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STRUGGLE OF WORLD MONOPOLIES FOR THE SOURCES OF ATOMIC RAW MATERIALS

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The rivalry between international capitalistic monopolies striving to secure the largest markets of strategic raw materials has existed for many years. In the postwar period, when three of the six competing imperialistic powers - Germany, Italy, and Japan - had quit because of their destruction during the war, and France had lost her earlier significance as a great power, the struggle for the redistribution of old sources and the seizure of new sources of raw materials has continued chiefly between the American and English monopolies. This struggle is going on in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Near and Far East, South America, and even in Antarctica.

After the war the range of strategic raw materials was broadened. In particular, in connection with new discoveries in the use of atomic energy the international monopolies began to show a great interest in the different types of atomic raw materials and their basic sources which had already been investigated.

At the present time, the main types of atomic raw materials are metallic uranium, extracted from uranium ore, and thorium, obtained from monazite, a rare mineral found in different regions in the form of sand. At the end of 1941, the quantity of metallic uranium in capitalistic countries was insignificant.

The war in Europe and Japanese aggression in the Pacific Ocean cut off the United States and England from the main sources of supply for strategic raw materials (tin, lead, copper, rubber). A special organization, the Combined Raw Materials Board, was

- 1 -

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created in connection with this in January 1942; its task was to distribute strategic raw materials among the Allied countries by establishing appropriate quotas. The influence of the United States and England predominated in this organization.

In agreement with the United States, England was assigned the task of taking proper measures to increase the extraction of strategic raw materials in all parts of Africa, with the exception of Liberia. Great Britain also carried on negotiations with friendly or Allied countries having colonies in Africa (France, Belgium, Portugal). The Belgian Congo, occupying an area of 2,336,000 sq km and having a population of approximately 10.5 million people, was therefore included in the English sphere of influence.

The natural wealth of the Belgian Congo is very great. A large number of industries for the extraction of uranium, radium, tin, copper, and industrial diamonds are found here under the operation of the Belgian monopoly, Union Miniere du Harit Katanga. (Mining Corporation of the Upper Katanga).

After Belgium was occupied by Hitler, Great Britain took upon herself the "care" of the Belgian Congo. The English pursued a double purpose in this: first, to place the raw materials of this region under the complete control of the British monopolies; and second, to bar access of the American monopolies to Western and Central Africa - the Belgian Congo - and deeper into the continent, to Northern Rhodesia and Nigeria with their very rich supplies of tin and copper.

According to data from French and Belgian sources, 60 to 80 percent of all available uranium supplies in capitalistic countries are concentrated in the Belgian Congo. The war stimulated atomic production and extraction of atomic raw materials. In spite of the resistance of England, a vigorous penetration of American monopolies into the Belgian Congo began. In 1943-44, the uranium mines of the Belgian monopoly, Union Miniere du Harit Katanga, near Dshadoghille (possibly Jadotville) (Katanga region, southern part of the Belgian Congo) were already working at full capacity. All the ore extracted here was shipped to the United States. In 1943, 8,267 metric tons of uranium ore were sent to the United States, and in 1944, 9,967 tons were shipped.

Publication of data on shipments of uranium stopped after 1945. However, judging from information in the foreign press, the American monopolies are pushing the extraction of uranium in the Belgian Congo in every way possible. At the present time, the agreement concluded during the war between the Belgian government and England and the United States, according to which the entire production of uranium in the Belgian Congo had to be placed at the disposal of the Allied countries, is still in force.

The Brussels Pact, concluded between England, France, and the Benelux countries (Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg), completely bound Belgium and deprived her of economic independence. As a result, the very rich raw material resources of the Belgian Congo and primarily the supplies of uranium ores fell under the unlimited control of the United States.

The struggle of American and English monopolies for control of world deposits of uranium ores has spread even to such distant

- 2 -

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regions as Antarctica. Great Britain, controlling a vast system of remote bases in the approaches to Antarctica (Falkland and South Shetland Islands) dispatched a "scientific" expedition of 30 persons in 1943 to the Antarctic for prospecting work to determine the presence of uranium and other sources of atomic raw materials.

At the end of 1946, the US Navy Department sent a large expedition to Antarctica under the direction of the famous polar explorer, Admiral Byrd. A large number of engineers, technicians, and polar experts sent by American monopolies to look for deposits of uranium ores and other types of atomic raw materials were in the expedition.

The interest of international monopolies in the discovery of new deposits of uranium ores in Antarctica increased still more with the publication of a report by Professor Douglas Hauson ~~/Hawson, Hawsoc?~~ of Australia, which established a definite geological similarity between the unexplored regions of the South Pole and the deposits of uranium ores in Canada.

After Admiral Byrd's American expedition, the English also sent another comparatively small group to replace the expedition sent earlier and to construct a new post in Marguerite Bay, south of Cape Horn.

In 1947, Argentina and Chile, closely connected with the American monopolies, joined the struggle to acquire the wealth of Antarctica. In June 1947, Argentina and Chile concluded an agreement for the development of a joint plan of action to study a number of regions in Antarctica. In a joint communique issued by the governments of both countries, it was indicated that "...they were convinced of the incontestable rights of Chile and Argentina to the regions of Antarctica facing South America" (The South American Journal, January 1948).

However, this did not please England, who made an official protest in January 1948 against the creation of an Argentine supporting base on Deception Island (of the South Shetland Islands group), which belongs to England, and also against the proposed construction of a Chilean military base on British territory in Antarctica. These protests actually led nowhere, since England was financially dependent upon the United States after the war and could not press the problem too hard. In the struggle for the raw material wealth of Antarctica, as in other parts of the world, the British companies were forced to concede one position after another under the powerful onrush of American monopolies.

Thorium is the second basic type of atomic raw material. It was discovered in oxide form in monazite sand, found in India, Brazil, and in small quantities in the United States. In India, monazite is found in the beach sands in the principality of Travancore and in the littoral regions of Madras and Orissa provinces. In 1946, the American research organizations working on the use of atomic energy already began to show increased interest in the mineral resources of India which contain uranium and thorium. The richest deposits of monazite were found on the southwestern shore of India in the principality of Travancore.

- 3 -

RESTRICTED

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The principality of Travancore, occupying an area of 20,000 sq km and having a population of more than six million people, is a dependency of England. Nevertheless, this did not prevent the penetration of American monopolies into this region also. Until the middle of last year the monazite sand mined here was shipped to the United States, where thorium was extracted from it. The shipment of monazite to the United States was stopped in June 1947. The government of India, fulfilling the demands of the English monopolies, notified American firms that the processing of monazite mined in this region would be carried out directly in the territory of this principality. Accompanying this, there was a notification to the effect that in the future, authorization for the production of thorium would be granted only upon agreement with the government of India.

English companies soon received a monopoly on the use of the monazite deposits in Travancore. They supplied technical assistance to the local government for the construction, equipment, and operation of a plant to produce thorium. In June 1947, the Geological Administration of India, in close collaboration with the experts of the English companies, developed a plan for the exploitation of uranium and thorium deposits in India.

Thus, the English companies in India succeeded in driving back the American competitors and securing for themselves a monopoly right to exploit the uranium and thorium deposits.

The American monopolies compensated for this in Brazil where, according to information of the foreign press, there are rich and still completely untouched supplies of monazite. Under the pressure of the United States, in July 1947, the ruling circles of Brazil established rigid governmental control over all thorium reserves in the country and strictly regulated the prospecting, exploitation, and export of this very important type of atomic raw material.

At the beginning of 1948, uranium and thorium were discovered in Central and Eastern Burma (The Metal Bulletin, 30 January 1948). The most significant quantities of these radioactive elements were discovered in the region of Ying'yan adjoining the English Burma Oil Company petroleum concession, and also in the district of Taton and the principality of Kerami near the Siam border. According to information in the foreign press, American firms are recently beginning to show greater interest in these regions.

The American monopolists, controlling the uranium deposits in the Belgian Congo and the monazite deposits in Brazil, already occupy the most profitable position. However, not satisfied with the attained results, they are also attempting to penetrate a number of countries of the sterling bloc, controlled at the present time by English corporations and rich in uranium and thorium.

The facts presented indicate the further aggravation of the competition between world monopolies for the control of the most important sources of strategic raw materials.

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- 4 -

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