

World Indicators Program No.7  
SOCIAL IMPERIALISM AND SUB-IMPERIALISM;  
Continuities in the Structural Theory of Imperialism \*

by

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## 1. Introduction

Much is known about capitalist imperialism - what about the Soviet variety? Eastern Europe in general, and the Soviet Union in particular, cannot be comprehended without some ideas about the relation of dominance said to characterize the relations between the Soviet Union and other countries. The question is how to conceive of this relation between the Soviet Union and other COMECON members. It is well known that the Chinese have a terminology for it, "social imperialism" - some times defined as "socialism in words, capitalism in deeds". This, however, is not a very helpful point of departure and is probably better as a way of characterizing some social democratic regimes in their dealings with Third World countries. A better point of departure would be how the Chinese themselves describe their relations with the Soviet Union, since they also have considerable experience and are free to speak. <sup>1)</sup> In other words, when they rejected the Soviet Union as a model and built down (in many fields even to zero) the cooperative relation they had entertained with that country, then what did they reject? and to what extent does this also apply to Eastern European reality? In short, what is social imperialism?

## 2. Social imperialism: capitalism in disguise, or another imperialism?

The difficulty is that the Chinese themselves sound inconsistent on this theme. In their denunciation of the internal as well as the external relations of the Soviet Union it is quite clear that they do not accept the Soviet Union's self-image as being a union of socialist republics. The Chinese seem to see her as a system of internal (and external) dominance, and as non-socialist. <sup>2)</sup> Since they seem to share a general marxist unilinear conception of history in terms of five successive stages; slave society - feudalism - capitalism - communism, "non-socialist" implies by definition "capitalist", a retrogression to capitalism. This capitalism is of a particular kind, "revisionism", the theory of which does not yet seem to have been spelt out. <sup>3)</sup> Moreover, if the Soviet Union is to be conceived of in its internal relations as essentially a capitalist formation, one would imagine that what is wrong about the external relations would be conceived of in terms of the theory of capitalist imperialism in general and monopolistic state capitalism in particular.

This, however, does not seem to be the case: When the Chinese talk about their relations with the Soviet Union, economic relations seem to play a relatively insignificant role. <sup>4)</sup> There are references to such factors as the dismantling of industries in Manchuria, <sup>5)</sup> the heavy and lasting burdens incurred by the Chinese in servicing the debts contracted to acquire arms in connection with the Korean war that started less than one year after the People's Republic had been declared; <sup>6)</sup> the dependence on Soviet technology and technicians; <sup>7)</sup> the location of industries and infrastructure close to the Soviet border; <sup>8)</sup> and the trade composition. <sup>9)</sup> But neither is the evidence conclusive, <sup>10)</sup> nor is the emphasis placed on such factors.

Rather, it seems that social imperialism, both in fact and in what the Chinese emphasize, is precisely what the term implies: a form of social domination. More precisely, we shall try to define it in a way that should be compatible with factual descriptions as well as Chinese perceptions, well knowing that it may not coincide completely with their ideas. <sup>11)</sup>

We shall define "social imperialism" as follows:

It is a relation between a Center country and a Periphery country whereby

- (1) The Center imposes a certain social structure on the Periphery
- (2) a center is created in that Periphery country structure, serving as a bridgehead for the Center.

Thus, there are exploitation and penetration. <sup>12)</sup> The exploitation does not consist in an exchange of commodities at low levels of processing and/or low prices for commodities of high levels of processing and/or high prices. <sup>13)</sup> Rather, there is the "exchange" between being the fertile soil on which a structure is implanted or imprinted, and being the willing exporter of that structure. <sup>14)</sup> In this exchange the Center provides a model, and the Periphery provides

- (a) through its (apparent) acceptance of the Center a confirmation of the validity of the Center model,
- (b) an expansion of the Center through isomorphism, creating homologous structures elsewhere,
- (c) leverage for internal control of the Periphery, through the bridgehead, and through knowledge since it is their own structure,

- (d) a buffer-zone ( a "Vorderland" for protection, just as vast Hinterland expanses can serve for retreat).
- (e) an alignment in policies vis-a-vis third parties.

Conceived of this way social imperialism should be seen as based more on political/military imperialism than on economic imperialism. It is supreme exercise of power, not only by shaping the attitudes and behavior, but by shaping the social and political structure in which people live, thereby getting at their attitudes and behavior. Its military implications are obvious. But what about its economic implications?

For dogmatic marxists no explanatory chain that is not firmly anchored somewhere in an economic formation in general and a profit motive in particular can ever become a theory of imperialism.<sup>15)</sup> The argument would be that even if Soviet expansionism is not seen as due to a need for export of capital or in order to secure raw materials, sometimes also raw labor, and even if there is no economic return from the trade with the dominated countries and regions - built into the terms of trade or the trade composition - there may nevertheless be long -term economic gains after the ground has been well prepared through structural manipulation and bridgehead building.

Our position would be that this may be so, but in that case economic imperialism should be seen as something in addition to social imperialism. This is not to deny that economic methods may be used. Thus, for many years now Soviet export to the Eastern European countries has mainly been in raw materials and raw energy<sup>16)</sup> - a trade pattern that both deprives the Soviet Union of the benefits of processing themselves their natural riches, and exposes them to the risk of depletion. Economically the Soviet Union has given herself the role of a vast colony providing Eastern European countries both with raw materials and markets for their processed goods - grosso modo - probably much to the delight of the latter,<sup>17)</sup> since it is a basic factor contributing to their living standard, and development generally. But politically/militarily this has also given the Soviet Union some of the same leverage as the OPEC countries have vis-a-vis Western Europe and the US.<sup>18)</sup> It creates dependencies both ways and may be a very problematic tool to use, may even be turned against the users - but to the extent it is a tool, it is clearly more for political/military reasons than for economic purposes - short term as well as long term.<sup>19)</sup>

But why then refer to this as "imperialism" and not simply as political/military domination? Because it is more than that. If it were simply a question of military occupation with political control, the term "domination" would have been conceptually sufficient. More significantly, if the purpose were only to provide military positions and secure them through political means, occupation of some bases would have been strategically sufficient. But the scope by far transcends such limited political horizons. It is a question of moulding another society, through effective bridgehead operation, establishing exploitative exchange patterns through the mechanism mentioned above, and the creation of dependency patterns completely similar to what is found under the general heading of "capitalist imperialism".<sup>20)</sup> Just as social imperialism may have economic implications, economic imperialism has social implications, transforming local/social structures so as to serve the purpose of Periphery (and Center) capitalism. But sometimes capitalism may be grafted onto a local structure almost ready made for the purpose; in need of no further transformation. This is one more reason why we want to keep these two phenomena analytically separate, regardless of how empirically intertwined they may be.<sup>21)</sup>

Let us then try to describe in more detail the structure the Chinese seem to see as the Soviet structure and to reject. In the language of the present author, not of the Chinese, it would contain the following elements:<sup>22)</sup>

- (1) Verticality
- (2) Individualism
- (3) Professionalism
- (4) Repression
  - a. in terms of social dialectics
  - b. in terms of human rights
- (5) Some special Soviet features
  - a. a solid power structure consisting of
    - party (goal-setting)
    - apparatus (execution)
    - police/military (control)and ruling over, sometimes exploiting -
  - b. three large, overlapping and marginalized sectors
    - "minorities" (that in fact constitute the majority)
    - peasants
    - intelligentsiawith workers to some extent in an in-between position.

Some comments on each point:

The verticality is in terms of both division of labor, power and privilege, the latter consisting not only in higher salaries but also in easier access to many amenities of life (food, clothing, housing, clinics, schools/and of a better quality).<sup>23)</sup>

The individualism consists in seeing the individual as something with a career, based essentially on education, individual performance, and loyalty to the power structure. These two points together combine into professionalism, which can be defined as the creation of a small upper crust with a high level of monopoly on problem-solving. All of this could, however, equally well be said about Western, capitalist, liberal societies since it is essentially the basic structure of Western post-renaissance society with a slow, but steady decrease in the significance of family background (although certainly not down to zero), and a slow, but steady increase in the degree of detachability of the individual (starting with the nuclear family) for geographic and social mobility. There may be some differences in the privilege structure and in the education/achievement/loyalty mix that produces upward mobility, but the basic social grammar is the same. Hence, in rejecting this combination the Chinese reject the Occident, capitalist and socialist alike.

Whereas these three first points may be compatible with Marcuse's famous "repressive tolerance", the next point would bring us into the reality of "repressive intolerance", drawing a blurred line between Western and Eastern Europe. The argument can be phrased in Western liberal human rights terms and in Chinese terms, and we shall start with the latter.

The basic point seems to be the following: no society is terminal, there will always be contradictions, but in a socialist society (where capitalist exploitation has been eliminated) contradictions are non-antagonistic and can be handled non-violently. It is not very clear where the Chinese stand on the issue of "democratic centralism" vs. "popular participation",<sup>24)</sup> it seems to vary from one issue area to another, - but it is quite clear that they see the Soviet Union leadership as opposed to any form of popular articulation of contradictions. There is no denial that there are "quarrels" at the top of the power structure,<sup>25)</sup> only that these exchanges do not reflect adequately contradictions as they are experienced by people in general. The social dialectics

is not permitted to continue, there is a pretention of near-perfection as a rationalization for consolidation, for tightening the lid of the social cauldron, so to speak. The result is not only powerlessness for the masses, but also some kind of general social stagnation, even "societal death" because the social dialectic is not permitted to run its course. 26)

Some of this can be captured in Western/liberal human rights language, since freedom of expression, impression, association, even organization are ways in which non-antagonistic contradictions may work themselves out. To tie the thinking to the theory and practice of Western parliamentary and presidential democracies, however, would be misleading. Politics is broader than these institutionalizations of politics; just as education is broader than schooling. The "cultural revolution" 1966-69 offers examples of other ways of doing politics, leading to transcendence of, not only change in, the current structure (for which reason the name is a misnomer; it was a structural revolution). It should be compared to an Eastern European country that has witnessed something corresponding to this: Poland, with the changes resulting from the upheavals in Poznań July 1956 and Gdansk December 1970 (will the next be in 1984?). The participation was limited, the process did not run its course, and the results were modest and corruptible. 27)

This type of thinking, extrapolated from discussions with Chinese, might shed some other type of light on the concept of social imperialism. The point is not merely that a structure is imposed upon a society, that there is a teacher-learner, sender-receiver relationship. The point is also that the Periphery is deprived of the possibility of developing further on its own premises, due to its own internal contradictions. It becomes deprived of the motor of its own dynamism just as under economic imperialism; it can no longer use the production factors for its own needs. It will either develop as a reflection of, or an imitation of, or as a reaction to, the dynamism of the social imperialist Center, and neither form is genuine, autonomous development. This then, should not be confused with struggles for power in Periphery leadership - we are thinking of genuine structural change. And the best examples are, of course, the Polish and Czech efforts to overcome some of the contradictions inherent in Soviet-imposed "socialism" and develop further a dialectic that, indeed, was not permitted to run its course. 28)

In addition to this there are the particularly repressive features<sup>of</sup>/Soviet society, as they are reflected, for instance in Solzhenitsyn's writings, and particularly in Archipelag Gulag. Much of this terror, however, must probably be seen as due to particular circumstances. One such circumstance was the problem of what to do when prophecy fails, i.e. when all the beneficial consequences supposed to derive from abolition of private ownership of means of production and planning for social production failed to appear. There must have been a need for scapegoats in order to save theory, and the very extensive concept of "class enemy" provided ample supply of such scapegoats. <sup>29)</sup> Then, the interventionist wars and the threat of a fascist attack also served to transform and distort the society, which was not difficult given the tsarist background. But this is to a large extent changing now, particularly in the Eastern European countries - and is not essential for the definition of social imperialism anyhow. <sup>30)</sup>

Essential for that definition is rather the idea of a new class precisely consisting of an alliance of military/police, party and apparat elements; presiding over a fragmented populace. <sup>31)</sup> The Chinese must have felt very strongly how the new class formation was taking place, even quickly. But the other condition, the fragmentation, must have been meaningless in China. With something like 94% being han Chinese and above 80% being in the agriculture, the structural basis for fragmentation was absent; at least along those lines. The Chinese people were a much more homogeneous people, and any revolution had to be meaningful, not repressive, for the overwhelming majority of the population. <sup>32)</sup> The revolution could not be based mainly on primary accumulation by exploiting the peasants and putting the surplus into heavy industry; some other form had to be found.

However that was, the net result today is that two of the biggest countries in the world have two very different social systems, that both refer to themselves as "socialist". In all probability the Soviet version will one day have to give up its hegemonial inclinations and spend the energy used on maintaining a structure of social imperialism for more creative purposes. Thus, the lack of any significant withdrawal of Soviet strength in Eastern Europe, although no proof,



is highly compatible with the idea that these troops are stationed there not primarily for East-West conflict reasons, but in order to maintain local control. For if that local control breaks down, there is a threat, not so much to the Soviet Union as to the Soviet leadership. And this is precisely the same mechanism as is operating also in connection with the use of military force to maintain economic imperialism. The currency in which this is expressed is not necessarily economic; the gains from the Periphery under social imperialism are in political/military terms and more precisely in the five areas mentioned above. A highly economic bias is needed not to see such interests - in the confirmation of one's own model, in the remoulding of the surrounding countries to become mirror images of one's own, in the provision of leverage for internal control, in having a buffer-zone and allies in a complex world - they are all benefits worth some costs. After all, what could be more profound exercise of power than to shape the entire structure of another country - not only to levy taxes, to rob and exploit economically but to expand oneself through multiplication abroad, not only enrichment at home? (35) And - is this not rather similar to what parents do to their children and teachers to their pupils, multiplying themselves through structuring the minds of others - being quite satisfied with this, in no need for economic gains in addition or instead of this rather profound impact?

Let us only add that two other characteristics of imperialism, fragmentation and marginalization, are also present in the Soviet system. The non-RSFSR republics are not known to have their own meetings and organization, nor are the non-Soviet CMEA members - although in either case it would most obviously be in their interests to exchange experiences and goods and develop joint strategies - in the case of Eastern Europe perhaps even their own European Socialist Community. (34) The latter might even one day open for a concept of European socialism purified of tsarist and social-imperialist ingredients, capable of establishing an internationalistic, participatory socialism, excluding nobody. (35)

But what about another characteristic of capitalist imperialism, the idea that it is caused by internal necessities: export of capital for investment abroad in order to secure an acceptable profit; import of raw materials and raw labor for processing at home? What, if any, is the linkage between internal and external factors

in the case of social, or - which would have been a better expression - structural imperialism? What is the problem in the Center - possibly overcome through the instrument of social imperialism in the Periphery?

One possible answer to this question is already embedded in point (a) above in the list of what the Periphery provides: fresh confirmation of the validity of the Center model. And this means the Center model as it originally was, not with the symptoms of degeneration and the impurities and the tear and wear brought about by time. A good example is the invigorating effect a stay in Cuba still seems to have on Soviet experts, coming from a country where the revolution long since has grown stale to a country sufficiently isomorphic to be seen as a structural Periphery. China must have had this function in the 1950's whereas it is doubtful whether Eastern Europe (with the possible exception of Bulgaria) gives any return on structural investment. However, we are certainly not only thinking of a psychological factor of inspiration, but also of reinforcement through homology - the idea that Center institutions, such as economic organizations, cultural institutions etc. that may be vulnerable to criticism on the ground of how they function internally become more meaningful by having external partners of the same kind with which they can easily interact. A flow of reports about this, and a stream of concrete people, the opposite numbers of the members of the local new class, will serve to confirm the latter in power by conveying an image of an international community of countries of the same kind. At that level there is an appearance of equality produced by ceremonies and rules of procedure; the threats and the bullying of the center in the Periphery take place in back-stage rooms, and the periphery of the Center performing their roles as soldiers of occupation of the Periphery when it threatens to get structurally out of line, are kept well outside public knowledge. 36)

This is by no means true for social imperialism only, or, rather, social imperialism is also an ingredient in classical imperialism. Thus, the old mores of British society were hardly ever so well enacted as in some of the enclaves in the colonies, 37) and the British Commonwealth has for a long time served a function relatively similar to what is mentioned above. It legitimizes vertical societies, essentially capitalist, based on exploitation

by  
of many/sharing a publicly visible ritual of parliamentarism,  
essentially run by an alliance of property-holders and knowledge-  
holders. It is as if the center in the Periphery says to its  
periphery, "look, our system cannot be as bad as you say, all these  
peoples have also accepted it and some of them are much more radical  
than you are - -".

Having said this it should be pointed out that under economic  
imperialism there is an operationalization of all this: the net  
gains to the Center can be calculated. Political science has not  
produced a similar tool; but at the same time as this makes the  
gains less visible, it also tends to conceal the losses - it will  
be less easy for anybody to claim that "imperialism does not pay  
any longer". And even if such a claim should arise there is always  
pure expansionism to fall back upon, provided that is a goal in  
itself - in other words, provided expansionism is built into the  
culture - as by and large it seems to be in Western civilization,  
of which the Soviet Union also is a part. <sup>37)</sup>

### 3. Sub-imperialism: imperialism compared and imperialism combined.

There is - indeed - a general theory of imperialism - today  
to a large extent "inspired" by the major imperialist power of our  
times: the United States, and to a lesser degree by Japan and the  
European Community countries. There is also the beginning of a  
theory of social imperialism - largely due to the Soviet Union.

Here we shall try to pull these lines together. There are  
two ways of doing this: one may compare different types of imperia-  
lism, and one may look at their interaction, their patterns of  
conflict and cooperation. We shall try to do both, but in a very  
sketchy way, partly to clarify the types, partly to see how they  
combine.

US, EC, Japan, the Soviet Union - where do they stand relative  
to each other when it comes to imperialism? The question has to  
be answered along two dimensions: the domain of imperialism  
(over what countries and regions of the world it is extended) and  
the scope of imperialism (what type of imperialism, and what  
mechanisms are used). It is a telling indictment of the sad state  
of international statistics that there are no easily available,  
meaningful answers to this question; some figures that could give  
us at a glance some information about the level of imperialism  
exercised by country A over country B. Or, since imperialism is  
not necessarily a bilateral relation but a total structure, there  
should at least be some kind of information about the amount of

"imperialism sent" and "imperialism received", for each country. In the absence of such information the briefest possible statement would be something like this.

The United States stand in an asymmetric relation of exploitation and penetration, economically, politically, militarily, socially, culturally and communication-wise to a great number of countries of the world. The points of gravity of the exploitation/penetration were the holes left behind by the Spanish imperialists defeated by the US by the turn of the century: the Caribbean and further south in Latin America; Southeast Asia and further north in Asia. This is by far the most extensive pattern of imperialism in the world today, which means that the US is by far the imperialist power that is going to decline most as the world fight against imperialism continues.

The European Community stands in an asymmetric relation of exploitation and penetration, in all the ways mentioned above except militarily - where direct European power has been fairly well forced to retreat - and also to a great many countries in the world. These are the "ACP countries", 46 countries in Africa, the Caribbean (Anglo-American and some others, rather than Spanish-American) and the Pacific - and in addition to that "overseas territories". As opposed to the US system the EC system is probably on its way up, which means that the effects of anti-imperialism, however, will not be fully appreciated for some time to come - except some of the economic consequences of the Periphery fight for better terms of trade. 38)

Japan stands in an asymmetric relation of exploitation and penetration, but only economically and to a much more limited range of countries, particularly in East and Southeast Asia. Like for the US and the EC her economic impact is felt all over the world, but not to the point of creating real dependencies on Japan as a market for raw material or semimanufacture export, and as source of capital, manufactures and technology. Since their dependence is also Japan's dependence, the impact of anti-imperialism will be considerable.

The Soviet Union stands in an asymmetric relation of exploitation and penetration, but mainly politically, militarily and socially, and mainly with countries in Eastern Europe. Again, the political and military power of the Soviet Union is felt in many places of the world - it is after all a superpower - but as

an imperialist power both domain and scope are limited. One reason for this is that the anti-imperialist struggle has been more successful against the Soviet Union; had the Soviet Union been able to dominate China politically, militarily and socially, then the domain would have been considerable. But both China - and before her Yugoslavia - managed to extricate themselves, with highly different effects. 39)

Of these four we assume, generally speaking, US, Japanese and Soviet imperialism to be on the decline, EC imperialism still to be on the increase for some time to come. The first three are considerably weakened through a three-front war against countries that have liberated themselves and at any time are willing to tell the story of how it was to be dominated (Cuba, North Korea, China), fighting or demonstrations of various kinds in the outer periphery (Vietnam, Indonesia, Czechoslovakia) and dissent in the inner periphery (intellectuals and some workers' movements in US and Japan, intelligentsia in the Soviet Union). The European Community is new and fresh and looks innocuous, and has still not created autonomous regions through struggle, or a group of countries conscious of being an outer periphery, or even an inner opposition. 40) That time will come - in the meantime the EC is gaining from the decline of the others and from the contrast effect: everything looks relatively acceptable in the light of the US in Indochina and - less importantly - the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia.

By and large we assume that anti-imperialist forces will draw their inspiration from three relatively similar phenomena: fundamental human needs, the desire for autonomy and the desire for diversity.

The masses in the Periphery are increasingly conscious of the obvious: that imperialism is antithetical to the fulfilment of their needs. In the periphery of US, EC and Japanese imperialism the masses are discovering that not only does capitalism not lead to a "trickling down" effect whereby food, clothes, shelter, health and education are satisfied for the lowest quarter, third, even half of the population - but the goals of capitalist "development" in terms of GNP/capita increase and trade increase even counteract satisfaction of fundamental needs.

This is not the problem of the masses under social imperialism, however, their fundamental needs are by and large fulfilled. But

both inside the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe there is a thirst for freedom, for the right to do politics, for a more meaningful, less repressive socialism, and this thirst has already led to a number of revolts and will lead to more. Of course, these needs are not fulfilled under capitalist imperialism either, except for small layers of the population in some periods.

The elites in the Periphery will increasingly be yearning for autonomy, for even though they have benefitted greatly from being the bridgeheads of imperialism (as businessmen, politicians, military leaders, cultural importers etc.) they also know that they are well-paid, well-kept instruments in somebody else's designs. These elites may want to keep the local structure, they may want to continue to exploit their masses in all the ways possible - but they want to do it themselves, not on behalf of somebody else.<sup>41)</sup> And this leads straight into the idea of diversity, the idea of finding one's own lead to development, not imitating somebody else. More particularly, we would predict an increasing rejection of the idea of "catching up", or "decreasing the gap" between poor and rich, LCDs and NDCs or whatever it is called, for at least two reasons. First, it is probably impossible to "catch up" with the leading imperialist powers without using some of their methods, i.e. imperialism. For this to happen, today's Periphery countries would have to create their own peripheries, and like for today's Center countries, considerably more extensive than themselves (three times, four times.)<sup>42)</sup> Second, and more importantly: is "catching up" or "decreasing the gap" really a goal?<sup>43)</sup> To satisfy human needs is definitely a goal, but of a different kind, and it raises the question of whether human needs really are satisfied in the Center countries. The poverty pockets in the US, the mass exploitation and the pollution in Japan, the general repression in the Soviet Union serve to throw considerable doubts. In addition to that come the increasingly visible negative side-effects of "development" in terms of mass alienation, mental illness, destroyed ecological balances and general confusion and bewilderment, combined with public scandals.<sup>44)</sup>

In short, the Center countries are not only on the decline in terms of power, but also as models - which, of course, is one aspect of their total power decline. It is hardly possible today to find countries, or even parties, that would hold up the US,

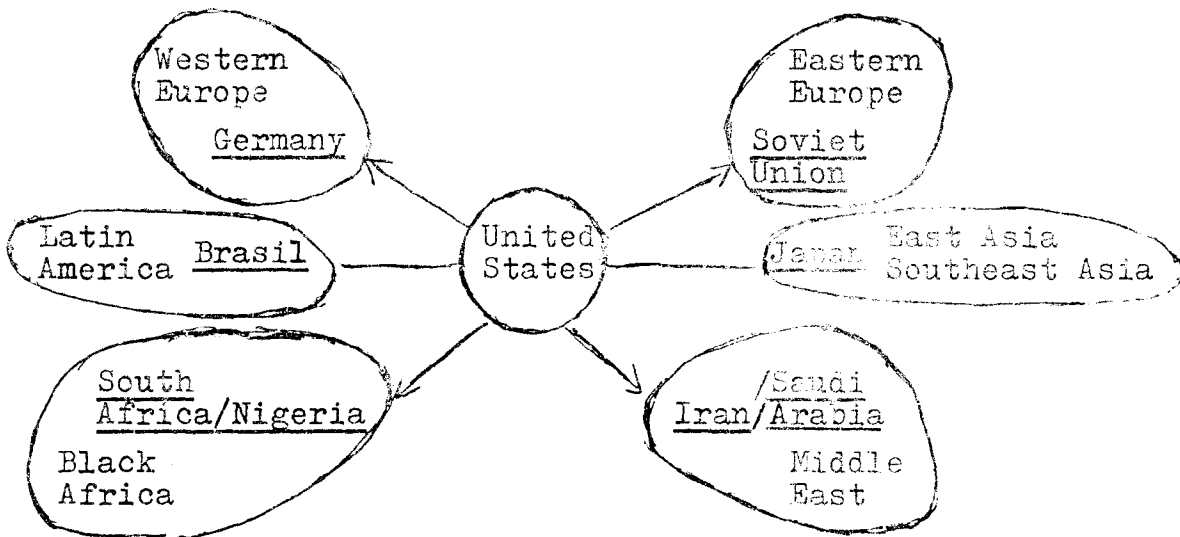
the Soviet Union or Japan as models and wish for their own country to be a true copy of one of these three. One may be fascinated by aspects (US pluralism and creativity if not in the public sphere); Soviet ability to eradicate poverty in such a vast territory and some technical feats; Japanese ingenuity in adapting Western technology and incredible capacity for concerted action), but not in the countries as a whole. <sup>45)</sup> On the contrary, if any country is a model, it would rather be China which is antithetical to all three - and to some extent the EC countries, probably because they do not exhibit clearly the disease symptoms found in the other three. One more reason why China and the EC countries currently are on good terms! <sup>46)</sup>

So much for the comparison, what about the combination? How do these imperialist systems relate to each other? By nature they are all expansive, which means competitive in a finite world. On the other hand, considerable political and military energy have already been expended on establishing the type of uneasy balance found among the Center countries in the world today. Economically the US has a certain monopoly on Latin America and the EC on Africa. The US competes with Japan in Southeast and East Asia, and with EC in the Caribbean and the Pacific, but it is hard to believe that these conflicts should escalate into real confrontations. Rather, one would assume all three to have a shared interest in preserving capitalism as such. For that reason they will also, after various kinds of trade and tariff wars, come to agreements among themselves and with the rising capitalist power of the oil exporting countries that increasingly take on imperialistic features (although only of the economic type so far - except for Iran.)<sup>47)</sup> Their real problem and real fight is certainly not with each other, but with the vast periphery they have created, and the basic theoretical, and indeed political, problem is not so much whether the Periphery will start fighting - it has already done so for a long time - but what the reaction of the Center will be. From colonial and neo-colonial wars we know the strategies of individual Center countries: the question is whether beyond this there will also be concerted action. One model for such concerted elite action is constituted by NATO, (especially its role in maintaining Portuguese control for such a long period in three parts of Africa); another is the OAS (Organization of American States) and the Rio de Janeiro Treaty. But one may also think in terms of more grandiose designs, particularly if one takes as a point of departure what seems to be the basic tenets of Henry Kissinger's foreign policy: recognize, even come

to terms with established "communism"; make use of local forces (and a low US profile) to fight any new attempt to establish "communism".

There are two good reasons why the US should take a lead in the effort to coordinate activities to maintain the status quo. The US is still the strongest imperialist power, so it has some capability; and it is the most imperialist power which means that it has most to lose and hence, presumably, the highest motivation. But however strong the motivation, the US is no longer capable, nor willing, to exercise "policing" activities all around the world, as she has been doing in countries like Guatemala, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Lebanon, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Korea. Hence the obvious method is to build on already existing structures, making use of somebody else's imperialism or aspiration in that direction - in other words sub-imperialism. The formula is simple: establish a bilateral relation between the US on the one hand and a region on the other, select a "favorite country" which can support local forces in exercising control so as to maintain a status quo, a law and order pattern compatible with capitalist types of "development".<sup>48)</sup>

Which are the regions, which are the favorite countries?  
Here is one possible image of what might be the US model:



The figure should be seen as a chart of hypotheses, well worth exploring in some detail. Basic is the idea of the US as a super-center with bilateral ties to regional imperialisms through favorite countries, not precise names of countries and regions. Thus, one assumption is that NATO and OAS will increasingly lose their multilateral form and become bilateral even in form - referred to as "partnership". But whereas Brasil may be used to supply



Chile with expertise in torturing right after the coup September 1973 (and some expertise in toppling "leftist" regimes before that), Germany's role may be, for instance, to bail out Italy, in economic crisis, to prevent her from going "communist".<sup>49)</sup> Iran exercises a corresponding role in a more militant openly manner, and South Africa has played a role in Southern Africa, in addition to her significance as a naval support point. And there is Japan, constantly asked to "fulfill her obligations" and always suspected of overfulfilling them. Like Germany she was beaten by the US in the last war which means that she still is a military stronghold for the US with nuclear connotations. And finally, the role of the Soviet Union may be to serve as an ultimate guarantee against what both the US and the Soviet Union would fear: leftist regimes of something like the Albanian variety.<sup>50)</sup> In doing so world capitalism makes use of social imperialism, partly penetrating the Soviet system, partly using Soviet structural control.

The system is far from perfect. For one thing the "favorite country" may be more interested in its own imperialism than in acting on behalf of somebody else. This may lead to the US to prefer Saudi Arabia to Iran, for instance. Second, all six countries designated here as "favorite countries" are feared, even hated one way or the other in the region concerned, and this reduces their leverage. (And that may lead to the US to prefer Nigeria to South Africa, for instance). On the other hand, it may be objected that this is of minor significance since the elites in the periphery may like them or at least be very willing to make use of their services. Third, the model makes use of the US system in Western Europe and Latin America (NATO and the OAS), the Soviet system (WTO) and the Japanese system, but is weak on Africa - as the US has always been. South Africa is too similar to Israel - it has no leverage with regional elites. But then US interests on that continent are also relatively limited.

Two important parts of the world are not included, China and India, for which reason it is obviously important for the US to keep China from practising the "World Village against the World City" strategy, and maintain a relatively powerless India. The pacification of China depends on the continuation of the Sino-Soviet conflict. And this was, perhaps, the meaning of Lin Piao's death: the elimination of a very active enemy of capitalist imperialism who was at the same time friendly to the Soviet Union. The question

is how stable this arrangement is, and how much it depends on the person who seems to be China's Kissinger - Chou En-lai. <sup>51)</sup>

We mention all this in order to point out that there is not only a world capitalist system, but also a potential system of world imperialism with a coordinated Center. That Center, however, is not the "world pentagon" US-EC-Japan-Soviet Union-China, <sup>52)</sup> for China is kept on the outside, and the EC is not made use of to pacify Africa. (Rather, the problem is how to use some European countries to pacify other EC countries, e.g. as a way of preventing Mediterranean countries from turning towards "communism"). <sup>53)</sup>

There are new centers coming up: the giant Brasil with her economic growth that certainly does not benefit the masses, but may lead to a nuclear capability, and the oil rich Iran, and a potential giant - Nigeria. In fact, all the favorite countries may have nuclear arms: the US and the Soviet Union have them, Germany and Japan might get access to them from the US in a crisis, Brasil, South Africa and Iran may get them. On the other hand (or precisely for that reason): China and India also have them. Hence, this is a combination that can play on all types of imperialism - economic, political, military, cultural, social, communicational.

#### 4. Conclusion

So there we stand, about to enter the last quarter of the twentieth century. Giant imperialism: dissimilar in much but similar in their ability to exploit and subordinate others and to penetrate them. Then there is the Periphery revolt. Then there is Center coordination, first among the capitalist powers, then possibly adding the Soviet Union and then, but this time more tacitly, adding China by pacifying her except for gigantic verbal battles against the "collusion between two hegemonial super-powers".

The consequence of this is fairly obvious: there will be a corresponding coordination of the Periphery revolt. Sooner or later Southern and Eastern Europe will join the Third World, <sup>54)</sup> and the net result is most likely to be a long series of revolutions, counter-revolutions and wars, possibly with nuclear overtones as more periphery countries get such arms, as a long century continues its journey to the end. Unless, that is, the US gives up designs in such directions, favorite countries refuse to be used, and the masses around the world - in all six regions in the figure above - stand up for their own interests.

For these masses are not the same as they were at Metternich's time. They no longer accept poverty and repression as a law of nature or God's punishment; they are more likely to see it as imposed from above. And the elites are not so homogeneous in culture and ideology as they were at Metternich's time either, for that matter - so any alliance is likely to be highly unstable. Which all adds up to one thing: our century is not very likely to end as a century of peace, but possibly as a century of liberation - liberation from imperialism, that is.

N O T E S

1. Or, at least they are free to speak about imperialism and do so gladly - e.g. to the present author during a recent study tour in China (reported in Johan Galtung and Tsumiko Nishimura, Learning from the Chinese, Oslo, 1975). It may be objected that such talks and discussions do not carry far as evidence, which is right - but nor do articles and official declarations. Moreover, in the absence of any real Chinese effort to define social imperialism we are relatively free to do it our way - inspired by what Chinese say.
2. An example would be article 013013 by a Hsinhua correspondent, date-line Peking, January 30, 1975: "The Soviet monopoly bureaucrat-capitalist class is far more ruthless in exploiting the Soviet working people than were the tsarist capitalists", "the soviet revisionists are able to squeeze several times more surplus-value from a worker than before in exchange for minimum wage increase", " - - also exploits them through the inhabitant tax", " - - in 1972 the floating labour force in soviet industry accounted for 20 per cent of the total, that is, some 6,5 million", "living standard among the non-russian working people in the Soviet Union is still lower owing to the Great Russian chauvinist policy of national oppression pursued by the Soviet revisionist renegade clique", etc.
3. In general, the Chinese are not very strong on theory-formation - with the rather important exception of chairman Mao Tse-tung (or the possible authors' collective behind that name). Thus, the Chinese have not so far produced anything that could be called the "theory of the cultural revolution".
4. But when they write this is certainly emphasized. As an example may serve the article "Soviet social-imperialism: Record of a Plunderer", Peking Review, March 28, 1975, pp.18-19: "In the name of selfless aid" and "mutually beneficial economic co-operation", Moscow engages in large-scale capital exports, controls the economic lifeline of the third world countries, sells them outdated machines and equipment, and plunders their raw materials in order to rake in super profits". The gist of the article is that the Soviet Union makes use of technical assistance projects, with outdated machinery and expertise, and gives loans - and is then paid back in kind, with under-priced raw materials: " - - selling industrial products at high monopolist prices and buying foodstuffs and agricultural and mineral raw materials at low prices." The article also asserts that the Soviet Union made "huge profits" (8.4 billion dollars from 1955 to 1973) by selling finished industrial products to Eastern Europe - but the general trade composition shows clearly that the net flow of finished products is in the opposite direction. See Johan Galtung: "European Security and Co-operation: A Sceptical Contribution", Journal of Peace Research, 1975, No.2
5. After the Second World War.
6. As Dennis M. Ray, Center for Chinese Studies, University of California at Berkeley notes in his From Dependency to Self-Reliance: A Perspective on Sino-Soviet Relations, 1949-1972:

"In the process of responding to the American encroachment along the Yalu River and later modernizing her military forces, the Chinese incurred heavy debts to the Soviet Union. While estimates vary, these debts may have amounted to as much as 2 billion dollars". "General Lung Yun - - - noted that the United States had forgiven Allied debts in World War I and II while the Soviet Union had not forgiven the Chinese debt. Finally he noted that the Soviet Union had dismantled industrial equipment in Manchuria and shipped it back to Russia. None of this seemed to reflect, in the Chinese eyes, fraternal comradeship" (quoted from manuscript version).

7. Ray comes to the conclusion (op.cit.) that about 21,000 Chinese studied in the Soviet Union; that the number of Soviet technicians in China must have been "tens of thousands" in 1956 but much less already in 1958; that 1,900 Chinese scholars visited the Soviet Union between 1949 and 1956 and that there was considerable exchange of material, books etc., meaning that very much took place according to Soviet Hue-prints.
8. Ray: "While Soviet aid projects have been concentrated along the Soviet border and, in other cases, in the northern section of China, the evidence does not really support the conclusion that Soviet aid had consequences incompatible with China's location policy" (op.cit.) Also when it comes to transportation facilities: "Soviet aid exerted no special influence on railway location since there was very little deviation. - - the pattern of railway location supported the pre-existing "north China" pattern (loc.cit.)"
9. As to trade composition Ray's conclusion is as follows: "While the Chinese did, indeed, export primary goods and import industrial goods in accordance with import substitution, the industrial goods were capital, not durable, consumer goods. Capital goods would, in time, give China the capacity to produce their own capital goods as well as her own durable consumer goods". (op.cit.) And Doolin and North (The Chinese People's Republic, Hoover Institute of War and Peace, 1966, p.51) give some interesting data on Sino-Soviet trade in the critical years (data in per cent):

Chinese export	58	59	60	61	62	Import	58	59	60	61	62
agricultural	44	41	31	9	10	industrial	26	42	46	21	4
clothing, fabrics	25	36	44	58	62	equipment	24	21	16	9	8
non-ferrous metals	14	11	13	15	12	petroleum	14	12	12	33	35
other	17	12	12	18	16	ferrous metals	6	3	5	5	7
						other	30	22	21	32	46
SUM	100	100	100	100	100	SUM	100	100	100	100	100

The tendency is clear enough: in those days China liberated herself, to a great extent from the underdeveloped country syndrome of exporting agricultural products and raw materials, and importing industrial plants and equipment. The export turned towards textiles and the import towards petroleum products; in other words - steps towards a more horizontal trade pattern, and - when the volume of trade is considered, also towards self-reliance. Again, the picture is not one of economic imperialism.

10. Ray quotes Alexander Eckstein as saying that "in light of the underdeveloped state of the Chinese economy and China's greater economic dependency on Russia, rather than vice versa, both the costs and the benefits of the relationship were far more significant to China than for Russia" (Growth and Foreign Trade, p. 137). This is important and it is also significant that the theme of economic exploitation is not so readily mentioned as other dimensions of dominance when the entire field of Sino-Soviet relations in those years is discussed in China.
11. But the Chinese do not have any monopoly on defining social imperialism. Their contribution lies in having seen the necessity for using another term: What the Soviet Union engages in is not simply (capitalist) imperialism or economic imperialism, nor is it "socialist imperialism" (meaning imperialism engaged in by socialist states - which would be a contradiction in adjecto). On the other hand, one can also make a distinction between social imperialism and Soviet imperialism, seeing the former as one component in the latter.
12. For the author's general theory of imperialism see "A Structural Theory of Imperialism", Journal of Peace Research, 1971 or The European Community: A Superpower in the Making (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973), chapters 3 and 6.
13. These two types of economic exploitation are, of course, combinable: A may refuse to import other than primary goods from B and in addition pay low prices (e.g. below world market level) - which is what China accuses the Soviet Union of practising - B being, for instance, India (and also Iran, for the case of gas). Our own view however, is that more important at present is the tendency to be willing to pay higher prices as long as the international division of labor can be maintained between raw material and manufacture exporting countries.
14. The view is structural, and would tend to de-emphasize the personalities of those who hold the various offices in the structure that is exported. This is the perennial fallacy of liberal analysis: an overemphasis on the personal, leading to all kinds of speculations as to what would happen after the death (or demise) of X - forgetting that structures are not easily changed by one person alone.
15. This is, of course, an example of reductionism, and as such an example of a particular intellectual style. See the author's Deductive Thinking and Political Practice: An Essay on Teutonic Intellectual Style (Oslo, 1973, mimeo).
16. See the author's article quoted at the end of footnote 4 above, particularly the work on trade composition carried out by Amalendu Guha. The Swedish journal Clarsté, and Bo Gustafsson particularly have collected much material on CMEA economic relations, in the direction of the Peking Review article quoted in footnote 4. The Norwegian journal Klassekampen (March 1974) gives some data indicating that out of their total import CMEA countries imported 100% of their iron and oil, 85% of their iron ore, 75% of oil products and 33% of their machines from the Soviet Union - but such figures indicate precisely that the Soviet Union has made them dependent on raw materials rather than manufactures. It is possible,

however, that in the longer run the CMEA countries will (have to?) import more manufactures from the Soviet Union, and the dependency on raw materials also gives the Soviet Union political leverage although it is not necessarily exploitative - except, possibly, for terms of trade.

17. I refer here to private talks with Eastern European planners and top executives who all emphasize the significance of the Soviet Union as a market and as resource for raw materials.
18. There is also an other factor: raw materials can be exported bulk and without follow-up in terms of experts, sales people etc. - hence less embarrassment if someone jumps the fence.
19. However, if it also had, at present, clear economic connotations with the Soviet Union exploiting Eastern Europe (rather than vice versa, as we would go far to assert) there would still be the need for a concept of "social imperialism" with no necessary economic content.
20. Take the following definition given by dos Santos (American Economic Review, May 1970, p.231): "The relation of inter-dependence between two or more economies, and between these and world trade, take the form of dependence when some countries (the dominant ones) can expand and can be self-sustaining, while other countries (the dependent ones) can do this only as a reflection of that expansion, which can have either a positive or a negative effect on their immediate development". This asymmetric "reflection" is precisely the point that will be made in the main text. All that is needed is to substitute the "structure" for "economies" and "trade" above.
21. Thus, capitalist imperialism is primarily economic, but it will almost inevitably also be social, i.e. structural.
22. This is discussed at more length in Galtung, Nishimura, op.cit. chapter 6.
23. See discussion of this in article quoted at the end of footnote 4, particularly International Herald Tribune analysis.
24. Stuart Schram, in his excellent introduction to Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed (Penguin, 1974, p.47) mentions this as one of the two contradictions in his thinking: "-- there is the tension between Mao's genuine concern for mass participation, and his strong feeling for the importance of organization - -"
25. Such quarrels are often referred to by Soviet elites as evidence that there is both freedom of expression and "politics". This is also mirrored in Western analysis which would also tend to see politics as conflict between elite groups - as in, for instance, Gordon Skilling and Franklin Griffiths, eds., Interest Groups in Soviet Politics (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1971). They analyze seven such groups: Party apparatchiki (we have split this into two different ones), the secret police, the military, the industrial managers, the economists, the writers, and the jurists. The last three groups we would be inclined to see more as intelligentsia with an ambivalent position, except insofar as they belong to the apparat.
26. This type of thinking, then, goes much deeper than for instance Western marxist economic analysis, and touches on the whole

concept whether society should be consolidated after a socialist revolution or continue to develop according to its inner contradictions.

27. The main beneficiaries from this were, of course, the Western elites who were not threatened by a "socialism with a human face" on their doorsteps, and could persist in seeing the tie between efforts to negate capitalism in Eastern Europe, and the lack of many kinds of freedom as immanent, not due to special circumstances.
28. In China it did run its course, however: the Cultural Revolution. There seems to be close to a world consensus today that this was an important innovation in the history of structural transformation, and a typical example of what social imperialism deprives its Periphery from doing.
29. For a list of possibilities of what to do "when prophecy fails" see footnote 4 article.
30. On the other hand we are not willing to see such phenomena as "aberrations" only, they should also be seen as the type of behavior engaged in precisely "when prophecy fails"; because a marxist theory has promised by far too much, from too little.
31. The expression, of course, comes from Minda Djilas and refers to Yugoslavia, easily the country with the most capitalistic features of the countries that emerged with a communist party on top after the Second World War. But his analysis applies to the others as well.
32. The traditional ordering of the Chinese society was shih (gentry, scholars), nung (peasant farmers), kung (artisans) and shang (merchants). "For /Mac/ the proper order of Chinese society was nung, kung, shih, shang" (Covarrubias and Morgan, China, Harrap, 1975, p. 272).
33. And this may be, precisely, the difference between missionary Western imperialism and non-Western conquest which may aim at robbery of all kinds, but not at conversion and change.
34. See The European Community (footnote 12 above), chapter 7.
35. See Amalendu Guha, "Some Notes on Social Imperialism and Hegemonism", Oslo, 1975, mimeo.
36. One particularly interesting interpretation of why Soviet soldiers were willing to crush a revolt in Czechoslovakia is given in Message from Moscow, By an Observer (Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1969): why should the masses in a Periphery country, Czechoslovakia, have something - some kind of freedom - the masses in the Center country did not have? Under economic imperialism, particularly then capitalist imperialism, this would translate into readiness to fight interventionist wars in former colonies when there is a suspicion that they are getting better off economically than workers in the Center - and this may one day become an important motivational factor.
37. This theme is developed at length in the Trends in Western Civilization Program at the Chair in Conflict and Peace Research, University of Oslo.



38. See, for instance, Johan Galtung, The Lomé Convention and Neo-Capitalism, Oslo, 1975. mimeo.
39. Thus, there is certainly no guarantee that liberation from social imperialism means further development in a socialist direction.
40. But they will in all probability arise as the European Community matures, see chapter 10, The European Community.
41. There is the high probability that the New International Economic Order will facilitate this type of development.
42. Most important right now is imperialism with the Arab/Persian Gulf as its Center, and, possibly, the "least developed countries" as its Periphery.
43. This is very much denied in the Cocoyoc Declaration.
44. Many of these symptoms can be seen as manifestations of "overdevelopment", the pattern accompanying underdevelopment.
45. Individuals may have these countries as their models, though, and that will shape their migration patterns - but countries do no longer, it seems.
46. Another is, of course, the common enemy factor: the Soviet Union.
47. We are thinking of the role Iran plays in the Dhoffar war.
48. I am indebted to Egbal Ahmad for very stimulating discussions of many of these points.
49. Recently, the same policy is clearly followed relative to Portugal, with the help of other North European social democrat parties.
50. See footnote 4 article for discussion of the role of the Soviet system in the pattern of world capitalism.
51. See Galtung, Nishimura, op.cit. chapter 7.
52. See Richard Nixon's Kansas speech, July 6, 1971.
53. Which, of course, does not mean that EC does not also have a controlling role in Africa through all kinds of penetration, including military aid to client regimes from some member countries.
54. This will be more easy for Southern Europe since they are exposed to much of the same capitalist imperialism - e.g. in Southern Italy. Westernness and whiteness will stand in the way, though.