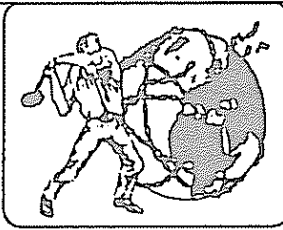


GEGEN DIE STROMUNG



Organ for the Building of the Marxist-Leninist Party of West Germany

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Why West/German Imperialism Recognizes Croatia

Not a day goes by without West/German imperialist media blowing their trumpets heralding new "success" stories in East European countries and the states of the ex-Soviet Union. Croatian ultra-facists in the Croatian portion of Yugoslavia are openly supported in order to drive on the dismembering of Yugoslavia in the interests of West/German imperialism. Politically extreme reactionary forces are stirring almost everywhere, in Latvia and Georgia, in Rumania and in Czechoslovakia. These forces more or less openly cultivate that old, well-known mixture of nationalism, anti-communism, religion, anti-semitism and the courting of the German Nazi regime which, even at the time of the German Nazi-facist invasions between 1939 and 1945, was to be found among Nazi collaborators in all countries. The diplomatic recognition of Croatia (and Slovenia - a subject to be dealt with separately) marks a decisive point in the aggressive policies of West/German imperialism, revanchism and militarism.

The concerns here are not such noble goals as the "right to self-determination of nations", "protection of minorities", "democracy" and "freedom" or any other of the self-proclaimed aspirations of the imperialistic great powers. The concern here is singly and solely *imperialistic power-politics, spheres of influence and the right to exploit the peoples of Yugoslavia*. Anything else is pretense and pure hypocrisy. And in this competition West/German imperialists have won some decisive plus-points in their rivalry with US imperialism, but also against their West European competitors. The imperial diplomacy of a Mr. Genscher, in commission of the West/German monopoly bourgeoisie, has carried off a victory, even if the outcome of the battle can't yet be seen.

Certain in any case are the losers: the peoples of Yugoslavia.

The Yugoslavian state is collapsing - but not of itself. Reactionary nationalistic Croatian forces and reactionary nationalistic Greater Serbian forces are the main adversaries in armed conflicts. They trample under their feet the revolutionary tradition of the Yugoslavian peoples from the time of the fight against Nazi Germany.

The war in Yugoslavia was unquestionably desired and fueled by West/German imperialism. Its sympathy and support is clearly on the side of those Croatian political forces who, with their large "U", clearly link themselves to the founding of the Ustasha State in 1941. Croatian facists, at that time under the protective shield of German Nazi aggressors, proclaimed the "Independent State of Croatia" four days after the invasion of German 'wehrmacht' armies into Yugoslavia on April 6, 1941. This Ustasha State carried out the expulsion and murder of hundreds of thousands of Serbians, as well as tens of thousands of Jews and Roma.

In countries like Yugoslavia, West/German imperialism blatantly admits its allegiance to the traditions of Nazi Germany, and does so incomparably more openly and nakedly than in its own country. It links to old

connections and artfully spins its web of influence and subjugation.

One fundamental method for this is the exploitation of national prejudices and contradictions. West/German imperialism cleverly understands how to exploit these in Yugoslavia right now, how to incite conflicts and discords of nations and nationalities for their own purposes and to their own advantage.

Yugoslavia was founded in 1918 as a "state with multiple nationalities", marked by a multiplicity of nations and national minorities - Serbians, Croats, Slovenians, Macedonians, Montenegrans, as well as Albanians, Hungarians and Roma, just to name a few. A characteristic feature for long stretches of time in the state's history was the dominance of Greater Serbian chauvinism and the oppression of other nations. Only after the victory of partisan troops against the Nazi facists was there a brief shimmer of hope for the peoples of Yugoslavia, underway on the road to socialism, to do away with national suppression and to achieve a peaceful, voluntary living together of different nations. That found expression in the Yugoslavian constitution, in which each nation's right to withdrawal was specified (Article 1 of the Constitution, "Right of Free Secession").

But Tito and his adherents went down the path of betrayal, the path of currying favor from the imperialists, the path of the restoration of capitalism, and they shattered all these hopes. As the Communist Information Office (KOMINFORM) under the leadership of Stalin exposed in 1948, the reactionary Tito clique - with phrases of "Socialism" in their mouths - set out on the side of imperialism. With that they began to undermine the alliance of the peoples of Yugoslavia formed in the fight against Nazi Germany. National discords and oppression dominated again from then on. The Albanian minority in Kosovo suffered especially.

Two counter-revolutionary movements stand across from each other in Yugoslavia today. The two main

Fanning the flames of national discord and the global mobilization of reactionary forces belong to the tools of the trade of West/German imperialism:

The Fifth Column of West/ German Imperialism

The advance on Yugoslavia is only one component of the world-wide campaign of West/German imperialism, in particular in its present expansion towards the East and the infiltration of the states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

In the process West/German imperialists set precisely on taking advantage of national contradictions, drive a wedge between the peoples of Eastern Europe, stir up national conflicts, exacerbate them to national hatreds and observe with great satisfaction the breaking up of multiple-nationality states into "bite-size pieces". They often help themselves to the "grandchildren" of collaborators with Nazi facism. As ever in so many countries, these are the reactionary portions of so-called or actual "German minorities" - such as the "Volga Germans."

German minorities (or groups which claim a "German ancestry" from x generations in the past) play a special role in the expansion of West/German imperialism into East European countries. According to official statements of West/German imperialists, about two million "Germans" supposedly live in the states of the former Soviet Union, one million in Poland, 230,000 in Hungary, 150,000 in Czechoslovakia and 100,000 in Rumania. They are supported by special "Aid Programs" (a large portion of the so-called "Russian Aid" went to German minorities!). Last year the German federal government made 200 million Deutschmarks available to such groups in the so-called "Resettler Areas" of Eastern Europe, in order to create "perspectives for remaining in the ancestral native lands". Just in the past few days, politicians of West/German imperialism have again sent a reminder nudging the founding of a "Volga German Republic" in the former Soviet Union.

These groups, courted and financially supported by West/German imperialism, are frequently contaminated by a reactionary hyper-German body of thought and are intended to serve West/German imperialism as a base and reserve for its all-round advance towards the East - politically, economically, culturally and militarily.

Federal President von Weizsaecker, one of the revanchist ideologists of West/German imperialism, pointed out the "grace of the moment" for the New World Order in the interests of West/German imperialism:

"We're living exactly now in one of the most rare phases of history, one in which powerful concepts and leadership can lay the foundations for long-term and beneficial developments. This is no time to simply administrate a bogged-down situation."

(von Weizsaecker at the reception of Foreign Ministers of the CSCE on June 19, 1991, quoted from "Politische Berichte" 14/91.)

That means nothing other than that the "foundations" have been laid for a path which includes war, that these "beneficial developments" are not for the people but rather for the interests of West/German imperialism!

This confirms what comrade Stalin had said in 1944, shortly before the defeat of Nazi facism:

"Everybody knows the German rulers are arming themselves even now for a new war. History shows that a brief time span of 20 to 30 years is sufficient for Germany to recover from defeat and re-establish its power."

(Stalin, "The 27th Anniversary of the Great Socialist October Revolution", Nov. 8, 1944, Works, Vol. 14, pg. 387, German edition.)

adversaries are the Greater Serbian chauvinists, after the model of the monarcho-fascistic Chetniks, and the Croatian nationalists, who link onto the tradition of the Ustasha fascists. Both of them must be decisively combated by revolutionary forces of the Yugoslavian peoples.

But indeed, these two forces don't stand there alone. They are the plaything and implementing organ of imperialist great power interests. The rivalries of these interests in the new division of the world are linked to the historically conditioned problems of the Yugoslavian peoples. The triumphantly open reactionary forces in Yugoslavia have proved themselves to be a considerable lever for imperialist great powers for dividing Yugoslavia among themselves - particularly for West/German imperialism, which ties to traditional, revanchist and fascist relationships.

Tasks and Perspectives

It would be completely wrong, whether in Yugoslavia or any other East European country, to take sides with either reactionary opponent. Neither the chauvinistic leader of the Serbians nor the deepest reactionary leader of the Croats represent their peoples' interests. The peoples of these countries will sooner or later rise up violently against "their" reactionary counter-revolutionary leaders. They will band together in *this* struggle, to clarify all questions after the revolutionary elimination of these ruling cliques.

The progressive, democratic, revolutionary forces of these countries see ever more clearly that only in struggle *against* nationalism, *against* the splitting of peoples, can the policies of imperialistic dismemberment be fought, that only on a democratic basis - including the right to secede from the state - can the peoples close ranks in common struggle.

Atrocities of the Ustasha-Fascists in Croatia

On April 10, 1941, with the support of German Nazi fascists, a fascist Croatian vassal state was founded under the leadership of the Croatian fascists, the Ustasha. This state wrote the persecution of the Serbs in Croatia onto its banners. Hundreds of thousands were expelled or murdered.

In addition, the so-called "Independent State of Croatia" was the only country occupied by Germany that carried out itself the murder of the Jewish population in its own extermination camps.

The end of April, 1941, saw the introduction of the first "Race Laws" after the example of the "Nuremberg Laws". They forbade Jews to hold public offices and required the wearing of a yellow emblem.

By the end of May 1941 in the Croatian capital of Zagreb, all Jewish cultural facilities had been closed, the Synagogues looted and all Jewish cemeteries desecrated.

Likewise in May, 1941, the first Croatian concentration camp was set up in Damica. Others followed in Jadovno, Gradiska, Ljuborgrad and Dakovo, as well as the notorious death camp in Jasenovac. In July and August 1941 alone, over 6000 Croatian Jews were abducted and transported into the concentration camps and almost all were killed. Until the end of 1943, 20,000 Jews, that is, almost all Croatian Jews whose escape attempts were unsuccessful, were forced to Jasenovac. Most of them there starved, were beaten to death in the most bestial way and manner, or shot.

The total number of victims who died in the Jasenovac concentration camp exceeds 70,000.

(Source: M. Gilbert, "Endlösung", Reinbek 1982; V. Dedijer, "Jasenovac - das jugoslawische Auschwitz und der Vatikan"; die Tageszeitung.)

Crimes of the Nazi Facists in Yugoslavia

On April 6, 1941 the Nazi 'Wehrmacht' armies invaded Yugoslavia, occupied the country and initiated a brutal regime of terror. Four years later the Nazi fascists were utterly destroyed by the Yugoslavian People's Liberation Army, who were aided by the Bulgarian People's Army and, above all, the Soviet Red Army. To that point in time over 1.7 million inhabitants of Yugoslavia had been murdered. That's over 10% of the entire population! Material damage was estimated at 9.1 billion dollars.

During the battles against the Nazi occupation forces and their local henchmen, the Yugoslavian People's Liberation Army suffered about 305,000 dead and over 425,000 wounded. Over 35,000 Red Army soldiers fell in combat, were wounded or missing in action. The Bulgarian People's Army had losses of over 24,000 soldiers.

As elsewhere in the occupied countries, German Nazis carried out the removal and murder of the

Jewish population. In Croatia alone approximately 18,000 Jews were murdered. In all Yugoslavia there were over 80,000 dead. In addition to the Jews, the Roma were particularly persecuted. Alone on December 11, 1941, 243 Roma were shot to death at one time in Leskovatz. Many deportations of Yugoslavian Jews led to the extermination camps of the Nazis, such as Auschwitz.

In order to break the support of the populace for the partisan troops, the Nazis conducted "Hostage Shootings" of the civilian population all over the country. In autumn of 1941, 6000 women, children and men in the Macva District, 2000 in Kraljevo and 7,000 in Kragevac were murdered because they lived in areas liberated by the partisans. Entire villages were systematically annihilated.

(Source: "Procedural Records of the 'Nuremberg Trials'; "Der zweite Weltkrieg", Pahl-Rugenstein Publishers; M. Gilbert, "Endlösung" Reinbek, 1982.)

The long-term plan of the struggle can be nothing other than the revolutionary transformation of the entire hitherto existing social order, a war against the interference of imperialistic great powers as well as against native reactionary forces, who in one way or another further the game of the imperialistic great powers.

Our task will be to vigorously support all revolutionary forces in their difficult struggle in this country as in all others, to unrelentingly denounce West/German imperialism, to make clear that it pursues a policy of destruction and internal war in order to continue buying up destroyed land at cheap prices and, under its own reign, in its own interest, to "renovate" them.

Our task is to analyse with increasing precision and to denounce the world-wide activities of West/German

imperialism, the preparation of multiple local wars, and the intervention in such wars as a preparation for West/German imperialism, militarism and revanchism for military conflicts with other imperialistic great powers. We must take this very seriously and politically develop the power to lead the fight against it more massively than ever.

■ *Without pursuing such a struggle, those forces cannot be mobilized which are needed in prolonged struggles to take a real step forward: to put an end to West/German imperialism by means of a socialist revolution; to smash its state apparatus in armed civil war; and to let the ideals of socialism and of communism - socialistic democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat - become reality.*

Study the Teachings of Marxism-Leninism and the Experiences of the Socialistic Soviet Union Under the Leadership of Lenin, Stalin and of the Communist Internationale!

One of the most important tasks of the socialist October Revolution was to eliminate national suppression and great Russian chauvinism as well as to declare war on narrow-minded nationalism. An absolutely necessary precondition for the friendship of peoples of the Soviet Union, for the voluntary living together of nations and national minorities in one state, was the right to the self-determination of nations, anchored in the constitution of the socialist Soviet Union. That means the right of nations to separate themselves, the right to their own existence as a state. Only on this basis could the voluntary fusion of nations follow.

If national hostilities and national conflicts are inevitable and unavoidable as long as capitalism is in the seat of power, the victory of the October Revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat offered for the first time in history the possibility of eliminating national discords and suppression. The Soviet Union, under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, removed the discrimination of formerly suppressed nations and national minorities step by step, guaranteed equal rights regardless of nationality and systematically promoted the formerly suppressed nations. There was a true blossoming of the cultures and languages of these peoples.

The "national question" in all its variations is one of the most complicated questions in the struggle against imperialists and reactionaries, in the struggle against nationalists and against opportunists of all sorts. Without a deep scientific study of these questions, without precise knowledge of the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, without a precise study of the concrete problems, there can be no correct answer of the proletariat against the demagoguery of the imperialists and reactionaries!

Read and Study

- ★ W.I. LENIN On the National and Colonial Question, Anthology
- ★ J.W. STALIN Marxism and the National Question
- ★ LENINISM - BOOKLET VI The National and Colonial Question, drawn from the works of the great teachers of the proletariat
- The current significance of the guidelines of the II World Congress of the Communist Internationale regarding the National and Colonial Question, "Gegen die Strömung" No. 54 (Common Declaration of the Marxistisch-Leninistische Partei Österreichs, the "Westberliner Kommunist" and "Gegen die Strömung"), April 1991, 4 DM, only available in German.

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