

New Tsars' Colonial Expansion In Africa

by Tao Chiu

LAST year when the Soviet revisionists openly started provoking the civil war in Angola and interfering in Africa's internal affairs to push big power hegemonism in an undisguised way there, they once more gave themselves away as social-imperialists with sinister designs on that continent—expansion, plunder and domination, double-quick.

Neo-Colonialism, Moscow Brand

The new tsars have long cast greedy eyes at this tasty chunk of meat, namely, strategically important Africa which is enormously rich in natural resources. Under cover of "co-operation" and "aid" they continually quickened the tempo of expansion in Africa in the 1960s. Calling itself the "faithful and selfless friend"

of the African people, the Soviet Union in recent years redoubled efforts to sell the African states the "international division of labour" trash it first introduced to the member states of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in the form of "specialized production" and "co-operation in production." The objective of this glaring neo-colonialism of Moscow's is to get Africa in its clutches and then help itself to raw materials there.

The Soviet revisionists say "co-operation in production" with the African countries is a long-term endeavour based on international division of labour. In reality the Soviet Union uses this to facilitate expansion and control in Africa. It means the African countries should produce goods with native labour and local natural resources while relying on Soviet capital, equipment and

technology. It means the African economy will be brought into the Soviet "international division of labour" orbit, to wit, an industrial Soviet Union and an Africa "specialized" in farming and mining and serving in other respects as a processing plant affiliated to the Soviet economy.

In recent years the new tsars have made good use of this "co-operation in production" in their frenzied colonial expansion in Africa. They now are giving first importance to Africa in "co-operation in production" with the third world countries. It was reported that of the 49 developing countries with which the Soviet Union had signed "economic and technical co-operation agreements" by 1975, 26 were African countries. Thanks to these agreements, the new tsars have succeeded in penetrating some African countries' major industrial branches, such as mining, metallurgy, petroleum, power, machine building and food processing as they vigorously promote "co-operation" in "exploiting explored minerals and building enterprises for processing them." Facts show that when they "co-operate" with these countries in production, the new tsars' intention is to get hold of their minerals and make off with them in the course of production, thereby augmenting their economic strength to contend with U.S. imperialism for hegemony.

The export of Soviet capital to African countries in the name of "co-operation" has been massive. Incomplete statistics show that from 1954 to 1974, Soviet state monopoly capital exported to these countries, which exceeded 3,000 million U.S. dollars, found its way into 200-odd industrial and agricultural branches there, mainly in oil-rich North Africa and West Africa known for its important mineral deposits. "Aid" in geological surveying and mineral exploration accounts for 12 per cent of total Soviet "aid" to Africa.

As this kind of "co-operation" expands, the Soviet Union becomes more and more unscrupulous in grabbing Africa's natural resources. A preliminary statistical survey showed that it took out some 4,700 million dollars' worth of food and raw materials like agricultural produce and minerals between 1960 and 1974. The breakdown, in part, is as follows: cotton, 1,800 million dollars; cacao, over 700 million; fruit, nearly 400 million; rice, about 300 million; and petroleum, some 200 million. More recently, the Soviet Union has showed a growing preference to conclude "long-term trade agreements" with these countries with a view to prolonging its plunder of Africa's important raw materials and ensuring ready markets for its own industrial goods. This, it says, is "an important way of making raw material purchases more stable." In fact, it is an illuminating footnote to the vicious design of the new tsars to turn these countries into their raw material bases.

More Rapacious Than Old-Line Imperialism

One sharp practice of the new tsars in pushing neo-colonialism in Africa is to set up so-called "joint-stock enterprises," an important vehicle for the Soviet Union to obtain raw materials at rock-bottom prices and

exploit cheap local labour power, export capital, promote sales of industrial goods and make superprofits. For instance, it has set up "joint-stock enterprises" in a number of countries in North, West and East Africa which help boost sales of Soviet-made machinery, industrial equipment, tractors, autos, including limousines, electrical appliances, pumps and other industrial goods at great profit. Of its nine "joint-stock enterprises" in seven countries, for example, five are "joint companies" dealing in marine and fishery products and the Soviet Union takes away half or all the catches of some companies.

Capital exports have brought a sharply increased influx of Soviet industrial goods to Africa. According to incomplete figures, between 1960 and 1974, the Soviet Union sold countries there 3,500 million dollars' worth of manufactured goods, of which machinery and transport equipment were valued at 2,700 million dollars, or 77 per cent of the total. Compared with 1960, Soviet exports of manufactured goods to Africa in 1974 grew more than sevenfold and machinery and equipment registered a rise of more than ten times.

Another practice used to exploit the African people is exchange of unequal values. What with "long-term trade agreements," and what with "aid," "co-operation" or dunning for repayment of debts, the new tsars ruthlessly keep down prices of Africa's primary products and raise those of their own industrial goods, steadily widening the "scissors" difference between the prices of these two categories of commodities. It has been estimated that the African countries in their trade with the Soviet Union had a loss of nearly 2,400 million dollars between 1955 and 1974 due to unfavourable trade terms. More hair-raising is the degree of exploitation if viewed from the changes in terms of bartering. While African countries in 1955 exported 1.8 tons of coffee in exchange for a Soviet metal cutting lathe, they had to export 4.2 tons for it in 1974.

All this points out that the Soviet social-imperialists are more rapacious and more truculent than the old-line capital-imperialists in exploiting the African people.

The great African people are awakening. The independent African countries and people have achieved gratifying results in their struggle to consolidate national independence, safeguard state sovereignty, place the national resources at their own disposal and develop their national economies. The trend of opposing neo-colonialist exploitation and plunder and strengthening regional co-operation is growing with each passing day. Countries want independence, nations want liberation and the people want revolution — this is the great historical current which no Soviet revisionist trick can halt, be it "international division of labour" or "co-operation in production." There is no doubt that the Moscow brand of neo-colonialism will go completely bankrupt.