

## STALIN AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION.

by D. TLOONE.

Joseph Stalin was a man of great intellectual ability, a profound thinker. He had the greatest love for human beings. There is not a single sphere of the life of the people which escaped his attention.

One of these was his famous work on the National and Colonial question. Joseph Stalin himself was born a member of an oppressed nationality. He was a Georgian, and under the Czarist empire, the Georgian people were treated with the same sort of contempt and bitter persecution, which we non-South Africans are familiar with in South Africa. He was, therefore, particularly interested in the problems of national emancipation. But Stalin did not approach these problems as a nationalist. His loyalty was to the working class of all countries, and he examined the problems of nationalism from the point of view of their relationship to the international labour movement.

Nations, he said arose from a particular period of history - the period of Capitalism. But not all nations were equally developed. Those which were more advanced, colonised and oppressed the people of other countries. Basing himself on the theory of Marx, that, "no nation which oppresses others can itself be free", Stalin declared that the labour movement in the dominant countries must positively ally itself with the national liberation movements in the colonies. They had a common enemy - Imperialism. But to form such an alliance, the working class had to adopt a positive policy on the whole question of relations between nations.

### IMPERIALISM.

"Imperialism cannot live without violence and plunder, without bloodshed and shooting," wrote Stalin.

"That is the law of capitalism - to beat the weak and backward. The wolf law of capitalism. You are backward, you are weak, therefore you are in the wrong, therefore you can be beaten and subjugated. You are powerful, therefore

you/....

are on the right, therefore one must beware of you."

In his last classic work, "Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.," he showed how the basic economic law of modern capitalism, the search for maximum profit

"Through the enslavement and systematic robbery of the peoples of other countries, especially backward countries. ... It is precisely the necessity of securing the maximum profits that drives monopoly capitalism to such risky undertakings as the enslavement and systematic plunder of colonies and other backward countries."

Considering current events in Kenya, we may remember Stalin's words of 1927, on the occasion of the British-backed coup d'état of Chiang Kai-shek:

"British capitalism has always been, is, and will continue to be the most vile executioner of popular revolutions."

### "LABOUR" IMPERIALISTS.

Stalin sharply attacked and exposed the type of "Labour" and "Socialist" leaders in Britain, France, and elsewhere who supported imperialism in oppressing colonial peoples. In their theory, he said:

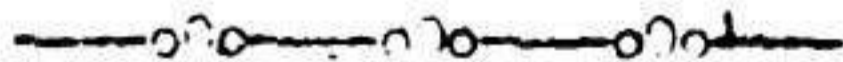
"It was tacitly assumed that although it might be necessary to strive for the emancipation of the European non-sovereign nationalities, it was entirely unnecessary for Socialist leaders to speak seriously of the emancipation of the colonies, which were 'necessary' for the 'production' of raw materials."

"These apologies for Socialists did not even suspect that the abolition of national oppression in Europe is inconceivable without the emancipation of the colonial peoples of Asia and Africa from

the oppression of imperialism."

In this sphere Stalin asserted the right of nations to self-determination. He outlined that the right of self-determination means that only the nation itself has the right to determine its destiny, that no one has the right forcibly to interfere in the life of the nation, to destroy its schools and other institutions, to violate its habits and customs, to oppress its language or curtail its rights. He proclaimed that a nation can arrange its life according to its own will, has the right to complete secession. Nations are sovereign and all nations are equal. He showed how the policy of repression passes from a system of oppression to a system of inciting nations against each other; how in the absence of elementary civil rights - limitation of freedom of movement, disfranchisement - such a policy could assure horrifying proportions, and heaters to drown the cause of the unity of the workers in blood and tears.

Stalin left no room for doubt about the need for national equality in all forms - language, schools, etc. - as an essential element in the solution of the national problem. In this respect he strongly asserted that a state-law based on complete equality in the country was required, prohibiting all national privileges without exception, all kinds of disabilities and restrictions on the rights of national groups.



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