱ – to subject oneself to the bourgeois state. In his speech after the annexation of the Crimea Putin declared, that like in the 18., 19., and 20. centuries, Russia is still the victim of attempts to force it into a corner and to keep it small, but Russia will not bend but “defend itself”. Putin portrayed himself like Ivan III, or other tsars, notes a bourgeois author Michel Eltchaninoff, as a “great” gatherer of the Russian nation, justifying the annexation with the “russianness” of the population of Crimea and a theater of an referendumⁱⁱ. Connected to the reactionary thought of “great-Russian nationalism” is the view of Russia

as “holy”, the union of the orthodox church and the state like in the times of the tsars, whose power was “given by god himself”, therefore, a strong connection to the nationalism of the tsarist empire. In Putin’s thought, Russia has a special role of guarding the “traditional” and “christian” values, which to him form the basis of the “unity” of the Russian people. This of course, is a load of demagogy, as it was for the tsars, to justify the brutal oppression of peoples in the service of Russian finance capital.

Putin has also long ago openly declared the struggle against yankee imperialism in the form of “eurasism”, a thought that sees that there is a confrontation between the “atlantic west” and Eurasia, and to “protect” Eurasia and the special “Russian” traditional from “american influence”, an “Eurasian empire” needs to be built. This describes the situation where Russian imperialism is, on the defensive against the encirclement of Yankee imperialism.

Putin’s reactionary thought goes all the way back to the tsarist empire and therefore also to the Soviet social imperialism – the leeching, bloodthirsty, imperialist “Great-Russian” nationalism and militarism. The revisionists clad this in the clothes of “communism” and “socialism”, trying to fool people, because Russia was the land where socialism was first established, and with the Red Army of the Soviet Union, Europe was liberated from fascism. The revisionists tried to paint their imperialist aspirations and their collusion and struggle with yankee-imperialism as “anti-imperialist”, as they knew well the sentiments of the people were against imperialism and for communism – and Putin knows this as well. How Putin claims that Russia is just “liberating” Ukraine from nazis and the lackeys of the U.S. and the EU is one example of trying to play on the memory of the people and to paint the bloodthirsty and ruthless Russian imperialism as “anti-fascist” or “anti-imperialist”. Putin’s so-called project to “rehabilitate” comrade Stalin in the official history writing

of the Russian imperialism is also part of this – an attempt to cause confusion and to use the great character of comrade Stalin as the statesman and defender of “historical Russia”, this could be nothing more false, because comrade Stalin was the head of the international proletariat, of the world revolution for decades. In a word, he was a great Marxist-Leninist, defender and developer of the dictatorship of the proletariat, who carried out the Great Patriotic War in defence of the socialist Soviet Union and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and to develop the world proletarian revolution. Who, following the great Lenin, applied and developed in theory and practice the solution of the national problem in the Soviet Union. His work On The National Question is a classic of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

Even some bourgeois analysts note the historical weight of the victory over fascism and Putin’s sinister misuse of it, and note that many conceptions of Putin’s have roots in his upbringing in the extremely militarised and fascist society of the social-imperialist Soviet Union – despite, of course, in their analysis many things are mixed with anti-communism and confusion of the nature of revisionism. These analysts also note that in his speeches, Putin seems to view the world the same way as the ruling clique of the social-imperialist Soviet Union in his youth – that there exists two contending superpowers, that are the two centers of the world – and holds onto the traditions of showing off the military and political strength of the state.^{[iii](#)} This analysis does not however recognise that Putin does see that Russian Federation is weaker, and in order to recover, it takes even desperate measures, as we see in the case of the war of aggression on Ukraine. This expressed view on the world is what he would like the world to be like. Therefore, Putin does not want back social-imperialism, but wants back the superpower status following the reactionary imperialist thinking of “Great Mother Russia” of the Tsars .

Putin's reactionary thought is therefore the thought of an imperialist atomic superpower, weakened and forced to a corner, and in a deep crisis, and has failed to recover as a superpower so far this century. It relies heavily on eclectic demagoguery of traditional values, as a justification for the attack on the rights of the people, and for crushing anything revolutionary.

The Russian federation is born out of the bankruptcy of the fascist-corporatist social-imperialist Soviet Union, and at the same time, carries on its legacy as an atomic superpower. Under new banners, the Putin regime promotes "Great Russian" nationalism and militarism, enforces the fascist tendency, trying to gain the same strength that the social-imperialist Soviet Union once had, looking to recover in order to return to being a superpower, losing ground to Yankee-imperialism. Currently, the centralisation of power is developing as presidential absolutism. In the conditions of the deepening crisis, sharpening internal contradictions, threatened by Yankee imperialism, Russian imperialism will increasingly have to use more and more aggressive and reactionary measures against the people in the "homeland" to control the crisis, as well as launch desperate offensives against oppressed nations, like we see in Ukraine in its desperate dispute with US imperialism and other powers. But as is already seen, it will face increasing resistance, and it is not possible for it to be victorious in its invasion of Ukraine, it is getting more and more mired, and it is facing increasing problems also domestically. With every step that the bourgeoisie takes over the rights and liberties of the people, it is walking towards its grave. This instinctive rebellion and resistance of the masses calls the communists to take up the task of leading it and transforming it into mighty anti-imperialist struggle waged side by side with the oppressed nations that are struggling against the oppression of Russian imperialism, into a struggle for socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia; the awakening of the masses is a call

for the urgency of reconstituting the glorious Communist Party as a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party.

Appendix

In regards to this series of articles on Russian imperialism we publish as an appendix the lecture "The Crisis of Democracy" by José Carlos Mariátegui in order to deepen the understanding of the reader on questions of the crisis of the parliament and the tendency of reactionaryisation of the state:

José Carlos Mariátegui: History of the World Crisis (1924)

Lecture 12: The Crisis of Democracy

Delivered to the "Gonzales Prada" People's University, at the Peruvian Student Federation hall, Lima, on September 25, 1923.

Author's Notes:

The symptoms of a crisis of the democratic order could be felt since before the war. What has driven this crisis? The parallel increase and concentration of capitalism and of the proletariat. The countries' economic life and economic forces have passed into the hands of these two great powers, beside which the State has acquired a role, not as referee, but as mediator. The conflicts, the contrasts between one force and the other, could not be solved by the State save through deals, direct agreements between them. In those deals, the State has but played the role of matchmaker. The shape of a new society has been incubating in the form of the old

society. The nation, by virtue of the new social reality, has ceased to be a predominantly political entity, to become a predominantly economic entity. This change in the nation's substance has brought about the crisis of the political State. History shows us that a society's forms of social and political organization correspond with the structure, with the tendency of the productive forces. Bourgeois society, for example, has no origin other than in the birth of industry. Within Medieval society, the bourgeoisie was the industrial class, the artisan class. As the bourgeoisie grew richer, as industry grew, the privileges of the aristocracy, of the nobility, became unbearable. The laborer and the bourgeois were mixed at that time into a single class: the people. The bourgeoisie was the people's vanguard and it was the class which led the revolution. Laborer and bourgeois coincided in the wish to abolish the aristocracy's privileges. More than by reasons of ideology, the fall of the aristocracy, of the medieval order, was determined by concrete reasons in the emergence of a new form of production: industry. New forms of production have been created under the democratic order, the bourgeois order. Industry has developed extraordinarily, pushed along by the machine. Huge industrial enterprises have emerged. The expansion of these new productive forces does not allow the old political molds to endure. It has transformed the structure of nations and demands a transformation in the democratic order's structure. Bourgeois democracy has ceased to correspond with the organization of the productive forces which have changed and grown formidably. That's why democracy is in crisis. Parliament is democracy's typical institution. The crisis of democracy is a crisis of parliament. We have already seen how the two great contemporary forces are capital and labor and how, beyond parliament, these forces clash or struggle. Democracy's theorists might suppose that these forces are, or should be, proportionally represented in parliament. But it is not so, because society is not split cleanly between capitalists and proletarians. Between the capitalist class and the proletarian class there are a series

of amorphous and intermediary layers. Besides, just as the whole proletarian class does not have a precise awareness of its historical and class necessities, the whole of the capitalist class is not gifted with a precise class consciousness. The mentality of the big industrialist or the banker is not the same as the mentality of the medium rentier or retail merchant. This dispersion of social classes is reflected in parliament which, therefore, does not exactly reflect the large interests at play. The political State turns out to be an integral representation of all social layers. But the conservative force and the revolutionary force polarize into single-interest groupings: capitalism and proletariat. Within the parliamentary order there is room only for coalition governments. Today, the tendency is toward factional governments.

Currently, the intensifying of the class struggle, the expansion of social warfare, has accented this crisis of democracy. The proletariat attempts the decisive assault on the State and on political power in order to transform society. Its growth in the parliaments is threatening to the bourgeoisie. Democracy's legal instruments have turned out to be insufficient for preserving the democratic order. Conservatism has needed to appeal to illegal action, to extra-legal methods. The middle class, society's intermediate and heterogeneous zone, has been the nerve center of this movement. Lacking a class consciousness of its own, the middle class feels itself equally distant from, and inimical to, capitalism and the proletariat, but some capitalist sectors are represented within it. And, as the current battle is waged between capital and the proletariat, all intervention from a third element must operate to the benefit of the conservative class. Capitalism and the proletariat are two great and singular camps of gravitation which draw in the scattered forces. Whosoever reacts against the proletariat serves capitalism. This falls to the middle class, from whose ranks the fascist movement has recruited its partisans. Fascism is

not an Italian phenomenon, it is an international phenomenon. The first European country in which fascism appeared was Italy because in Italy the class struggle was in a sharper period, because in Italy the revolutionary situation was most violent and decisive.

Process of fascism. Its rise to the top. Its systems. Its methods.

Fascism in Germany, in France, in Hungary, etc. Lugones in Argentina.

[i](#) Fish & al. 2017: What is Putinism? Journal of Democracy, vol. 28, issue 4

[ii](#) Michel Eltchaninoff 2015 [2022]: Dans la tête de Vladimir Poutine. Actes Sud. Arles

[iii](#) Ibid.