

The future of the Congo is indeed a matter of vital importance to "the whole of mankind". And most of all it is of importance to the rest of Africa — for the defeat or dismemberment of the Congo would be a severe setback to our hopes and aspirations; while the advance and consolidation of the new Republic will open a splendid new chapter in the progress of all the Africans towards freedom and a better life.

That is why African patriots, wherever they may be, will regard it as their first and urgent duty to stand by our brothers and sisters in the Congo, fighting for the independence, unity and integrity of their new Republic.

(Note: This article is referred to in the Editorial in this issue).

## Lenin and Africa

by I. POTEKHIN

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In the extensive literary heritage left us by Lenin we find many statements and remarks concerning Africa. The history of the imperialist division of Africa by the European powers; the difficult position of the oppressed peoples, the harsh persecution of them by the colonisers and, finally, the first flashes of the liberation movements — all this found its reflection in the works of Lenin, great teacher and friend of all peoples enslaved by imperialism. V.I. Lenin made extensive use of African sources, as well as of sources concerning the countries of Asia, to work out the theory of the national-colonial revolution as an integral part of the general theory of the communist transformation of society.

When he was working on his classical work *Imperialism — The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, V.I. Lenin read and made abstracts of a tremendous amount of books on history and economics. A study of Lenin's abstracts shows with what thoroughness Vladimir Ilyich collected data concerning the plundering policy of the imperialist powers in Africa and other parts of the world. In the abstracts are facts, dates, statistics, while in the margins are angry, scourging descriptions of the colonisers, of their predatory methods of seizure and division of the African colonies: "They plunder ('divide') AFRICA", "They plunder ('divide') MOROCCO", "THEY EXCHANGE Morocco for the Congo".\* "They divide the Congo (85). — They divide Uganda (90) — (17.6.189) exchange

\*V.I. Lenin, *Notebooks on Imperialism*, Moscow, 1939, p.63D.

for Heligoland. (Zanzibar for Heligoland)".\*

V.I. Lenin mercilessly exposed the ideologists of colonialism, who falsified African history, concealing from public opinion the heroic struggle of the African peoples for independence. "Take", he wrote, "the history of those little wars which they (the imperialist. I.P.) conducted before the big war (he is talking of the first world war. I.P.) — 'little' because the number of Europeans who died in them was small, but hundreds of thousands were killed of the peoples whom they strangled, who, from their viewpoint were not even considered peoples (Asians, Africans — what peoples are they?); against these peoples this was the kind of war that they conducted: they were unarmed, but they were machinegunned. What sort of wars are those? Strictly speaking, after all, those weren't even wars, it can be dismissed from the mind".\*\*

In his abstracts V.I. Lenin notes down facts of brutal suppression by the German imperialists of the peoples of South West Africa — the Hereros and Hottentots, the execution by the German colonisers in the Cameroons of the leader of the Duala tribe.

When Italy conducted her colonial war in Libya, V.I. Lenin wrote an article in the Bolshevik newspaper *Pravda*, on September 28, 1912, passionately exposing the crime of the Italian imperialists. He said:

"What was the cause of the war? It was caused by the mercenary interests of the Italian finance tycoons and capitalists, who need a new market, who require successes for Italian imperialism.

"What was this war? It was an advanced, civilised human massacre, the slaughter of the Arabs by the aid of the 'most up to date' weapons.

"The Arabs resisted desperately. . . . About 14,800 Arabs were killed". V.I. Lenin pointed out that nevertheless the Arabs would not submit to the Italian colonisers, that "it would take a long time yet to 'civilise' them by bayonet, bullet, the noose, fire and the raping of women".\*\*\*

V.I. Lenin gave vivid accusatory descriptions of Cecil Rhodes, one of the most active, most militant representatives of British imperialism in South Africa, and of the Belgian King Leopold II, who had seized a tremendous territory in the Congo Basin. "Millionaire, finance king, chief culprit of the Boer War", wrote Lenin of Cecil Rhodes,\*\*\*\* and of Leopold II: "Businessman.

\*Ibid., p.456.

\*\*V.I. Lenin, Col. Works, v.24, p.370.

\*\*\*V.I. Lenin, Col. Works, V.18, pp.309-310.

\*\*\*\*Lenin, Col. Works, v.22, p.244.

financier, swindler, he bought the Congo for himself and 'developed' it".\*

## DIVISION OF AFRICA

The imperialist division of Africa was completed in the main towards the end of the 19th century. Noting this circumstance, V.I. Lenin wrote that "the colonial policy of the imperialist countries had COMPLETED the seizure of unoccupied lands on our planet. For the first time the world has proved already divided so that in the future there can be ONLY redivisions, i.e., transfer from one 'owner' to another, and not from ownerlessness to an 'owner'".\*\*

When the struggle for the redivision of the world, already divided by the imperialist powers, led to the world war, Lenin came out in a most impassioned way against the chauvinist propaganda of the governments of the belligerent powers and the treachery by the leaders of the Second International, demonstrating the imperialist, annexationist nature of the war.

One result of the first world war, as we know, was that Britain, France and Belgium seized and divided among themselves the German colonies. The transfer of the German colonies to the monopoly possession of the European colonial powers was opposed — naturally in their own mercenary interests — by the American imperialists. However, the chief obstacle to the realisation of the imperialist plans for direct seizure of foreign territories was the great October Socialist Revolution in Russia, which proclaimed the principle of the equality of all peoples, the right of the nations to self-determination. The October Revolution not only shook the foundations of imperialism in the metropolitan countries, but also struck at its deep rear lines, undermining the dominion of the imperialists in the colonial and dependent countries. In order to hoodwink world opinion and camouflage the seizure of the former German colonies, the imperialist powers instituted the so-called system of mandates of the League of Nations they had set up.

V.I. Lenin exposed this ruse. ". . . When they speak of the distribution of mandates for colonies", he pointed out, "we know full well that this is the distribution of mandates for plundering and pillage, that this is distribution of the right of an insignificant section of the world's population to exploit the majority of the population of the earth".\*\*\*

\*Lenin, Notebooks on Imperialism, p.469.

\*\*Lenin, Col. Works, v.22, p.242.

\*\*\*V.I. Lenin, Col. Works, v.30, p.138.

V.I. Lenin opposed the imperialist re-division of the German colonies and demanded the abolition of colonialism. Most interesting in this respect is the "Mandate to Deputies to the Soviet of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies elected in factories and regiments", which he drafted shortly after the February Revolution. At that time the central question in Russian political life was that of the attitude to the war. The Bolsheviks, headed by Lenin, demanded the immediate ending of the imperialist war and the conclusion of a just and democratic peace, peace without annexations or contributions. In drafting the mandate to the workers' and soldiers' deputies Lenin did not lose sight of the interests of the colonial peoples, in particular the interests of the African peoples. He wrote in the "Mandate":

"Germany must renounce absolutely and unconditionally all her colonies, for colonies are constituted of oppressed peoples.

"Britain, by the terms of such a peace, must renounce forthwith and absolutely not only all the foreign lands she has seized since the beginning of the war (the German colonies in Africa, etc.; Turkish lands, Mesopotamia, etc. but also ALL HER OWN COLONIES".\*

The workers' and soldiers' deputies were to demand that the imperialist powers immediately withdraw their troops from these territories.

### LENIN'S STAND

Against the despicable colonial system of imperialism Lenin consistently opposed the right of the peoples to independence and self-determination. He allowed of no compromise on this question: every people, regardless of whether it was big or little irrespective of its level of social, economic and cultural development, has the right to live freely, to arrange its life and order its fate in its own way.

A consistent internationalist, Lenin always championed the principle of equality, friendship and co-operation among all peoples, gave support to the struggle of the oppressed peoples against their oppressors. He mercilessly scourged the right wing socialists of the colonial powers who defended the right of "the nation" to the exploitation of colonies. For instance, he wrote the Belgian socialists that "in actual fact they defend the demands of the Belgian bourgeoisie, who wish to continue their plunder

\*Lenin, Col. Works, v.24, p.321.

the 15 million population of the Congo . . .”\*

An irreconcilable opponent of imperialist wars, Lenin held that wars of the colonial peoples against imperialism were just. “National wars AGAINST imperialist powers are not only possible and probable, they are inevitable and PROGRESSIVE, REVOLUTIONARY . . .”\*\* He regarded it as an indispensable duty of all who recognised the principle of self-determination to support actively and in every possible way the colonial peoples’ national liberation movement.

V.I. Lenin had profound confidence in the power of the African peoples, just as he had in those of other peoples enslaved by imperialism; he was confident, he knew, that they would put an end to the dark rule of colonialism and regain their lost freedom. He dreamed of the day when the peoples of the colonies would enter upon the broad path of independent creation and take part in world policy, together with all the other peoples of the world, on an equal footing.

Today we are witnessing the realisation of this great dream. First the peoples of Asia, followed by the peoples of Africa, broke through the barriers erected by imperialism, separating them from the rest of the world. The colonial system in Africa is collapsing under the powerful pressure of the anti-imperialist forces. The colonisers continue to resist stubbornly, they manoeuvre, resort to arms, but still they are compelled to surrender position after position.

The greater part of the African continent is still under the yoke of foreign occupation. But events are unfolding with astonishing swiftness. The liberation of the colonies is being accomplished as though by the laws of chain reaction. The Africans are still faced with a difficult struggle, but the immediate political object, the winning of independence by all the peoples of Africa — is already close.

One need only attend the sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, or the conferences of its specialised agencies not only to understand, but also to feel the striking changes that have taken place in the world. The League of Nations of sorry memory hardly had any Asian or African countries in its membership, although it repeatedly discussed and decided the fate of peoples of Asia and Africa. And even in the early period of the United Nations existence the countries of Asia and Africa were hardly represented.

\*Lenin, Col. Works, v.21, p.263.

\*\*Lenin, Col. Works, v.22, p.298.

Today of the 82 members of the United Nations there are 20 Asian and 10 African countries. At the next session of the General Assembly at least another six African countries should be admitted to membership: Camerouns, Togo, Somalia, Nigeria, Mali and Madagascar. Before very many years have gone by the Afro-Asian countries will comprise the majority of the members of the United Nations.

### NEW PERIOD

One after another the peoples of Africa are joining the family of peoples of the world, as equal members. The period of world history, when Africa was only the object of the policy of non-African countries, an object of strife and wars between the imperialist states, is coming to a close. A new period is beginning, when the peoples of Africa, to use the words of V.I. Lenin, will take part in "solving the fate of the whole world". This is a great victory for the African peoples and all people of good will share with them the joy of victory.

Construction of the new life is developing ever more widely in the countries of Africa which have won political independence. There are great difficulties in the way. Economic and cultural backwardness; the continued domination of foreign monopolies which still plunder the national wealth of these countries; the acute lack of funds to finance economic construction; resistance of the forces of internal reaction who refuse to make a complete break with the past, and a great deal more, hamper their advance.

The imperialists try to take advantage of these difficulties. In new forms and under new signs they seek to preserve the possibilities of enrichment through the exploitation of the peoples of sovereign African states. The struggle against imperialism does not end with the gaining of political independence. This was pointed out with ample eloquence by delegates to the Second Conference of African Peoples, held in Tunis last January.

The Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist camp are loyally following the great behests of Lenin, who said long ago, on the eve of the triumph of our revolution: "We shall exert every effort to come closer to the Mongols, Persians, Indians, the Egyptians . . . We will try . . . to teach them to go over to the use of machinery, to making work easier, to democracy, to socialism".\*

Lenin's name, his ideas, are widely known in Africa. The colonisers have always put every possible obstacle in the way of the distribution of Marxist literature in their colonies, and they

\*Lenin, Col. Works, v.23, p.35.

still do so. The Marxist book has found it very difficult to make its way in Africa. Yet today it is no longer an unusual phenomenon. The most important obstacle to the spread of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism in Africa is the illiteracy of the overwhelming majority of the population. It is to the advantage of the colonisers to keep the enslaved peoples in ignorance. But today there are already many educated people in the African countries, and these include advanced people who propagate Leninist ideas, even at the cost of personal sacrifice.

The Communist Parties of the metropolitan countries, particularly Britain and France, have made a valuable contribution to the spread of Leninist ideas in Africa. Many thousands of Africans, coming to the metropolitan countries, learn a great deal more about the communist movement, read Marxist literature, and return home enriched by progressive ideas.

In recent years we have also seen the appearance in African countries of quite a number of leaders who give themselves out to be Marxists but at the same time reject Marxist-Leninist theory as, allegedly, being unsuitable for African conditions. With an obstinacy worthy of being put to better use, these people keep talking about the distinctive features of the historical path of the African peoples, the specific features of the social-economic system in the countries of Africa, the special lines of the further development of the African peoples. But no one disputes all that.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The peoples of Africa have indisputably covered a most distinctive path of development, though this distinctiveness was caused not by any special features inherent in the African peoples and the African peoples alone, but by the interference of European capitalism. The social and economic way of life of the African peoples also has its own characteristic peculiarities. The forms of material and spiritual culture of the Africans are their own, and so on and so forth. Africa, perfectly truly, has its own face, its own individuality. All this is so, but this in no way proves that Marxist-Leninist theory is not applicable to Africa.

As we know, Marxist-Leninist theory is not a dogma; it stipulates the combination of basic principles with the concrete historical conditions in which these principles are put into effect. Lenin always fought against a dogmatic attitude to theory; he always demanded its creative application. This is what he said in his report to the 2nd All Russia Congress of Communist

Organisations of peoples of the East, on November 22, 1919:

"You have before you a task which has never before confronted the communists anywhere in the whole world. Basing yourselves on the general communist theory and practice what you have to do, in adapting yourselves to the specific conditions (which do not obtain in the European countries), is to be able to apply this theory and practice to the conditions where the main masses consist of peasantry, in which it is necessary to solve the task of the struggle, not against capital, but against mediaeval survivals".\*

The history of the peoples of the Soviet East during the years of socialist construction have brilliantly confirmed the correctness of these instructions of Lenin.

It is well known that in the level of their social-economic and cultural development these peoples were very much behind the foremost capitalist countries of the West. They had not passed through the capitalist stage of development; feudal and patriarchal-feudal relations, which are so characteristic of present-day Africa, predominated with them. The forms of their material and spiritual culture different considerably from the forms of culture of, for instance the Russian people. These peoples—and this applies, incidentally to all other peoples—have their own inherent distinctive features. They themselves also experienced national oppression by Russian landlords and capitalists. None of this, however, prevented them from making the principles of Leninism the basis of construction of their new life.

Guided by Marxist-Leninist theory in the construction of the new life, and getting tremendous help from the Russian people, the peoples of the Soviet Eastern republics have made a tremendous stride from poverty to abundance, from ignorance to the heights of human culture. According to the 1959 census, the Uzbek S.S.R. has per 1000 of the population, 13 persons with a higher education and 234 with a secondary education; the respective figures for the Kazakh S.S.R. are 13 and 239, for Kirghizia 13 and 227; Tajikistan 10 and 214, Turkmenistan 13 and 256. What highly developed capitalist country can boast of such a high level of national education? And yet before the revolution the population in the outlying regions of Russian was practically totally illiterate.

The authenticity of all knowledge, of all theories, is confirmed by practice. The practice of the Soviet Eastern republics demonstrates that Marxist-Leninist theory serves as the guiding star in the struggle for the happiness of mankind whatever the social-

\*Lenin. Col. Work, v.30, p.140.



economic conditions. Africa cannot be any exception.

Lenin's name, his noble ideas of struggle against colonialism and all other forms of imperialist enslavement of the peoples, for national freedom, are becoming the property of ever increasing circles of people in the countries of Africa. They will inevitably become the property of all who dream of a better future for the working people.

(Translated from "Contemporary East", April, 1960.)

## The Agony of South Africa

by A. LERUMO

### APARTHEID

— the policy of naked domination and oppression by a minority of three million Whites over 12 million African and other non-White peoples of the Union of South Africa — has long been denounced by democratic men and women the world over. At one Session after another of the United Nations General Assembly, at the initiative of the African and Asian countries, backed consistently by the representatives of the socialist countries, the policy of the Union Government has been condemned as contrary to the U.N. Charter and a threat to world peace. Each time the condemnation has been more vigorous and forthright; the minority of imperialist countries which gave open or tacit support to the South African racists has diminished and become less blatant.

At first the United States of America used to shield the Nationalist Government of South Africa by supporting its claim that U.N. discussion of apartheid meant "interference in domestic affairs". But in the last year or so American advisers have told the State Department that this line was rapidly undermining U.S. influence in Africa. At the last General Assembly, in October 1959, only Britain, France and Fascist Portugal, the major remaining African colony-owners, opposed the strong resolution demanding a revision of the Union's racial discrimination.

World feeling against South Africa's Nazi white supremacists rose to unprecedented heights last March, following the bloody massacres unleashed by police at Sharpeville and Langa against African men and women peacefully demonstrating against the vicious pass laws and for higher wages. Mass meetings, from Peking and London to Cairo and Accra,