



Ideology and Contradictions within the Framework of the “Great Alliance” during World War II

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Abstract: One of the classical theses of Marxism presumes that any revolution, aside from the communist one, bears the seeds of a new revolution to follow. This thing can certainly be stated about wars as well. For instance, during World War II (1939-1945), the opinions of most specialists concurred with the idea that the “war had not yet ended when the next had already begun”, said the illustrious historian- A. Fontaine.

Keywords: Soviet Union; revolutionary messianism; ideology

Introduction

Based on this paradigm, the Marxism-Leninism provided the Soviet leaders at that time with a vision of the world, according to which, each society would become sooner or later a “paradise” based on the lack of social class, thus following a well-defined path and steps. In contrast, the *résistance* shown by the “western capitalists” against this development and conjoined with the existence of a non-communist state represented a real threat for the Soviet Union”.

The ongoing of the war favored the rise of a feeling of admiration on the side of Western people towards the Russians, the British being totally confident in their new allies’ effort and strength of character since they had been in return deeply blown during the first part of the war. The Americans would become fully aware

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that the cost reduction of the war was closely linked to the effort of the Soviet Ally so they would soon put aside the ideological set-backs.

Already aware that the victory of the war depended decisively on keeping the Soviet Union in the alliance, this feeling grew even stronger for the Anglo-Americans after the battle from Stalingrad (Nov. 1942-Jan. 1943), both the British Prime Minister and the President of the USA taking a conciliatory attitude towards the Russians and thus abandoning any possible disapproval or reluctance against the expansion of the Soviet Union in Europe. In the opinion of the American President "the USSR had abandoned or was about to abandon the revolutionary messianism in order to enter the classic game of a big power" (Constantin, 1995, pp. 176-177).

This illusion was fueled by the Kremlin's official propaganda through the formal dissolution of the Komintern (1943) and by the official statements which aimed to present the Soviet power as being "unrelated" to the export of revolution and unwilling to advance its armed forces on other countries' territory for the purpose of installing communist regimes" (Constantin, 1995, p. 177). According to the opinion of Anglo-American politicians, the idea of collaboration between the Three Great Power became obviously quite necessary and it was considered that a certain moderation would also be necessary in regards to the Soviet Union's actions.

A fierce opponent of the communism, the British Prime Minister, W. Churchill, will publicly declare, right after the German attack against USSR on 22nd June 1941, that the "Nazi barbarism is a an evil far worse than communism" and on 16th April 1944, in a telegram addressed to V. Molotov, concluded that "Now it's not the time of an ideological war. I'm determined to leave everything behind. I wish you good luck" (Gardner, 1993, p. 196).

If at the beginning of the secret negotiations with the Anglo-American Allies, the Kremlin aimed to discuss exclusively territorial expectations for security reasons, the Red Army's success after success against Wermacht alongside with the victories on the West front made room for more claims. In fact, few weeks before Germany's surrender, Stalin received the visit of Tito in Kremlin and revealed him the essence of Soviet plans in the presence of Milovan Djilas: "this war is not the same as the one from last year. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. There's no other way (Buzatu, 1995, p. 5).

One of the classic theses of Marxism presumes that any revolution, aside from the communist one, to bear the seeds of a new revolution to follow. This thing can certainly be stated about wars as well. “The war of 1939-1945 had not yet ended when the next had already begun” (Fontaine, 1992, p. 261), wrote the illustrious historian- A. Fontaine. The *résistance* manifested by the “Western capitalists” against this development, conjoined with the “existence of a non-communist state, represented a real threat for the Soviet Union¹. The Marxism-Leninism provided the Soviet leaders at that time with a vision of the world, according to which, each society would become sooner or later a “paradise” *based on the lack of social class*, thus following well-defined path and steps.

Despite the obvious signs and antagonistical interests, there were moments where ideology was put aside because the Three Great Powers sincerely had wished a future collaboration. In support of this idea, the statement about post-war organization given by the Soviet leader, I.V. Stalin, can definitely be used as argument: “of course, the United States and the Soviet Union can cooperate with one another. The difference between them has no real importance because the heart of the matter is their cooperation. The economic systems of Germany and the USA are the same, yet nevertheless war arose between them. The economic systems of the USA and the USSR are different, but they did not fight with each other, and cooperated during wartime. If two different systems can cooperate during wartime, then why can’t they cooperate during peacetime?” (Pop, 1997, p. 19). Nevertheless, the declarations made by the allied leaders did not remove the suspicion and cautiousness from their relations.

From the Kremlin’s perspective, the solution was favorable because it allowed the fulfilling of at least three essential objectives in the international politics of the Soviet Union.

- a) the exclusion of the two great powers, Germany and Japan, from the political arena for as long as possible;
- b) having the Soviet Union adhere and remain in the world post-war leading forum made up of
 - the Three Great Powers as suggested by the Soviet Union’s Prime Minister

or

¹ Art Schlessinger, p. 45.

- in the one of the “Four Policemen of the United Nations”, as the USA’s President, F.D. Roosevelt hoped for

or

- c) in the “Five Great Powers”, as wished by the Great Britain’s Prime Minister, W. Churchill.

“Since the emerging potential of the aggressors like Germany and Japan represented the main risk for the post-war world, this objective had priority in the Soviet politics” (Pop, 1997, p. 19). These opinions in regards of the post-war direction highlight the Soviets’s perspective on the burst of a new war in the future. This could not be accomplished without being detrimental to Central and Eastern-Europe states bordering the USSR.

The inclusion of the Baltic countries could have been motivated through the need of preventively occupying a vital territory for the security of the Soviet Union and this could would have taken into consideration Finland as well. More than this, plebiscites were organized in the Baltic countries thus “confirming” the adherence to the Soviet Union. In regards of Romania and Hungary, their position as satellite states of the Nazi Germany simplifies the situation even more, while the annexation of Bessarabia did not seem to be much of a problem for the leaders or the international public opinion. The two states had to be punished in the future in order not to threat USSR, especially Romania which had savagely and unwisely attacked the USSR with twenty-six divisions (Churchill, 1996, p. 221).

Additionally, the Soviet Union had longtime connections with Bulgaria. The occupation of the area by the Red Army alongside the arrangement with its Anglo-American partners on the sphere of influence from the South-Eastern Europe were the decisive factors marking the entering of Romania under USSR’s domination and the installing of the communist regime through the will of the Soviet occupant. In principle, these facts did not cause major disputes during the negotiations between the allies or issues which could have weakened the cohesion of the Big Three.

With respect to Poland, the problem was treated differently: Great Britain had accepted entering the war against Germany because of political and military debts to Poland. The Soviet Union had been already invaded twice through the crossing of Poland’s territory and the USA considered that the success or failure of the UNO depended very much on solving Poland’s issue. The American President, F. D.

Roosevelt, approached the matter from another angle and pleaded it quite often: the seven million Americans of Polish origin were an elective support for the presidential elections which he was going to participate in for the fourth time. In reply, the Soviet leader stated in Teheran that if for Great Britain the Polish matter was a question of honor, then for the USSR it was a question of security and he as a military “would not accept a detrimental situation for the USSR in Poland while bordering the Russian frontiers” (Churchill, 1996, p. 221).

The Western allies were not that concerned about the frontiers because they had already given their acceptance for the Curzon line, they were more worried about the government representing Poland after the war since the relations between the Polish government, exiled in London, and the Soviet Union had worsened. Another major disagreement was related to the allies’ military strategy against Germany: the Soviets requested insistently for the opening of a second front in Europe, through a debarkation in France. However, the British Prime Minister was an advocate of a tactic which meant outflanking and harassing Germany through an invasion of Europe in accordance with the “peripheral strategy”. This tactic had the advantage of serving the British future interests, in this respect W. Churchill stating several times that “Britain must be the leading Mediterranean power in Europe” (Churchill, 1996, p. 221).

Aware that the American public opinion will dislike the USA’s engagement on two fields of military operations, quite remote and obscure (eg. The Balkans), President Roosevelt firmly pleaded for an Anglo-American debarkation in the North-West of France, the theater of operations being closer and more receptive to the American electorate. The divergent opinions between the Anglo-Americans were the cause of different interests and objectives for which each country had entered the war. To the USA, the immediate objective was the total defeat of the Axis powers while future post-war arrangements could be discussed at the peace conference.

Unlike the American military strategists, the British ones had a “political” approach, meaning it was essential to further keep the British Empire in the new post-war configuration of the world. This point of view led to the Americans’s disapproval which through their president stated that “the trouble with Mr Churchill is that is more concerned about the post-war situation. He is terrified of the idea of a Europe dominated by the Red Army. We shall see whether this is bad or not” (Winkler, 1996, p. 48). Nonetheless, the American President was not happy either about replacing Germany with Soviet Russia as dominant power in Europe due to

different reasons: both parties would sign the Atlantic Charter accepting its provisions not to prevent the closing and continuation of the alliance with the Soviet Union. The American party, through its president, considered it was in the interest of the future collaboration for Russia to have a security area acknowledged in Eastern Europe.

The USSR ascendance in the Eastern part of the continent had to be limited to the external politics of the neighboring states in direction of adopting a non-hostile position towards the Soviet Union. As for the rest of the matter, these countries would have continued being independent and governed democratically. This illusion would last shortly, both the British as well as the US Department of State convincing themselves about the irrelevance of these terms, “subjectively appreciated and interpreted” by the Soviets. A telegram sent to the USA president by the American Ambassador from London, Averell Harriman, acknowledged the fact that for the Soviets, “words have a totally different meaning to them” (Winkler, 1996, p. 48), and suggested that the “Soviets’ different and flexible interpretation of the interallied agreements can be a starting point for the communization of Eastern Europe”.

Aware of the Red Army’s important role in the evaluations of the Western allies, I.V. Stalin will notice that the British had a leading part in the European affairs, while the Americans had it in the matters of the Far East. Both Western powers needed the Soviet Union for achieving their objectives: the British needed it in Europe for defeating Germany while the Americans needed it for defeating Japan.

This precise weakness of the Anglo-American partners, veiled in a certain extent, contributed decisively to a conciliatory behavior towards the Soviets’ claims. In fact, the ongoing of the war favored the rise of a feeling of admiration on the side of Western people towards the Russians, the British being totally confident in their new allies’ effort and strength of character since they had been in return deeply blown during the first part of the war.

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