

## *Basic Ideas of Lohia : Selected Writings*

### On Hidden Imperialisms

I have long held to the notion that the world is divided between the privileged white and the coloured under dog. This act of vengeful hostility to the white peoples, which does no good to the world. I have, however, felt emotionally at home with Euro-America and, in fact, found greater awareness of the world among them than among the coloured peoples. The coloured man generally is emotionally hostile to Euro-America and intellectually enslaved to it. Men like me are emotionally friendly to Euro-America, but strive for intellectual freedom from it. Our position has been a little difficult of understanding both for the white and the coloured lackey but the coloured man's angle that we bring to bear upon our interpretation of the world and its events helps reveal the truth. We did not create the division between the privileged white and the coloured underdog. It is there. In acknowledging the division, we aim to destroy it, not to reverse the roles but to achieve equality. One could, therefore, have legitimately expected more of the Chinese Communists than of the Russian Communists, at least in certain spheres. I will first record the spheres of these expectations before trying to discover what has happened to them. Mankind must know of many insidious but hitherto unknown imperialisms. As imperialism is a somewhat odorous word, it creates a wall on genuine understanding, when it should not. The idea is not to blame anybody. A certain situation of empire-colony relationship has arisen in several spheres of human activity. History, if anybody, must be blamed for it. The coloured peoples must bear the blame for it just as much as the white peoples, if not more, for they were supine, indolent or stupid when the whites were active, masterful and bloody.

#### **International Landlordism**

Lebensraun imperialism, or international landlordism, is the first of the unapprehended criminals. Countries like the United States and Soviet Russia have enormous space with little density of population. Accidents of history alone have gifted these enormous land masses. Cruel barbarism has incidentally been a contributory factor to such accidents. Siberia and Australia are

peopled at one person to the square mile. Canada is not much different. California is well under ten persons to the square mile. We may contrast these with the densities of 350 persons to the square mile in India and nearly 200 in China. If landlordism within a country can be so unsavoury to the progressive, as it ought to be, what of this international landlordism? Some day, somebody or perhaps the whole of mankind will have to set right these unjust turns of history. Mind-imperialism is as much a mark of our times as any other. It is true that there is a willingness on the part of the intellectual imperialist to impart his learning, though not necessarily all the skills or the situation of elemental awakening, to the colonials of the mind. It may be pointed out that a similar mind-imperialism exists internally in India. Certain castes have become mind-imperialists through long tradition. One might say that several thousand years of division of labour by birth have been acting almost like a natural selection. On the world stage, this has been going on for about 400 years. The white mind-imperialist would be just as wrong as the coloured high caste, native mind-imperialist, if he were to deny all responsibility for this situation and content himself with the nostrum of equal opportunity. Equality of opportunity can only continue and deepen the injustice of mind-imperialism. Only through unequal and privileged opportunities to colonials of the mind can mind-imperialism be abolished. A third such hidden tyranny is productivity imperialism. Everyone knows that Russia and America with roughly oneeighth

of the world's population produce more than half of its wealth. The landless labourer in India earns eight annas or ten American cents a day, while his opposite number in the U.S. earns about Rs. 25 or five American dollars a day. Russia and America produce wealth worth between Rs. 8,000 and Rs. 14,000 per person per year, while India has to be content with a paltry sum of Rs. 400 per person per year. Russia and America are growing each year at the rate of Rs. 250 per person per year, while the corresponding amount in India is just Rs. 5. The idea is not to apportion blame, at least not in the present. The basis for this productivity-imperialism may be traced to ancient exploitation. If

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there is exploitation today, it is more or less with the willing consent of those exploited. No imputation of blame or any other kind of accusation must be read into this. The situation has to be recognised. If we the human race are to be one, this situation must be deeply understood and remedied. Weapons-imperialism is a necessary corollary of the previous imperialisms or perhaps their source, and it is not so hidden. Russia and America have often agreed in their drafts on the need to keep the knowledge and the reality of nuclear weaponry to themselves. Some of the progressive Americans and Russians would be shocked if they were told that this amounts to weapons-imperialism of the white against the coloured. The coloured peoples have indeed no right to fret or fume. They are more than willing to stockpile any old conventional weapons while they pay worshipful homage to the unilateralist disarmament in Euro-America. Such is the split mind of the coloured man. Once again it is not a question of blame or accusation, but of simple recognition of a situation in which one part of mankind possesses almost the ultimate in weapons. Price-loot-imperialism is the fifth one in this category with which I shall stop the present enumeration. Price movement and the terms of trade are almost always unfavourable to agriculture and the producer of raw materials. If the prices of manufactures have gone up by a hundred percent in the last ten years, primary produce has increased just by 74 percent. Robbery on this score alone must be running into billions every year. I dare say that there is a similar internal price-loot in the relationship between manufactures and primary produce. But that is aggravated to a very large extent by the presence of indirect taxation. One hears almost every day of foreign aid and the philanthropic motives involved in it. The taker of gifts must indeed be contrite and humble, at least until the taker has learned not to misuse gifts and both he and he giver have become aware of the world situation as a whole. However, one never hears of the price-loot inherent in every item of international trade between the white and the coloured. Against each of these imperialisms, India and China and all the other coloured peoples should have been able to act with firmness and in unison. They should, of course, have made every effort to include such white peoples in their ranks and, in fact, invite to leadership those willing to recognise the world situation. But none of this was to happen. I had sometimes day-

dreamed in my earlier years that China and India and the just-minded whites would be able some day to knock at the doors of Australia, Siberia and California and have them opened. But the knocking has taken place elsewhere. Bursting with some kind of power, one knows not which, China has sought the easy way out. She has knocked at the Himalayas. Not to talk of Australia, she did not even knock at Hong Kong or Macao. She did not have strength enough in her knuckles even for measly enterprises. She has chosen to knock where she thought her strength sufficed. I am compelled to believe that this shall ever remain a tragedy of the human race. Enthroned man will work not for the removal of injustice but for the attainment of aims that lie within his reach. The reach of the coloured man must necessarily remain small, even wicked, for a long time yet. Not much can, therefore, be expected of the coloured man that sits on the throne. Deliverance must come, if it ever will, from the white man. He has infinitely greater power and potentially greater intelligence. If ever he sees the world situation as a whole, he may do something about it. Coloured peoples are indeed not out of the arena altogether. Such of them whom little packets of power do not corrupt may take a wider view and the more risky initiative. I must, however, add an item to the theory of the struggle between the white and coloured peoples. This struggle will be overcome, if at all, by the intelligence of the white as much as by the self-interest and radicalism of the coloured.

### **Soviet Superiority**

I rather turn towards Russia and America. I do not intend to make a very close examination of their respective merits in regard to the five imperialisms. So far, neither has shown much merit or intelligence. Some rough isolated trends may be indicated. The Russians seem to have been more willing to communicate their skills of the steel industry to Indians than the West European has been. They have also charged lower rates of interest on their investment. This would demonstrate their superiority in relation to productivity-imperialism, although in a very small way. Americans, on the other hand, have been willing to take coloured settlers into California, although only nominally. Coloured students at their universities are apparently more numerous than at the Russian universities. How far this is due to the

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willingness of coloured governments to open their students to Americanism rather than Russianism and how far to the inclination of Russia to emphasise a particular type of general education rather than technical and scientific skills at least for foreign students is more than I can say. Russian record against open imperialism, of political domination by one people over another, has in recent years been

undoubtedly superior to the American. Would there be a future improvement of achievements in respect of the five imperialisms enumerated here, and who would be better—Russia or America? I hope and pray that both Russia and America in whose hands, more than any others, rests the betterment of the human race, will become equally aware of the world situation as a whole.

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