Workers of the World, Unite!

Unity & Struggle

Journal of the
International Conference of
Marxist-Leninist Parties
and Organizations

No. 34 – June of 2017

Unity & Struggle

Journal of the International Conference
of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations.

Published in English, Spanish, Turkish,
Arabic, Portuguese and German
as the responsibility of the Coordinating Committee
of the International Conference.

Any opinions expressed in this journal belong
to the contributors.

Postal Address: Verlag AZ, Postfach 401051,
D-70410, Stuttgart, Germany

Contents

Brazil....5
The Red Army and the Soviet People Saved Humanity from Nazism
Revolutionary Communist Party – PCR

Burkina Faso....15
The October Revolution: Its Teachings on the Question of Nations and Nationalities
Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta – PCRV

Denmark....23
Denmark and the Nordic countries: The rise and fall of the dream of peace and socialism without a revolution
Workers' Communist Party of Denmark – APK

Dominican Republic....37
Hundredth Anniversary of the October Revolution: The Experience of the Soviets
Communist Party of Labor – PCT

Ecuador....48
The October Revolution and the Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat
Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ecuador – PCMLE

France....71
The Conditions of the Revolutionary Crisis in Russia and the Struggle against the Opportunist Currents
Workers' Communist Party of France – PCOF

Germany....82
The October Revolution and its Influence on the German Workers' Movement
Organization for the Construction of the Workers' Communist Party of Germany

Greece....105
October Revolution – Confirmation of the Leninist Theory of the Proletarian Revolution
Movement for the Reorganisation of the Communist Party of Greece 1918-55

India 113
The October Revolution and Education (1917-1932)
Revolutionary Democracy

Iran 143
The October Revolution and the Victory of Leninism Its Effects on the International Communist Movement and the Communist Movement in Iran
Party of Labor (Toufan)

Italy 154
Red October and the founding of the Communist International
Communist Platform – for the Communist Party of the Proletariat of Italy

Mexico 168
The Mexican Revolution of 1910-17 and the Great Socialist Revolution of October 1917
Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist) – PCM(ML)

Norway 177
Alexandra Kollontai and the Bolshevik Influence on the Norwegian Labour Movement in the Period of the October Revolution
Revolusyon

Peru 183
The Alliance of the Working Class, the Poor and Middle Peasantry in the October Revolution and the Building of Socialism
Peruvian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) – PCP(ML)

Spain 191
Stalin and the Revolution
Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist) – PCE(ML)

Tunisia 203
The Role of Women in the Great October Revolution
Workers' Party of Tunisia – PTT

Turkey 211
Culture and Revolution
Party of Labour (EMEP)

Brazil

Revolutionary Communist Party – Brazil

The Red Army and the Soviet People Saved Humanity from Nazism

Soviet Union, if we could gather up
all the blood spilled in your struggles,
all you gave as a mother to the world
so that freedom, dying, might live,
we would have a new ocean
larger than any other
deeper than any other
vibrant as all rivers
active as the fire of Araucanian volcanoes.
Sink your hand into this sea,
man of every nation,
then withdraw and drown in it
all that has forgotten, outraged,
lied and stained,
all that joined the hundred small curs
of the Western dump-heap
and insulted your blood,
Mother of free men!...

Pablo Neruda

Under capitalism, wars are the result of the competition of the ruling classes of different countries for the domination of the planet. In World War I, two opposing imperialist blocs were formed: the Triple Alliance (the German, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman-Turkish Empire) and the Triple Entente (the English, French and Russian Empire).

Something new, however, arose during World War I: the socialist revolution of October 1917, in Russia. A new division occurred in the world, now divided into two antagonistic systems: capitalism and socialism.

The capitalist blocs began to have a common goal: the destruction of the first worker-peasant state in history, with the goal of the restoration of capitalism on a global scale. It was for this purpose

that the winning bloc invested 15 billion marks in the German economy in six years (1924-1929).

When Nazism took power in Germany and made clear its intention of dominating the world, the dominant imperialist powers did not try to fight it. On the contrary, they fixed their eyes on its aggressions and even encouraged the Nazi monster to direct its attack against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

The plan of the capitalist countries to destroy the homeland of the soviets

In 1939, the USSR proposed a pact to England and France for joint military action if the Axis countries (Germany, Italy and Japan), the Nazi fascist bloc, were to start a war in Europe. There was no formal rejection, but no steps were taken by the capitalist countries to finalize the pact. On the contrary, France and England signed a non-aggression treaty with Germany. Being alone, in August 1939, the USSR signed a non-aggression treaty with Germany. The leaders knew that sooner or later, Hitler would break the agreement, but they would gain valuable time to move part of their industries to the East of the great Soviet territory, as well as to reinforce their military capabilities.

From 1938 to 1941, Hitler occupied Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Greece, Yugoslavia and finally France. In Central and Eastern Europe, Germany acquired a large quantity of war materials, means of transport, raw materials, strategic materials and labor power, becoming strong enough to attack the Soviet Union. Hitler in his book "*Mein Kampf*" ("*My Struggle*"), proclaimed: "If land was desired in Europe, it could be obtained by and large only at the expense of Russia."

In 1941 Hitler, the fascist beast, representing the interests of the capitalist monopolies, tried to put an end to socialism by invading the Soviet Union, burning factories and fields, dropping thousands of bombs on the USSR and carrying out the greatest carnage the world has ever seen. But the heroic Red Army, led by the Communist Party and Stalin, supported by a free people, rose up against the Nazi beast and crushed it, freeing humanity from fascism.

The Hitlerite invasion was relentless. "They shot people en masse (women, children, the elderly), set up death camps, deported people for forced labor in Germany. Wherever they went, they left nothing standing." It was a policy of extermination: "I have the

right to destroy millions of men of an inferior race who multiply like vermin" (Hitler).

In response, the government, the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet people issued the call: Death to the fascist invaders, forward to the front! Everything for victory! Millions of men joined the ranks of the Red Army. They also created numerous partisan regiments, made up of millions of fighters.

The dedication and bravery of the Soviet people inspired the world and were decisive shook up the capitalist resistance (the USA, England and France). The allied, anti-fascist bloc was finally formed, the united front of the peoples for peace and against fascism.

Hitler's idea that the occupation of the USSR would be a walk in the park, a "blitzkrieg" (lightning war), collapsed. The Nazis did not imagine the resistance they would find in the main cities: Leningrad, Stalingrad, Kiev and Moscow, among others. Men and women, elders and children rose up like an impregnable wall.

The deeds of the Soviet people reverberated throughout the world, leading a US newspaper, the *Washington Star*, to state: "The events in Russia in the struggle against Hitlerite Germany are of great importance not only for Moscow and the Russian people, but also for Washington, for the future of the United States. History will pay homage to the Russians for having stopped the blitzkrieg and put the adversary to flight."

The Battle of Stalingrad

In June of 1942, the invaders advanced, but found an impenetrable barrier in Stalingrad. During seven months of combat, the invaders lost 700 thousand soldiers and officers, plus a thousand

tanks, two thousand guns and mortars and 1,400 airplanes. The invaders were superior in technology, but in November of 1942, the numbers were reversed in favor of the Soviets. The Germans had 6,200,000 soldiers, the Soviets had 6,600,000; the invaders had 5,000 tanks against 7,000 for the Soviets; 51 thousand artillery pieces and mortars against 77 thousand.

The invaders were devastated, "cooked in the great cauldron of Stalingrad." In the defeat of Stalingrad, the Nazis lost 1.5 million soldiers and officers. "Morally even more than materially, the disaster to that army at Stalingrad had an effect from which the German Army never recovered." ("History of the Second World War," B Liddell Hart).

The Battle of Stalingrad ended on February 2, 1943 with the victory of the communists and marked a turning point in World War II and is considered the bloodiest battle of all history.

About this period Stalin wrote: "the morale of our Army is higher than that of the German, for it is defending its native land against alien invaders and believes in the justice of its cause, whereas the German army is waging a war of annexation, is plundering a foreign country, and is unable to believe even for a moment in the justice of its vile cause."[1]

After Stalingrad, conditions were established for dozens of cities throughout the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to free themselves from the yoke of the enemy in 1943 and 1944, which established the conditions for the final expulsion of the invaders from the great Russian homeland.

With all these successes, the USSR prepared a gigantic counteroffensive at the beginning of 1945 to liberate the countries of eastern European, a vast geographical area that runs from the countries along the Baltic Sea (Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Germany) to the Carpathian region (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Romania and Ukraine). An important factor in this new victory over the Nazis was the enormous support received by the Red Army from the oppressed peoples, particularly from the communist party fighters. After the liberation of these countries, the conditions were set for the USSR to turn its energies to the final defeat of Nazi fascism.

[1] "24th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, November 6, 1941," in *On the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union.*

Then came the victory in the Caucasus and the process of mass expulsion of the Nazi occupiers began. "The Soviet Union can be proud of its heroic victories," wrote US President Franklin Roosevelt, adding: "... the Russians killed more enemy soldiers and destroyed more weaponry than the other 25 United Nations states combined."

The end of 1943 marked a turn in the Soviet front and in the Second World War as a whole. The movement against Nazi fascism was consolidated and expanded throughout the planet.

In June 1944, with the German army defeated in all regions of the USSR, the Anglo-American troops landed in the north of France, opening the western front proposed by the Soviet government from the beginning of the invasion.

It can be said that by that time the war was decided, through the defeat of Germany in Russia. Winston Churchill himself, the British Prime Minister, recognized the fundamental role of the Soviets in a speech to the House of Commons in July 1944: "...I consider it my duty to recognize that Russia mobilized their troops and overcame far more forces than those faced by the Western allies; that, for many long years and at the cost of immense losses, it bore the main weight of the struggle on the ground."

The End of the Auschwitz Camp

Another important deed of the Red Army was the liberation of the prisoners of Auschwitz. Auschwitz was the largest Nazi concen-

tration camp in WWII. It was actually a complex of several camps. It was created in 1940, a year after the Nazis invaded and occupied Poland, which is where the camp was. Most of the prisoners were Jewish, but there were also Polish politicians, members of the anti-Nazi resistance, gypsies, homosexuals, anti-social elements, and, of course, communists. The Soviets who had been imprisoned by the Nazis as prisoners of war and taken to the camps formed the fourth largest group of victims in the Auschwitz camp.

The entrance to Auschwitz read (and even now reads, as a memorial) the words "Arbeit macht frei" (work makes you free). In fact, as in all Nazi concentration camps, the prisoners were forced to work. Those who were too weak were immediately killed in the gas chambers, disguised as collective showers. It is estimated that 1 million people were killed in this Nazi camp. Among several well-known Nazis who worked in the camp were Joseph Mengele, the Angel of Death, a doctor who performed horrible experiments on humans (and later drowned in Brazil), and officers Maria Mandel (directly responsible for the death of thousands of women prisoners) and Irma Greese (a sadist who used to attack her victims with a whip).

On January 27, 1945, Red Army soldiers – organized in the Army of the First Ukrainian Front under Marshal Ivan Konev, entered the camp and freed thousands of prisoners. The camp was almost empty, because with the Soviet advance the Nazis had abandoned it and took tens of thousands of prisoners with them, leaving behind only the sick and those who were too weak to march to other concentration camps. January 27, 1945 was a special day in the history of humanity. On that day the Nazi concentration camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau, was closed by the Allied. The liberators of Auschwitz were none other than the Red Army soldiers

The Liberating Army: "On To Berlin"

In spite of enormous losses, the Red Army advanced through Eastern Europe on the heels of the Germans, thrashing the Nazi and, supported by the popular resistance forces, they defeated the occupiers and their local collaborators. People's democratic republics were elected with communist parties at their head in Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria.

On to Berlin was the call of the liberating army. It was not a walk in the park. The Nazi resistance, although weakened, led to

fierce and bloody combats. The victorious Russians did not kill, they did not loot, they did not take revenge for the crimes committed by the German army on Soviet soil. On the contrary, they fed the hungry, organized medical care, the operation of transport and the distribution of water and electricity.

On May 2, 1945, the German Supreme Command signed the unconditional capitulation of their armed forces, with the flag of the USSR fluttering at the top of the German parliament (Reichstag) in Berlin. On May Day, there was a huge event in Moscow in commemoration of the end of the Great Patriotic War (as the Soviets called their participation in World War II), and from then until today it is celebrated in Russia as Victory Day.

The so-called Allied countries, the United States and England, delayed as much as possible all concrete aid to the USSR (which was fighting on the eastern front). Their aim was to refrain from opening a second (western) front against Germany, hoping that the Soviets would be defeated by the Nazis. Seeing that their desire could not become reality and fearing that the USSR would defeat the fascist Nazis on their own, only on June 6, 1944, was the Second Front opened.

The event known in history as the Normandy landing, or "D-Day", is usually presented in countless US books, magazines and films as the decisive day that ensured the final turn of the war. In fact, even though the famous D-Day was important, the central forces of the Nazi army had already been defeated by the USSR, which was marching at full swing to Germany, pushing what remained of the Nazi troops back to Berlin.

The Final Victory

After the war in Europe, it was necessary to turn to Asia. Japan, allied with the Nazis, ruled millions of people in China, Korea, the Philippines, despite the fact that the US and British armed forces had inflicted successive defeats on them, Japanese forces were still numerous and strong. From time to time they attacked the frontiers of the USSR and torpedoed Soviet ships on the high seas.

On August 8, 1945, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and began its offensive. That same day, Japanese Prime Minister Teiichi Susuki said: "...The entry of the USSR into the war this morning definitely puts us in a situation with no way out and it becomes impossible to continue the war." He was right. At the end of

the month, the Japanese Army had lost 677 thousand soldiers and officers: 84 thousand dead and 593 thousand prisoners.

Contrary to what many people think and what bourgeois historiography seeks to spread, it was not the US atomic bombs launched at the beginning of August against Hiroshima and Nagasaki that led to the Japanese capitulation. The war continued as before after the barbaric and cowardly attack. The surrender resulted from the destruction of the Japanese army by the Soviet troops.

If anyone doubts this, read the testimony of General Chennault, who commanded US troops in China: "...The entry of the USSR into the war against Japan was the decisive factor for the end of the war in the Pacific, which would have happened without the use of atomic bombs. The rapid blow dealt by the Red Army against Japan tightened the encirclement that finally forced Japan to its knees."

The Red Army also contributed to the expulsion of Japan from China and Korea. The sacrifice of the Soviet people was very costly. But it was worth it because it freed Humanity from the Nazi beast. It was also a victory for socialism, which emerged victorious from the Second World War in all of Eastern Europe and China.

The Role of Stalin in the Victory over Nazi Fascism

The role of Comrade Stalin was fundamental for this great victory of the Red Army. Let us see what Alexander Mikhailovich Vasilevsky, Marshal of the Soviet Union and Deputy Minister of Defense during World War II, says about Stalin's conduct through-

out the war: "Stalin was trained as a strategist.... After the Stalingrad and especially the Kursk battles he rose to the heights of strategic leadership. From then on Stalin would think in terms of modern warfare, had a good grasp of all questions relating to the preparation for and execution of operations. He would now demand that military action be carried out in a creative way, with full account of military science, so that all actions were decisive and flexible, designed to split up and encircle the enemy. In his military thinking he markedly displayed a tendency to concentrate men and materiel, to diversified employment of all possible ways of commencing operations and their conduct. Stalin began to show an excellent grasp of military strategy, which came fairly easily to him since he was a past master at the art of political strategy, and of operational art as well."

"Joseph Stalin has certainly gone down in military history. His undoubted service is that it was under his direct guidance as Supreme High Commander that the Soviet Armed Forces withstood the defensive campaigns and carried out all the offensive operations so splendidly. Yet he, to the best of my judgement, never spoke of his own contribution. At any rate, I never happened to hear him do so. The title of Hero of the Soviet Union and rank of Generalissimus were awarded to him by written representation to the Party Central Committee Politburo from front commanders. In fact, he had fewer military orders than did the commanders of fronts and armies. He told people plainly and honestly about the miscalculations made during the war…."

"It is my profound conviction that Stalin, especially in the latter part of the war, was the strongest and most remarkable figure of the strategic command. He successfully supervised the fronts and all the war efforts of the country on the basis of the Party line.... He has remained in my memory as a stern and resolute war leader, but not without a certain personal charm."

Marshal Georgii Zhukov, commander in chief of the Soviet Armed Forces during World War II, also attributed great merits to Stalin for the victory: "Stalin is said to have authored fundamental innovations in military science – elaborating methods of artillery offensives, of winning air supremacy, of encircling the enemy, splitting surrounded groups into parts and wiping them out one by one, etc. This is untrue. These paramount aspects of warcraft were mastered in battles with the enemy. They were the fruit of deep reflec-

tions and summed up the experience of a large number of military leaders and troop commanders. The credit that is due here to Stalin is for assimilating the advice of military experts in his stride, filling it out and elaborating upon it in a summarized form – in instructions, directives, and recommendations which were immediately circulated as guides among the troops."

"I can say that Stalin was conversant with the basic principles of organizing operations of Fronts and groups of Fronts, and that he supervised them knowledgeably. Certainly, he was familiar with major strategic principles. Stalin's ability as Supreme Commander was especially marked after the Battle of Stalingrad."

His leadership of the armed struggle "Stalin owed… to his natural intelligence, his experience as political leader, his intuition and broad knowledge. He could find the main link in a strategic situation which he seized upon in organizing actions against the enemy, and thus assured the success of the offensive operation.

"It is beyond question that he was a splendid Supreme Commander-in-Chief."

The USSR suffered enormous losses in the war: 25 million Soviets killed, many of them members of the Communist Party. The Soviet people practically had to start all over again. And they did it. Confirming the words of V.I. Lenin: "A nation in which the majority of the workers and peasants realise, feel and see that they are fighting for their own Soviet power, for the rule of the working people, for the cause whose victory will ensure them and their children all the benefits of culture, of all that has been created by human labour – such a nation can never be vanquished." (V. I. Lenin, Speech at a Meeting of the Railwaymen of Moscow Junction, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29.)

Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party – Brazil

Sources:

- Great Victory, a Brief Account of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet People – Vasily Ryabov
- Another View of Stalin– Ludo Martens
- History of the USSR, Time of Socialism
- A Lifelong Cause – A. M. Vasilevsky
- Reminiscences and Reflections – G. K. Zhukov

Burkina Faso

Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta

The October Revolution: Its Teachings on the Question of Nations and Nationalities

The October Revolution of 1917 opened a new era for humanity: the seizure of power by the proletariat, and the construction of socialism through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It was the first victorious experience of the seizure of power by the working class at the head of the working people, the peasantry, and other popular strata. By means of armed insurrection, the proletariat and people overthrew the tsarist regime and the Russian bourgeoisie, allied with the powers in the imperialist war that had plunged the peoples into a massacre for the interests of the monopolies and the arms merchants.

The October Revolution, masterfully directed by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Stalin, launched the country into profound political, economic, social and cultural transformations. Among the thorny problems resolved in the light of Marxism-Leninism was the question of nations and nationalities.

What principles guided the Bolsheviks in the struggle against the tsarist regime, the bourgeoisie and the opportunist currents, for the liberation of the different nationalities that made up central Russia and the border regions, to ensure their liberation and then the unity within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic?

What lessons can the International Communist Movement draw from the rich experience of the resolution of the question of nations and nationalities by the Bolshevik Communist Party?

Attention to the Leninist principles on these fundamental problems, elaborated by Lenin and Stalin, we believe is indispensable to understand, from the outset, the importance of the October Revolution on the question of nations and nationalities.

1) The theoretical positions of Marxism-Leninism on the national question.

These are positions linked to Lenin's theses on the consequences of the emergence and development of imperialism at the international level, as a result of the struggle among the monopolies and

the imperialist powers for the export of capital and the conquest of markets in the colonies. From this there arises the domination of the colonized countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, the exploitation and oppression of the working class and peoples of those countries. This domination deprives the countries of their national sovereignty and their territorial integrity and leaves the peoples in a state of economic, social and cultural backwardness. These political, economic and social characteristics determine the tactical and strategic content of the revolution in these countries, specifically on the national question. Stalin clearly put forward the positions of the doctrine of the proletariat as follows: "*Leninism linked the national question with the question of the colonies. The national question was thereby transformed from a particular and internal state problem into a general and international problem, into a world problem of the liberation of the oppressed peoples in the dependent countries and colonies from the yoke of imperialism.*"[2]

Stalin further states: "*Leninism broadened the conception of self-determination, interpreting it as the right of the oppressed peoples of the dependent countries and colonies to complete secession, as the right of nations to independent existence as states.*"

These principles, elaborated on the basis of concrete historical conditions, have been applied in the direct struggle against the social-chauvinist positions of the opportunists of the Second International, which negatively influenced the proletariat and the masses during the imperialist war. These opportunist elements were mobilized in the service of the interests of the bourgeoisie under the pretext of defending the homeland...

The October Revolution led by the Bolshevik Communist Party in practice destroyed these chauvinist conceptions and opened new perspectives to the proletariat and the peoples; it harshly struck the bourgeoisie, destroyed the capitalist system from top to bottom, and created the conditions to correctly resolve the question of nations and nationalities in central Russia and vast border regions, oppressed for many years under the yoke of tsarism and the bourgeoisie. These border regions were mainly Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Turkestan, etc. The conquest of power, the violent destruction of the bourgeois state and the establishment of the dictatorship of the pro-

[2] Stalin: "The Foundations of Leninism," in *Problems of Leninism*, FLP Peking, 1976, English edition, p. 68.

letariat, created the conditions necessary to settle the question of nations and nationalities. Tsarism and the bourgeoisie used the weapon of the division of the working class and peoples in the context of ferocious oppression and exploitation. "*Tsarism deliberately cultivated patriarchal and feudal oppression in the border regions in order to keep the masses in slavery and ignorance. Tsarism deliberately settled the best areas in the border regions with colonizing elements in order to force the masses of the native nationalities into the worst areas and to intensify national strife.*"[3]

The October Revolution opened the way for establishing political, economic, social and cultural conditions for the development of the nationalities and equality among them, both in theory and in practice. The Communist Party carried out the struggle to remove the heavy legacy of Great Russian chauvinism and its negative influence also after the revolution. It also carried out an arduous work of education and persuasion among the peoples of the border regions who were imbued with distrust and hostility towards the Russians. This work was carried out based on the results of the material and social progress of a consistent, well thought-out economic policy. These peoples saw, concretely, the elimination of the former colonial privileges, saw the implementation of measures for national cultural development, the national theater and public instruction in the national languages, throughout all spheres of administration.

These achievements were in the program of the Communist Party, which clearly formulated them, among others, as follows: "*The proletariat of the oppressor nations must pay particular attention to the survival of remnants of national sentiments among the working masses of the oppressed nations, or who do not fully enjoy their rights.*"

The construction of socialism showed the communists' ability to promote and organize the peaceful living together of the various nationalities and ethnic minorities within a single proletarian state, supported by mutual confidence and freely consented commitment. This unprecedented experience showed the superiority of the socialist system over the capitalist system in solving the question of nations and nationalities. The imperialist system, with its logic of na-

[3] Stalin, The Policy of the Soviet Government on the National Question in Russia, *Works*, Vol. 4, FLPH Moscow, 1953, English edition, p. 368-69.

tional oppression, accentuates xenophobic and racist sentiments to divide the working class and peoples in order to maintain its rule. As history shows, it is a system that, in periods of extreme aggravation of the crisis, feeds fascism and aggravates the national problem. The October Revolution, as we have already pointed out, broadened the national question by including it within the general framework of the liberation of the oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies against imperialism.

It opened up great possibilities and prospects by linking the struggles of the proletariat of the developed capitalist countries to the victorious revolution in Russia and that of the oppressed peoples in the dominated countries. They participated in the revolutionary process on a world scale and supported each other. We must now examine the lessons that we can derive from the October Revolution for the struggles of the Marxist-Leninist Movement of today.

2) The teachings of the October Revolution, for the Marxist-Leninist Movement of Today

After the triumph of the October Revolution, despite the ebb in various periods of the world revolutionary movement, particularly the restoration of capitalism in the former USSR through the betrayal of Khrushchevite revisionism, the defeat of socialism in Albania, etc., we continue to live in the epoch "of imperialism and the proletarian revolution," "*the era of colonial revolutions in the oppressed countries of the world, in alliance with the proletariat and under the leadership of the proletariat.*" (Stalin)

The anti-imperialist struggle is more than ever on the agenda on the international level, in the context in which inter-imperialist rivalries for the redivision of spheres of influence and of geostrategic interests provoke conflicts and reactionary wars in many countries of the continent. A living example of this is the Middle East with the military interventions of the imperialist powers (U.S., European Union, Russia), their allies (Iran, Turkey), in Iraq and Syria, under the pretext of fighting *jihadist* terrorism.

The deepening of the crisis of the imperialist system is the main source of tension, since the different imperialist powers, the monopolies, and the new candidates in the war of redivision of the territories with countries such as China, India, Brazil and Turkey, are intervening in the dominated countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, exporting capital, plundering the agricultural and mining

resources, and conquering markets.

The international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO), in the pay of the imperialist powers, are instruments of aggression against national sovereignty and of social and economic regression in the different countries in which they intervene. Faced with the policy of exploitation and oppression on an international scale, the proletariat and the peoples are carrying out various types of struggles and popular insurrections to free themselves from imperialist domination and to win their national and social liberation. From this point of view, the African continent is a clear example of the largely negative balance of the formal independence of the 1960s, in the colonial period of countries ruled mainly by French colonialism and administered by allied reactionary social classes and strata which are experiencing a serious crisis. This crisis manifests itself at different levels, with catastrophic consequences.

The neocolonial state apparatus has completely failed and the established institutions have been discredited. In certain neocolonial countries, this apparatus has disappeared at certain times, to make way for armed gangs (Central African Republic, some regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the north of Mali, etc.).

The neocolonial armed forces, created, trained, financed and supplied by French imperialism to deal with the neglect by the reactionary social classes and strata, which are an essential pillar of imperialist rule, are undergoing a deep crisis (repeated military coups, riots, etc.); they are all a factor of insecurity for the African peoples.

Reactionary civil wars, post-electoral crises resulting from the struggle between the different bourgeois clans for control of the state apparatus, plus the interference of the great imperialist powers, have dramatic consequences:

- Development projects are affected:
- Human rights are massively violated;
- The working class and peoples are experiencing great misery and lack of security;
- Capitalist exploitation and oppression is strengthened and the natural resources are looted.
- The inability of the reactionary bourgeoisie to correctly resolve the national question in the framework of States in which different nationalities coexist.

French imperialism in the colonial period used the principle of divide and rule, to ensure its domination over the peoples of the colonies, and afterwards of the neo colonies. For example:

- After the wars of colonial conquest, it arbitrarily drew the borders of the different colonies. According to its interests, certain colonies were dissolved to strengthen others, and then they restored them. This was the case with Upper Volta, dissolved in 1932 (different parts were connected to the colonies of Ivory Coast, Niger and French Sudan). It was later revived in 1947. The colonized peoples were divided according to a territorial framework established solely for the interests of the colonialists.
- At the time of formal independence in 1960, the large aggregates such as French West Africa (AOF) and French Equatorial Africa (AEF) were dismantled by French imperialism, which preferred to deal with the problem individually and create "dwarf states" under its control.
- The reactionary classes and strata allied to imperialism in the struggle for power divide and oppose the different nationalities to each other, using all means (ethnic, regionalism, chauvinism and xenophobia). They succeed in fomenting reactionary civil wars, as in Ivory Coast, Central African Republic, Chad, etc. For this reason, decades after the formal independence of 1960, the different nationalities that made up the French neocolonies, aspire to free themselves from the double yoke of French imperialism and its local allies in order to achieve unity.

The national question has not been resolved correctly and this places sharply before the communists and the revolutionaries the need for political work for the real liberation and unity of the different nationalities in each of the neocolonies.

In our time, as the October Revolution teaches us, only the Communist Party, within the framework of the struggle for the National Democratic and Popular Revolution and scientific socialism, can resolve the national question. This struggle, an integral part of the world revolutionary process, is being carried out in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. The struggles of the peoples in the oppressed countries for their national and social liberation and those of the proletariat in the imperialist countries, support each other in their struggle directed fundamentally against their common enemies (the monopolies and the states serving them). It is time to remember the fundamental principles guiding the Marxist-Leninist movement in the resolution of the national question. "*Parties in countries whose bourgeoisie possess colonies and oppress other nations must pursue a most well-defined and clear-cut policy in respect of colonies and oppressed nations.*"[4]

[4] Introduction to the 8th condition of admission to the Communist International.

This principle is illustrated by the following analysis of the Workers' Communist Party of France (PCOF): "*If in a dominated country, it is not possible to raise the issue of democracy and social emancipation without questioning imperialist domination, also in an imperialist country a revolutionary program of profound rupture with the system cannot refrain from fighting the ties of abuse and subjection that the country practices at the expense of other peoples. The struggle for the revolution in the imperialist countries and the struggle of the dominated peoples for their national and social liberation are inextricably linked.*"[5]

[5] PCOF, *Unity & Struggle* #28, Autumn/Winter, 2014

Denmark

Workers' Communist Party of Denmark APK

Denmark and the Nordic countries: The rise and fall of the dream of peace and socialism without a revolution

As the Great Socialist October Revolution and the socialist Soviet Union of Lenin and Stalin (1917-1953) is vanishing from the memories of the living, it becomes especially important to establish its significance – not solely as an epoch-making historical event of world significance with repercussions in the most distant corners of the planet, but also as a living reality, a hope and inspiration to the proletarians, peoples and revolutionaries, struggling for a better world.

The great Danish proletarian author Martin Andersen Nexö (1869-1954), one of the fathers of socialist realist literature, testifies of this in his message to the Soviet Union in 1938 on the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the revolution – at a time when fascism had darkened the skies of the European continent:

"The feeling of having a big brother as your back-up with the strength of the Soviet Union that has realized the dream of mankind of liberation from exploitation and repression on one sixth of the planet, has given the ordinary people all over the world new strength to continue the struggle for our rights as men, our human rights.

"For me personally the existence of the Soviet Union and its marvellous well-being in spite of all enemies is a confirmation that there is a meaning and justice in life, and that it rests in the hands of those who *will* meaning and order. Bolshevism has beaten the game and opportunity of the minority and driven fatalism out of the minds of the great majority. Already as a boy I dreamed, when I was hungry or freezing or was over-burdened with labour, that a giant would come and beat all injustice to the ground, so there would be enough food and time for a boy to play. There would be so much food, that mother wouldn't have to cry when stirring the pan, or wink to us across the table when we asked for more.

"Reality was hard on the dream and on the belief in meaning and justice in life. But then emerged the great fact of the Soviet Un-

ion and it rehabilitated the belief in the victory of the forces of good. All justice is rooted in the elementary, is so to say built on bread and the smile of the child! In the republic of the proletariat no mother will wet the bread with her tears when she divides it among her children, and all children are joyful there – this alone is worth two world revolutions. And notice how life grows and becomes just in all its details, with bread and the child as its basis! Bread for all is work for all; work for all is prosperity for all; rest, enlightenment, good entertainment for everybody.

"Every day there are unemployed people knocking at my door, big strong men with hanging vacant arms and a bunch of hungry, crying kids at home. Involuntarily my thoughts turn towards my own childhood – and from there to the Soviet Union. And seeing the daily newspaper and reading about the fighting in Spain and China and about the tantrums of rage of the fascist countries, the thoughts again go to the Soviet Union, with a quiet and strongly felt Thanks!"

The living reality of socialism was a daily reminder to both rulers and ruled, exploiters and exploited, the bourgeois class and the proletariat, that a struggle of gigantic proportions about the future of mankind was going on in front of their eyes, a reminder that the capitalist and imperialist system was not 'the end of history' or the most advanced model of society ever.

The destruction of this hope, this inspiration and living reality, created by the workers under the leadership of a revolutionary communist party, and upheld by the support of the people and workers all over the world, was a major feat of counter revolution, revisionism and reaction in the last century, which witnessed so many triumphs of revolutionary struggle, but also severe setbacks.

Denmark at the time of October

At the time of the October Revolution in Russia during the first imperialist world war the small kingdom Denmark – situated at the gate to Scandinavia (or, if you wish, to the European continent) and the Baltic Ocean, around 300 kilometres from former Leningrad – was a semi-neutral country trying to remain outside the deadly conflict between its three European big power neighbours – Germany, UK and Russia.

The majority of the working class was organized in or affiliated to Social Democracy, at that time containing both reformist and

revolutionary elements, but oriented towards the parliamentary road and class collaboration.

In 1916 the leader of the Danish Social Democracy Stauning became minister in a bourgeois coalition government. In his famous article 'Ten "socialist" ministers' Lenin explained how the leader of the opposition within the party, the revolutionary Gerson Trier, resisted the ministerialism of the Stauning Party:

"Trier defended revolutionary Marxist views in a splendid speech, and when the party decided to go into the government, he resigned from the Central Committee and from the party, declaring that he would not be a member of a *bourgeois* party. In the past few years the Danish 'Social-Democratic' Party has in no way differed from the bourgeois radicals. Greetings to Comrade G. Trier!"

In Denmark the revolutionary unrest after the revolution led to an upsurge of the class struggle and militant class actions. In February 1918 in the last year of the war a demonstration of unemployed, led by syndicalists, entered the Danish stock exchange, beating up some of the stockbrokers.

The October Revolution and the Bolshevik Party of Lenin gave a new and clear direction to the Marxist forces that in Europe were entangled in the web of opportunism. The revolution also prompted the ruling classes to call the Social Democratic parties of the Second International to come out openly in favour of the bourgeois capitalist system. The first majority 'socialist' labour governments in Europe were formed in 1920, with the purpose of saving capitalism.

Martin Andersen-Nexö

Class collaboration became the method of the bourgeoisie to preserve the system of exploitation through some concessions and reforms to the workers. In 1924 Stauning became Prime Minister and the head of such a government, endorsed by the king and the major capitalists.

Reforms are the by-products of revolution. No revolution has produced more reforms than the socialist October Revolution. But the Social Democrats and the bourgeoisie would preach that the reforms were the result of class collaboration and that socialism would be achieved in a gradual process without revolutionary leaps and jumps, by parliamentary means, without any violence. Due to their bourgeois class character and their role as the tools of the policies of the ruling class within the working class and the workers' movement they have had the task of reducing and minimizing the influence of the communist parties and Marxist-Leninist ideas.

During the Nazi occupation of Denmark (1940-45) the Social Democrats degenerated to pursue a line of collaboration with the occupiers. Stauning was Prime Minister during the first years of the occupation until his death in 1942. In 1941 the party together with the rest of the bourgeois parties voted to forbid the communist party, which was in the forefront of the anti-fascist struggle.

The most significant and immediate result of the October Revolution in Denmark was the creation of the Communist Party of Denmark (DKP) on November 9, 1919, two years after the world-shaking events in Russia. This signified the formation of an independent class political force, attracting and uniting the revolutionaries under the banner of Marxism-Leninism. The Party, with Martin Andersen Nexö as one of its most important figures, subsequently became a member of the Communist International, founded by Lenin, The Workers' Communist Party APK considers itself to be the direct heir and continuer of this party.

The rise and fall of the capitalist 'welfare state'

The well-known Danish and 'Nordic' model of the capitalist welfare state is indeed also a by-product of the Great October Revolution and of the deep going changes in the relation of class forces in the world following the revolution and the building and strengthening of the first socialist country in the world, led by the party of Lenin and Stalin.

It gave a new impetus to the struggle of the workers for their basic social and political rights, and it forced the ruling bourgeoisie to make concessions when they realized that the new socialist state would not bend to armed interventions or political and economic sabotage. In the right-wing social-democratic parties with considerable mass backing and influence, the ruling capitalist class found the ideal partner. They would twist the demands of the masses of workers for shorter work hours, better working conditions and social and other benefits in in such a way that it did not threaten or challenge the power of the ruling bourgeoisie or the capitalist system itself. They made a 'historic' class compromise that basically was in effect until the revisionist counter-revolution had destroyed socialism and the Soviet state itself.

The world economic crises from 1929 and throughout the 1930s that eventually was overcome by war preparations and the Second World War accentuated the need for reforms to the benefit of the workers – exactly in order to avoid a proletarian revolution in Denmark and the other Nordic countries.

In Denmark the capitalist welfare state found its first expression in the legislation following a major political deal in 1933 between Stauning's Social Democracy as the leading party in government and the parties of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. Unemployment had exploded, reaching 30 percent, the capitalists de-

manded wage reductions of 20 percent, and threatened to lock out the majority of the workers. The existing labour contracts were prolonged by law, the labour conflict stopped, lockouts and strikes were forbidden – and the capitalist state was accepted to intervene in the economy with a series of public works, creating workplaces and enlarged consumption. This introduced what from 1936 became known as Keynesian economics, the basic bourgeois economic concept of the capitalist welfare states.

A part of this legislation was a so-called social reform that introduced the right of the unemployed and disabled to receive fixed and general social benefits without loss of political or other rights, also introducing an obligatory insurance system.

These steps constituted the first form of the capitalist welfare state in Denmark. It laid the framework for the subsequent development of its version of the Nordic model – based on broad political agreements, comprising the majority of the political parties and the organizations of the capitalists and workers alike. It brought some degree of social security to the workers that had not existed before and addressed in a kind of distorted way some of the main social demands of the workers at the time.

This model and these politics would be further developed over the following decades, interrupted by the Nazi German occupation of Denmark (1940-45) that also meant a general onslaught of the capitalists against these achievements.

The victory over fascism and the resistance movement – in which the Communist Party played a major and leading part – strengthened the position of the working class against the capitalists, weakened Social Democracy that had collaborated with the occupiers and set in the post-war conditions for the development of the Nordic welfare state as an 'alternative to both capitalism and socialism' and as 'the third way between capitalism and socialism', as the propaganda called it.

The full-scale model of the capitalist welfare state culminated in the 1960s and '70s, after the revisionist advent to power in the Soviet Union following the death of J.V. Stalin – and was even presented as a possible road of development also for the revisionist countries in Europe and the Soviet Union.

Its main characteristic is its universal and general character. It applies to all members of society not matter what class or income – as is the case also with political rights like the right to vote and to be

elected etc. The system is based on individual taxation, income taxes. It grants a number of social rights to everybody, poor or rich, as basically free public education, free health care, old age pensions with the possibility of retiring at 60 or 65 for all, improved social housing, unemployment benefits and a social security system, that would prevent people from being thrown into the streets and hunger was a memory of the older generation. The idea was that everybody would contribute, and everybody would benefit,.

This system assisted Denmark and the other Nordic countries in developing into some of the most affluent capitalist countries of the world, and its popular support would be strengthened with the revisionist developments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, where the dynamic socialist economies turned capitalist and entered a prolonged phase of stagnation during until their fall in 1989-91.

The Danish monopolies were quite satisfied with a system with little labour unrest that still yielded great profits. The reformist Social Democracy and the class collaborationist trade union leaders boasted of the welfare state, as if it was their original invention and not a concession made in order to avoid sharp class struggles and the perspective of revolution and socialism. It proved to be temporary, maintained by a long equilibrium in the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working class and the forces of socialism. As soon as they changed, the decline of the capitalist Nordic welfare states began. The ruling class refused to carry on the class compromise.

In the 1980s and ‘90s the offensive of the capitalists against the welfare state gained momentum. No improvements to the benefit of the working people were seen, the period of progressive reforms had come to an end. The European Union that Denmark joined in 1973 adopted neoliberalism as its economic outlook to the exclusion of basic elements of the Nordic model, constantly reducing the public sector and privatizing its tasks and assets. The struggle of the working class entered a period of defence of the gains achieved.

The bourgeoisie, its government and politicians would of course not declare war against the welfare state. On the contrary – they claimed that every piece of legislation rolling back the former achievements were ‘reforms’ made in order to ‘save’ the welfare state and prolong its life forever. So cutbacks reduced the time during which you can receive unemployment benefits by two thirds or the age of retirement is being progressively raised from being pos-

sible at 60 and in general from 65 was changed so in a few years it will be 67 and raised to 72 by 2040. And so on – in one field after another the capitalist welfare state has been turned into an empty shell with only the progressive signboard left.

If from the beginning it was a caricature of the socialist welfare system, it has now become a caricature of itself – a grotesque system of extensive robbery of the working people. One of its aims is the formation of a downtrodden lower sector of the working class, forced to take whatever job it was assigned, with no rights at all, for a constantly reduced wage.

The social advances of the capitalist welfare state have been gradually undermined, restricted and successively eliminated. The main means of the welfare state have systematically been channelled into the pocket of the capitalists and the multinationals. One hundred years after the October Revolution, which put the welfare of the workers all over the world on the political agenda, the Nordic welfare states do not exist – as little as do genuine socialist countries today. Only remnants of this much advertised feat of capitalism are left. Names signifying nothing, and memories of what once was.

The Baltic Region: Zone of aggression or a zone of peace and non-alignment?

The small Nordic and Baltic countries between big European imperialist powers such as the UK, Germany and Russia have fought for their independence and against the risk of being subjected to and integrated into the domain of one or the other. This has prompted the politics of 'neutrality' and the idea of the Nordic countries and indeed the Baltic Region as a zone of peace, of non-alignment and neutrality. Under this banner countries like Sweden, Denmark and Norway have also acted as arbiters in international conflicts. The truth is that this non-alignment never became a reality. Today it seems further away than ever.

The Bolshevik Revolution and the existence of a big socialist state bordering Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea would of course have direct consequences for the external policies of Denmark and the Nordic countries. The workers in Finland tried to seize power in the wake of the revolution, but were militarily defeated in a civil war between January and May 1918. In the following rage of the counter-revolution 8500 'reds' were summarily executed and more

than 12,500 of 80,000 prisoners died in the next years of hunger and disease.

The other Nordic countries saw no attempts to seize power. Directly or indirectly the governments of the Scandinavian countries sided with the counterrevolutionary interventionists and the 'whites' and their efforts to make the workers' state fail, while the class conscious workers tried to support the efforts of the Soviet proletariat in creating the new society. The anti-worker and anti-communist class character of the rulers of the capitalist states make them obvious allies of the most aggressive capitalist and imperialist powers.

During both the First and Second World War the Baltic Sea was controlled by Germany and the German navy. At the beginning of the Second World War Denmark and Norway declared 'neutrality', but they were both occupied by the Nazis in April 1940 and enlisted to support the Nazi aggression against the Soviet Union in 1941. Sweden remained formally neutral during the war, while Finland sided with the Hitlerites, and the three Baltic countries Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were occupied by the Nazis to support the German war, as was Poland.

The Baltic Sea and the entire region became a hotbed of aggression, but the heroic struggle of the Soviet people and its Red Army, the allied forces and the resistance movements in the occupied countries defeated and destroyed the Nazi regime and its dominance.

The first socialist state endured and came out even stronger after the war in spite of colossal losses, and the Nordic countries had to adapt to a new political situation in the world and the Baltic region – with the possibility of turning the Baltic Sea into a 'Sea of Peace' and non-aggression. Nuclear arms were to be forbidden. But such a joint platform of these small countries was never achieved. Denmark and Norway were integrated into the aggressive NATO alliance from the beginning, while Sweden pursued a policy of neutrality and official non-alignment, and Finland made a special treaty with the Soviet Union that would prevent new aggression from Finnish territory.

But the movement for the Nordic countries as a non-aligned international force of peace outside the post-war military blocs and without nuclear armaments remained strong for decades, and included a strong popular resistance to nuclear weapons in the Nordic area and the plan of putting up 572 nuclear missiles in Europe by

the US in 1983. Officially Denmark will have no nuclear arms on its territory in 'times of peace'. The other Nordic countries also renounced having nuclear weapons and stockpiles of offensive weapons on their territory during the 'Cold War'.

As the Soviet Union degenerated from a force of peace into an imperialist superpower, the movement against both these warmongers and their military alliances gained new momentum. This was reversed with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Most of the East European countries of the Soviet bloc and even some former republics of the Soviet Union have been integrated into the imperialist European Union and the aggressive NATO alliance.

Today the entire Baltic region has become an area of militarization and war preparations. Not for a war against the socialist state, which ceased to exist, but against capitalist Russia, considered a dangerous imperialist rival by the main imperialist country, the US. All the Nordic countries signed a joint declaration with the US (May 2016) obliging them to arm themselves against 'the Russian threat'. This included the professed 'neutral' Sweden, which later the same month signed a so-called host country treaty with the US, allowing stockpiling of NATO equipment and huge NATO exercises on Swedish territory. Today US and NATO soldiers, warships and fighter planes operate in the Baltic Sea and the countries around it, including a permanent presence in the Baltic states and Poland. The border with Russia has been filled with elite soldiers and nuclear missiles point towards Russia from Polish and Romanian territory.

Peace in the Baltic region, peace for the Nordic countries seems further away than ever. The possibilities for peace, created by socialism also for countries with different social systems, are eliminated by the 'victories' of capitalism, posing grave dangers to mankind.

A working class revolution today is both necessary and achievable

Workers' revolutions, proletarian revolutions, are becoming more and more urgent. The rulers of the capitalist societies are again fearing social unrest and the inevitable explosions as the result of the brutal capitalist agenda of exploitation and war.

Also in Denmark we hear more and more warnings from supporters of the capitalist system. The organization of industrialists

and the main Danske Bank (Danish Bank) worry that severe social unrest might be the consequence of rapidly increasing social inequality and ever more widespread poverty.

In 2010 the present Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen stated that 'We will bring back hunger'. By 2017 this noble aim has been achieved in the former welfare state of Denmark. The neoliberal 'medicine' of the European Union has turned it into a bottomless discount version.

So far the ruling class has avoided big explosions. The parliamentary system and many new parties with changing government alliances, a right-populist 'Danish Peoples Party' and a lame parliamentary left tied to Social Democracy, have kept the protests under control by false promises and genuine fraud towards the electorate.

The trade unions and their reformist leadership have not raised a finger, or waved a fist, to counter the wave of neoliberal 'reforms', including the higher retirement age, aimed to squeeze every drop of labour power out of even seriously ill people.

The result is a present and future society where you are born to slave for the capitalists until you die. It is obvious that protests cannot be held back and buried forever. The tendency is obvious. The anger and dissatisfaction toward the cutback reforms are simmering, both in the big towns and in the countryside and coastal regions. Many sorts of protests appear, but still not on a very large scale.

'Right populism' with Donald Trump in the US, Marine Le Pen in France and people of the same ilk and movements of the same kind all over is promoted and supported by strong forces of capital and the bourgeois media to prevent the protests from turning towards the left and becoming directed against the system itself. They try to see that the protests are diverted into fighting among the workers and people themselves and turning 'the foreigners' into scapegoats.

Many bourgeois commentators, who have supported 'globalization', 'open borders' and the cut-back 'reforms' are saying that the present time reminds them of the 1930s and the advent of the fascist and extreme right forces. Such elements exist, but the main danger to the benefits that the workers and the majority have fought for and achieved does not come from these forces, but from the neoliberal course pursued by the European Union and the capitalist bourgeoi-

sie, and from the persistent wars and war policy of the US and NATO.

Drawing parallels to different historical situations, it will be even more relevant to compare the present to the time leading to the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia – a time when all factors to cause such a gigantic social upheaval were maturing in many countries. This opens the perspective of a revolution that throws the present ruling class into the dustbin of history, destroying its power structures and institutions, building a new society with another formerly oppressed class as the ruling and leading class, a workers' state, a socialist society

The October Revolution 100 years ago showed that a revolution of the working class is possible. The power of the present rulers is not eternal. It may be challenged and defeated. The revolution of the Russian workers, peasant and soldiers was not the first proletarian revolution of a socialist character. That was the Paris Commune fifty years before. But it was the first victorious workers' revolution, thanks to the fact that it was guided by the ideas of scientific socialism.

For the first time a new type of society was built in a conscious and planned manner, where the entire structure is not made to serve a minority, a ruling class of capitalists and big landowners, but for the great majority of people.

Nothing has changed in this respect during the last 100 years of dramatic and violent historical changes. Victorious socialist revolutions are not wishful thinking or a utopia. They are certainly attainable and real possibilities – on the condition that the adequate objective and subjective factors of revolution exist and a revolutionary situation develops in the country. A crisis where the ruling class is not able to continue to rule as before, and where the subjected will not accept to be ruled over any more, as the classic definition goes.

In Russia in November 1917 a whole series of these factors came together: Big imperialist powers were tied in a worldwide showdown and not able to focus on stopping the developing revolution; the czarist regime had been overthrown, but the new bourgeois regime was not consolidated, the Russian people were war-weary and hungry and keen on change. The revolution was led by a revolutionary communist party, armed with Marxism, with the scientific theory of revolution, able to place itself in the vanguard of the workers and all oppressed people. A party with a great Marxist and

revolutionary as V.I. Lenin at the head and a leadership tested in struggles.

This party was able to repel all counter-attacks of the defeated feudal and semi-feudal forces, of the capitalist bourgeoisie, of international capitalism and its armed forces and of all reaction. It was able to dismiss the demagogy and misdirection of the masses by opportunists and reformists of various sorts that tried to stop the revolution half-way.

One hundred years later new workers' revolutions are no less possible. In many ways the factors for revolution have been strengthened. Also the present imperialist bourgeoisie is engaged in a deadly fight that is threatening to lead to a new world war and atomic doomsday.

A new October is not only possible. Socialist revolution is also necessary. Necessary for world peace, for new advances for the great majority. Necessary to end the never-ending catastrophes of capitalism and wars. To end climate and environmental destruction, to stop international crime, to end exploitation of the workers and the degradation of ordinary people. To have a just and secure life. To end the waves of refugees from wars and capitalist disasters. To have the possibility of normal life and development everywhere.

In all societies – Denmark included – the need of the new society becomes greater and more widespread. No return to the past is possible. Not to our old Denmark, not to the capitalist Nordic welfare state of the 1960s and '70s. The welfare state of the future will be a socialist Denmark.

The October revolution was not a single event, but a whole process of defeating the old ruling class and its international support, destroying its state apparatus and the building of a new one with the workers in command – the process of expropriation of the means of production, turning factories, mines and large farming into collective social property instead of private property. A process where the working class would learn to be the leading and directing class, taking control over all issues of society and life.

Such a revolution is also the unconditional prerequisite for the creation of a socialist society. From the October Revolution grew socialist Russia, the socialist Soviet Union, the victory over Nazi-fascism, the peoples' democracies and the spread of the new society to other continents. From this revolution grew a social progress for the people in a scale never seen before, for the majority and not just

for a few. The human rights of today, including the social rights of man, are also the by-products of this great revolution of 1917.

Socialism without revolution – without the victory of the working class over the capitalists and capitalist monopolies – is impossible. There is still no single historical example of 'peaceful' or 'parliamentary' transition to socialism. Even large-scale nationalizations will not be socialist without a complete transformation of the class structures, without crushing the power of capital, the capitalist state and private property. Not in the 20th Century, not in the 21st either. Such nationalizations may protect the resources of a country against imperialist plunder, but a successful construction of socialism requires a socialist revolution, bringing the working class to power and securing the transition of the means of production to the property of society.

As a part of the fight of the rulers against socialist revolution, all kinds of false theories and ideas are spread – such as the notion that class struggle has disappeared, that the working class is diminishing and disappearing, that capitalism of today is a benevolent capitalism, and many more, when some handfuls of superbillionaires have taken possession of half of the world's riches. Anti-Marxist and opportunist ideas are also spread by 'left', 'socialist' and even self-proclaimed communist forces, seeking to prevent a proletarian revolution by claiming that there are other and easier ways to achieve the blessings of socialism, such as new versions of the tales of the capitalist welfare state, or the tale of 'anti-monopolist democracy' still marketed by some revisionist parties, claiming to be communist.

The Workers' Communist Party of Denmark APK and CIPOML – the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations – are firmly based on the ground of the great October Revolution. They are indeed its direct offspring one hundred years later.

The socialist revolution is indeed possible, necessary and the prerequisite for a new and better Denmark. And for a new and better world.

Dominican Republic

Communist Party of Labor (PCT)

Hundredth Anniversary of the October Revolution: The Experience of the Soviets

All Power to the Soviets! V.I. Lenin.

Between February and October, this was the cry of the Russian working class and peasantry

November 7, 1917, is marked in the history of the humanity as the day in which the working class seized political power for the first time.

The emergence and vicissitudes of the soviets express to a great extent the rhythm and heartbeat of the Russian revolutionary process between 1905 and 1917. Indeed, the ebb and flow of the Russian revolution can only be dealt with and fully understood to the extent that we include in its correct dimension the leading role of the soviets in the ups and downs of the revolutionary movement.

Thus, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Great Soviet Socialist Revolution, we must examine the lessons of the legacy of the soviets, as an organ that unified and organized the working masses mobilized in struggle for the overthrow of the tsarist power, against the bourgeoisie and for the construction of workers' and people's power.

What were the soviets?

They were the organizational response of the Russian working class to the situation of misery and violation of the most elementary rights of human beings to which Tsar Nicholas II subjected them and what he represented, keeping millions of men and women of the people in poverty, while he and his privileged family concentrated all the power and monopolized all the land and the wealth that was produced.

During the period of 1905-1907, Russia experienced an unprecedented revolutionary upsurge, in which the working class carried out great struggles for wages and social and political demands. The numerous and continuous workers' strikes, especially in the great centers of concentration of workers, the demand of reduction of the work-day to eight hours, at the heat of the movement, began to be

accompanied by slogans against the autocracy, for freedom and democracy.

The development of the struggle in 1905 gave rise to the emergence from the masses of the experience of the Soviets. It is necessary to note that, in general this initiative did not come from the leadership of any party. The first Soviet emerged in Ivanovo-Vosnesensk, which was the most important center of the Russian textile industry and was one of the oldest expressions of the organized workers' movement.

Why did the Soviets arise?

At the beginning, they were simple assemblies or councils, organizations of the working masses of a particular factory, sector of production or services and that had as their role the defense of the interests of the workers. Later, they spread and were organized among the peasantry to demand the right to work the land, and also in the army of the regime itself to defend the rights of soldiers, in their function as oppressed workers as well.

The Soviets, as mass organizations, were contested ground, for different reasons, by the various political forces, even of reaction, which wanted to destroy them and disarm the working class of a tool of class resistance. The Soviets were a broad organization of non-party workers, and there were also communists in their midst.

With their disposition of mobilization and combat, they ended up contributing – in a leading role – to creating the revolutionary conditions that ended up overthrowing the tsarist regime with the revolution of February 1917.

Earlier, they also made contributed politically to the establishment of a limited constitutional monarchy in Russia and the creation of the Duma, a kind of parliamentary assembly.

The Soviets emerged as a natural development of the strike committees created by the railway workers, and the committees of factories and workshops, which, in principle only aimed at leading the strike movement. These committees gradually transformed, in a process under the impetus of revolutionary events, taking up new objectives and tasks in the order indicated above. They were the result of the creativity of the masses and the circumstances of the struggle, although from the early days with the active participation of the revolutionary organizations, including the social-revolutionaries and the Menshevik and Bolshevik currents of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party.

In the context of the revolution of 1905, the Soviets were formed in all regions of the country, but the ones that played the main role were the Soviets of Petersburg and of Moscow, due to the economic and political importance of these two cities in tsarist Russia.

The Soviet of Workers' Deputies was established in October of 1905 as one of the high points of the revolutionary process at that time and, since Petersburg was the nerve center of the revolutionary movement, it exerted a great influence on the rest of the country. One of the first objectives of the recently formed Soviet was to concentrate the leadership of the strike movement in all factories and workshops in Petersburg into a single workers' committee.

This Soviet was formed by 562 deputies, delegates from factories, workshops and unions, representing about 250 thousand workers. Its executive committee was composed, in addition to the workers' delegates from factories and unions, of nine representatives of socialist parties. It represented a union of all revolutionary sectors and tendencies, including the currents of the radical petty bourgeoisie. The Soviet, under the leadership of revolutionary social-democracy, pulled along with it all the sectors of the population.

In order to illustrate the revolutionary nature of this organization, the following indicates the content of one of its first decisions,

which was to present a series of demands to the Duma (Parliament) of the Municipality: to take measures to supply the workers of the capital; handing over of public buildings for the holding of assemblies; abolition of the concession of premises and subsidies to the police, gendarmes and other repressive agencies; handing over of money from municipal finances to the Soviets to arm the Petersburg proletariat in struggle for the freedom of the people.

Dynamics, internal democracy and power of the masses

Like all sectors of the oppressed masses in mobilization, the soviets were spontaneous organizational responses; their dynamics and structure changed depending on the circumstances. They were simple structures, flexible but firm against the class enemies.

What was the source of their strength in the concrete reality in which they arose and developed?

In their class character, their determination for power, their philosophy and qualitative leap in which they evolved, they did not confine themselves to demands for wages and the eight-hour day; they fought for more: for political power, for the government, for the leadership of the State and society.

This was how they grew and became representative bodies of the working class; later to fronts of armed resistance against the class enemy, to overthrow it; and besides demanding social and

economic gains, they included political demands, including the highest: the seizure of political power and the rule of the working class and peasantry.

In this creative dynamic, the soviets were transformed and became an embryo of popular power... in the midst of the economic, political and armed struggle they imposed a new social reality on Russia; in the period of February 1905-1907 they created the conditions for the advent of October 1917.

The St. Petersburg Soviet, in addition to carrying out strikes and active propaganda, it established the eight-hour day, proclaimed freedom of the press and assembly, confiscated printing presses, promoted solidarity with the unemployed, and obtained from the autocracy the promise of the convocation of the Duma and the recognition of political freedoms and rights; it promoted the creation of workers militias and in the period of the greatest upsurge of the ongoing revolutionary movement it functioned as an organ of power.

The role of the Bolsheviks in this whole process is illustrated by the fact that, with the arrest of the first president of the Soviet, Khrustalev, in his place a member of the Bolshevik group was designated, although the Mensheviks held the predominant influence in the Soviet.

The Soviet of Moscow emerged in November of 1905 in the context of a typographers' strike that mobilized the solidarity of the majority of the working class of that city with demonstrations, clashes with the troops and barricades. The Soviet of Workers' Deputies took a more determined stance than the Soviet of St. Petersburg in relation to arms, propaganda and organization among the soldiers; it assumed the role of an organ of insurrection. Unlike the experience in Petersburg, the main influence was of the Bolsheviks, with the Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks playing a secondary role.

It was formed by 200 deputies who represented more than 100 thousand workers. Besides the central Soviet, there were Soviets on the barricades. The decision for the general strike adopted by the Social-Democratic Party was supported by the Soviet and the general assemblies in each factory.

Were there women in the Soviets?

The well-known Alexandra Kollontai said Yes! She stated that in her article entitled "Women Fighters in the Days of the Great October Revolution," published in 1927. She asked who they were and whether they were isolated cases. She referred to several, and asserted that they were not isolated cases, that "there were hosts of them; tens, hundreds of thousands of nameless heroines who, marching side by side with the workers and peasants behind the Red Flag and the slogan of the Soviets, passed over the ruins of tsarist theocracy into a new future."

The distinctive characteristics of the Soviets can be summarized by the following points:

1) They arose in the heat of the struggle of the oppressed masses and with the presence of communists within them.
2) They were flexible in structure, not rigid or given to magic formulas. Each circumstance established their need, always starting from the strategic objective; they were in charge of the press and publications (some with their own press); treasury (economy), rallies, arms and other matters.
3) They were unifying. They were proponents of unity – in struggle – of the working class.
4) They had a determination for power.
5) It was a non-paid job, subject to accountability and revocation of the mandate in the face of non-compliance by the delegates.
6) The election of deputies was proportional to the number of workers in a given factory or service sector.

One of the main lessons from these experiences is that without the Soviet type of organization, the party would not have been able to lead the masses to armed insurrection.

Another lesson is the Bolsheviks' correct analysis when they realized in due course that the Soviets were representative organizations of the masses; in the course of struggle they experienced the transformation of strike committees into organs of revolutionary struggle and the embryo of the revolutionary power.

As is known, the revolution of 1905 ended in defeat for the workers and the revolutionary organizations. With its development and maturation, the movement not only took aim at tsarism, but the workers also began to pose capitalism among their targets. As a consequence, the bourgeoisie, which had been an ally in the strug-

gle against tsarism, turned its back on the revolution, supported tsarism and with that support the government began its offensive against the movement.

Moreover, the movement could not coordinate the numerous Soviets, dispersed around the country, into a single center, nor was there coordination between the strikes in the cities and the uprisings that took place in the countryside. The Bolshevik Party had barely developed its construction, only in Siberia and precariously in Moscow were there soviets of soldiers. All these circumstances prevented the movement from ending in victory.

Summing up the experience of 1905 before young Swiss workers, Lenin stated in January of 1917: "Prior to January 22 (or January 9, old style), 1905, the revolutionary party of Russia consisted of a small group of people, and the reformists of those days (exactly like the reformists of today) derisively called us a 'sect'. Several hundred revolutionary organizers, several thousand members of local organizations, half a dozen revolutionary papers appearing not more frequently than once a month, published mainly abroad and smuggled into Russia with incredible difficulty and at the cost of many sacrifices – such were the revolutionary parties in Russia, and the revolutionary Social-Democracy in particular, prior to January 22, 1905....

"Within a few months, however, the picture changed completely. The hundreds of revolutionary Social-Democrats 'suddenly' grew into thousands; the thousands became the leaders of between two and three million proletarians. The proletarian struggle produced widespread ferment, often revolutionary movements among the peasant masses, fifty to a hundred million strong... In this manner a colossal country, with a population of 130,000,000, went into the revolution…"[6]

Continuing his speech, in evaluating the situation prevailing in Europe in the context of the ongoing imperialist war, before the revolution of February 1917, Lenin called for optimism for the prospects of the proletarian revolution:

[6] "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution," delivered on January 9, 1917, in the House of the People in Zurich, to an assembly of young Swiss workers on the 12th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday," considered the beginning of the 1905 Revolution in Russia. In *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 236-253.

"We must not be deceived by the present grave-like stillness in Europe. Europe is pregnant with revolution.... Just as in Russia in 1905, a popular uprising against the tsarist government began under the leadership of the proletariat with the aim of achieving a democratic republic, so, in Europe, the coming years, precisely because of this predatory war, will lead to popular uprisings under the leadership of the proletariat against the power of finance capital, against the big banks, against the capitalists; and these upheavals cannot end otherwise than with the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, with the victory of socialism."[7]

Notwithstanding the defeat suffered by the 1905 revolution, this experience constituted a dress rehearsal for the revolution of 1917. This explains the resurgence of the soviets 12 years later, in February 1917, when the workers and soldiers of Petrograd overthrew the tsarist power which was on its downfall.

The February 1917 revolution had a lot of spontaneity of the masses, who at that time lacked a revolutionary leadership, since the main Bolshevik leaders had been imprisoned or deported. The liberal bourgeoisie rose to power through the State Duma.

On the same day that the provisional government was named, the Petrograd Soviet reappeared and in the heat of the events of the so-called February revolution, the soviets were again developing all over the country. However, the influence of petty-bourgeois organizations on them, under the pretext of the bourgeois democratic character of this phase of the revolution, allowed power to be handed over to the bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless, the soviets continued to develop under the influence of the revolutionary impetus of the working masses; their actions ranged between deepening the revolution to vacillation caused by the ideological disorientation of the Socialist Revolutionaries and Menshevik. To the degree that the soviets pushed forward, their revolutionary sense as an organ of power of the working masses was asserted and the bourgeois provisional government had to make concessions. And vice versa; to the extent that the latter took the initiative, the soviets retreated.

The situation described gave rise to the famous dual power, an expression with which Lenin characterized the situation created after the February revolution with the leading role of the working

[7] Ibid.

masses, the advent of the soviets, the overthrow of the tsar and the control of power by the bourgeoisie through the provisional government.

In the heat of the development of these contradictions, the Bolsheviks were consolidating their organization and political influence on the masses, which, together with the return of many of the main Bolshevik leaders from exile, led to a gradual decline of influence of the vacillating petty-bourgeois positions in the soviets.

In this context Lenin returned in April and delivered his famous April Thesis, in which he summed up the revolutionary orientation of the Bolsheviks for the course of the revolution: after the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy, the bourgeoisie had seized power. The war remained an imperialist war and the proletariat could not support it without betraying socialism. Therefore, Lenin had to explain "patiently" to the masses that the ending of the war on truly democratic bases necessarily implied the overthrow of capitalism. He noted that the soviet government, formed parallel to that of the bourgeoisie, although it was in an embryonic and weak state, had an importance that was increasing every day. He pointed out that the solution of this contradiction could only be resolved correctly by giving all power to the soviets.

On that occasion, Lenin pointed out that the Bolshevik Party was still a minority in the Soviets at that time, since most of them were led by the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. These parties were under the influence of the bourgeoisie and feared breaking with the capitalists to seize power. For that reason, the slogan "All power to the Soviets" did not mean the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the passage of power into the hands of petty-bourgeois democracy, with the aim of separating it from the bourgeoisie. As long as the Bolsheviks were in the minority, one had to denounce the conciliatory policy of the petty-bourgeois parties and explain their errors to the masses. This required a patient and tenacious work among the workers, peasants and soldiers, in order to win their confidence and the majority in the soviets.

Summing up the situation, he stated that: "The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that the country is passing from the first stage of the revolution – which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organization of the proletariat, placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie – to its second stage, which must

place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants."[8]

This tactic outlined by Lenin made it possible for the Bolsheviks to gain ground in a spiral that lined up the majority of the Soviets, including that of the city of Petrograd, behind this policy. Just as in 1905, the Petrograd Soviet was the nerve center of the current revolution. It is no coincidence that the Revolutionary Military Committee, which concentrated the operational leadership of the revolution, was precisely attached to the Petrograd Soviet. The events between April and October 25, 1917, had at their center the leading role of the soviets and their passing over from organizations of struggle of the masses to their consolidation as organs of power. This process was possible due to the correct summing up of the whole previous experience, especially the victories and setbacks from the rise of the revolution of 1905-1907 and its decline and the predominance of the counter-revolution between 1907 and 1912.

Evaluating the extent of the Soviet experience, Lenin stated in 1919: "The government of the country is so organized that only the workers and the working peasants, to the exclusion of the exploiters; constitute those mass organizations known as Soviets, and these Soviets wield all state power. That is why, in spite of the slander that the representatives of the bourgeoisie in all countries spread about Russia, the word 'Soviet' has now become not only intelligible but popular all over the world, has become the favorite word of the workers, and of all working people."

Conscious of the fact that they were passing through an unexplored path and that the process of revolutionary transformation of the society had complex distinctive feature, in the same speech Lenin added that: "We know very well that there are still many defects in the organization of Soviet power in this country. Soviet power is not a miracle-working talisman. It does not, overnight, heal all the evils of the past – illiteracy, lack of culture, the consequences of a

[8] The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution, originally published in April 7, 1917, in *Pravda*. Here the course of the party towards the transformation from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution is outlined. In *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 19-26,

barbarous war, the aftermath of predatory capitalism. But it does pave the way to socialism."[9]

Today just as yesterday, humanity has no alternative to socialism for the building of a society in which justice reigns and capitalist exploitation is abolished. That is what Red October means for the history of humanity!

Today, one hundred years later, under the new conditions of the rule of capitalism and oppression of imperialism, the challenge before the communists and revolutionaries is to learn from the boldness and creativity of the great legacy of the Great Socialist Revolution of October 1917.

[9] What Is Soviet Power? Speech given in March, 1919; in *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 248-249.

Ecuador

Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ecuador
Pablo Miranda

The October Revolution and the Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat

The Need for the Communist Party

In the course of its rise, capitalism led to the growth and development of the industrial working class, the proletariat, to the birth of the class that will bring about its overthrow and supersession, of the class of the proletarians who will become its gravediggers.

Marx and Engels were emphatic in pointing out the objective conditions that would bring about the social revolution: the development of the productive forces; the supersession of the stages of society by the negation of the old modes of production by new historical periods; the accumulation and concentration of wealth; the exploitation and oppression of the vast majority of workers by a handful of property owners, the class of capitalists; the growing impoverishment of the working masses; the development of the class struggle as the motive force of social and material progress; the inability of the class of property owners to hold back the course of history. On the basis of the historical development of humanity, on the continuous sharpening of the class struggle, they also established that the working class must transform itself from being a class in itself to being a class for itself.

They clearly saw the need for the working class to develop its own ideology, the role of protagonist of its own liberation and thereby, the liberation of all humanity. These circumstances cannot be fulfilled without the guidance of revolutionary theory, without the activity of the advanced workers organized into the revolutionary party of the proletariat.

In order for the working masses, the oppressed peoples and nations to embark on the road to liberation and to be victorious in this war for emancipation, the existence of the working-class political party, the communist party, is necessary; it is indispensable.

These teachings were systematized with the publication of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* in 1848.

Together with the development of the workers' movement in the capitalist countries of Europe and the United States, the theory of scientific socialism was taken up in the consciousness and organization of the proletarians; the principles of communism became the revolutionary guide of the emancipatory movement of the working class.

With the formation of the First International, scientific socialism was thus becoming international, it was adopted by the advanced workers and intelligentsia of various countries and regions.

Socialism and the Workers' Movement in Russia

The ideas of communism spread among various countries, mainly those in which capitalism had developed and the workers totaled millions of wage slaves. They reached old Russia, the empire of the tsars, the largest country on earth, where the exploitation of the workers was exacerbated by the development of capitalism, where the oppression and exploitation of millions of peasants were visible and appalling, where an aggressive war of conquest was being carried out against the peoples and nations from the center of Europe to the Pacific Ocean.

The struggle of the workers, youth and peasants of tsarist Russia for freedom had been going on for centuries. Great rebellions in the countryside, numerous strikes of the working class for their rights, an intense struggle of the youth, of the democratic sectors against the autocracy took place intermittently.

In the last years of the 19th century, there was an intense struggle of the workers against the exploitation and oppression of the capitalists; these struggles were part of the yearnings for freedom and democracy, for social justice; they were directed against the tsarist autocracy, they incorporated important sectors of the youth and the revolutionary intelligentsia.

Simultaneously an important theoretical political debate was taking place among the workers, among the fighters for social emancipation, among the revolutionary intellectuals. On the one hand were the populists [Narodniks] who proclaimed the leading role of the peasantry in the struggle for freedom, the building of socialism from the peasant communes, who later became followers of individual terrorism and carried out terrorist attacks; on the other hand were the followers of Marxism, who proclaimed the struggle for socialism, the necessity of the party of the working class as an

indispensable condition to wage the struggle for emancipation and lead it to victory.

That debate culminated in the unmasking and defeat of the populists, it laid the foundations for the building of the party of the working class, the Bolshevik Party and the development of the revolutionary struggle.

The history of the Bolshevik Communist Party is the history of the October Revolution. This cannot be understood without the leading role of that Party.

The Party of the Working Class

The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, RSDLP, was born in the heat of the struggle of the working class against the oppression and exploitation of the capitalists; it was the result of the fusion of scientific socialism with the workers' movement; it was the result of a theoretical and political debate between Marxist principles and populist ideas, between revolutionary Marxism and the "legal Marxists," between revolutionaries and economists, which had an impact on the workers' organization and struggle.

The revolutionary Marxists, workers and intellectuals, among whom Lenin stood out, achieved a first great victory: they unmasked and defeated populism, they started a vigorous workers' movement; they laid the bases for the party of the proletarians.

The First Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party was held in March 1898 in Minsk. The ideological and political bases of the party were formed and its establishment and development were planned.

"A Party of a New Type"

It was necessary to define the nature, politics, organization and practice of the Party in the very course of the struggle of the working class and peoples against capitalist exploitation and the autocracy.

The class character of the party showed it to be the true representative of the immediate and long-term interests of the working class, the fighter consistent with those objectives, as the political organization that proposed and fought against the class of employers and in opposition to the State that represented their interests, that united the struggle against exploitation and the struggle for power in

the same torrent with the overthrow of the propertied classes and the establishment of the power of the workers and people.

The development of the struggles of the working class and youth was largely the work of the members and organizations of the RSDLP. In the cities and regions in which the factories, mines and railroads were established, a strike movement was developed in large waves, incorporating tens and hundreds of thousands of workers. This allowed for the growth and development of the trade union organization, the development of the consciousness of the masses, the visualization by the advanced workers of the seizure of power. This was the scene of the birth and strengthening of the party.

The formation and establishment of the Party had as an indispensable condition the upholding of Marxism, to its revolutionary postulates. Lenin always spoke of the indispensable role of theory. "Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement... the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory" (Lenin).

Within the workers' and trade-union movement, within the ranks of the party, there also existed reformist and conciliatory ideas, the theoreticians of economism and spontaneity, the thesis that the workers' movement should deal essentially with concrete demands, with higher wages, with stability, with problems and issues that directly concerned the workers.

At the Second Congress of the Party held in 1903 the revolutionary, truly Marxist positions, confronted the opportunist ideas and practices. A fierce ideological and political struggle was waged in which the Leninist positions prevailed. From then on, within the party, within the workers' movement and within the Soviets, there

РОССІЙСКАЯ СОЦІАЛЬ-ДЕМОКРАТИЧЕСКАЯ РАБОЧАЯ ПАРТІЯ

ИСКРА

№ 1. ДЕКАБРЬ 1900 ГОДА. № 1.

ОТСЮДА САМА СОБОЮ ВЫТЕКАЕТ ТА ЗАДАЧА, КОТОРУЮ ПРИЗВАНА ОСУЩЕСТВИТЬ РУССКАЯ СОЦИАЛ-ДЕМОКРАТИЯ: ВНЕДРИТЬ СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКИЕ ИДЕИ И ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЕ САМОСОЗНАНИЕ В МАССУ ПРОЛЕТАРИАТА И ОРГАНИЗОВАТЬ РЕВОЛЮЦИОННУЮ ПАРТИЮ, НЕРАЗРЫВНО СВЯЗАННУЮ С СТИХИЙНЫМ РАБОЧИМ ДВИЖЕНИЕМ.

ЛЕНИН

were two different political lines: the Marxists, who, having obtained the majority, were called Bolsheviks, and the opportunists, who remained in the minority, and were thus called Mensheviks.

The proletarian revolutionaries, while promoting the strike struggle and the struggle for liberties, had to fight hard against opportunist theses preached within the party; they had to fight against dispersion and for the unity of the party of the working class.

It was a far-reaching ideological and political confrontation that concerned the true revolutionaries, the consistent Marxists with Lenin at their head. This battle involved the great majority of members, despite their dispersion in large numbers of groups that did not have a single leadership and fought in an uncoordinated manner.

In order to face this complex situation, Lenin wrote a very important work of an ideological, political and organizational character, "What Is To Be Done? This work had a decisive importance in the development of the struggle of the working class and in the ideological and political definitions, in the unification of the Party.

Within the workers' movement and the ranks of the party, he unmasked and isolated the opportunist, economist positions; he showed that they were essentially expressions of bowing to spontaneity that opposed the development of socialist consciousness. He fully restored the importance of revolutionary theory, of the conscious element, of the Party as leading force, as the political organizer and educator of the working class. He categorically stated that the working class by itself is only capable of acquiring trade-union consciousness and activity, that, in order to master revolutionary ideology and politics, the role of the advanced workers organized in the political party of the working class is necessary. For the working masses, for the people, revolutionary consciousness must be "introduced" from without, from the revolutionary theory, whose most important expression is the party of the proletariat. For Lenin the Marxist party is the fusion of the workers' movement with socialism.

For Lenin and the Bolsheviks it was always clear that the Party of the working class had to correspond fully with the interests of the proletariat and the people, with their immediate aspirations and demands, and with the strategic objectives of the revolution and socialism, of communism. This understanding and the need to carry through to the end the building of the independent party of the working class led to changing the name of the Russian Social-

Democratic Workers' Party to the Communist Party (Bolshevik) in March of 1918.

Propaganda and the Revolutionary Struggle

Faced with organizational disunity, the existence of numerous groups of socialists in various cities and regions, Lenin proposed a masterful plan that was tested in theory and practice: the publication of a newspaper that unified the members and organizations of the party with a single political line, into a single organization for all of Russia. From this Leninist proposal was born *Iskra*, the *Spark* that fulfilled its role as agitator, propagandist, fighter for Marxism, as organizer. Throughout the vast territory of Russia there arose and developed a great interwoven network of correspondents and distributors of *Iskra*. It strengthened in them and in the organizations of the party the revolutionary consciousness and politics; a single political organization was formed, with only one orientation, with a network of organizations that worked and struggled in the factories and the unions, in the countryside and in the armed forces of the tsar.

The party of the working class integrates the role of the party newspaper in its daily work, in the struggle of the working class, in the ideological confrontation against opportunism, the theoretical debate for the development of revolutionary politics. The proletarian revolutionaries in Russia conceived of the newspaper of the party as an essential tool for revolutionary agitation and propaganda, for the political education of the workers, for the building of the party, for the political theory of the membership, for the struggle against opportunism in all its manifestations. The whole development of the October Revolution is marked by the work of the newspaper of the Party. Hundreds of newspapers circulated in the most varied circumstances, in the most absolute illegality and clandestinity, in the smallest openings of legality, and openly at the time of the rise of the revolutionary struggle. One of the greatest lessons of the October Revolution and of the Bolshevik Party is the importance given to revolutionary propaganda, and especially to the party newspaper.

The Party Program

The formulation of the Party program was an extraordinary milestone of the Second Congress in 1903. The programmatic definitions had great significance in the revolutionary process. That

Program was in force until after the victory of the October Revolution. The Program designed the strategic and immediate objectives of the revolution. It proposed the strategic objectives, or the maximum program, "the fundamental role of the party of the working class, the socialist revolution, the overthrow of the power of the capitalists and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat; and what was called the minimum program: the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy, the establishment of the democratic republic, the 8-hour day for the workers, the destruction of all feudal vestiges in the countryside, the return to the peasants of the lands which had been taken from them by the landlords. Later, the Bolsheviks replaced this last demand by another; the confiscation of all the lands of the landowners."

This great task, the formulation of the Party Program, taken up and resolved by the Third Congress of the RSDLP, defined the ideological and political objectives, the psychological and material achievements that were propagated and agitated by the Bolsheviks in the factories, among the peasantry, the youth and the democratic sectors, which allowed the Party to win over to revolutionary politics a good part of the working class, the peasantry, the trade unionists and the masses incorporated into the Soviets.

The Leninist Organization

Leninism waged a bitter battle for the definition of the nature of the party. A primary question concerned membership in the ranks of the Party.

Lenin proposed that, to be a member of the party, one had to fulfill as essential requirements: agreement with the program and the struggle for its application, paying dues and membership in one of its organizations. In opposition, the Mensheviks advocated that those who adhered to the program and policy of the party and pay dues be considered members of the party. The Bolsheviks won with their proposals and the party acquired the characteristics of an organized party in its statutes.

The Party was defined as the highest form of organization of the working class, as a vanguard detachment, as a system of organizations, as a disciplined organization, as a centralized party, with a single political line and a single orientation, as the manifestation of its members to be a part of it, consciously and voluntarily, as an expression of democracy within the framework of the organization. These principles and their validity are part of democratic centralism.

These characteristics endowed the Bolshevik Party with the ideological strength, political clarity and organizational force that enabled it to fulfill its role in the process of organizing the revolution and winning victory; they made the Bolshevik Party a great party, a "party of a new type", different from the Social-Democratic parties of the countries of Western Europe, a party capable of discerning and elaborating concrete policies to confront the various situations, to organize the contingents of the working class, peasantry and soldiers and to lead them to victorious combats, to unite those discontented with the tsarist regime into a single revolutionary torrent, to discern, unmask and defeat the various ideological and political manifestations of opportunism within the workers' movement and inside the party.

Since then democratic centralism became the touchstone in order to distinguish between a proletarian party and every kind of petty-bourgeois organization or movement.

The Link between the Party and the Masses

The nature of the party, its politics and organization were tested in the course of the struggle of the workers and peasants for their demands, in the fights for freedom and democracy, for the defeat of the tsar; they were correct to the extent that the party could envisage and build indissoluble ties with the working class and other working classes. The link between the party and the masses ceased to be a theoretical question and became a reality. There were tens and hun-

dreds of thousands of workers and peasants who took Party policy as their own, who battled under its leadership and won victory.

The Russian proletarian revolutionaries never separated themselves from the working class, from the contingents of rebellious youth, from the problems and fights of the peasantry, from the struggle for freedom and democracy, against the tsar's autocracy; they were always front-line fighters, the most self-sacrificing organizers of strikes and demonstrations of the workers, tey knew how to win important sectors of the working class and youth important to the ideas of the revolution and socialism.

The Leninist ideas of building a party that counts on selected nuclei of cadres who fully assume the role of professional revolutionaries, who dedicate their intellectual and physical capabilities to the day-to-day work of organizing the detachments of the revolution, of agitating and educating in the unions, of leading strikes and street mobilization, of participating actively and clearly and convincingly in the assemblies of the masses of trade unionists and in the soviets, of being champions and leaders of the class struggles, of being organizers of revolutionary violence of the masses became concrete in the structure and functioning and especially in the struggle of the Bolshevik Party.

It must be emphasized that the Leninist idea of professional revolutionary cadres is intrinsically linked to the work of the party among the masses. The party was never conceived as a sect. On the contrary, the cadres and organs of the party were always closely linked to the masses. For that reason they could understand the interests of the masses, their yearnings, their state of mind, to learn from their teachings, and, above all, they knew how to place themselves at the head of the immediate and long-range interests of the masses, of the struggle to achieve these interests; they had the ability to educate them politically, to instill revolutionary consciousness in them, and to lead them from battle to battle to win victory.

The Revolution of 1905

The revolutionary policy of the Party, guided by Marxism and applied concretely to the development of events, as well as the tenacious work of Party leaders and members were decisive for the rise of the workers' and democratic movement that spread among the cities and the countryside of old Russia. By 1905 the strike movement included millions of workers; it threatened the establishment.

On January 9, 1905, a large workers' demonstration addressed itself to the tsar begging him for justice and new conditions of life. It was put down with arms, causing the death of more than a thousand demonstrators. This procession was organized by other political forces; the Bolsheviks warned that their demands would not be achieved by prayers, but by struggle, by armed insurrection. However, knowing that reality, they joined the mobilization so as not to isolate themselves from the masses and to contribute to their political understanding. Dozens of Bolsheviks paid for this massacre with their lives.

In spite of the magnitude of the repression, "Bloody Sunday" did not lead to the disarming of the working class; rather, it led to the indignation and protest of hundreds of thousands of workers in different regions and cities.

It produced an upsurge of the workers' movement, the emergence of workers 'and peasants' soviets as an expression of the political organization of the masses. By the autumn of 1905 the strike movement grew to a great degree; political strikes of the masses were demanding the overthrow of the tsar.

Once again the political debate between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks was raised. The former put forward the need to organize the armed insurrection and the leading role of the working class in the democratic revolution to ensure its continuation to socialism. The Mensheviks proclaimed that the bourgeoisie was the only class capable of leading the democratic revolution and implementing a state similar to those of Western Europe, the workers had to support the bourgeoisie, since the conditions for armed insurrection, for revolution, did not exist.

The Bolsheviks turned to organize the armed insurrection, to mobilize the working class and the peasantry. In December 1905 there was an insurrection in Petersburg and Moscow. It was defeated by the military superiority of the tsar and by the weaknesses of the workers' movement and of the party.

The revolution of 1905 was defeated and the Bolsheviks learned important lessons. They did not conclude that the insurrection was not feasible but that it was not well prepared; they did not reject the struggle and set out to continue it under new conditions. In spite of the defeat, in 1906-1907 the workers' movement took on important forms; strikes took place in numerous cities and regions.

Although the revolution of 1905 was defeated, the tsar was forced to change the way of governing, to call for a parliament, the Duma, which in spite of restrictions opened cracks in absolutism.

The Use of All Forms of Struggle

The defeat of the Revolution led to a period of ebb in the workers' movement, the hardening of reaction and repression; a period that forced the workers and the revolutionaries to adapt the tactics of combat to new conditions.

The working class, the peasantry, the youth, and the democratic forces suffered blows that had an impact on the organization and consciousness of the trade unionists and members of the Soviets. For the opportunists and the Mensheviks, the struggle of the working class and people had suffered a very grave defeat that demanded their retreat, their peaceful and strictly trade union demands. For the Bolsheviks this defeat caused serious damage to the organization and consciousness of the workers' movement, but it was a temporary setback that would later be transformed into a new rise in the workers' struggle, in a new revolution.

The RSDLP suffered the impact of the repressive policies, the ebb in the social and political struggle that reaction caused; tens of thousands of members deserted the ranks of the party. In a large part of the trade unions and the Soviets, the Bolsheviks were replaced by the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries.

In fact, the social and political scene had changed significantly.

These circumstances forced the party to modify its tactics. Under the new conditions, the policy of the Party took into account the situation of the working class, its immediate demands, the use of legal resources for the elaboration of demands and the organization of the struggle to make them a reality, the active participation in the various organizations allowed by institutional legality. "It built up illegal organizations. It issued illegal leaflets. It carried on secret revolutionary work among the masses. At the same time it steadily gained the leadership of the various legally existing organizations of the working class." (History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (*Bolsheviks*), p. 156.)

The tactics of the Party was based on the need to elaborate a policy directed to the working class, but also, from its interests, to the whole of society. Faced with the call for elections to the parliament (Duma), despite the restrictions imposed by the autocracy, the

party called on the working class and people to participate in these elections and were able to win a group of Bolshevik parliamentary delegates who used those positions as a tribune in order to continue the political struggle for democracy and against authoritarianism, for freedom and socialism. This policy was not immutable, it was flexible, tactical, took conditions into account and on several occasions they participated in the Duma and in others they abstained and denounced it.

The party prioritized clandestine and illegal work, without refusing to use the spaces allowed by the institutions. In these harsh conditions the Bolshevik Party suffered repression, persecution, capture and confinement of a large number of leaders and members; dozens of Bolsheviks were assassinated. But because of a correct policy, of organization, discipline and the consciousness of its members, the Party was regaining strength, growing and gaining the leadership of the masses. Within the working class and in its own ranks, it was able to beat back the opportunist ideas of the Mensheviks, to clarify the revolutionary course and to lead important strikes and mobilizations that led to a new rise of the revolutionary struggle of the masses starting in 1912.

This was a harsh and difficult period that proved the nature of the Party, the correctness of its policy, the teachings of Lenin.

The Party demonstrated in deeds that the fusion of Marxism with the workers' movement was carried out in theory and practice.

There cannot be a workers' party without the guidance of Marx-

ism, without the light of theory. There can be no revolutionary party without a correct policy that, starting from the interests of the working class, takes into account the economic, social and political scene, a policy that expresses the immediate interests and desires of the workers, but which sums up the ideas and yearnings of the whole people. It is not enough to disseminate general ideas about socialism and emancipation, it is necessary to concretize the theory into a platform of struggle, into a call to mobilize the masses. It is not possible to have a revolutionary Party that does not take up, in deeds, the use of various forms of struggle, to combine legal and illegal work, public and clandestine activity. One cannot have a Party of the working class that abandons the political, ideological, and organizational links with the masses. Only a Party intimately united with the masses can contribute to their organization, to their political education and will be able to lead them to successive battles until victory. There cannot be a proletarian Party if it does not prove, in the struggle, the organization of cells, democracy and discipline, the decision and the courage to fight to the end.

The Bolshevik Party developed concrete policies, related to the interests of the workers in the particular conditions, in the process of rise and increase of the class struggle, and in circumstances of retreat. Under all circumstances it had the ability to define correct, timely and revolutionary tactics. It never disconnected these proposals and policies from the strategic objectives of the revolution and socialism. Experience showed that it was a party that had the ability to elaborate tactics that took into account concrete reality and maintained the aim of the strategic objectives of the revolution and socialism.

The slogan of building a party of the new type was recalled: "a new and genuinely Marxist party, which would be irreconcilable towards the opportunists and revolutionary towards the bourgeoisie, which would be firmly knit and monolithic, which would be a party of social revolution, a party of the dictatorship of the proletariat." (History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (*Bolsheviks*), p. 140.)

The Revolutionary Situation

The development of the class struggle in tsarist Russia starting from 1912 was expressed in a sustained rise, in which millions of workers who became involved in the strike struggle, millions of

people who took to the streets to demand freedom and democracy. There were uprisings among the soldiers and the Navy. An important upsurge took place in the revolutionary struggle.

"Those above cannot rule as before, those below are not willing to continue as before." The masses of workers and peasants were standing up, fighting for their own interests, for freedom and democracy, against authoritarianism.

A revolutionary situation was taking place. The Bolsheviks decisively took up the responsibility of leading the working class, the Soviets, to the struggle for power.

The First World War

The development of capitalism on the world level had given rise to the emergence of a new phase, imperialism, a higher stage than mercantile capitalism but also the highest stage.

The development of imperialism has concrete manifestations: unequal development, the heightened competition among the monopolies and among the imperialist countries, the contention over raw materials, markets, zones of influence, wars of aggression against backward countries and peoples. When there are no longer countries and regions to be discovered, when there are no new territories to be conquered, the monopolies and imperialist countries are confronted with carrying out a new redivision; they must contend for positions among themselves.

The first decades of the 20th century, which are the scene of an important development of the productive forces, of new techniques and technologies to boost production and productivity, led to the emergence of monopolies, to a gigantic concentration of wealth created by the workers, to the development of the arms industry, to new wars of conquest. This led to the outbreak of the inter-imperialist war, World War I.

The workers' movement and the workers' parties of Western Europe and the United States were confronted with an intense debate between the internationalists, who denounced the imperialist, reactionary character of the war, and the opportunists who proclaimed the "defense of the Fatherland" and subordinated the workers' movement to the designs and policies of the bourgeoisie.

Within the workers' movement of Russia and in the ranks of the Bolshevik Party, the most consistent internationalist positions were

taken up and defended by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. The Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries took up nationalist positions.

Russia participated in the First World War allied to France and England; they confronted the alliance of Germany and Austria. Russia's participation in the imperialist war imposed new sacrifices on the workers and peasants, on the peoples; it allowed the tsar to stifle the rise of the struggle of the working class and people, to distract attention from the internal problems and to launch the slogan of fighting for the strengthening and aggrandizement of Russia.

The Bolsheviks consistently condemned the war and worked among the people and the troops to denounce its character.

The Revolution of February 1917

The ideas of the Bolshevik Party that the defeat of the 1905 Revolution did not mean the end of the struggle for the emancipation of the workers' and peasants' movement, that there would again be a upsurge in the revolutionary struggle of the working class and the people, were confirmed by the development of events.

The desire for freedom and democracy of the working masses, the strike struggle of millions of workers, the demonstrations of the youth, the protests and uprisings of the peasantry were growing, as were the organization and action of the Soviets.

This incessant battle incorporated millions of human beings, forces and parties of the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie to deal with tsarism. Soon it became a torrent that culminated with the overthrow of the tsar and the establishment of a bourgeois government.

The victory of the February Revolution overthrew the rule of the tsar but established a government of the bourgeoisie. In spite of this, these events constituted an extraordinary milestone in the process of social liberation.

Once again, there was a heated debate within the workers' movement and the Party. The Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries and all kinds of opportunists maintained that a great victory had been won, that it was necessary to follow the path of the European capitalist countries, that the working class should subordinate its aspirations to bourgeois democracy. The Bolsheviks pointed out that this victory of the revolution was incomplete, that the capitalists would continue to chain the workers of the city and the countryside to exploitation and oppression, that they would continue to commit

the country to the imperialist war. The Bolsheviks proclaimed the need for the working class to lead the revolution and carry it out in an interrupted way from its democratic tasks to socialism.

Dual Power

Lenin and the Party rightly pointed out that the February Revolution had introduced a new situation, unprecedented in the history of Russia and in the process of the revolutions on an international scale.

The defeat of the autocracy meant the rise to power of the capitalist class but also the strengthening of the Soviets and their role in society.

The mobilization of the working class, the peasant uprisings, the revolts of the soldiers on the battlefronts, the fraternization of the troops with the insurgents, strengthened the functioning of the Soviets, encouraged their active participation in all events, and their leading role in the greatest actions, especially in Petersburg and Moscow. These conditions gave the Soviets the characteristics of an alternative power to that which the bourgeoisie had established.

In fact, a new power was established, a power that exerted its leadership among the masses of workers, among the peasants and a part of the soldiers.

The Bolsheviks, although they did not have hegemony in the leadership of the Soviets, worked to increase that power and to gain positions in their leadership.

Lenin clearly stated that this situation in Russia was one of a "dual power". There were two centers of power: the bourgeois government and the Soviets. He warned that this situation could not last long, that it must be overcome through the elimination of bourgeois rule and launched the slogan "all power to the Soviets." That is the essential content of the April Theses.

The Marxist analysis of the situation, the revolutionary policies and the practice of the Bolshevik Party, enabled it to win the Soviets, the masses of workers, the hard-working peasantry, and the rebellious soldiers.

The Victory of the Armed Insurrection in October 1917

The February Revolution had defeated the tsarist autocracy and imposed the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, celebrated as a "demo-

cratic and revolutionary" government by the Mensheviks and as an expression of the rule of the capitalists by the Bolshevik.

The February events did not resolve the political crisis; the working class and peasantry, youth and soldiers learned how to fight, they realized that they had the ability to determine the course of the revolutionary process. Politics were no longer just from the milieu and dealings of the ruling classes and became an expression of the interests of the people. Everywhere, in the neighborhoods and factories, in the trade unions and soviets, the problems of the country, of democracy, freedom and war, were being debated with enthusiasm. The masses quickly became protagonists of history; they were making their own present and future.

The Bolshevik Party met the needs of the events, it took full advantage of the opportunities opened up with the defeat of the autocracy, it used all the circumstances with initiative and audacity. Stalin assumed responsibility for leading "Pravda" and projected it as the voice of the rebels and revolutionaries, as the guide of the struggle for freedom and socialism. In a few weeks, Pravda became the press of the workers' movement, a voice for the revolutionary positions in the Soviets. Throughout Russia, the Bolsheviks founded and disseminated newspapers of the Party and the mass organizations, as well as of the Soviets.

The Bolsheviks, upholding the April Theses with the slogan "All power to the Soviets," had the skill to gain influence in the leadership of the Soviets, displacing the Mensheviks who had taken possession of those positions, taking advantage of the fact that the great majority of Bolshevik cadres were imprisoned or deported.

The debates that were taking place in the Soviets on the way to win freedom were of great value, an extraordinary lesson. However, the discussion were reflected in the Bolshevik Party, in the Central Committee, between the revolutionary theses of organizing the armed insurrection, defended by Lenin and Stalin, and the opportunist and conciliatory positions that defended the bourgeois government as an expression of democracy and that claimed that to oppose this government would lead to reactionary positions of the restoration of the autocracy.

The nature of the Bolshevik Party, its revolutionary character, its rich experience achieved in the heat of battle allowed the Leninist theses of organizing the armed insurrection to win out in the internal debate and to become the order.

On October 25 of the old calendar (November 7 of the new calendar), the planning of the Bolsheviks became a reality. The bourgeois government was overthrown, the workers, the youth and the insurgent soldiers defeated the bourgeois government troops and proclaimed the Revolution.

This was the victorious seizure of power, the takeover by the working class and its party of the destiny of Russia. The most profound and radical revolutionary process in the History of Humanity was initiated. For the first time a revolution was made by the majority for the benefit of the majority themselves, a revolution that shook the foundations of society, which brought down all the institutions and established a government of workers and peasants, the people's power, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Bolshevik Party was the inspirer and organizer of this Revolution.

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Having seized power, the great task of the working class and the Bolsheviks was to maintain power.

The Bolsheviks led by Lenin and Stalin set the course: to implement the great social achievements that gave impetus to the fight of the masses of workers and peasants, of vast sectors of society and of soldiers:

They decreed the establishment of the 8-hour day, they confiscated the banks and large enterprises, they exercised revolutionary justice; they confiscated the lands of the landowners and handed them over to the peasants; they democratized the life of society and the State; they formed the Soviet Republic; they ended the imperialist war.

A new way of life arose; the common men and women, the workers of the city and the countryside became the protagonists of social and political life. The laboring classes, with the working class at the head, assumed the role of ruling classes; they turned society and to. The relations between the working class and the peoples and nationalities of Old Russia changed in nature, the "great prison-house of nations" became the voluntary union of the peoples and nationalities, led by the working class, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The Soviets became the organs of power, the unions were in full force; they became the instruments for the administration of the factories, for the workers' control over production.

The Communist Party (Bolshevik) was the inspirer and political guide, its members and leaders were the makers of the great achievements of the revolution.

Within the Party, new ideological and political battles were waged. The idea that the old officers of the armed forces had to be recruited to lead the Red Army was unmasked and defeated, that one had to rely on the engineers and technicians of the past to restart production. The thesis that the support of the Revolution demanded that the revolution take place in other European countries immediately, the theory of permanent revolution put forward by the Trotskyists, was defeated. The concept that, under the conditions of that time, it was possible to build socialism in a single country, in Russia, was affirmed in theory and practice.

These great achievements were possible due to the establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, which implied the leading role of the working class in close alliance with the peasantry, the formation of the Red Army, the establishment of new institutions, different from all the existing ones, the establishment of a democracy in which workers and peasants could speak and decide; and of course the repression of the reactionary classes that had been thrown out of power but which sabotaged and conspired against the revolution.

In analyzing the Paris Commune, Marx elucidated the theory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat as the form of government of the proletarian revolution. The Bolsheviks and the working class of Russia made it a reality, in the most advanced form of democracy, in the most effective and efficient expression for the fulfillment of the great objectives of the emancipation of the workers.

The Revolutionary Civil War

The landlords and capitalists who were overthrown by the October Revolution were not resigned to the loss of their class privileges. Time and again, they rose up in arms against the young Soviet power.

The former heads of the tsarist army, supported by the landlords and rich peasants, the kulaks, assisted economically and militarily with arms and advisors by the imperialist countries, revolted in var-

ious regions of the vast Soviet Union. Later, once World War I was over, the imperialist Entente was formed, grouping together 14 countries led by England and France, which began a war of aggression, in close coordination with the internal reactionary forces.

The Bolshevik Party, the Soviets, the working class, the poor peasants and the rebellious youth assumed responsibility for the defense of the revolution. Without putting aside the democratic and liberating achievements, the transformations in the sphere of the structure and superstructure raised the need to defend socialism; they carried forward "war communism."

They started with the troops who participated in the military actions of October, the considerable sectors of the soldiers who fraternized with the insurgents, the troops who fought in the imperialist war and who rebelled, recognizing that the war was against the interests of the people. They incorporated large sectors of the working class that fought on the barricades, vast sectors of the peasantry that revolted against the landowners to form the Red Army.

The Red Army, large contingents of militia fighters and guerrillas fought harsh battles against the reactionary and imperialist forces and defeated them in successive fights lasting a little more than three years.

The communists were the soul of the revolutionary military forces, the fierce combatants, the selfless leaders, who led the working class, the Soviets and the Red Army to victory. The organization of the Party, the political commissars, troops and people consolidated the victory of the October Revolution.

Only a Party armed with Marxist-Leninist ideas, with revolutionary consciousness and a great devotion to the interests of the workers and people could have the ability to face such a devastating war and lead it to victory. Only a Party with proven leaders such as Lenin and Stalin could lead the working class and people to military victory over the enemies of the revolution.

Proletarian Internationalism

The international character of the domination of capital and imperialism makes the working class an international class. The Party of the working class is a consistently internationalist formation. These principles emanate from the beginning of the struggle of the working class and the formation of the communist parties; they are embodied in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

The Bolsheviks, with Lenin at their head, have always been an internationalist party. They never renounced that responsibility. They participated actively in the international activities of the working class and its parties. They denounced the chauvinism and betrayal of the leaders of the Second International when they colluded with the bourgeoisies of their respective countries and supported the participation of the workers into the imperialist war, supposedly in defense of the fatherland.

The victory of the October Revolution aroused great enthusiasm among the workers of the world; it put them on the side of its defense. (One of the reasons for the withdrawal of several governments of the imperialist countries from taking part in the war of aggression against Soviet Russia was the fear that the soldiers would refuse to fight the communists and go over to their side.)

The October Revolution stimulated the formation of communist and workers' parties in a large number of countries on all continents.

The Bolshevik Party contributed, it gave all its support to the formation of the Communist International in Moscow in March 1919. The Soviet Union became the safe rearguard of the international revolution of the proletariat.

The Armed Insurrection and the Seizure of Power

The Bolsheviks always understood, from the earliest attempts to build the Party and throughout their intense social and political struggle, that the central aim of the workers' movement and its party was the struggle for power. Lenin was a champion of these positions and educated the membership, the working masses and the youth in the ideas of leading all struggles, all actions, towards the goal of overthrowing the power of the autocracy and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The question of the seizure of power was always linked to the use of all forms of struggle, but above all, to the idea that only through revolutionary war would it be possible to fulfill that objective.

The armed insurrection was not just a slogan; it was always part of the activity of the communists. In 1905 at the climax of the upsurge of the struggle, they openly proclaimed that the immediate objectives and, above all, emancipation would only be achieved by an armed insurrection. In 1917, in February and October, they in-

sisted on these positions and they consistently proposed to organize it. They did this in a just and correct manner, and thus they seized power, overthrew the capitalists and landlords, and established the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The revolutionary civil war that defeated the internal reactionaries and the imperialist aggression is a demonstration of the use of revolutionary violence for the seizure and maintenance of power, for the building of socialism.

The Great Patriotic War that heroically resisted the aggression of Nazi Germany and later led to the defeat of Nazi fascism and made an extraordinary contribution to peace and humanity is another demonstration of the correct organization and leadership of the revolutionary war of the masses.

In the process of the struggle for power the Party educated and organized the membership to face the military tasks of the revolution; it worked intensely inside the armed forces, it supported the rights of the troops, against the imperialist war, it promoted the formation of soldiers' soviets.

The Struggle of Ideas within the Party

The October Revolution is a long and difficult process for the affirmation of Marxist conceptions in the nature and practice of the Bolshevik Party.

To form the party Lenin and the revolutionaries had to wage a theoretical-political battle to unmask and isolate the positions of the populists of individual terror as a way to defeat the tsar, and of the legal Marxists, in order to implant the ideas of Marx and Engels in the mind and practice of the proletarian revolutionaries.

In order for the Bolshevik Party meet the requirements of the situation for the development of the struggle of the working class and peasantry, it was necessary to affirm and develop the theses of Marxism, to cast aside the theses of the supporters of economism who tried limit the struggle of the working class to immediate demands; to defeat the ideas of capitalist development for the further advent of the revolution and socialism.

To build a party with a single organization and a single political line throughout the country, united, disciplined and tested in battle, it was necessary to rid itself of the ideas of democratism and freedom of criticism; it was essential to develop the organizational conceptions of the party of the proletariat, democratic centralism, and

to implant them in the organizations of the social-democrats who were scattered throughout old Russia. The ideological and political positions expressed and defended by the opportunists were defeated in debate and social practice.

To lead the working class in its daily struggles and to push them forward towards the political struggle, it was necessary to define within the Party, the working class and the Soviets the role of open confrontation to win the rights and demands, of the struggle for power, of the armed insurrection, to achieve those objectives; it had to unmask and put aside the opportunist positions espoused by opportunists and petty-bourgeois revolutionaries.

For the struggle for the transformation of the imperialist war into a revolutionary war, it was necessary to unmask the positions of defensism, to defend internationalist conceptions, to defeat the chauvinist and opportunist positions of the Mensheviks and other like-minded forces embedded in the workers' and communist movement at the national and international level.

In order to build people's power, to uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat, to build the society of the workers, it was necessary to bury the ideas of Trotskyism of the permanent revolution, to affirm in deeds the thesis of the building of socialism in a single country, subject to encirclement by imperialism and international reaction, but counting on the solidarity and support of the workers' movement of all countries.

The history of the Bolshevik Party, its formation, its ability to organize and lead millions of people in the struggle for the overthrow of the autocracy and capitalism, could only be achieved with the firmest and most consistent ideological struggle within the party and society. The Bolsheviks with Lenin and Stalin were relentless against incorrect ideas, with the ideological and political deviations of opportunism. They understood the struggle of ideas as the inculcation of proletarian conceptions in the theory and practice of the Party; they never conciliated in order to "preserve unity," they never allowed the appearence and emergence of anti-Marxist positions.

Ecuador, March 2017

France

Workers' Communist Party of France

The Conditions of the Revolutionary Crisis in Russia and the Struggle against the Opportunist Currents

The Situation in Russia in 1914

In 1914 Russia was under the yoke of the Tsarist autocracy. It was a political power that relied chiefly on the great landowners, the feudals, the nobility, the Orthodox Church, and on a brutal police and military organization which violently repressed all opposition. After the defeat of the 1905 revolution, the Tsarist regime regained control and subjected the working masses to a terrible exploitation and oppression. The causes which had led to the 1905 revolution were still there. For the vast majority of the peasantry as for the working class Russia was synonymous with a miserable life of exploitation and deprivation; for the non-Russian peoples of the border regions, their situation was even more terrible, and for them tsarism was a real prison.

At that time Russia was still a semi-colony of Western countries, particularly **British imperialism and French imperialism**. Tsarism depended on these powers through massive borrowing of capital. Treaties bound the Tsar to France, and obliged him to declare war on Germany to open a front in the East. In this war, the Tsar, but also the Russian bourgeoisie, which held economic power, pursued their own imperialist aims: to plunder Austria (allied with Germany) and to occupy the rich region of Galicia; to take Constantinople, the key to the Dardanelles Straits and access to the sea. Tsarism, like the bourgeoisie, also saw in the war the means of stopping the rise of the revolutionary movement.

"The *Russian imperialist bourgeoisie placed its hopes in the tsarist autocracy as a mailed fist that could ensure the seizure of new markets and new territories, on the one hand, and crush the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants, on the other.*" (History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), International Publishers edition, New York, 1939, p. 162).

From the spring of 1912, the workers' movement experienced a new development. The massacre of the Lena miners in Siberia, who were demonstrating peacefully for their demands, had repercussions throughout the country and marked the beginning of the development of a mass strike movement. In 1914 strikes in the factories grew in size and in their political character against the regime, and sometimes even had an insurrectional character with barricades and violent clashes with the police.

The War Exacerbates All the Contradictions

On July 14, 1914, the Tsarist government proclaimed a general mobilization and the Russian army took part in this First World War of imperialist redivision. But from the first days of the war, the Russian troops suffered great setbacks; in one battle, by August 30, 1914, the Russian army had already lost 20,000 killed and 90,000 imprisoned! But it was above all in 1915 that Russia experienced the debacle at the front and enormous difficulties in the rear. In the second half of 1916, class antagonisms were considerably sharpened.

The army was not prepared for this war. In the summer of 1914, it had reserves for only six months! Its military industry showed a serious technical backwardness. Very soon the soldiers would have no more ammunition, warm clothes, shoes, food, etc. They were commanded by incapable and corrupt officers. In the rear, production slowed down in the factories and in the countryside, because the men were sent to the front as cannon fodder! Fuel and raw materials were lacking to run the factories, whose antiquated equipment was in efficient. Transport was disorganized. The Tsarist state apparatus was in full decay, paralyzed by bureaucracy and the incapacity of its leaders. Speculation on stocks of wheat was at its height. The population of the towns could no longer feed themselves; the endless lines in front of the bakeries fueled their anger against the regime.

The Role and Action of the Bolshevik Party

During the ebb of the revolution of 1905 and the lead weight of Stolypin[10] reaction, the Bolsheviks exploited the slightest legal pos-

[10] Stolypin was a minister in the Tsarist government. He carried out a harsh repression against the workers' organizations and a policy of destruction of the communal ownership of land, aggravating the situation of the small peasants.

sibilities to maintain links with the masses: from the insurance funds to the unions and the Duma, they skillfully combined this work with illegal actions. They were the only ones not to lower their banners and to remain faithful to their program which the Mensheviks had repudiated, abandoning their revolutionary objectives and slogans to transform themselves into a reformist party. The Trotskyists, for their part, supported them under the slogan of defense of "the unity of the party."

But the Bolsheviks, with Lenin at their head, understood that they could not make a new advance in the revolution while keeping the Mensheviks within the party. This is why, at the Prague Conference convened in January 1912, the Mensheviks were expelled from the party. The Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (Bolshevik) then constituted itself an independent party, a party of a new type.

February 1917: The Democratic Revolution against the Tsarist Regime

If the declaration of war and the mobilization of the great masses of peasants and some of the workers had interrupted the development of the revolutionary movement, very quickly the military defeats, the appalling conditions under which the soldiers were fighting at the front and the suffering of the population in the rear would create a situation favorable to the resumption and development of the revolutionary movement.

After three years of war, anger raged against the Tsarist government. The bourgeois itself was discontented because it feared that the Tsar would sign a separate peace with Germany. Their aim was a palace revolution that would set aside Tsar Nicholas II and replace him with a Tsar linked to the bourgeoisie, Michael Romanov (brother of Nicholas II). This would allow him to sneak into power while preventing the revolution. This plan had the support of the French and English governments.

But they did not count on the power of the developing workers' movement.

From January onwards and more and more in February 1917, strikes, demonstrations and meetings took place and grew in Petrograd and Moscow and took on a more and more marked political character. The Bolshevik Party was preparing for the armed insurrection.

On February 23 (March 8), the workers demonstrated against famine, war and Tsarism with the cry "Down with the Tsar, down with war; bread!" On February 26 (March 11), the insurrection took place. The workers disarmed the police and the gendarmerie and armed themselves. On the 27th the troops passed over to the side of the people; the Tsarist ministers and generals were arrested; the revolutionaries came out of prison. The victory won in Petrograd, the seat of the Tsarist regime, extended to the whole country.

The proletariat was the hegemonic force in this insurrection which overthrew Tsarism. But, until October, a dual power was established: the bourgeoisie was not strong enough to govern by itself and impose its power; the working class and the peasantry were not yet ready to get rid of the bourgeoisie and exercise power for themselves alone.

"*The workers and the peasants clothed in military garb had made the revolution, but at first it was not they who obtained its fruits: besides the Soviets, the government of the bourgeoisie had arisen*." (History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. I, p. 94, *Line of Demarcation* edition – Montreal 1981).

Appearance of the Soviets

The Soviets had appeared in the course of the 1905 revolution as the organs of the armed insurrection and the embryo of the new power. They re-formed in the course of the revolution of February 1917. This time they were broadened to become the Soviets of the

workers and soldiers. In fact, under their soldiers' uniforms, a majority were mobilized peasants.

The Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries, representing the parties of conciliation with the bourgeoisie, had the majority in the leadership of the Soviets in Petrograd and Moscow, as in many other Soviets. This is explained by the fact that the Bolshevik leaders had been in prison or exile for a long time. They could not resume their place in the political struggle in Russia until after the February Revolution. On the other hand, 40% of the workers had been inducted into the army and were therefore at the front. A large number of small proprietors, artisans and shopkeepers had gone into the enterprises to escape mobilization. The new labor force recruited into the factories came from the countryside with a still low level of consciousness. The fact that the great masses of the people had no knowledge of politics and were overwhelmed by the wave of the petty bourgeois elements, in the midst of the first successes of the revolution, explains the fact that for several months the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries were able to hold the leadership of the Soviets and to influence them politically.

On All the Crucial Questions of the War and Revolution, the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks Were in Opposition

On the war: the Mensheviks had aligned themselves with the positions of the parties of the Second International, which supported the bourgeoisie of each country in its imperialist war aims against the bourgeoisie of the opposing countries. The Mensheviks supported their bourgeoisie in the war against the German "aggressor." They defended social peace within the country so as not to hamper the bourgeoisie in its pursuit of the war. They propagated the idea that the Russian bourgeoisie was not responsible for the war. The centrists, Kautsky, Trotsky, Martov, and others, who differed from the Mensheviks by using leftist phrases, in the fight against the war in the main defended the same policy, since they refused to vote against war credits and were content with abstaining! In fact all the opportunists abandoned the class struggle during the war.

By contrast, the Bolshevik Party had a very clear position against the imperialist war of redivision: to transform the imperialist war into a revolutionary civil war, that is, the workers, peasants and soldiers had to turn their weapons against their own bourgeoisie, to work for the defeat of their government in this war. Unlike the paci-

fists who sighed for peace and merely made statements on the subject, the Bolsheviks worked hard to put these orientations into practice. This meant: voting against war credits, creating illegal organizations in the army and navy, encouraging the fraternization of the soldiers at the front.

The Bolsheviks applied these positions with courage and determination. In November 1914, the deputies of the Bolshevik faction in the Duma, who had voted against war credits and had denounced the war aims of Tsarism and the bourgeoisie, were tried for high treason, deprived of their civil rights and deported to eastern Siberia.

On the Possibility of Revolution in a Single Country

The Mensheviks and opportunists did not believe in the possibility of a socialist revolution in a single country. They maintained the ideas of the theoreticians of pre-imperialist capitalism, in which, according to them, the socialist revolution would triumph simultaneously in all the industrialized countries.

In his book published in the spring of 1916, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," Lenin showed that this conception was no longer valid. He explained that imperialism was not only pregnant with socialist revolution, but also that, due to the uneven development of the capitalist countries, the imperialist front could break where it was weakest.

"*Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone....*" "*Socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously in all countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries....*" (Excerpts from the article "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe" – August 1915, Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 342, and from "The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution" – September 1916, in Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 79)

On the Need for the Proletariat in Alliance with the Peasantry to Win the Leadership of the Democratic Revolution and Carry It Through to the End

Again, the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks defended opposing views. The Mensheviks claimed that because of its bourgeois democratic nature, the revolution had to be led by the liberal bourgeoi-

sie. The proletariat had to help the bourgeoisie to acquire power but not to display its revolutionary zeal for fear of frightening the bourgeoisie and throwing it into the arms of the autocracy. The proletariat had to content itself with exerting pressure from the outside in order to force the bourgeoisie to carry the bourgeois democratic revolution through to the end. The proletariat therefore had to play a subsidiary role, the role of appendage of the liberal bourgeoisie.

For the Bolsheviks, it was the proletariat that had the greatest interest in the victory of the democratic revolution; it was they who had to organize it, to develop it politically, to gain experience in the political leadership of the working masses and thus to prepare for the transition to the socialist revolution. The Bolshevik Party also showed that the peasantry had an interest in this revolution, that this revolution alone would enable them to settle accounts with the class of landowners and give the land to the peasants. It showed that the bourgeoisie did not want to give the land to the peasantry or to stop the war and that consequently any policy of conciliation with it would lead the revolution to failure.

How, While the Majority of the Leadership of the Soviets Was Still in the Hands of the Mensheviks, Would the Bolsheviks Proceed?

The Bolsheviks, without becoming discouraged, developed a patient work of explanation to unveil the imperialist character of the Provisional Government and to denounce the betrayal of the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. They tirelessly explained that in order to win peace, it was necessary to overthrow the Provisional Government and establish the power of the Soviets.

Beginning with the February victory, the Party reconstituted its press organs, which had been banned at the beginning of the war. Having emerged from illegality and still numerically weak, it nevertheless possessed a body of cadres seasoned and tempered in the struggle. The Party and the proletarian organizations would use all the democratic liberties that had been won: the right to speak, to meet, to associate, to demonstrate, of the press, etc., in order to develop their work.

In April, Lenin returned from exile and presented his theses: this was a plan to pass from the bourgeois democratic revolution to the socialist revolution. The “April Theses” supplemented and clarified the contents of the book “Two Tactics of Social Democracy in

the Democratic Revolution," which Lenin had written in the spring of 1905. These theses, adopted by the Party, armed it to carry out the tasks of the hour.

On the agenda was a patient work of explanation, clarification, criticism and putting forth the slogan "All Power to the Soviets." It was thus necessary to win the majority in the Soviets. But in order to do this, propaganda was not enough; it was necessary to combine this work with the experience of the masses. This was absolutely necessary in order to eliminate the influence of the bourgeoisie and the Socialist Revolutionaries (SR)[11] over the peasantry.

The Provisional Government (PG) was to give them this opportunity. On April 18, the Foreign Minister of the bourgeois Provisional Government declared to the Allies that Russia would wage the war until the final victory and that "the PG is determined to fully honor its commitments made to our allies." Since the bourgeoisie and its SR and Menshevik allies had promised peace, since the masses of the workers and peasants demanded peace, since they had risen against Tsarism under the slogan of peace, this declaration was received as a betrayal and unleashed the anger of the masses. On April 20, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party called on them to protest against the war policy of the Provisional Government. Nearly 100,000 demonstrators marched chanting "Publish the Secret Treaties," "Down with the War," "All Power to the Soviets." This demonstration caused a crisis in the PG; a new government was formed into which the SRs and the Mensheviks entered!

While this experience played an important role in unmasking the bourgeoisie, the working class and peasant masses were still under the influence of the conciliating, reformist parties.

In June 1917, at the first Congress of the Soviets, the Mensheviks, SRs and other opportunists still had the majority; there were 100 Bolshevik delegates compared to 700 or 800 delegates from the other currents (Mensheviks, Socialists Revolutionaries, etc.).

Another painful experience would open the eyes of the masses to the nature of the bourgeoisie and especially to the counter-revolutionary character of the conciliatory parties. In early July, the PG, in which the Mensheviks participated, launched an offensive at

[11] In the beginning, the SRs were a peasant revolutionary party, but in the end they represented the interests of the rich peasants, intellectuals and politically uneducated people from the distant rural areas.

the front. This offensive turned into a defeat. When this news became known, it unleashed the anger of the masses. They realized that the PG, in spite of its promises, was for the war and that the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Russia and that of Petrograd (held by the SRs and the Mensheviks) did not, or could not, oppose it!

Worker mobilizations then developed in Petrograd. The workers' battalions wanted to pass over to the insurrection, but the Party judged that the moment was premature, that the conditions for a victory of this insurrection were not yet ready. The Bolsheviks nevertheless participated in it to make a demonstration of strength, but peaceful and organized. In spite of the peaceful nature of the demonstration, the reaction was unleashed and repression fell upon the Party and the revolutionary workers' and popular organizations. This was the end of the dual power; the bourgeoisie had taken all power into its hands; the stage of peaceful development of the revolution had come to an end. The Bolshevik Party was preparing itself and the masses for armed insurrection.

The Sixth Congress of the Party met in late July and early August in clandestinity. Its work consisted in preparing the Party for the armed insurrection, for the socialist revolution.

In the weeks that followed reaction attempted a coup. This was crushed by the workers' and popular mobilization led by the Bolsheviks. The balance of power shifted in favor of the revolution; the Party was ready, the Soviets were reviving and ridding themselves of the conciliatory policy of the SRs and the Mensheviks; the poor

and small peasants were rallying to the side of the workers. The Second Congress of the Soviets was summoned, the Bolsheviks were prepared to win the majority of the delegates and take charge of it.

The CC of the Party, meeting on October 20, after a thorough and careful analysis of the situation, decided to launch the insurrection. On the night of October 25 to 26, the Winter Palace, where the Provisional Government was entrenched, was taken by assault. On the 25th the Second Congress of Soviets opened. The Bolsheviks had the majority. Power passed into the hands of the Soviets, which on the night of October 26 passed the decree on peace, the decree on land and formed the first socialist government: the Council of People's Commissars.

What the Study of the Development of the Revolution in Russia from February 17 (Bourgeois Democratic Revolution) to October 17 (Socialist Revolution) Teaches Us

If the Bolshevik Communist Party was able to win the political leadership of the Soviets and of the revolutionary movement of the working masses in Russia it was because this Party:

1) Was armed ideologically, theoretically and politically. That it knew how to purge its ranks of opportunists and constitute itself as an independent party of a new type, functioning on the basis of democratic centralism.

2) It had a clear objective, the socialist revolution, from which it never deviated; in the most difficult situations (the domination of reaction, the ferocious repression and the harsh conditions of clandestinity), it never let go of this banner.

3) At each stage of the development of the class struggle, it knew how to draw a concrete path to pass over to this objective; it adopted a flexible offensive tactic when the situation demanded it; it knew how to withdraw in good order when retreat was necessary. At every moment, it knew how to sum up the aspirations of the working masses in order to translate them into slogans for the struggle.

4) It counted among its ranks disciplined, courageous communists, ready to fight and take the lead in the struggles, having full confidence in the masses, in their heroism, in their revolutionary capacity. Communists who, whatever the conditions, found ways to

maintain and develop their links with the masses through the mass organizations.

5) It was this confidence in the working masses that enabled the Party to find ways of removing them from the influence of the reformist, conciliatory parties, which did not want the revolution but only simple reforms of the bourgeois system. The Bolsheviks gained the leadership of the revolutionary movement by patient work of explanation, using all the means at their disposal and drawing on the experience of the working class and the working peasantry.

Workers' Communist Party of France
www.pcof.net

Germany

Organization for the Construction of the Workers' Communist Party of Germany

Niels Clasen

The October Revolution and its Influence on the German Workers' Movement

When we began planning our seminar on the October Revolution, we chose the topic *"The October Revolution and its Influence on the German Workers' Movement"*. It is a broad topic, which we cannot cover completely. However, we chose it since we want to deal with the traces left by the 1917 Russian October Revolution in our country. We hope to be able to work out how these traces are useful for our struggles today. How should we approach this topic?

I decided to tackle the topic based on the present situation of the class struggle. We expect that our discussion partners, with whom we talk about the broadest possible co-operation in the class struggle, will tackle it in the same manner and put it into practice. This is the minimal precondition for establishing unity in order to form the urgently needed Communist Workers' Party. Ernst Thaelmann (the leader of the Communist Party of Germany from 1925 until 1933 when Nazi rule was established in Germany and Thaelmann was imprisoned) gave us a surprisingly relevant saying in his commemorative article *"Die Lehren des Hamburger Aufstandes"* ("The Lessons of the Hamburg Uprising"). He wrote at that time, in 1925:

*"If we commemorate today the second anniversary of the Hamburg street fighting, we commemorate it not just because it recurs on the calendar…. **Anniversaries are for us communists and class-conscious workers not empty days of recollection but guidelines for the class struggle, guides for action…."***

What remains of Red October in the German workers' movement, what is its influence today, what lessons do we draw from it?

We want to establish some priorities in relation to with the October Revolution. We want to examine those priorities as profoundly as possible and connect them with the history of our communist movement in order to recall essential aspects of it, in the manner of Thaelmann:

*"If today, on the hundredth anniversary of the Great Socialist October Revolution, we commemorate it, this is not just because it recurs on the calendar day…. **Anniversaries are for us communists and class-conscious workers not empty days of recollection but guidelines for the class struggle, guides for action…..**"*

I will focus on four topics:

1. Peace. The struggle against imperialist war.
2. The working peasants' question.
3. The councils (soviets).
4. The role of revolution, of armed insurrection, of the communist party.

None of these topics is obsolete for us; no consideration of the October Revolution can ignore any of them!

Further, the first two topics in particular have greater importance for us today, and that in ever shorter time periods, as well.

- The problems of the peasants, their massive indebtedness and their ruin, the contradiction between conventional agriculture on the one hand and ecologically sustainable agriculture on the other.
- The questions of the peace movement in the face of the increasingly acute danger of a big imperialist war.

1. Peace! The Fight against Imperialist War!

The Great October Socialist Revolution and the preceding February 1917 Revolution developed directly out of the first

German and Russian soldiers celebrate the truce on the German-Russian front in January 1918.

imperialist World War. That imperialist robbers' war caused hitherto unknown cruelty and brutality. It was triggered by the imperialist Central Powers, Germany and Austria-Hungary. But the enemy States of the Entente, too, were predatory imperialists.

The truce between the German and Russian troops at the turn of the year 1917/1918 was welcomed especially by the ordinary soldiers. Our photo shows the Russian and German soldiers celebrating the truce together. They could no longer be stopped – There was fraternization at last.

The aggressive nationalist propaganda had lost its force in the inferno of the battles. The ordinary soldiers had become aware that they were nothing but cannon fodder for their imperialist rulers who, at the same time, represented the capitalist class which stuffed itself with the enormous war profits. The yearning for peace became stronger and stronger, and that was an increasing danger for capitalist rule.

The imperial German imperialists and their social-democratic apologists had been unmasked before the German working class in the midst of the war by Karl Liebknecht, with a leaflet by the Spartacus League, distributed in hundreds of thousands of copies:

"How long still shall the gamblers of imperialism misuse the people's patience? Enough and more than enough of this butchery! Down with the warmongers on both sides of the border!

Put an end to the genocide!

Proletarians of all countries, follow the heroic example of your Italian brothers! Unite in international class struggle against the plots of the secret diplomacy, against imperialism, against the war, for peace in a socialist spirit!

The main enemy is in our own country!"

(Quoted according to: Spartakus spricht. Kampfdokumente der Spartakusgruppe aus der Zeit des ersten Weltkriegs. (Spartacus speaks. Documents of Struggle of the Spartacus League from the Time of the First World War, selected and introduced by Karl Zeisler, Berlin (GDR) 1961, p. 31)

We consider these arguments as relevant today; they directly apply to the current situation.

In face of the increasingly critical international contradictions between the modern imperialist Great Powers, and those between these on the one hand and the oppressed, dependent States and peoples on the other hand, it is at least surprising to see that, in the

opinion polls, many people in Germany oppose the actions of the Bundeswehr (German military forces) abroad as well as the export of armaments by German imperialism.

The apparent relative ineffectiveness of the demagogic, inflammatory anti-Russian propaganda in Germany directed against Putin and his government is noticeable. This propaganda does not cut any ice with numerous people, despite the great efforts made by the German government, in the media close to the government, etc.

Imperialist Germany is the third-largest arms-exporter in the world. The continuous assertion that the largest share of the supply of arms by the Berlin government goes to its "NATO allies" is pure hypocrisy. Turkey is a constant customer. But this country has made war for many years, both within the country and abroad. Its army intervenes in the Kurdish territories in Turkey as well as in northern Iraq and northern Syria.

Besides whole arms factories, the Gulf Emirates and Saudi-Arabia are receiving tanks, missiles, small weapons etc. Everybody knows what role these Powers play in the Middle East wars. Syria, Yemen, Iraq are only some main examples.

The conflict over Ukraine is of special importance given the increasingly critical situation on the entire NATO border with Russia. German imperialism is involved as the leading power along the EU. With the aid of the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine, the military co-operation with NATO, the EU free trade agreement by which Ukraine is also separated from its natural market in Russia, as well as the incorporation of Ukraine in the Western zone of influence up to the border with Russia are being pushed ahead. NATO now stands directly along the entire western border of Russia (with the exception of Belarus). The EU, NATO and Germany are acting very aggressively in order to have it signed and sealed. The officially expressed desire by Russia to negotiate with the EU about Russian interests in connection with the association of Ukraine was brusquely rejected in 2013. The events around Maydan were controlled by the imperialists with active participation of Germany but also of the USA. In 2013 German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle demonstrated on the Maydan in Kiev against the legal President Yanukovich. Westerwelle's successor, Steinmeier, the current German President, had actively participated in negotiating the deceitful agreement by which the violent removal of President Yanukovich from power was prepared, after having lulled him

into a false sense of security.

In the meantime, relations in East Europe are so strained that troops of the Bundeswehr at battalion strength, with tanks and arms, are stationed in Lithuania, also as the commanding force of an international NATO rapid intervention task force.

It is astonishing that many people refuse to accept the war propaganda accompanying this dangerous situation.

This threatening situation brings us back to the time of the October Revolution, even to the time immediately preceding it. In this situation, we emphasize the relevance of Karl Liebknecht's statement: *The main enemy is at home!*

We consider Liebknecht's popularity among sectors of the youth and the peace movement as an example of the relevance of the influence of Red October. Liebknecht stood, as did no one else in Germany, for solidarity with the Bolsheviks and the October Revolution.

We are trying to expose the diplomatic manoeuvres of the Berlin government and its hypocritical game, consciously risking an imperialist war. We demand:

- Abrogation of the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine!
- NATO out of Ukraine!
- Bundeswehr out of the East!
- No use of the Bundeswehr abroad!
- No arms exports!

We stand for obstructing German imperialism in our country, for making its policy of the danger of war and the preparation for war impossible. Liebknecht's statement in the Reichstag in 1912, shortly before the outbreak of the slaughter of the First World War, is highly relevant. At that time, he denounced the arms running by Krupp, a large German company in the field of arms production. His 1912 speech in the Reichstag could be our guide:

"...it is necessary to point out that all the sins of your internal policy cannot be made up for by the fact that you plunge the German people into foreign policy conflicts or lead them to a chauvinist frenzy."

Therefore, our task today is to throw light onto the current "sins" of the German internal and foreign policy, in order to prevent German workers, employees and youth from being sent, for a third

time, against their Russian class brothers and against the people of Russia, so that we can fight for peace among our peoples.

Because of the endless chauvinist hate campaign against Russia, we are restrained on the question of Russia. We expose the fact that this hate campaign against Russia and against President Putin has offensive, aggressive, even racist features. However, we persist in our necessary criticism of Russia's policy, unmasking Russia's capitalist and imperialist interests. We do not describe Russia as a power for peace since that country is, simply put, capitalist.

Also we do not fail to make clear the leading aggressive role of USA imperialism. It is not our task to hush up or minimize the imperialist or leading character of any power.

As before Red October, our task is to denounce our own imperialism, its militarism, its danger for the workers, employees, young people, etc. The main enemy is at home. Fighting for the socialist revolution in our country is our contribution to peace!

Another influence of Red October, especially among the youth and in sectors of the peace movement, is shown in the popularity of Liebknecht's slogans in their current version: *"The fights are not between States and peoples, but between those above and those below."* Some of the peace and anti-militarist initiatives, for instance the OTKM (Offenes Treffen gegen Krieg und Militarismus, Open Meeting against War and Militarism) in the Stuttgart region see themselves in the Liebknecht tradition. And thus directly in the tradition of Red October.

In spite of that, this position is not at all uncontested. Communist organisations such as the KPD (Rote Fahne), and also the Freidenkerverband (Freethinkers Association), try to establish the position that "Russia as a peace power" within the peace movement. They reproach us and others for the theory of equidistance, claiming that we position ourselves equally between the "peace power" Russia and the aggressive imperialists such as Germany. We ask them directly: When we try to obstruct "our own." German imperialism, when we try to convince our co-workers of that: how are we being equidistant? We support the **attacked peoples** of the Russian Federation when we attack "our" imperialism, which is trying to stir up the people against them. If Russia's government, its president and the Russian State were really a peace power, they would certainly not oppose what we are doing.

We also reject the position of Russia as a peace power since it ignores the lesson of Red October that, in a war between imperialist and capitalist powers, the workers, employees and the working peasants must maintain solidarity against the imperialist powers, and if the war cannot be avoided, to convert the war into a civil war against one's own State and capitalist ruling class. Of course, we are in solidarity with the people of Russia because they have historically carried out such a resistance against German imperialism.

Furthermore, we also reject the conception of the Freidenkerverband and others, since such a position makes unity of action impermissibly narrow, it excludes people who oppose German aggression – also against Russia – but who do not have any sympathy with this alleged peace power.

So, the demand for peace is relevant today and the two catastrophically failed imperialist robber's wars of German imperialism have their effect up to now. Besides the German fascists and nationalists, who are unfortunately reorganising, there are only a few people who feel any enthusiasm for war adventures. The strong emotional as well as practical solidarity with the refugees who arrived in Germany contains a strong moment of solidarity with the people below against the people above, a verdict against nationalism and war.

2. The Peasant Question

The peasant question is also fundamental, even if it can only be discussed briefly here. Nevertheless it is part of our topic.

Without the alliance of the Russian workers and peasants, the October Revolution would not have been feasible. A socialist revolution is inconceivable without the solution to the peasant question, not even today!

In the February 1917 revolution the demand for land, for the expropriation of the large landowners already played a central role for the peasants. But the Provisional Government of Lvov and Kerensky, formed after the February insurrection, betrayed this central demand of the peasants and the rural poor. Only the Bolsheviks acted according to their words. On January 27, 1918, the All-Russian CEC (Central Executive Committee) already passed the "*Basic law concerning the socialization of land and property*". The whole Russian land became the property of the working people.

Distribution of land took place, but also the first state farms and first mechanical workshops in the countryside (precursors of the Machine-Tractor Stations), were soon formed. The revolutionary workers began to take up the rural questions.

It is well known and we only want to recall it briefly here: The history of Russian socialist agriculture, Soviet agriculture, is a history of the harshest class struggle.

Rosa Luxemburg criticised the peasant and land policy of the Bolsheviks in her posthumous work "*The Russian Revolution*". But this originated from her isolation in prison without comprehensive information, only a few months after the October Revolution. She had no further influence on the published version, because German reaction had killed her horrendously. But she took a perceptive look at the German revolution, and this concerns our topic.

Rosa Luxemburg wrote:

"...one of the prerequisites of this transformation [is], that the separation between rural economy and industry which is so characteristic of bourgeois society, should be ended in such a way as to bring about a mutual interpenetration and fusion of both, to clear the way for the planning of both agrarian and industrial production according to a unified point of view... The nationalization of the large and middle-sized estates and the union of industry and agriculture – these are two fundamental requirements of any socialist economic reform, without which there is no socialism...

"Even in the West, under the most favourable conditions, once we have come to power, we too will break many a tooth on this hard nut before we are out of the worst of the thousands of complicated difficulties of this gigantic task!" (Quoted from http:///www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1918/russian-revolution/ch02.htm)

Unfortunately, for the "West", especially Germany, in 1918/19 this remained theoretical. To make it short at this point: German reaction, not the revolutionary parties, succeeded in mobilising many peasants, especially in Bavaria, to throttle the Bavarian and particularly the Munich Soviet republic.

In the 1920s, when really violent and military conflicts took place against the reactionary Kapp-Putsch and in 1923 in an almost revolutionary situation, the KPD also did not succeed in seriously influencing the broad movement of the peasants against the brutal dispossession of the peasants or against their massive indebtedness.

However, it was able to gain ground among the farm workers. But the KPD already fell behind principally in the lost November Revolution, when right-wing social democracy, supported by the bourgeoisie and so also by the rural bourgeoisie – the so-called "Junkers" and the rich big farmers – set themselves against the proletariat. Together with their betrayal of the socialist revolution, the SPD also handed over the poorer strata of the peasantry to their capitalist fate. The KPD first had to consolidate itself after the defeat in the revolution.

Indeed the KPD made clear programmatic commitment, which were surely heard among the peasants. The KPD programme of 1919, one year after the first decisions of the October Revolution for socialist agriculture, said:

"Expropriation of the land and property of all agrarian large and middle properties; creation of socialist cooperatives under uniform central direction in the whole empire; small peasant properties remain the property of their owners until their voluntary association to the socialist cooperatives." (Quoted from the Institute of Marxism-Leninism at the CC of the SED (Ed.) "Revolutionäre deutsche Parteiprogramme," (Revolutionary German Party Programs) Berlin 1967, p. 115)

Interestingly here are laid out some main features of the agriculture policy, which the GDR and SED tried to realize three decades later.

There is also the "*Programmatic declaration on the national and social liberation of the German people*" from 1929, in which the KPD explicitly wanted to counter threatening Nazi-fascism:

"We will break the domination of the large landowners, we will expropriate their property without compensation and give it to the peasants with little land, we will create soviet farms with the most modern machine operation, we will equalize the working conditions of the rural proletariat with those of the workers and we will include many millions of working peasants in the building of socialism." (ibid. p. 126)

This second programmatic formulation shows the significant influence on Germany of the socialist Soviet Union, developing under the harshest conditions,: The term "*soviet farms*" as well as the references to "*the most modern machine operation*", an echo of the machine-tractor stations, are noteworthy. Of course it was also an echo of Rosa Luxemburg´s demand for the unification of industry and agriculture.

The 12 years of fascist domination by Hitler, the terrorist suppression of the KPD and of all forces of the left brutally interrupted the development of the communist and workers' movement in Germany. That was the declared intention of fascism. Countless functionaries of the KPD were killed, including the legendary Ernst Thaelmann, whom the Nazis did not dare to bring to trial.

It was then the GDR, that in fact expropriated the large estates and land of the big farmers and distributed them to the poorer farmers in the "*democratic agrarian reform*". It also proceeded to collectivization, which was officially voluntary. But this step was accompanied by great difficulties, and here a real class struggle took place. After joining the cooperatives, there were also political motivated resignations and heavy political conflicts, in which peasants representatives took up harsh positions of opposition. Just a little light: Andrew Port quotes a statement of a peasant, a former leader of a cooperative(!) in 1965, which he found in the State Archive of Thuringia at Rudolstadt in a report of an SED party organisation or of a Council in the Saalfeld administrative district:

"If it were up to me, the dairy wouldn't get another drop of milk, because then the working class would come begging on its knees for a slice of butter or a slice of bread!" (Andrew Port, Die rätselhafte Stabilität der DDR, Berlin 2010, p. 277; Orig.: Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic, Cambridge University Press, New York 2007, p. 219)

But at last large cooperative farms prevailed, the so called LPGs. (Agricultural Production Cooperatives) and State Farms (People's Own Estates / VEG). However there still existed private peasants, who had refused to join the cooperatives or had left them.

After the seizure of the GDR by the German Federal Republic in 1990 most of the LPGs were dissolved. This was done in two basic ways: one was by the conversion into capitalist companies or registered cooperatives, which existed or still exist occasionally also in Western Germany. This way they remained large estates, which are ironically supported by the EU. The other way consisted in returning the land and goods to the individual farmers who had once joined the LPGs of the GDR. And thus they began to compete with the western individual agriculture farms, with large estates of agrocapitalists or large companies and still many big, medium and small farmers.

Many small peasants have become part-time farmers, because

their small farms are no longer able to feed them, a fate that has struck many individual farmers in the former GDR too.

Today the EU regulates agriculture in Germany as well as throughout Europe largely in the interest of the big agrarian companies and food monopolists, the banks and the big retail trade. The interests of the small farmers only play a subordinate role and their interests can only be partly represented, if the peasants today struggle and organise themselves against the agricultural policy that is in the interest of big capital. This struggle indeed existed and exists – in the EU, but also in Germany.

The focus in Germany is once again the extensive dairy farming and, as a result, the -price of milk that the producers can earn from the largely monopolised buyers, compared to the general cost of production. At the same time most of the small farmers are forced to make huge investments and therefore they are in debt on a large scale. Thus a natural process of concentration takes place.

In the first decade of this century we saw militant struggles of the peasants in Germany, which were supported by our small organisation, because above all they concerned small peasants. We reported on them widely and distributed our material in the peasant demonstrations, for example in Rostock during the huge demonstration on the occasion of the G-10-summit in Heiligendamm. Unlike our alliance partners, together with whom we called for the actions, we also went to the peasants, who brought out more than 10,000 participants themselves. Their demands for adequate prices, ecological and sustainable agriculture are popular.

Precisely during these actions we had to learn immediately that this is a question of class struggle: I myself was asked in Rostock by a farmer, to whom I offered a copy of "Arbeit Zukunft": *"But aren't you that ones who want to expropriate me!?"*

There is a tradition of our small organisation, begun by Ernst Aust, the founder and for many years leader of the KPD/ML / KPD. Our party in certain regions did particular work among the peasants, putting out its own newspaper for peasants, *"Das freie Landvolk"* ("The free peasantry"). In the 1970s, some young comrades were sent to the villages to carry out agitation, and to learn about the situation and mood there.

The lesson of October Revolution about the alliance of the working class with the (small) peasants remains relevant, as well as the objective tendency in agriculture towards ever increasing con-

centration, dependence on the banks and credits and subordination to the monopolies. If the masses of workers and employees really want socialist revolution, they need an alliance with the peasantry. For without their own agricultural production there is a real danger that any revolutionary country, any revolutionary state will be strangled by the remaining capital and surviving capitalist forces.

3. About the Councils (Soviets)!

Our employee representative councils in Germany today are a consequence of the 1918 German November Revolution. Thus they are also a heritage of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, because the first German workers' and soldiers' councils came into being before and during the November Revolution directly under the influence of Red October. At that time, workers' and soldiers' councils were created all over Germany, the first ones already in the course of the big January 1918 Strike, i.e. already before November. In some places, they even took power.

In Russia, such councils (soviets) sent the former rulers packing in the October 1917 Socialist Revolution and started building a new society without exploitation and oppression. Except for the 1871 Paris Commune, which was the first to establish or invent the new form of proletarian rule, the 1905 Russian Revolution is considered the origin of the soviets. In 1917, shortly before the February Revolution, Lenin briefly described this historical turning point in his *"Lecture on the 1905 Revolution"* (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23) to young Swiss workers in Zurich; he clearly spoke about the very important role of the proletariat in the really democratic revolution, which was at its core a bourgeois revolution, and about the rapidly growing participation of the poor peasants and soldiers, who increasingly armed themselves:

"The proletariat marched at the head of the movement. It set out to win the eight-hour day by revolutionary action. 'An Eight-Hour Day and Arms!' was the fighting slogan.... That the fate of the revolution could, and would, be decided only by armed struggle was becoming obvious to an ever-increasing mass of workers.

"In the fire of battle, a peculiar mass organisation was formed, the famous Soviets of Workers' Deputies, comprising delegates from all factories. ***In several cities these Soviets of Workers' Deputies began more and more to play the part of a provisional revolutionary government, the part of organs and leaders of the uprising.***

Attempts were made to organise Soviets of Soldiers' and Sailors' Deputies and to combine them with the Soviets of Workers' Deputies. For a time several cities... became something in the nature of small local "republics". The government authorities were deposed and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies actually functioned as the new government...." (Lenin, ibid., p. 248)

In 1917, the soviets, the councils, played a decisive role first in the February Revolution. This was the heroic period of dual power when, in the course of a historic political and military fight (the formation of the Red Guards and the victory over the Kornilov putsch), the Bolshevik party managed, step by step, to win over the workers, peasants, soldiers and soviets to their side. More than any other slogan, "All power to the soviets!" marked the period immediately before the armed revolt that launched the October Revolution. Soviets in factories, soviets in the villages, soviets in the towns, regional and central conferences of soviets.

However, power did not just fall into the lap of the Bolsheviks. In the beginning, the majority was often in the hands of the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries, and these parties did not at all call for the soviets to seize all power; they focused their attention on the so-called Constituent Assembly, with the final aim of depriving the soviets of power. These traitors in a left-wing garb almost openly made deals with the bourgeoisie and capital. The Mensheviks covered up their betrayal with the historically disproven theory that now the bourgeois revolution was on the agenda and it would be best if the bourgeoisie came to power.

Already in 1902 in his work *"What Is To Be Done?"* Lenin had worked out this social dialectic regarding capitalist as well as feudal Russian society.

It was not a "classic" bourgeois revolution that was on the agenda, as the Mensheviks claimed. Because of the German experience too, Lenin came to the conclusion that, in Russia, the time was over for the typical bourgeois leaders (Constitutional Democrats, the so-called Cadets), that the masses of industrial workers had become too strong and too conscious for that type of leaders, and that the toiling masses of millions of peasants had woken up. The bourgeoisie was more afraid of these classes than of Tsarist feudalism. Instead of gathering the workers and peasants around themselves, the bourgeoisie joined together with the big landowners, with Tsarism, in order to secure their own position as

exploiters against the workers and peasants and to share rule with Reaction.

The Bolsheviks, however, considered the working class and its party as the revolutionary leadership for the bourgeois tasks of the revolution, and that the toiling peasants, the village poor, had to join with the industrial working class. The soviets and their dynamic expansion, the seizure of power in many areas precisely confirmed this social analysis. Soviets were not only

"the form 'at last discovered' by the proletarian revolution, under which the economic emancipation of labor can take place." (Lenin, *The State and Revolution*).

In the course of the seizure of power, of the sweeping away of the entire bourgeois state machine and of the assumption of the executive power by the deputies of the workers, peasants and soldiers, the soviets, the councils, created the preconditions for an entirely new class character of the Soviet State.

The Mensheviks, Social-Revolutionaries, Cadets, the Tsarist Reaction were afraid of the councils. Contrary to the other, often much more developed capitalist countries, Lenin's party was well prepared for this development! Even though this party initially did not at all have the majority in the soviets, it was able to successfully fight to win the majority. Lenin's party understood the role of the councils, the role of the Bolshevik soviet fractions, too, in the uprising and for the uprising. This party had a profound understanding of society and was able to set the political line of the party and to successfully put it into practice.

The Councils and the November Revolution in Germany

The tragedy of the revolutionaries in Germany is that they did not have exactly this type of party with which they could fight for power and for the majority in the councils at those historic moments,

- when (under the impact of the October Socialist Revolution) the empire of the German imperialists began to collapse (with the big 1918 January Strike, the collapse of the western military front, the fact that the army leadership was begging for an armistice)
- when the ordinary seamen of the navy were openly refusing to obey orders,
- when on November 4, 1918, in Kiel for the first time they took

power by creating the first workers' and soldiers' council, disarmed the navy officers etc.

- when the council movement spread like wildfire all over the German Reich.

The Spartacus League was once again led by Karl Liebknecht at the end of October and Rosa Luxemburg in November 1918 when these leaders were released from prison. The Spartacus League did an enormous work of mobilisation and unmasking, but when the November Revolution broke out and swept through the country, the councils were full of members of the MSPD (Majority Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the former and later SPD), whose leaders, namely Scheidemann, Bauer and Ebert, had openly supported the imperialist First World War, or members of the centrist USPD (Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany) who were more willing to compromise on the war question. The leaders of this party (e.g. Kautsky and Bernstein) did not support the **quick insurrection** demanded by Liebknecht on November 8, during the meeting of the Revolutionary Shop Stewards.

In the councils, the phony socialists had the majority behind them. Just after the Kiel workers' and soldiers' council had taken power, Gustav Noske, the butcher of the November Revolution and one of the worst of the right-wing Social-Democrats, went there and impertinently managed to be chosen its Chair. He was successful in doing so. He immediately conspired with the officers of the imperial army and arranged for the disarming of the people of Kiel and for protection of the navy officers.

In spite of the indecisive attitude of the USPD shop stewards, the Berlin proletariat, joined by the masses of solders, took the first steps to an insurrection on November 9. Tens of thousands marched to the centre of Berlin, so militantly that the still-existing imperial government no longer dares to use force against them.

The movement swept away the emperor and the rule of the princes in all the German federal states as well. Despite the historic disappointment that this revolution failed halfway so that it did not result in the rule of the proletariat and socialism, we shall not forget that such reactionary forces disappeared forever, in spite of everything!

After the emperor's abdication, workers' and soldiers' councils came into being in almost all municipalities, but the clear leadership of the communists was absent. The drama took its own course – ex-

actly in the opposite direction of the Russian fight. While the Bolsheviks won power within the soviets and defeated the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries, the right-wing social-democrats (Ebert, Noske, Scheidemann etc.), supported by the USPD, which put a brake on the struggle, were victorious in the councils in Germany

The betrayal by the right-wing social-democrats during the entire world war had even resulted in their obtaining secondary governmental positions. Later, it was the logical consequence that they, who had not been able to prevent the creation of the councils, worked within these councils to undermine them and to eliminate the revolutionary ruling positions of the councils. From the first day on, they promulgated the election of a bourgeois National Assembly –helped by the USPD leaders like Kautsky and Haase. On November 10, the right-wing SPD members and the USPD divided the seats in the newly established Council of People's Deputies among themselves. This Council was the *de facto* government after the abdication of the emperor.

In fact, they pushed through the election of the National Assembly at the national congress of the workers' and soldiers' councils, against Liebknecht's revolutionary appeal to this congress to take the whole power.

After the foundation of the KPD (Communist Party of Germany (Spartacus League)) by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg during the turn of the year 1918/1919, which had attracted enormous attention, the traitors made a quick decision – against the councils. Noske and Ebert had long before maintained a close conspiracy with the military forces, which were now no longer under the empire, but otherwise they had not changed their attitude.

All reliable troops still existing within the area around Berlin were ordered to march to Berlin. The start of the decisive battle in the German capital was given by the dismissal of the revolutionary Berlin chief of police, Eichhorn, by the SPD/USPD government on January 4. In the armed revolt, the Spartacus League, the just founded KPD, was defeated by the brutal troops of Reaction under Noske's command. Karl and Rosa were imprisoned by the reactionary troops (so-called Freikorps, volunteer corps) and were killed in a cowardly and brutal manner. The rage of Reaction to strip the proletarian ruling organs of the councils from their power continued through the first half of 1919. Noske also had the council republics in Bremen and Bavaria liquidated.

In Germany, the SPD thus made sure that the revolutionary spirit of the workers' and soldiers' councils was drowned in blood. Until today, Noske's later is notorious: *"Someone must play the role of bloodhound!"* (Gustav Noske, Von Kiel bis Kapp. Zur Geschichte der deutschen Revolution (From Kiel to Kapp. On the History of the German Revolution), Berlin 1920, p. 68.)

After the election and the first meeting of the National Assembly in Weimar, after the adoption of the Weimar Constitution by the bourgeois Republic, in which capital took the whole power – which the Mensheviks in Russia had always dreamt of – the still existing workers' councils in the shops were legalized by the Shop Councils Act (Betriebsrätegesetz) put forward by the SPD. But these councils were definitely deprived of power. So the still current dual system of representation of interests was established: the trade unions and shop councils. The trade unions are responsible for interests beyond the shops and tariff policies, the shop councils are to look after the workers' participation within the shop and to support the employer in "fulfilling the shop's purposes". According to the Act, they are required to "co-operation based on trust" with capital. At the core, that was already the case in the Weimar Republic. After the Second World War, the Act was re-established. Hitler had had it repealed. In 1952 and 2001, there were two reforms to the Shop Councils Act, which today is called the "Employees' Representation Act" (Betriebsverfassungsgesetz). The reforms resulted in this or that improvement, but essentially, the class co-operation and the obligation of the workers and employees to be subordinate to capital, have not at all changed.

In spite of that, class-conscious workers and employees, class-conscious trade unions should participate in employees' representative committees; they should take part in the elections every four years. Trade unionists should put up candidates in elections, and they may be defeated, because non-trade unionists can and do put up candidates.

As a conclusion of this chapter and a transition to the last one, I quote the level-headed but very vivid assessment of a bourgeois liberal historian, Dietrich Geyer:

"The Bolsheviks had the overwhelming majority of the work and a considerable part of the masses of soldiers behind them when they took power. They controlled the most important soviet organs, whereas the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries had already

gone downhill. In Germany, however, the Spartacus League was in an absolute minority compared to the Majority Social-Democracy (MSPD) and the Independents (USPD). The development of the young KPD into a mass communist party did not start with the rise of the council movement; it started after the German councils had already withdrawn from history." (Dietrich Geyer, Sowjetrussland und die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung 1918-1932 (Soviet Russia and the German Workers' Movement 1918-1932), in: Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte, n° 1, January 1976, p. 10 ff., Munich 1976).

Let us hold open the question of whether the councils have definitely *withdrawn from history*. The answer is up to us! We have to make known the importance of this type of State among the working people and encourage them to take this weapon into their own hands again. It depends on us!

4. The Role of the Revolution, the Armed Uprising and the Communist Party

In this final section, we will again recall the Hamburg people's tribune and Comrade Ernst Thaelmann, the real representative of the class-conscious workers, who left the USPD and joined the KPD.

He tried, like no one else, not only to draw the lessons from the October Revolution but also its practical consequences.

The defeat of German imperialism left the country in a social catastrophe. The peace treaty of Versailles, a real robber's treaty, burdened the newly established Republic with almost unbearable reparations. According to the usual capitalist methods, they shifted this burden onto the working class. This led to a spreading of catastrophic misery during the first years and culminated in the hyperinflation of 1923.

In 1928 Thaelmann looked back at November 9, 1923, a historic date in Germany, to evaluate this period:

"*The tragedy of the German revolution in 1918, in the struggles in January 1919, in the struggles after the Kapp Putsch of 1920, in the struggles of March 1921, until the last acute revolutionary wave... October 1923 – was the discrepancy between the ripe objective revolutionary conditions on the one hand and the subjective weakness of the German proletariat, caused by the lack of a goal-oriented Bolshevik party on the other....*

"...Neither the revolutionary instinct nor the incomparable heroism of individual leaders of the Spartacus League, the murdered founders of our party, could substitute for the existence of a steeled vanguard, tempered in the forge of the revolutionary experiences... Karl and Rosa became victims of the barbaric social-democratic counter-revolution… of Noske, Ebert and Scheidemann, because they had not yet tempered the weapon of the proletariat which had enabled the Russian proletariat to win: the Bolshevik party!" (Ernst Thaelmann, Speeches and Articles on the History of the German Workers Movement, II, Berlin 1956, p. 13, German edition)

This is how Thaelmann concisely summarised the highly dramatic class struggles of the German workers' movement in the decade before.

And he knew exactly what he was talking about. What he addressed somewhat cautiously as the "*last acute revolutionary wave in October 1923*" was a further defeat of the German communists, who once again could not fulfil the self-appointed task. But this defeat was very instructive for the KPD and led to serious changes in the CC and in the whole work of the party.

The KPD judged the situation described above as a revolutionary situation – with the unbearable war burdens, the shifting of

Ernst Thaelmann, chair of KPD from 1925

these burdens on to the pauperized people, the hyperinflation, which most severely struck the working class. In Saxony and Thuringia a mass agitation developed, and also in Hamburg, where at that time Thaelmann was the responsible leader of the KPD, protests and looting developed due to the misery of the masses. On October 20 the police used firearms against a workers' protest.

In Saxony and Thuringia the KPD entered into a so-called workers' government, in coalitions with left social-democrats. The KPD connected with the broad masses who struck or were ready to strike with the expectation of being able to arm them better, to organize them better in strikes, and finally to call them to a republic-wide general strike, out of which the insurrection against the ruling class should break out.

A decision was made to prepare the insurrection, there was a committee for its preparation, and efforts were made, to form the workers' own armed militia under the name *Ordnerdienst (OD)* (security guard group).

A decision was made to start the insurrection on November 9, 1923, when the *Reich*-Government under Stresemann decided, under pressure of capital –Hugo Stinnes wasallegedly personally involved – on the so called execution by the *Reich* in Saxony and Thuringia. It means that troops were to be sent to take over of the power in both states, arresting all the opposition leaders, especially from the KPD.

The situation caused the KPD CC to change its decision on October 20. Now they decided not to wait until November 9, but to declare a general strike of the whole German working-class. This was raised at a conference in Chemnitz, called by the Saxony state government with workers' representatives on October 21. This decision was communicated to all Party organizations, which had to start the uprising. They had only two days to organize all the necessary steps. But in Hamburg they proceeded to action at once. Considerable sectors of the workers were just waiting for this.

But the planning of the CC proved to be a grossly incorrect estimation. During the Chemnitz conference both the representatives of the left social-democrats and the union delegates refused to carry out the decision for general strike. The chair of KPD at that time, Heinrich Brandler, found no way to persuade the opponents and withdrew the CC-decision on his own. An outrageous step, unique until now in such a situation.

But it was too late for Hamburg, where the well organized insurrection had begun! Hundreds of workers, organized in the *OD*, attacked police stations, seized the arms, blockaded roads with barricades and trenches, occupied at least three sectors of the city and other parts, so that the surprised police and troops called in for assistance were unable to succeed against them. Two sectors of Hamburg are still famous for this: Barmbeck and Schiffbeck (nowadays Billstedt).

In Schiffbeck alone, the responsible leader, Fritz (Fiete) Schulze, saw to it that a workers' council was established and even made a call for a Schiffbeck Council Republic. The insurrection lasted three days, which caused fear to the troops and police involved. Moreover, many policeman had no real desire to attack the insurgents, because often their own situation and that of their families was as bad as that of the workers.

The armed workers, about 300 to 500 of them, enjoyed massive support among the working class, and there was a capable leadership. The latter was emphasized by the events at the end of the insurrection. Because in the other parts of the *Reich* no attempt at an insurrection took place – a result of the wrong estimation and the failure of the KPD CC – the insurrection had to be broken off. But there was an organized retreat, so that massive arrests were avoided, although the police attempted this.

Our photograph shows a police raid in the following days.

Of course, afterwards well-known KPD leaders in Hamburg were arrested, but many others could not be identified. There were several dead, not only among the police and military, but also among the workers. Trials for high treason led to long terms of imprisonments.

Why this rather detailed report?

Because this history proves how much the October Revolution was the standard for the workers' movement in the early 1920s.

And this new failure showed the lack of a clearly oriented Bolshevik party. This was proved by the weakness of the KPD CC, which this time fluctuated in a left-radical direction, before Thaelmann became the chair.

The evaluation which Ernst Thaelmann dedicated to the Hamburg insurrection is remarkable. Our quotation at the beginning comes from his article "The Lessons of the Hamburg Insurrection". His main conclusion was that a party finally had to be created,

which in the day-to-day class struggle adopted the lessons of the Bolsheviks. He said:

"*The insurrection led io defeat, because it had been carried out alone… They" (the insurgents) "were beaten, because the proletariat in the whole country did not support them. The role of the Communist Party as vanguard of the proletariat consists particularly in organizing and bringing together the whole working class … in the whole country. That is why we need an iron, completely united, absolutely disciplined Party…*" (Ernst Thaelmann: Die Lehren des Hamburger Aufstands. In: Für ein freies sozialistisches Deutschland (For a Free, Socialist Germany), Vol. I, 1, ed. by Kommunistische Arbeiterbund ML (Communist Workers' League ML) 1971, p. 260)

A further point is relevant:

"*The absence of a strong council-movement was felt as a particular lack in the days of Hamburg insurrection. This fact is still not understood well-enough in the party. The councils are the executives, which bring together the masses of the proletariat in their millions in a revolutionary situation, which constitute the backbone of the struggles. We must not forget this lesson also in the present period between two revolutions.*" (Ibid. p. 261)

Finally:

Hamburg: Heavily armed policeman searching for participants in the October struggles in 1923.

"*The insurrection was a model of a brilliant, smoothly working organization of the revolutionary struggle.*" But Thaelmann is not one to get intoxicated over this. No, his analysis goes deeper:

But the insurrection "*at the same time revealed the biggest organizational mistake of our party. The Hamburg fighters enjoyed the full sympathy of the workers in the factories, but they had no organized connection with them. The complete uselessness of our old social-democratic election-oriented organization became evident. The election-machine is not fit for the barricades! The biggest deficiency in the Hamburg fighting front was the lack of communist factory cells…*" (Ibid. p. 262)

Revolution, armed insurrection, the Communist Party – all this is addressed here. For the KPD followed a phase, that would transform it into a Bolshevik party.

Close unity, strong discipline, an objective evaluation of the situation, and a solid scientific grounding in Marxism-Leninism.

Today we are miles away from this influence of the October Revolution. It was not without reason that German monopoly capital smashed this workers' movement by means of Hitler's fascist dictatorship, corrupting one part, suppressing all workers' organizations and murdering the most important leaders. There is a well-grounded suspicion that Stalin was also murdered, before organized revisionism could begin to erode that socialism which was the ideal for generations of workers, employees, peasants, the young and old, until it was no longer able to resist the bourgeois-capitalist and imperialist pressure.

We see revisionism as the weakening of the clear principles, as the attempt to weaken the struggle against imperialism. We no longer hear anything about the necessity of revolutionary force. But this is more necessary than ever, as a look at the world situation makes clear.

Today the road to a mass communist party is not yet paved, so that one can proceed along it simply and comfortably. We do not just need copies of the Thaelmann's conceptions, but we do need today, what we can learn from Great Red October:

Close unity, deep roots in the working class, close connections with the peasantry and other allied strata, strong discipline, objective evaluation of the situation, and a strong scientific grounding in Marxism-Leninism.

Greece

Movement for the Reorganisation of the Communist Party of Greece 1918-55

October Revolution – Confirmation of the Leninist Theory of the Proletarian Revolution

The victorious outcome of the Proletarian Revolution in October (7 November) 1917 in Russia – with leading force the revolutionary proletariat in the alliance of workers-peasants and under the leadership of the revolutionary Bolshevik Party of Lenin-Stalin - marked the beginning of a new era in human history: it celebrated the passage from capitalism-imperialism to socialism and the beginning of the construction of the new socialist-communist society and confirmed:

First, the necessity and inevitability of the proletarian revolution and socialism-communism; that "the class struggle leads to the communist Revolution" (Marx) and that **"the class struggle necessarily leads to the** *dictatorship of the proletariat***, (that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the** *abolition of all classes* **and to a** *classless society***,"** (Marx, 1852) i.e. the communist society.

Second, the inevitability of the replacement of capitalism by socialism-communism: ***"Precisely as capitalism succeeded feudalism, socialism likewise will inevitably succeed capitalism"***. (Marx)

Third, it confirmed the correctness of the Marxist theory of revolution and in particular the Leninist-Stalinist theory of the Proletarian Revolution**.**

Marx's standpoint **"from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history"** (Capital, Vol. 1, Preface to the First German Edition) studying and analyzing pre-monopoly capitalism, more precisely **"the capitalist mode of production, and the conditions of production and exchange corresponding to that mode"** discovered the natural laws of its movement and **"working with iron necessity towards inevitable results"** – revealed "the dirty little secret of capitalist exploitation" and its fundamental *contradictions, remarking at the same time "the temporary nature of the capitalist system" and its inevitable succession of Socialism-Communism.*

Later, Lenin, during the first 15 years of the 20th century, studied the new stage of capitalism, monopoly capitalism i.e. imperialism and discovered, amongst other things, the law of Uneven economic and political development of capitalism: ***"Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism"*** *(Lenin, On the Slogan for a United States of Europe, 1915).* ***At the same time he expressed the Leninist theory of*** Proletarian Revolution, remarking that by this law: **"the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone"** (Lenin, ibid.) and **"The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in different countries. It cannot be otherwise under commodity production. From this it follows irrefutably that socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously *in all* countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois."** (Lenin, The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution, 1916)

The October Revolution took place exactly on the basis of this analysis and in that way it confirmed the Leninist theory of the Proletarian Revolution.

For organising and preparing the Proletarian Revolution – apart from the struggle of the working class to defend its class interests – for a revolutionary communist movement, the follow points are generally necessary (as opposed by all opportunist currents):

1. The realisation that the proletariat is the revolutionary class of capitalist society, its historical missions and leading role in the revolution (within the alliance of the working class and poor peasants): **"the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class"** (Marx, Manifesto of the Communist Party). **"It is to the great historic merit of Marx and Engels that they indicated to the workers of the world their role, their task, their mission, namely, to be the first to rise in the revolutionary struggle against capital and to rally around themselves in this struggle all working and exploited people."** (Lenin, Unveiling of a Memorial to Marx and Engels, 1918)

The proletariat, the gravedigger of capitalism, is not just an oppressed and exploited class, but first of all **the most revolutionary class** of the capitalist society whose mission is the overthrow of capitalism: **"The chief thing in the doctrine of Marx is that it brings out the historic role of the proletariat as the builder of**

socialist society." (Lenin, The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx, 1913). Since then the working class has inscribed **"on their banner the** *revolutionary* **watchword: '***Abolition of the wages system!***'"** (Marx, Value Price and Profit)

2. Recognizing the existence and necessity of a mass revolutionary Party of a **new type,** spokesperson, organizer and leader of the proletarian struggle.

3. Recognizing the leading role of the Communist Party in the revolution as the organizer and leader.

But nevertheless the revolution in Russia in October 1917 would have been impossible without a revolutionary situation in that historic period, as noted by Lenin about revolutions in general: "a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the 'upper classes', a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for 'the lower classes not to want' to live in the old way; it is also necessary that 'the upper classes should be unable' to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes,

there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in 'peace time', but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis *and by the 'upper classes' themselves* into independent historical action.

"Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible. The totality of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation". (Lenin, The Collapse of the Second International, 1915)

Leninism-Stalinism sees the notions of "political crisis" and "revolutionary crisis" as identical: "In our speech we did not distinguish between political and revolutionary crisis. For us these concepts are identical." (Manuilsky: XI Plenary of the EC of the Communist International, March 1931)

The October Revolution confirmed the following Marxist positions in confrontation with the anti-Marxist treacherous reformists of the old Social Democracy and the new Khrushchevite social-democracy (20th Congress, in February 1956, "peaceful road" etc.) and other opportunist currents:

a. **Violent-Armed Revolution.** The overthrow of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of political power by the proletariat, when in a period of a revolutionary situation a proletarian revolution erupts, can **only** be achieved by revolutionary violence, an armed struggle which is the highest form of revolutionary class struggle: **"the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat"** (Marx-Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party). The **class struggle** between the exploiters and the exploited - a key driver of the social development in all class societies – in the era of the proletarian revolution **"has always, inevitably, and in every country, assumed the form of *civil war*"** (Lenin, Letter To American Workers, 1918) and **"To think that such a revolution can be carried out peacefully, within the framework of bourgeois democracy, which is adapted to the rule of the bourgeoisie, means that one has either gone out of one's mind and lost normal human understanding, or has grossly and openly repudiated the proletarian revolution."** (Stalin, Concerning Questions of Leninism, 1926)

Lenin was underlying that **"The necessity of systematically imbuing the masses with this and precisely this view of violent**

revolution lies at the root of the entire theory of Marx and Engels" (Lenin, The State ad Revolution, 1917) and ironically characterized the opportunists of his times as "mummies, dried and shrunken in the atmosphere of lifeless scholasticism" (Lenin, Materialism and Empirio-Criticism) who whine because **"The school of civil war does not leave the people unaffected"** (Lenin), **"the very thought of peacefully subordinating the capitalists to the will of the majority of the exploited, of the peaceful, reformist transition to Socialism is not only extreme philistine stupidity, but also downright deception of the workers, the embellishment of capitalist wage slavery, concealment of the truth."** (Lenin, Theses on Fundamental Tasks of The Second Congress of the Communist International, 1920).... **"Only the forcible overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the confiscation of its property, the destruction of the entire bourgeois state apparatus from top to bottom – parliamentary. judicial, military, bureaucratic, administrative, municipal, etc. – right down to the wholesale deportation or internment of the most dangerous and stubborn exploiters and the institution of strict surveillance over them so as to foil their inevitable attempts to resist and to restore capitalist slavery – only such measures can ensure real submission of the whole class of exploiters."** (Lenin, Ibid.)

b. Smashing the bourgeois state. After the victory of the revolution it is absolutely necessary to smash down, break up the bourgeois state machine (bourgeois army, police, security, courts, bu-

reaucratic hierarchy, etc.) which is "essential for every real people's revolution" (Marx, Letter to Dr Kugelmann Concerning the Paris Commune, 12 April, 1871) which expresses **"the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during a revolution in relation to the state."** (Lenin, The State and Revolution, 1917). **"The supersession of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution"** (Lenin, Ibid.) and moreover it is impossible by **"improving the state machine"** and it is achieved only by "smashing and destroying it" which is **"the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during a revolution in relation to the state."** (Lenin, Ibid.) **"The law of violent proletarian revolution, the law of smashing of the bourgeois state machine as a preliminary condition for such a revolution, is an inevitable law of the revolutionary movement."** (Stalin, The Foundations of Leninism)

The proletarian revolution and the conquest of power by the proletariat is impossible without both the armed struggle and **"completely destroy the old state machine and replace it by a new one"** and that " the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, but also without the destruction of the apparatus of state power" (Lenin, The State and Revolution, 1917)

These two Marxist positions were implemented in practice in the course of the proletarian revolution of October in Russia, and later repeated in The Programme (1928) of the Communist International:

"The conquest of power by the proletariat does not mean peacefully 'capturing' the ready-made bourgeois State machinery by means of a parliamentary majority. The bourgeoisie resorts to every means of violence and terror to safeguard and strengthen its predatory property and its political domination. Like the feudal nobility of the past, the bourgeoisie cannot abandon its historical position to the new class without a desperate and frantic struggle. Hence, the violence of the bourgeoisie can be suppressed only by the stern violence of the proletariat. The conquest of power by the proletariat is the violent overthrow of bourgeois power, the destruction of the capitalist State apparatus (bourgeois armies, police, bureaucratic hierarchy, the judiciary, parliaments, etc.), and the substitution in its place of new organs of proletarian power, to serve primarily as in-

struments for the suppression of the exploiters." (The Programme of the Communist International, Comintern Sixth Congress, 1928)

The working class can **never** use the bourgeois state.

The seizure of political power by the proletariat is impossible without the violent-armed revolution and without smashing the bourgeois state machine as claimed by the treacherous counter-revolutionary current of international Khrushchevite revisionism (20th Congress of the CPSU, February 1956: aim "to capture a stable parliamentary majority "(!), pp. 41-42, Greek version) and the local representatives of social-democratic leaders of "K"KE-SYRIZA who repeat the anti-Marxist positions of the old counter-revolutionary social democracy.

c. Establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The working class cannot defend and maintain its political power or much more to build the socialist-communist society without the establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

"The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot arise as the result of the peaceful development of bourgeois society and of bourgeois democracy; it can arise only as the result of the smashing of the bourgeois state machine, the bourgeois army, the bourgeois bureaucratic apparatus, the bourgeois police." (Stalin, The Foundations of Leninism)

From the law of the **"uneven economic and political development of capitalism"** (Lenin, On the Slogan for a United States of Europe, 1915) and the victory of socialism in **"in several or even in one capitalist country alone"** yields the **Leninist-Stalinist conception** of building socialism-communism in a single country: **"the victorious proletariat of that country will arise against the rest of the world – the capitalist world – attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, stirring uprisings in those countries against the capitalists, and in case of need using even armed force against the exploiting classes and their states"** (Lenin, Ibid.) which is obviously a position of Lenin himself and not just "of Stalin" as falsely claimed by the counter-revolutionary Trotskyites to attack only Stalin and not Lenin- Stalin (Stalin consistently **adopted** and **defended** this position).

Building the socialist-communist society is possible – as demonstrated by the practical construction of socialism-communism in Soviet Union of Lenin-Stalin up to 1953 – only by the existence and

maintenance of the Dictatorship of Proletariat until Communism and the corresponding **transition period** which also extends to **Communism**: **"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat,"** (Marx, Critique of the Gotha Programme, 1875) and not to Socialism as falsely claimed by the revisionists who distort Marx-Lenin (22nd Congress of the CPSU, 1961, p. 206, Greek version) and reject Marxism.

"The dictatorship of the proletariat can be exercised only through the Communist Party" (Lenin) and **"the dictatorship of the proletariat is one party, the party of the proletariat, the Party of the Communists, which does not and cannot share leadership with other parties"** (Stalin, Concerning Questions of Leninism)

The violent coup overthrow of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the early 1950s immediately after the death-murder of Joseph Stalin by the traitorous revisionist-social democratic group of Khrushchev-Mikoyan-Brezhnev et. al. interrupted the building of Socialism-Communism in the Soviet Union, and was the beginning of the gradual restoration of capitalism, which was completed in the mid-1960s.

India

Revolutionary Democracy

The October Revolution and Education (1917-1932)

The Soviet Union was perhaps the most self-conscious attempt at comprehensive restructuring of society based on principles of equity, fraternity, and economic progress. It inherited a society and ways of thinking that were highly hierarchical and patriarchal, that was dominated by a landed aristocracy and absolutist kingship but simultaneously had strong elements of communitarian life based on equality. What marked the Tsarist Empire was the wide diversity of nationalities and tribal communities extending from the Tundra in the far north to Uzbekistan in the south. The challenge of integrating these into a larger framework of egalitarian progress while simultaneously nurturing the diversity added to the complexity of the momentous experimentation.

The experience of Soviet Union has to be seen as one marked by a very creative dialogue between an idealist imagination of egalitarian but modern society, the inherited social institutions and ways of thinking and the exigencies imposed by a very hostile world keen to see the experiment fail. It was an experiment which was shaped by conscious choices made in response to concrete conditions and to the consequences of the choices previously made. It therefore can be grasped only by looking at it historically as human choices made in the flow of change.

This article seeks to understand the vicissitudes of the public education system after the October Revolution.

Public school education system had evolved in 19th century Europe as a handmaid of absolutist states and industrialisation, its main objective being to discipline and control the proletarian children and to build a stratum of middle class intelligentsia to serve the needs of the state and industry. It built on the foundations of early modern clerical schools designed to train the priesthood. As such it was divorced from life, repressive and designed to exclude children of lower classes from higher education.

Working class and socialist movements developed a critique of the bourgeois schooling system and also tried to put into effect al-

ternative schooling model. Robert Owen, the early Utopian Socialist, advocated publically-funded education for all children (including working children) which simultaneously developed autonomy of the individual and served the needs of egalitarian community; activity-based education that formed a continuum with real life, integration of mental and physical labour, child-centred pedagogy that encouraged initiative of the children. Owen set up schools as part of his cooperative communities which put into practice his ideas.

Marx drew upon Owen's ideas on education and appears to have broadly approved of them as can be seen from the references in *Capital*. He especially underlined Owen's rooting his education not in some utopian commune but in a society based on industrial production and his emphasis on the combination of mental, physical and polytechnical education. He also supported the idea of free and publically-funded education for all children, abolition of child labour but combining appropriate productive labour with academic learning. However Marx was wary of state control of curriculum as it gave scope for the ruling classes to indoctrinate children.

Subsequent socialist critique of bourgeois education drew not only from the Owenian and Marxist tradition but also from the democratic educational thinking of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Montessori, Dewey, etc. They emphasised the need to educate children not only to adapt to the world around them, but also to change it as had been envisioned by American democratic educationists like Horace Mann. They argued that the present system being geared to the needs of industry and commerce, negated the individuality of each child and sought to create a standardised worker or consumer. They also critiqued the divorce between life and schooling and also the fragmentation of learning about life into disciplines.

Nadezhda Krupskaya, in collaboration with VI. Lenin developed a comprehensive critique of bourgeois education and proposals for democratic and socialist transformation in the event of a revolution. Krupskaya drew attention to the class character of bourgeois education, how the system is structured to educate the ruling elite, the petty-bourgeois middle class and the working class and peasantry so that the class divisions are reinforced. These children go to different schools and there are clear barriers which prevent children of one class from entering schools of the other classes. The different kinds of schools envision different kinds of human beings, use different kind of curriculum and pedagogy to educate the chil-

dren. While the most liberal and enlightened education is reserved for the aristocracy, mass education for the labouring poor sought to promote faith in Tsarism, unbridled national chauvinism, mutual competition among students. "*In short, the objective of public schools is to instil the bourgeois morality in pupils, deaden their class consciousness and transform them into an obedient herd which can be easily controlled*."

Democratisation of schools can be achieved only by a democratic state whose primary task is to '*make schools at all levels accessible to all sections of the population*.' She outlined twofold objective for the new socialist school – the free development of the individuality of the child ('*Socialist schools are schools of freedom in which there is no room for regimentation, rote learning and cramming'*) and expression of this individuality in useful and productive labour ('*leave the imprint of their own individuality on their work*'). (Nadezhda Krupskaya, On the Labour oriented Education and Instruction, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1985, pp 47-53. The article was originally published in 1918.)

Lenin was convinced that socialist culture had to be based on and draw upon the best in all cultures in human history, especially bourgeois culture and that it is not possible to visualise a proletarian culture which is created ad novo. Bourgeois education, in depriving the working class children of this cultural heritage and making it an exclusive privilege of the ruling classes, was in effect cutting off the proletariat from all human heritage.

As the Soviet Government was established in Russia and the other republics after 1917, the new educational authorities drew upon these critiques and educational thinking.

Schooling on the eve of Revolution

Education in Tsarist Russia was designed primarily to cultivate a multinational nobility and bureaucracy. There were the state-funded gymnasia with a predominantly classical education (Latin, Greek, German languages). About 60 percent of the students came from the nobility and the church, the urban mercantile classes accounting for thirty percent and the remaining ten percent coming from other social classes including rich peasantry. Parallel to the gymnasia were the commercial 'Realschule' which taught practical subjects and did not focus on Latin. In addition there were exclusive schools for the nobility for the candidates entering the army etc,

admission into which was open only to the nobility. There were very few universities and entrance into them was through the gymnasia.

Mass elementary education was left to local schools run by district administration or the Church or private efforts. They focussed on teaching reading and writing Russian, arithmetic and the Bible. A student passing on from these schools was not automatically eligible for entrance into secondary schools like gymnasia or Realschule. Most of these schools were for boys and a very few for girls and perhaps none for both together. Schools were run on highly patriarchal principles with the Headmaster wielding complete control over the schools and the students being subjected to a high level of discipline and corporeal punishments. The pedagogy emphasised rote learning and mastering the texts. Exams played a crucial role in schooling and in certifying scholars.

As the Tsarist autocracy realised the need for reform and expansion of literacy to facilitate both industrialisation and building of a modern state, it sought to extend primary education. This was to be done in such a way as to spread literacy among the peasantry, without in anyway challenging the hold of the aristocracy and the urban elite over higher education. These half-hearted attempts at extending primary education without enabling social mobility has led many scholars to argue that Tsarist Russia was well on its way to universalisation and modernisation of education but for the interruption caused by the War and Revolution. Indeed it is being argued that the Soviet education did not mark any break vis a vis Tsarism. Even if one were to concede that access to primary education had widened considerably in the last decades of Tsarism, the fact remains that the educational barriers to social mobility remained very much in place and Tsarism was not prepared to countenance any challenge to the privileged position of the ruling classes. (PL Alston, Education and the State in Tsarist Russia, Stanford, 1969, and Ben Eklof, 'Russia and the Soviet Union: Schooling, Citizenship and the Reach of the State, 1870–1945', in Laurence Brockliss, Mass Education and the Limits of State Building, 2012)

The two major issues that the Tsarist education system threw up were democratisation of educational administration so that the different 'stakeholders' like the teachers, pupils, parents and local communities had a voice in it, and restructuring the school system

in such a way as to remove the social barriers that Tsarist autocracy had placed between primary to secondary and higher education.

Soviet Power and Education

When the new Soviet Government was named on the day following the revolution, Lunacharsky was to head the newly established Commissariat of Enlightenment. The incipient Soviet Education Commissariat faced resistance from the old bureaucrats and teachers and had to restore the rudiments of school system. However this would not be a return to the old system, but the setting up of a democratic system. In fact, democratisation of school education was foremost on the agenda. Lunacharsky declared, "*The State Education Commission is certainly not a central power directing educational institutions. On the contrary, all school affairs must be handed over to the organs of local self government. The independent action of… workers, soldiers and peasants' cultural educational organisations must achieve full autonomy*" (cited in S Fitzpatrick, Commissariat of Enlightenment, p. 26).

Anatoly Lunacharsky, First Commissar of Education of the USSR, after the victory of the October Revolution.

During the first decade of its existence, the Commissariat did not have the bureaucratic structure or funds to act as a central directorial organisation. It saw its work primarily as a body laying down policies, developing models and suggestions and enacting necessary laws and regulations. Implementation was left to the local Soviets which were supposed to have the actual control over the schools and also the requisite funds. During the first years of the revolution when the old state structure was being demolished and new systems were being created with both central directives and spontaneous initiatives from below, the task which took priority was democratisation.

Democratisation was to be achieved by the creation of 'Educational Soviets' elected by all residents of a locality. The central commissariat was to function without any subordinate organ under its authority. This would place maximum responsibility and initiative with the masses. Initially the educational soviets were to be the controlling bodies at the local levels. There was much debate whether this was desirable particularly in view of the fact that majority of the population was composed of illiterate peasants whose trust in the Church was deep rooted. It was decided by June 1918 that these elected bodies would act as 'advisory and controlling bodies' alongside of local departments of education. Besides elected representatives of the people, it was also to consist of elected representatives of teachers, pupils and intelligentsia. (A Lunacharsky, On Education, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1981, p. 272.)

Incidentally the anxiety about the priests retaining a hold was a real one. The decree on separation of religion from school and removal of the Bible from school curriculum (20 Jan 1918 decree 'On freedom of conscience, the church and religious orders' – on separation of the Church from the State and school from the Church) did not go down well with a large number of rural communities who wanted the local priests to teach the Bible in the schools. In fact many rural communities passed resolutions authorising the local priest to teach the Bible.

The Soviet power also had to confront the hostility of the middle-class teaching community and the unions which sided with the Provisional Government. Lunacharsky made serious attempts to bring over the teachers to helping the Soviet government restore and reform school education, but was consistently repulsed. The teachers of Moscow and Petrograd went on a long strike between De-

cember 1917 and March 1918 refusing to work for an 'usurper' government. Repeated appeals from the government fell on deaf ears. This earned them the wrath of mass of workers and their Soviets. Lunacharsky pointed out in a speech in August 1918: "*A profound hostility and misunderstanding opened up between the teachers and the people. It became necessary to postpone reform of the schools, to map out ways of achieving it which would by-pass the progressive teachers and rely on the action of the people themselves*." (Lunacharsky, On Education, p. 14.)

As even threats of mass dismissal did not deter the teachers, the Commissariat called for election of teachers by the Soviets and asked the old teachers to submit themselves to a process of re-election (or reappointment) by the Educational Soviets or the local soviets. ('Decree on the elective nature of of all teaching posts and the posts in the administration of education' 7 Feb 1918.) The continued resistance of the teacher's union forced the Soviet Trade Unions to dissolve it and eventually set up a new union.

A third dimension of democratisation of schools was student activism. Children of all ages could not but be deeply stirred by the transformations taking place all around them, the excitement of revolution and civil war and the angst of NEP. Especially the children of the working classes and peasantry who were able to emerge from the shadows of the middle class were aroused into political action. The Bolshevik party sought to channelize their energies by organising the Komsomols for the adolescent children and Pioneer movement for the still younger. These organisations took upon themselves the task of keeping vigilance and ensuring that the revolution did not lose its way. Lively debates on how to safeguard themselves from the bourgeois influences and how to cultivate proletarian and revolutionary spirit became the order of the day. The students found their new-found freedom to criticise their teachers and management of the school. This was to some encouraged to counter the right-wing sympathies of the teachers. The Commissariat too had called for 'Pupils' self-government' which led to the formation of class committees and school committees of students and meetings to discuss various issues pertaining to the school and current developments. These meetings usually turned against the teachers and headmasters and also against fellow students who were tried and punished for errant behaviour. The Commissariat and the

Party often chided them for excessive belligerence and unwarranted interference in school management.

Even as student and youth activism sprang up across the country, many communist educators like A.S. Makarenko, Shatsky etc. tried to develop processes and institutions which embodied responsible 'self-governance' by children. Democratic principles of collective functioning like formulating rules of behaviour through discussion, abiding by them, entrusting leadership responsibilities by rotation, abiding by their decisions while retaining the right to review them in meetings etc. were tried out in practice.

Democratisation of education also took the form of unprecedented public participation in debates on educational issues and the formation of organisations by teachers, students and others. A large number of journals came to be published in which educationists, teachers and students debated issues and narrated their experiences. All these fed into public policy formulations and greatly influenced changes in those policies. In addition the popular student and teacher organisations conducted campaigns around key issues which often were critical of the policies being pursued by the Commissariat of Education or the Soviets. However, this space got considerably reduced during phases of purges and 'Cultural Revolution' when right-wing or even independent viewpoints were treated as 'bourgeois' and victimised.

Structural Reforms in the Period of 'War Communism'

Among the early reforms undertaken was the abolition of exams and the system of awarding marks and certificates. This was followed by the introduction of co-education of the sexes. After nearly a year of intense debate, the Commissariat announced its policy and programme for the future of Soviet Education in 30th September 1918 (Declaration and Statement on Unified Labour School). Education was to be 'free, equal, compulsory and universal' from the age of 8 to 17. Education was to be unified in the sense that there would be a single system of education in place of the myriad of schools (parish, church, agricultural schools, Realschule, commerce schools, boys' gymnasium, comprehensive secondary schools, girls' gymnasium, and so on). There would be a five-year primary section followed by a four-year secondary education. This was to be a "*single, uninterrupted staircase. All children must enter the same type of school and begin their education alike*

and all have the right alike to go up the ladder to its highest rungs." Henceforth, children passing from one level would automatically get admission into the higher level. This broke the structural barriers erected to prevent children of lower social classes and girls from entering institutions of higher learning and created the basis of common schooling for all children.

The Declaration on preschool education of November 1917 stated that all public education of children must start in the first few months of life. It also stated that pre-school education was to be organically linked with the entire network of educational structure. Pre-school education was considered important not only to prepare children for primary education but as a device to free women of much domestic drudgery and socialising child care. Pre-school education on a large scale was inaugurated in 1919. Eventually the Soviet Union was to build one of the most effective and universal pre-school child care and education systems for children in the age group of 3 to 6 years.

Secondary education remained in focus due to the access it gave to higher education, white collar jobs and positions of leadership in the Soviet society. The Soviet rule resorted to a policy of 'positive discrimination' in favour of such children. It was decided that children of Communists, workers, peasants etc were to be given priority in admissions.

The schools were to function on all days of the week for nine months (with an additional month of open air camps). Every week a day and a half was to be spent on clubs and excursions and a meal was to be served everyday. Children were also to be supplied with clothing.

The 'labour' component of the policy had been much debated and a working understanding gave it a threefold meaning: it was to be activity based and not simply scholastic or bookish; secondly, teaching was to be done with and through productive labour and finally the productive labour was not to be confined to one trade or industry but would introduce the students to a wide range of modern production processes and technology ('polytechnical education'). Teaching was to be activity based, with minimal use of textbooks, without any homework, examination or punishment.

The curriculum to be followed was still not well defined. At the elementary level it included mother tongue, mathematics, besides 'encyclopaedia of culture based on labour process'. In higher levels

this was to include sociology based on evolution of social process (social evolution based on modes of production?). Aesthetic education and gymnastics too were to be part of the curriculum. The educationists in the Commissariat preferred a classroom process which did not divide children very strictly into age-based classes but mixed groups taking up project work, preferably based on productive labour. It also was against a curriculum which was compartmentalised into disciplinary areas like history or geography or math. Instead it visualised an integrated thematic learning centred around productive labour. School was to function as a living collective, with clear collective purpose and vision and communal decision-making. These were considered the basis of the creation of a new Soviet and Communist individuals and society.

Despite all the debates, these documents remained mere pious wishes. The conditions of revolution, civil war and extreme resource constraints had disrupted the functioning of the schools and the setting up of new schools. Enrolment of students and salaries of teachers had sunk much below the pre-war level. The commissariat did not have any mechanism for retraining the teachers in the new ideas relating to education and pedagogy. Nor did it have an executive arm to implement its own orders. These were to be implemented by the local soviets. Thus when Krupskaya toured the provinces in 1919 she found she was confronted everywhere with opposition to the new decrees and poor implementation and sheer lack of understanding of what was being suggested. Ideas like Labour School was interpreted to mean getting children to do some useful work like washing clothes, cleaning the toilets, cutting fire wood and transporting water. The teachers, still bitter after the long strike and travails of re-election, opposed most of the progressive orders from the Commissariat. The two main ideas of democratisation and curricular reforms were yet to be realised on the ground. It was apparent that the Commissariat had to exercise a more decisive leadership in both curricular and organisational matters.

Nevertheless the year 1919 was to be an important year for Soviet education. Recognising the need to strengthen mass literacy and mass education as a primary objective of Soviet power, a decree passed in December 1919 ‘On elimination of illiteracy’ made it mandatory for soviet citizens under 50 years of age to attend literacy classes and become literate. A massive campaign for imparting literacy was undertaken and it met with a historic success. 1919 was

also the year in which the 'rabfaks' or four-year secondary school faculty for workers were established to enable drop-out worker youth to acquire formal education. In the same year the rudiments of kindergartens were also established which were to play a very important role in bringing about universalisation of elementary education. Another major achievement of the Soviet power during the Civil War period was to address the problem of children rendered homeless due to the turmoil. By 1922 more than four lakh homeless children had been brought into residential colonies which became experimental grounds for innovative educators like A.S. Makarenko.

The Nationalities

The USSR consisted of some developed non-Russian nationalities like the Ukraine and Georgia with an urban proletariat and intelligentsia. They were quick to take charge of their educational matters and even though in constant debate with the Russian Commissariat, they were in tune with the emerging perspectives in education. However, there were a large number of Central Asian and Far Northern republics and regions which were less developed. Most of the Central Asian republics were just emerging from pastoral nomadism and chiefdom with strong patriarchies and Islamic clerical control. The far north was largely dependent upon migrant hunting and gathering and limited nomadic animal herding with their own shamans. In the last phase of its colonial control the Tsarist multinational aristocracy aggressively pursued a policy of Russification of these nationalities, forcing the Russian language and culture on them.

Their incorporation into the USSR as 'socialist' nationalities meant that the union government had an obligation to foster social change in these societies, which required confronting patriarchy, chiefdom and the clergy. The Soviet government to begin with reversed the Tsarist policy and called for education in the native languages. The problem was that schooling in most of these nationalities, if it existed, was under the control of Islamic *Mektebs*. The policy of separating religion from public education required the spread of secular modern school networks in these societies, which ensured the participation of all children including girls. This was a difficult task, not only because the personnel and the schools had to be created from scratch, but also because most of these languages lacked a

script. The first years of Soviet government was spent in developing scripts for these languages with the help of linguists using Cyrillic and Roman scripts. Anna Louise Strong, the American journalist who visited the USSR in the early 1920s, was effusive on this issue: *"In the Russia of the Revolution, there are schools carried on in sixty different languages, and textbooks printed in all of them. Some ten or twelve of these languages had first to be reduced to writing. This programme of teaching the new citizens of the soviets is based on a definite programme of equal chance for all races*." (A.L. Strong, *First time in History: Two years of Russia's New Life*, New York 1924.)

J. Dewey, who also visited the USSR during the same period, was equally impressed: "*Aside from immediate educational results, one is impressed with the idea that the scrupulous regard for cultural independence characteristic of the Soviet régime is one of the chief causes of its stability, in view of the non-communist beliefs of most of these populations. Going a little further, one may say that the freedom from race- and color-prejudice characteristic of the régime is one of the greatest assets in Bolshevist propaganda among Asiatic peoples."* This he contrasted with the racism and chauvinism characteristic of European colonial policies. (John Dewey, *Impressions of Soviet Russia and the revolutionary world*, New York, 1929.)

In Kazakhstan for example, despite the network of mektebs the pre-revolutionary literacy level (1916) was only 2 to 4%. After its incorporation into the USSR in 1920s an extensive system of education encompassing pre-school, primary and secondary schools was constructed, and the higher education system was established for the first time in Kazakhstan. All educational institutions were state owned and controlled and offered education free of charge. The priority in the early 1920s was liquidation of illiteracy and universalising access to education. Educational policies were drafted by the Kazakh Party (Alash) consisting mostly of communist intelligentsia, which helped to develop a Roman script for the language in place of the old Arabic script in 1929. (Scripts were developed for a number of minority languages of Kazakhstan too.) The first text books were produced and teachers trained. Subsequently, general primary education was implemented in Kazakhstan, education being provided in the languages of all the ethnic nationalities residing in the territory of Kazakhstan.

It has been charged that the USSR pushed for Roman or Cyrillic script so as to prevent the use of Arabic, which may have enabled a Pan-Islamic mobilisation. This is said to have resulted in a loss of access to classical literature generated by the traditional scholars of Central Asia, of such civilizational centres as Bokhara and Samarkand. Likewise it has also been suggested that the Soviet authorities consciously consolidated more languages in Central Asia than there were, again to prevent nationalistic mobilisations like the Pan-Turkic movement. Even if this were true we need to appreciate the potential dangers of Pan-Islamic or Pan Turkic movements in the Inter-War period.

Experimentation with Ideas of Progressive and Polytechnical Education

As the Civil War drew to a close and the Soviet power launched the New Economic Policy, the economy gradually began to revive and the Commissariat had the peace to carry forward its programmes. Funds were still a problem as the Central Commissariat and the local Soviets were on strappy budgets. Hence the schools had to charge a fee on students from primary to higher level between 1922 and 1927. Even though the fee in primary schools was abolished in 1927, it was retained in secondary and higher educa-

Nadezhda Krupskaya, Great Bolshevik personality and Soviet educator

tion. Concessions were given on the basis of student's class background. Financial considerations also severely constrained the prospects of universalising education across the country in terms of opening new schools, appointing teachers, training teachers and providing instructional materials to schools.

However, the NEP period also saw the stabilisation of experimentation in curricular and pedagogical matters. The Academic Council (called GUS) of the Commissariat brought into its fold the leading educationists of Russia – both Marxists and non-Marxists like Blonsky and Shatsky – in order to develop a curriculum for the primary and secondary schools. The primary objective of the Commissariat and the GUS was to develop a common and universal schooling for all children irrespective of trade or class, and to give all future citizens a common basic education. This was not easy as the pressure for immediate employability and the ideal of learning from local context pushed education into old segmented frameworks. Hence schools for white collar jobs, for training skilled workers in different trades, schools focussing on agriculture, and schools for training state and party leaders, were in great demand. There were also pressures to create special schools for children talented in music, mathematics etc. Even as such requirements were being met on the ground, the Commissariat sought to break free of this 'caste' structuring and create a genuinely common schooling which provided all children with a common grounding. While there was less debate over primary curriculum, the implementation was not easy as the teachers used to old methods had little sympathy for the new ideas and did not feel comfortable with them. However, the bone of contention was the secondary curriculum as it was directly related to the employability and access to higher education.

There were a number of currents of curricular reform which converged on some important points but diverged on a number of key issues. On the one hand there were the well-articulated ideas relating to Progressive Education advocated by John Dewey in the USA which sought to bring school and 'life' close to each other and advocated real life productive work as an essential component of education but disapproving of teaching 'specialist knowledge' based on disciplines in elementary level. Among the Russian inspirations, 19th century Russian educationists Konstantin Ushinsky, Pavel Blonsky and Stanislav Shatsky advocated the principles of integrating productive labour in education and fusion of physical labour,

games, artistic activity, intellectual work, and social and communal living.

Another trend came from working class radicalism which rejected aristocratic education and its emphasis on classical learning. By extension they came to consider all education which placed premium on academic learning as 'bourgeois'. They wanted an education that trained the youth for labour in the factories and gave them a minimum of political education. A similar but somewhat different line of thinking was of those who pressed for linking education to the immediate needs of the economy – in terms of training the requisite number of workers skilled in one or another sphere of production.

Most of the old guard Bolsheviks like Lenin were convinced that the working class cannot bypass the knowledge generated in the past and claim the right to rule. It had to master the 'bourgeois' knowledge and rework it. Thus mere dismissal of academic learning as a relic of class oppression could not be an acceptable policy.

At the very outset in 1920 'Recommended curricula and recommended syllabi' were announced which did away with the Tsarist emphasis on classical languages and Bible. These were replaced by a primary education focussing on Russian, mathematics, Social Science, Life Science, physical and art education. Physics, Chemistry, Geography, and a foreign language were to be added from grade 6^{th} onwards. Quite clearly the earlier classical and religious education of Tsarist gymnasium had been replaced with science. However, these were 'not obligatory and the schools were able to make considerable alterations to them according to local circumstances.' (Lunacharsky, On Education, notes, p. 297-8).

The educationists at GUS were not in favour of the disciplinary structure of primary and secondary education. They worked on the idea of integrating all the subject areas into a composite thematic course which drew from diverse disciplinary areas and also integrated group work and productive work. A new curriculum for four year primary schooling was announced in 1923.

The cornerstone of the new curriculum was the 'complex method', which replaced the teaching of subjects (including reading and writing) with integrated themes. "*These themes were to be socially oriented and related directly to the child's environment and experience of the world. From studying the familiar and domestic in his first school years, the child would progress to a study of the*

*world beyond his own immediate horizons. Each theme was studied under three basic headings: Nature, Society and Labou*r." (S Fitzpatrick, Education and social Mobility in the Soviet Union 1921-1934, p. 20.) The themes were to be such as man, steamboat, sheep, agriculture, day of the female worker, First of May, etc. Each of these was to be studied with reference to nature, labour process and society. Literacy and numeracy were to be acquired not in isolation but in the meaningful context of understanding these themes: "*mastery of skills of speaking, writing, reading, counting and measurement must be closely linked with the study of the real world; and arithmetic and Russian language must not exist in the school as separate subjects*." (Cited in ibid.) Language, math, art and labour were to be treated only as a means to of studying, rather than as ends in themselves. Observation, independent work, excursions, laboratory work and productive work were to be used as methods of teaching and learning. In terms of pedagogy the current favourite were the 'Methods' theory and 'Universal' theory; the former saw the aim of school education as enabling children to 'master methods of perception' rather than acquisition of knowledge. The latter insisted on giving children the freedom to discover knowledge for themselves rather than being told by the teacher or text books.

Krupskaya was the most articulate advocate of 'polytechnical education'. In her 'Theses on Polytechnical schools' (1920) to the First Party Conference on Public Education, she proposed:

"The elementary school (7-12 years) provides general, mathematics and graphic knowledge and teaches pupils how to transform books, mathematics and drawings into instruments of labour. It teaches how to observe, make generalisations, and verify them through experimentation, while providing knowledge of the basic methods of self education and elementary knowledge of reality (study of nature and society). In the elementary school knowledge is acquired through work. Its character must be that of collective participation in the elementary forms of social labour and it must provide elementary work skills…

"The secondary school (13-17) years is concerned with teaching general aspects of production and they are studied in terms of both theory and practice. The most basic branches of production are studied, and particular emphasis is made on a theoretical explanation of practical activities. At the same time the history of labour is studied…"

She had also argued that students would be prepared for streaming only after the completion of the secondary schooling in age 16-17.

To Krupskaya polytechnical education was not a subject to be specially taught but an approach to education which incorporated productive labour in the teaching of all themes and which helped children develop theoretical understanding of labour processes. In this it differed from skill or vocational education which focussed on specific trade-related skills, and from conventional academic education which divorced theoretical-subject studies from productive labour. Engagement with productive labour should be done both within school workshop and also in factories and state farms.

The role of productive labour in education and the nature of such labour was a subject of much lively debate in those eventful years. An early interpretation was to get children to do regular work of the school like chopping wood, carrying water, preparing dinner etc. Lunacharsky rejected such an interpretation. He argued "*that educational value attaches only to work of a specific kind, work through which more and more useful skills are learned, acquired and established, and which also yields an appreciable amount of knowledge gained along the way and just because the child is working*." (Lunacharsky, On Education, pp. 127-8.) The Commissariat recommended work as an educational experience and not work for the sake of carrying on basic tasks of life or for the maintenance of the school. In the early primary stage labour was to overlap with children's play. "*Play is a method of self-education… the whole task of the kindergarten and of the first years at school is to help children to play usefully!... (F)rom play the transition must be made to work, in the widest sense of the word.*" (Lunacharsky, op cit p 97-8.)

The curriculum for secondary grades (grade V to IX) sought to combine the 'complex' method with disciplinary knowledge. Physical and life sciences were grouped under Nature study and Social study with history and literature were put under Society study. Labour became a separate subject focussing on theoretical aspects of production like technology, organisation of production and the history of labour. Language and mathematics continued to be treated as a part of other subject areas. Indeed it was claimed that 'math in itself does not have any educational value in the school'. Subject-based teaching was still discouraged. "*The secondary school exists in order to initiate the student in basic labour and cognitive meth-*

ods and the basic approaches to labour and knowledge of all kinds that he will use later in life." (Cited in S Fitzpatrick, Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union 1921-1934, p. 22.)

The commissariat constantly faced criticism for its pursuit of such radical educational ideas. On the one hand most of the teachers had been trained in the old methods of teaching and did not take easily to the new ideas. The commissariat did not have the resources to organise en masse retraining of the teachers. The progressive ideas were often interpreted as a licence for a lot of aimless activity and little teaching. The result was felt to be a chaos and lowering of the learning levels of children. Institutions of higher learning and employers constantly complained of poor learning by students graduating from the new Soviet schools.

Despite constant debate and changes, there was a broad continuity in curricular and pedagogic matters till 1932. This consisted of rejection of disciplinary boundaries, use of the so-called 'complex' or thematic-project method and engagement with productive work both inside and outside the schools. It was also a period when students and even teachers were freed of bureaucratic controls and were free to plan the work of the school.

With the coming of the First Five-Year plan and collectivisation of agriculture, major upheavals occurred in both the cities and the villages. At this juncture the Party initiated the 'Cultural Revolution'. The students and the youth in general participated with much enthusiasm in this and this was to transform the educational landscape and radically reinterpret the new curriculum and pedagogy initiated by the October Revolution.

The year 1928-29 also saw a change in the leadership of the Commissariat as Lunacharsky resigned over differences on two major issues: one related to shifting of control over technical institutions to the Industry Commissariat and over aggressive purge of students belonging to children of disenfranchised social groups from schools and institutions of higher learning. The Komsomols had been critical of what they considered to be rightist and bureaucratic handling of educational affairs by Lunacharsky, mainly due to his defence of general education at the secondary level. The Cultural Revolution was marked by an aggressive literacy campaign both in the town and country and also a move towards activation of the 'educational soviets' drawing upon the initiative of workers, teacher activists and Komsomol personnel.

Lunacharsky was replaced by A.S. Bubnov who inducted some of the more radical intellectuals like V.N. Shulgin into academic leadership. They had been complaining that while Soviet adults were experiencing the revolution, the children were being deprived of this experience as they continued to go to school which functioned in much the same hierarchical way as in pre-revolutionary times. Shulgin was of the opinion that children should be schooled in real life rather than in classrooms; that the school should 'wither away' under conditions of socialism and the alienation experienced by children in bourgeois schools should come to an end. He believed that social environment played a great role in shaping individuals and hoped that exposure to revolutionary social environment of post-revolutionary Russia would facilitate the shaping of future socialist human beings. This meant that children should become part and parcel of the construction of socialism and its struggles instead of spending their time within the four walls of the class room and studying books under the tutelage of an authoritarian teacher. He advocated that participating in social-political campaigns for literacy, collectivisation of agriculture and industrialisation should become integral to the 'project method' of teaching in the schools.

In 1930 the Congress on Polytechnical education resolved to link even primary schools with neighbouring factories, collective or state farms. These in turn were to become the patrons of the schools, introducing the children to production process and also using children's labour. This had varying success as many factories were reluctant to take on this additional responsibility while others short of hands welcomed it. Use of child labour became rampant in collective and state farms, which could always do with some extra hands. As a result children spent less hours in the schools learning and more hours out of school. Out of school work not only included work in the factories and fields, but also active participation in literacy campaigns where children had to mobilise and teach reluctant adults of the towns and villages.

Within the schools too traditional methods of teaching and even text books were looked down upon as relics of Tsarist schools. Instead it became fashionable to talk of 'loose-leaf books' – or worksheets to be made as per requirement by the teacher and handed over to the students for self-study/task assignment.

On the ground itself the actual realties were complex and diverse, ranging from enthusiastic adoption of the new ideas, selective implementation and even more radical experimentation to conservative continuation of old methods of text book and subject-based teaching. All said and done the students got a first hand experience of revolutionary struggles being waged in the real life outside, during those heady days of debate, experimentation and mass engagement in struggles over industrialisation and collectivisation.

This could not last long though. 1931-32 the Central Committee of the Party and Stalin personally addressed issues relating to school education and sought to restore order and normalcy in the schools. The Central Committee took note of the fact that teaching in schools had been adversely affected by a number of developments: the complex-project method which rejected teaching of subjects in a systematic manner, the denial of class room discipline and authority of the teacher, the rejection of text books, excessive political engagement of students outside of the schools, constant purging of students and teachers from non-worker-peasant backgrounds… etc. This had led to what was seen as insufficient learning outcomes on the part of the graduates of schooling. The Central Committee moved in decisively with several resolutions between 1931 and 1935.

The 25th August 1931 Resolution called attention to the serious state of elementary education: "*it does not give a sufficient amount of general knowledge, and does not adequately solve the problem of training fully literate persons with a good grasp of the bases of the sciences (physics, chemistry, mathematics, national language, geography etc) for entrance to technicums and higher schools*." It denounced the 'complex method' and also the idea of deploying children outside of school in the name of 'withering away of the school'. It called for restoration of teaching of these basic subjects and introduction of firm time tables. The Central Committee resolution still stuck to the principle of Polytechnical education. However, at the same time, it wanted to ensure the primacy of subject teaching.

The 1932 resolutions were even more far reaching: the practice of work brigades being sent to factories, and state farms were to be discontinued and instead class room teaching was to be the pivot of schooling. Students were to be regularly examined in each subject before being promoted. School discipline was to be restored and

students who persisted in insulting teachers or violated school administration's instructions were to be expelled.

In 1933 the Central Committee came down heavily upon the loose-leaf text books and the journal textbooks. It ridiculed this regime and called for publishing firm textbooks; in fact common text books were to be published for all the constituent republics for all subjects except the 'local region studies'.

To Krupskaya's chagrin this emphasis on formal learning of subjects was accompanied by gradual weakening of the 'polytechnical' component. The schools were ill equipped, and the teachers ill prepared to handle the requirements of polytechnical education and the factories under pressure to complete their plan targets were not keen on entertaining mass of children. Polytechnical education was given a formal burial in 1937.

A few days before the voting was to take place in the Central Committee on this issue, Krupskaya wrote a passionate letter to A.A. Zhdanov

"No matter how poorly organised labour instruction in the schools may have been, it charged children with enthusiasm and disciplined them,…

"And now, when the new Constitution is being adopted, when socialism is victorious in our Land of Soviets, when all the prerequisites have been created for carrying out the behests of Marx, Engels and Lenin concerning polytechnical schools such a decision (of abolishing labour instruction in schools) *should not be taken. Why make it possible for those who opposed this development to say that schools are for studies and not labour and that the Central Committee has decided to abolish labour instruction in the schools?"*(N Krupskaya, On Labour-Oriented Education and Instruction, Moscow, p. 110-111.)

The Soviet schools thus gradually abandoned the principle of incorporating productive labour into general elementary education in the form of polytechnics. These were cardinal tenets for Marxists and socialists down the ages and their abandoning in favour of bifurcation of vocational and general education appeared as a betrayal of those principles. In this, some theoretical and practical issues need to be addressed squarely. The idea of communist education was evolved, keeping in mind a functioning Communist Society in which the distinction between manual and physical labour as well the very idea of division of labour would have disappeared. To what

extent was it viable in a society in transition to industrial socialism from a feudal agrarian society? This society in actual fact needed both technical experts specialising in their subject areas as well as skilled workers at a rapid rate. The polytechnical approach did not seem to deliver either. Indeed what exactly the polytechnical approach would be was not really clarified besides the assertion that it was not to be narrow craft-based and should combine both theory and practice of a wide range of modern industrial production. At best of times this meant a couple of hours of work in the field or a workshop or kitchen gardening or woodcraft. This was largely left to the schools to figure out. The solutions worked out turned out to be far from satisfactory, as they tended to focus on imparting techniques of definite traditional crafts. Disciplinary knowledge is extremely specialised requiring years of intensive study and likewise industrial work requires years of training in a field. Could there be a watered-down version of both which could be taught in schools? Would it be meaningful?

Similarly, with the resources available to an economy emerging from war and destruction and trying to rapidly industrialise, without any prior network of modern mass school worth the name, was it possible to set up schools equipped with full-fledged 'polytechnical' workshops and trained technical teachers who could combine 'theoretical and practical knowledge'? Given the higher value accorded to mental labour and white collar professions, would the workers and peasants be content with minimal academic learning and experience of industrial activity? Most importantly, can productive work be defined narrowly as work with machines producing tangible products alone? As we enter a new era of labour and production and struggle against capitalism, these questions require a reassessment and the enormous experience of the USSR needs to be reviewed anew. (See also, Harold Entwistle, Antonio Gramsci, Conservative Schooling for Radical Politics, Routledge, New York, 2010, pp. 94-99.)

The Problem of Streaming and Secondary Education

Democratic societies based on division of labour and stratification have faced the problem of determining the age and stage for terminating common schooling and commencing streaming to prepare children for specific careers. This is not a simple question of age appropriateness, as it is critically linked to the question of 'so-

cial mobility' or right of all children to access education that will enable them to enter the most remunerative profession or career of their choice.

The USSR as we know was not exactly an egalitarian or classless society. As was repeatedly pointed out, it had classes (workers and peasants) and there was the division between mental and manual labour. One may add in hindsight two more categories of gender differences and differences between nationalities and communities. Add to these the children of disenfranchised social classes – the aristocracy, priesthood, bourgeoisie, the upper middle classes and kulaks. These differences may have been less exploitative but marginalisation and exclusion would have been crucial issues.

White-collar professions in industry and administration were much sought after, but most workers were content to make their children literate and skilled to earn more than what they themselves earned. The Soviet leadership too had its own requirements. It desperately needed a new generation of leadership in industry, economy, administration, intelligentsia, party and society which was proletarian in character and politically committed to socialism. Time and again, the unreliable nature of the old 'bourgeois' special-

Anton Makarenko (back row, second from left), outstanding educator and Soviet pedagogue, with Maxim Gorky (front row, centre) and former members of the children's commune

ists was demonstrated even though the Soviet government had no alternative but to rely on them till a new generation took its place. Proletarian dictatorship in fact was endangered if the proletariat failed to educate itself and assume leadership positions within a very short time. Given a long history of educational deprivation, this was turning out to be a very challenging task. In addition the rapidly expanding soviet industries and townships needed an ever increasing number of skilled workers.

The first decade after the revolution thus was spent on intensive debates over the need for and the nature of secondary education. Indeed, whether it should be under the control of the Commissariat of Education or Industry was also a matter of much debate.

During the Tsarist times, students wishing to enter technical and academic higher education (termed VUZys) has to pass out of the gymnasiums. This effectively was accessible only to the aristocracy, bourgeoisie, and salaried middle class. The working class could only aspire for training in trade schools called 'technicums' devoted to specific trades or crafts. The initial reforms towards 'Unified Labour Schools' sought to replace the technicums with general secondary schools which taught, besides other subjects, the basic production system in modern industry (polytechnical education). This was not successful due to the resistance of the industrial employers and also working-class parents who favoured brief training in a trade before children took employment. Thus a system parallel to the general education continued. This was the vocational education line with trade apprenticeships and technicum to which children could go after completing seven years of schooling.

The Ukrainian Commissariat tried to solve this problem by converting secondary education into a vocational education after which students could either enter employment as workers or enter higher education institutions and technicums. The Russian Commissariat was opposed to this as it meant streaming children at the age of 14 or 15.

An alternative viewpoint was that of the Komsomols, which advocated a seven-year schooling to be followed by a few years of work experience before students applied for higher education. Higher education was to be open only to about 10-15% of school graduates and the rest were to acquire proficiency on the job. The Komsomols were opposed to the Commissariat's proposal of three-

year general secondary education and termed it a return to the system of Tsarist gymnasiums.

A new set of institutions called FZUs or Factory Apprenticeship Schools run at the expense of factories and teaching basic industrial skills along with a minimal general education emerged in 1924. In the rural areas, Peasant Youth Schools linked to state farms were set up parallel to the FZUs. Entrance into both of these was open for graduates of seven-year general schooling. In the same year 'vocational bias' was sought to be introduced into secondary school education with different streams for clerks, accounting, teaching etc. These were widely welcomed by the Komsomols and Soviets and trade unions though they were opposed by the Commissariat as a return to forms of old trade schools and reinforcing caste stratification in education (as white-collar employee children went to general schools and worker's children went to trade schools) and a return to early streaming.

This created a peculiar problem for the secondary general education institutions favoured by the Commissariat. While all children attended primary schools for about four years, in 1927-28, more than 50% of working class children dropped out of schooling to enter work. Only 3% of the children of workers continued into class IX and X. In contrast, most children of white-collar employees and middle class continued to complete 7-year schooling and more than 23% completed ten-year secondary schooling. Effectively this meant that only the middle classes cared to complete secondary education. Yet most of the workers' children who continued their education went to secondary schools rather than FZUs or other trade schools. This meant that those workers who could afford to educate their children valued general education more than narrow trade schools.

The issue of control over technicums, FZUs and institutions of higher education was a bone of contention between the industry commissariat (which eventually employed the graduates) and the Education Commissariat. After much debate and discussion control was transferred to the industry department in 1929; however, the principle of combination of general education and broad-based industrial training was accepted by the industry department too. This had been the argument of the education commissariat as it had been very critical of narrow specialisation which turned out 'conditioned labourers behaving like efficient cogs in the industrial machine' in

place of workers who were masters of production and functioned as the ruling class. (Manifesto on Labour Training of the Education Commissariat, 1928.)

In 1930, as the Soviet economy was in a position to invest substantially in education, schooling was made free and compulsory for all children above 7 or 8 years of age. Four years of schooling in the rural areas and seven years in urban areas became compulsory for all children. (Seven-year schooling for all was made compulsory in 1949.)

As part of a string of crucial decisions to restructure the Soviet education system, the Central Committee resolved in August 1932 to restore the secondary school (classes VIII to X) as a part of the general schooling system to prepare students entering higher educational institutions whether technical or academic. The system of education which eventually stabilised was four years of universal compulsory primary education followed by three years of middle schooling compulsory in the urban areas and optional in the rural areas (till the post-war period); streaming was initiated in the eighth year of schooling. Students keen on higher education continued in the general education schools for another three years (total of ten years); students who wished to enter a profession went to the factory training centres (FZU) for short-term apprenticeship courses. Perhaps the vast majority preferred to take up short professional and technical courses for six months to one year before taking up a job.

Thus the revolutionary education policy achieved its stated aim of instituting 'single, uninterrupted staircase of unified labour school' combining both academic and vocational dimensions only partially. Universal access was ensured for a seven-year elementary education but streaming took place after this, separating opportunities for low-paid vocations for the majority and high-paid academic and technical professions for relatively lesser numbers.

However this was not to maintain a social hierarchy based on privilege but to service an egalitarian society in which the majority of workers and peasants wanted a vocational qualification with minimal general education. As we shall see in the following section, concerted campaigns were undertaken in 1927-31 to educate workers and peasants as technical experts and develop a strata of 'proletarian intelligentsia' with much success.

Creating a proletarian intelligentsia: Rabfaks, Positive Discrimination and *Vydvizhenstsy*

Two powerful sociological concerns worked to shape the educational policies and practices during the first decade of the revolution. The working people, especially the workers and poor peasants, looked for opportunities for subsidised or free education which will enable them to access more remunerative employment as skilled workers or in white-collar administrative jobs now being opened up for non-aristocratic and non-middle class youth. There was thus an intense pressure to open up higher education to such youth in preference over children of the middle classes. Immediately after the revolution, admission to institutions of higher learning were thrown open to all, ending the monopoly of gymnasium graduates. However this did not solve the problem as applicants from labouring backgrounds did not have the requisite academic competence to cope with higher education curriculum. It therefore became necessary to introduce mechanisms for preparing them academically for higher education.

A second consideration related to creating a new intelligentsia drawn from workers and peasants. Given the fact that a large segment of the working class did not have formal education, the Soviet power had to rely on 'bourgeois' specialists of the old order. It was fairly clear that unless the cream of the working class acquired requisite education it cannot really consolidate its hold over administration and management of the economy and polity. However, it was not possible to wait for the fresh generation of worker children to finish schooling and higher education.

As a result of the convergence of both concerns, Rabfaks (Workers Faculties) were set up to give an educational course to adult workers so that they could acquire the requisite competence to enter institutions of higher learning, both technical and academic (called VUZs). It was open to all workers who were literate and could do the four mathematical operations. The Rabfaks were established as departments in the VUZs with the express objective of preparing working-class youth for entrance into the VUZs. The Rabfaks gave a two to three year preparation which would be equivalent to secondary education of five years. The Rabfaks became immensely popular and in a short period of time prepared a very large number of highly motivated workers between 16 and 40

years of age to enter institutions of higher education. Admissions were given to those recommended by trade unions, party committees, factory committees and the Soviets. While it was initially imagined that the Rabfaks were a temporary arrangement to prepare workers to enter higher education institutions, which would be redundant once the normal schooling system was in place, the Rabfaks' role dramatically increased during the industrialisation drive. It continued almost up to 1940 and became a model for post-revolutionary societies in Eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc.

Even though peasants were eligible to enter the rabfaks, Schools of Peasant Youth were established in 1923 to give secondary education to peasant youth with a special emphasis on small-scale farming techniques.

Early Soviet educational institutions almost till the middle of 1930s saw periodic purging of students in secondary schools and higher education institutions besides a policy of preferred admission to children of working class and peasant parents. During the early 1920s, a major purge of students of such disenfranchised social classes was undertaken in the institutions of higher education (VUZs) in 1924. The impact on social composition of students can be seen in this table:

Year	Proletarian	Peasant	White Collar	Disenfranchised
1923-24	15%	24%	24%	37%
1927-28	26%	24%	40%	10%

Clearly working class children and white collar employee's children took a lion's share of what the erstwhile privileged classes lost.

The Shakhty affair (1928), in which the 'bourgeois' experts employed in Soviet enterprises appeared to have engaged in activities of sabotage, brought home the need to build a new intelligentsia drawn from the working class and committed to the ideals of socialism. This was also the period of initiation of the Five-year Plans and collectivisation of agriculture in which the extensive destructive role of the dispossessed kulaks similarly engaged in sabotage. The April Plenum of the Party (1928) urged for proletarian experts and decried the fact that the existing education being divorced from practical experience turned out unemployable technicians. The Plenum resolved: "*the party must bring forward Red proletarian spe-*

cialists to replace elements from the milieu of bourgeois specialists which are alien to socialist construction. That is one of the basic tasks of economic construction, and, unless it is successfully accomplished, socialist industrialisation cannot be carried out." (Cited in Fitzpatrick, Education and Social Mobility, p 119.)

It was not enough to hope for the training of fresh graduates. Stalin placed greater faith in providing experienced workers with education in scientific theory. He wanted experienced workers to be sent to institutions of higher education to take courses which help them to fortify their practical expertise with theoretical foundations. *"*Our country has entered the phase of development when the *working class must create its own industrial and technical intelligentsia*, capable of standing up for its own interests in production, as the interests of the ruling class. *The industrial and technical intelligentsia of the working class will be recruited not only from those who have had higher education, but also from practical workers in our factories, from the skilled workers, from the working-class cultural forces in the mills, factories and mines."* (June 1931, Stalin, *Collected Works*, XIII, Moscow 1954, pp 68-70.)

The Shakhty affair prompted another round of purge of 'socially alien' elements, this time not only from higher education institutions, but even in primary schools. On the positive side, right from 1928 autumn admissions, special efforts were made to induct experienced workers into higher technical institutions. 65% seats went to workers and special courses were organised to help them to cope with the curriculum. Likewise the seats reserved for Rabfak graduates were drastically increased and new institutions were set up to train more worker candidates. This campaign was called 'vydvizhenie' (promotion of workers).

Fitzpatrick has convincingly argued that this campaign was not so much to create a technically qualified strata for industrialisation, as to create such a strata from among workers. At the time of the revolution most of the workers had been illiterate and the literacy campaigns had spread literacy among them, but this clearly was not enough to put the working class in leadership position in the economy and administration and the army. If proletarian class leadership was to be consolidated the working class, especially the most experienced and political among them, had to acquire formal education. Apparently in 1927 only 4% of worker members of the Party had completed secondary education. In the industries most of the directors who had

been promoted from being workers, had only primary education and were badly in need of professional education.

1928 onwards the Party and the trade unions undertook a special campaign to send experienced workers to higher education institutions. More than 150,000 persons of working class/communist origins were sent to these institutions under the *vydvizhenstsy*. To cater to this influx, the number of higher education institutions was increased dramatically from 152 in 1929 to 537 in 1930.

Having achieved the objective of creating a working class intelligentsia and technical specialists, the policy of preferential admission based on social origins was scrapped by 1935. This paved the way for a declaration of complete equality of all citizens of the USSR in the Stalin Constitution irrespective of their background or present status. This was accompanied by a massive expansion of both school and higher education opportunities. Apparently the number of students in middle schools had trebled between 1931 and 1938; students in general secondary education were more than ten times those in 1928. In addition part-time training courses for adult workers too expanded considerably. All this nullified the need for any further social discrimination in education. Post-secondary technicums registered an expansion of eight times over 1928. The higher education institutions had expanded more than five and a half times over 1928.

With this we end the saga of Soviet educational experiments: it may have lived up only partially to the ideals of 'communist' education as visualised by Marx or Owen, but it succeeded in ending centuries of educational deprivation of the poorest and opening up for them paths for personal advancement and assumption of responsible positions in society. In the process it unleashed the creative potentials of millions of people earlier and elsewhere condemned to servitude and exclusion.

March 2017

Iran

Party of Labor (Toufan)

The October Revolution and the Victory of Leninism

Its Effects on the International Communist Movement and the Communist Movement in Iran

The October Revolution and the Victory of Leninism

This year we celebrate the centenary of the great October Revolution in former Russia. We celebrate the birth of a new society and a new world, called the "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

For the first time in history this revolution created a state of a new type (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and a new, different form of democracy (democracy for the working people and the working class, the dictatorship of the proletariat).

Despite the fact that it was long ago, the setbacks inclding the coup d'état of Nikita Khrushchev and the destruction of socialist society by the bourgeoisie, and thus the consequent temporary reversal of socialism, socialism is always relevant and is the only possible alternative for a better future for humanity. The October Revolution is always alive, and it is never absent from the mind of people nor from the history of the world, despite the temporary setbacks.

We find the objective conditions of this revolution in previous Russian history since these actions led to changes of its social, economic and political conditions, and the consequent class struggle before the revolution.

"At the head of the October Revolution was the Russian working class, tempered in fighting, to which was added the poor peasantry, which constituted the great majority of the population; on the other hand, in the camp of the enemy was the Russian bourgeoisie, relatively very weakened due to the intensity of the previous struggles, poorly organized and with little experience." Finally, "at the head of the working class was – after breaking with other sectors such as the social-democrats – the Bolshevik Party." (Quotes from J. Stalin).

All these objective conditions would not have led to the revolution, or at best it would have happened much later, had there not

been the Bolshevik Party to prepare, organize and lead the process, with the political, ideological and organizational plan of the great leader Lenin and his comrades.

"Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular." "Lenin applied the laws of Marxism to the concrete situation of his time (and the concrete situation of Russia), particularly following the line of Marx and Engels" (J. Stalin, *Principles of Leninism*)

What happened in the period between the death of Engels (1895) and the October Revolution? There had intensified the merger between industrial capital and bank capital (the financial oligarchy) with the appearance of financial groups and the cartels.

Lenin studied these developments and in the spring of 1917 published some texts with the well-known theses on the highest stage of capitalism (monopoly capitalism), that is, imperialism. These excellent theses of Lenin perfectly characterized the events of the era and paved the way for the victory of the workers, peasants and oppressed peoples. Utilizing these theses, Lenin was preparing the conditions for the victory of the socialist revolution in his own country.

A great achievement of the Leninist theory on the socialist revolution is that, in general, this will first triumph in one or several countries, while the others will remain for some time capitalist or pre-capitalist.

Lenin wrote ("The Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution," 1916) that "The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in different countries. It cannot be otherwise under commodity production. From this it follows irrefutably that socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously in all countries."

But Lenin could not and did not want to wait for the appearance of the socialist revolution in the most economically developed countries. With his comrades he launched a vast and formidable debate within the Party on the political, ideological and organizational level. Under his leadership a Party of a new type was created, the Bolshevik Party. It developed a modern theory adapted to the socialist revolution. Thus Leninism was born.

The outdated and opportunist theses of the period that were rejected by Leninism were the following:

- The struggle of the working class and working people is in the first place an economic struggle, organized in a workers' party, consolidating all kinds of workers.
- After the seizure of power by the working class and working people, the workers' Party will disappear and democracy for everyone will replace the class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat.
- Any kind of party can lead to the dictatorship: the dictatorship of the working class and working people, in place of the dictatorship of the Party.

Bolshevism swept away those theses that came from Menshevism (of the left or right), the Trotskyites or left-wing radicals.

Lenin's theses on the relationship between the masses, classes, parties and leaders are well-known; however, it is evident that they must constantly be restudied.

The truth is that we live in a society in which there are different classes with different interests (antagonistic or not). The class struggle is inevitable and in this struggle one class must prevail over the other. A type of "democracy" or "eternal peace" between these two poles is impossible. The class in power (for example, the proletariat under socialism) must exercise its dictatorship over the bourgeoisie, with all the means that it has, that is, the state (the dictatorship of the proletariat). The socialist October Revolution – with the seizure of political power – made possible the dictatorship of the proletariat and thus freedom and democracy for the vast majority of

the population and thus the disappearance of exploitation of man by man.

The socialist State and the Communist Party are a means for the class struggle. The class struggle does not disappear after the victory of the revolution; it even continues with a greater intensity than before. Having lost power, the bourgeoisie can reorganize, carrying out ideological and cultural battles, and trying to regain power (as was the case in the Soviet Union with the coup organized by Nikita Khrushchev).

The October Revolution was effective in this sense. It took from the bourgeoisie and the feudal lords the means of production; the banks, factories, lands and railways became common property.

The October Revolution gave a strong impetus to the revolutionary proletarian movement throughout the world. It was seen as a key factor not only in the struggle for liberation of the proletariat and its allies (especially the poor peasantry), but also in the movements of liberation and anti-imperialist struggles of the oppressed peoples of the entire planet.

Under the influence of this revolution, a new stage of the international proletarian movement was established, the Leninist stage. After the October Revolution, our world was no longer the same. Communist parties were established all over the world and, with the creation of the Communist International, these parties became a key factor for influencing and changing almost all aspects of society. The theory of Marxism-Leninism spread all over the planet.

The October Revolution owes its principal success to the Bolshevik Party, developed by Lenin. The Bolshevik Party acted as the leader of the working class and constituted its motive force: vigilant, courageous and strictly linked with the theory of Marxism-Leninism.

The opportunists of that period and of today try to ignore or even deny the quality and particular nature of the communist parties, proposing illogical liberal theories and a fraudulent democracy.

We must take care to avoid the errors of the past and recognize the new ones of the present.

Our recommendation to all communists and all revolutionaries: the next socialist revolution must be prepared in a profound, proletarian and Marxist way.

The October Revolution and its effects on the political destiny of Iran.

The democratic and communist movement in Iran was under the influence of the struggles of the social-democrats of Tsarist Russia. The creation of social democratic circles in Iran was under the influence of the Iranians of Baku in Azerbaijan in Tsarist Russia. While they collaborated with the Social-Democrats of Russia, their newspaper, "Iskra," allowed their political and theoretical activities to be known. When the revolution of 1905 of Russia was defeated, the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 to 1911, with the participation of social-democratic nuclei, was carried out in Iran and managed to limit the powers of the Qajar kings. For the first time, a parliament was created in Iran and parliamentary elections were held. The struggles of the Iranian people were then not only under the influence of the Russian Social-Democrats before the October Revolution, but also after the October Revolution, with the profound transformations not only in Russia but also in neighboring Iran.

In May of 1917, after the February Revolution, the Social Democratic Party under the name of "Edalat" (Justice) began its activities. That Party was composed of social-democrats and, after the October Revolution of 1917, in June of 1920 it changed its name to the Communist Party; it organized its first congress in Bandar Anjali, in the department of Guilan. Heidar Amou Oghli, one of the leaders of the constitutional revolution, played an important role in the creation of the Communist Party of Iran and was elected the Party's First Secretary.

The history of the Communist Party of Iran is not separate from the national and anti-imperialist movement of the Iranian people.

With the victory of the Communist Party of Iran, great changes took place in Iran. The unions, under the influence of the activity of the Russian Social-Democrats and then of the Russian Communists, were created and the workers realized that they had rights. With the victory of the October Revolution, a great blow was struck against British imperialism and the reactionaries who collaborated with it, who remained rather weak.

To better understand the situation in Iran, it is worth taking a look at what was happening before the great influence of the October Revolution.

The Colonial Pact of St. Petersburg

Before the First World War, the territory of Iran was the scene of competition between two great imperialist powers at the beginning of the 20th century. Czarist Russia, with a 2,500 km border along the north of Iran, was the great neighboring country. To the south of Iran, British imperialism had colonized India and later Iraq, but it was suspicious of the influence of Russian imperialism in Iran. To safeguard its colonial influence over India, which lay to the east of Iran (Pakistan did not yet exist – Toufan), it tried to colonize Iran in order to protect its interests in India. In this period, German imperialism helped the Ottoman State to build the railway line between Turkey, Baghdad and Hedjaz, and to open the way for its influence in the Persian Gulf and the region colonized by Great Britain. This act constituted a great danger to the colonialist interests of the latter in the region. Therefore, British imperialism established an agreement with Russian imperialism in order to safeguard its colonial interests in Asia. The struggle for the division of Iran between these two imperialist powers culminated in the conclusion of a Pact between them in 1907, called the St. Petersburg Pact. According to the terms of this Pact, Iran was divided in two parts, the north by Russia and the south by Great Britain, and between these two parts was a neutral part to avoid any clash between these two imperialists; in 1915 this intermediate region was also divided between these powers.

That Pact consisted of five paragraphs. It had been concluded without the agreement of Iran, which was at the height of the constitutional revolution in 1906. After the victory of the constitutional revolution in Iran, which was the first democratic revolution in Asia, a parliament was established in Iran. When the deputies were informed of the existence of such a dishonorable Pact, they strongly protested against that Pact and published a note of protest. On September 16, 1907, the imperialists shamelessly informed Iran of the existence of this colonialist Pact. This Pact had been concluded in St. Petersburg and decided on the future of Iran, Afghanistan and other peoples without taking them into account.

Despite Iran's protests against the Pact, its territory was used by the military forces and influence of the Russian and British imperialists, and in the course of the First World War, under the pretext of war against the Ottomans, certain regions of Iran were occupied by

the Russians and the British. The Russians declared that it was "to safeguard their interests."

The October Revolution of 1917, from the first days of its victory, put an end to the Pact and recognized Iran's independence. The Iranian people recognized the fact that the revolutionary proletariat of Russia and the Bolsheviks played an outstanding role, with important elements for Iran's independence.

The October Revolution, shortly after its victory, in early 1918, projected its influence on Iran. On December 5, that is 40 days after the revolution and Lenin's accession to power, the communist regime published a very important declaration addressed to the Muslims of the East. That declaration is very long and with many details. The part of that communiqué relating to Iran is as follows:

"Comrades and brothers

"In Russia great events are underway. The bloody war of these days (the First World War) that began with the aggression against foreign territories and the division of the territories of other peoples is coming to an end. Another world is being born. This is the world of the oppressed and the liberated peoples. After the revolution that took place in Russia, the government that was born of the will of the Russian workers and peasants was established. Muslims of the East, Iranians, Turks, Arabs, Hindus, we send you our message: your life, capital and honor have been trampled on for centuries by the European aggressors.

"We solemnly declare that all the secret pacts and contracts which the overthrown Tsar concluded with England and France and, according to their terms, wanted to give Istanbul to Russia, and which had been approved by the overthrown government of Kerensky, are null and void.

"The Socialist Republic of Russia and the government that executes its decisions, that is, the Councils of People's Commissars, are against the occupation of other territories. We solemnly declare that Istanbul belongs to Turkey, and must remain so always under the Muslims.

"We solemnly declare that the pacts and agreements concluded between Russia and England that divided Iran between them, are abrogated and are null and void (the pacts of 1907 and 1915).

"We give you our word that at the end of military operations, our soldiers will leave your territory and that you, the Iranian people, have the right to decide your fate...

(Signed) "The Chair of the Soviet of People's Commissars: Lenin

(Signed) "The People's Commissar of Nationalities: Stalin"

With this unilateral act, socialist Russia abolished the plot for the colonial division of Iran among the imperialists and reinforced the strength of the Iranians desiring freedom; it also strongly affected the presence of British imperialism. Of course, this imperialism was alive and, with the help of U.S. imperialism tried, by plots the machinations, to revive that colonial Pact, so that Iran was under the domination of these imperialists until the revolution of February 1979.

Iran recognized its independence with the help of the Bolsheviks of the Soviet Republic.

After the abolition of that colonial Pact and the realization of its independence, the new government of the Socialist Soviet Republic, within the framework of the policy of peaceful coexistence, offered Iran to establish a pact of friendship, which would guarantee the independence of Iran against foreign aggression. In the early 1950s, Iran nationalized its oil industry against British imperialism. The imperialists were of course totally against this nationalization, so that they reversed this situation through conspiracy and espionage, utilizing the intelligence services of the British and US imperialists.

The independent government of Iran, that is, Dr. Mossadegh, was overthrown. Mohammad Reza Shah, who had earlier fled abroad and lived in Rome due to the patriotic and anti-colonial struggles of the Iranian people, returned to Iran and was "put on the throne."

From that moment, the US hand placed the Pahlavi dynasty on Iran, which depended more and more on imperialism and the Shah of Iran, dependent on US imperialism, never respected the pact of friendship with the Socialist Soviet Union. They entered into a close military collaboration and concluded military pacts (to "disturb" the Soviet Union), including the CENTO pact, which transformed our country into a collateral part of the NATO pact whose aim was to surround the Socialist Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, the US influence over Iran increased, making it a base of imperialism and the gendarme of the region. US imperialism transformed Iran into a center of espionage against the Soviet Union and created the largest eavesdropping base in the north of Iran under the supervision of US experts – even when the socialist Soviet Union had disappeared. The presence of 50,000 US military advisers was a pure and simple violation of Article 5 of the pact of friendship with the Soviet Union and transformed Iran into a base to attack it.

We will examine some articles of the Pact to confirm the nature of the document of friendship between the Iranian people and the Bolsheviks. The October Revolution, after a hundred years, not only created a new world, but had a fundamental influence on the destiny of the Iranian people since it broke the rear of the old colonial regime of England, giving the people freedom.

The bilateral friendship pact between Iran and the Soviet Union contains, among other things:

"Article 1

"The government of the Soviet Union, following its communiqués on the bases of Russian policy in connection with Iran contained in its correspondence of January 14, 1918, and July 26, 1919, states once again that the oppressive policy imposed on Iran by the Russian colonial governments, overthrown by the will of the workers and peasants of this country, is definitively abolished. As stated before and with the will to see the Iranian people independent and happy so that they can freely benefit from their wealth, the government of the Soviet Union declares that all pacts, contracts and agreements that Tsarist Russia had concluded and that affected the

rights of the Iranian people, are null and void. (All those articles are from the Labor Party of Iran – Toufan.)

"Article 2

"The Soviet government of Russia declares itself contrary to the policy of the governments of Tsarist Russia, which concluded agreements with countries of Europe to subjugate the peoples of the Middle East without the consent of these peoples and under the pretext of safeguarding their independence. This oppressive policy not only eliminated the independence of these countries, but made them objects of contention, looting and pillage of the European imperialists. The government of Russia unconditionally rejects this policy.

According to articles one and four of this pact, **the government of the Soviet Union declares its refusal to participate in any action that leads to the weakening or negation of the independence of Iran and declares all pacts and contracts that the former governments of Tsarist Russia signed with other countries against Iran null and void.** (Toufan's emphasis).

"**Article** 4

"Approving the principle that all peoples have the right to decide their own destiny, the parties to the pacts and contracts declare that they abstain from any intervention in the internal affairs of other peoples.

"Article 5

"The parties to the pact agree: (1) to prohibit the formation of any group within their territory under any pretext, whose object is to fight against Iran or Russia or against countries friendly to Russia; to prohibit any intervention on their territory, bringing in any prisoners or soldiers or supplies for their army or military forces. (2) not to permit any organization to intervene on the territory of either party to the pact or to transport arms through its territory (3) by all means at their disposal, to prohibit the establishment of any Armed Forces or military force of a third country, if its objective is to threaten the frontiers or the interests or security of the parties to the pact; they should prohibit the entry of those forces into their territory.

"Article 6

"The contracting parties have agreed that if third countries try to carry out military intervention in order to impose their policy of aggression on Iranian territory or to establish a military base, Iran must reject it; the government of the Soviet Union has the right to

intervene with its military forces on Iranian territory for its defense, to carry out a deterrent military action. When these threats have disappeared, the Government of the Soviet Union commits itself to withdraw its military forces from Iran.

"Article 8

"The government of the Soviet Union of Russia rejects the economic policy that the Tsarist government carried out in the Middle East, which lent money to Iran not for the economic progress of the Iranian people, but for the purpose of putting its yoke on Iran's policy. **Therefore, the Government of the Soviet Union renounces all the loans that Tsarist Russia granted to Iran and thus declares that the debts due to it are void.**" (All emphases are by Toufan.)

In reviewing the text of this pact, one can see that the Bolsheviks were fighting boldly and vigorously against colonialism and imperialism; they were not like the Social-Democrats who were socialist in words and imperialist in deeds. These revolutionary actions of the Bolsheviks discredited social-democracy worldwide.

Shortly after the October Revolution, the communist movement in Iran was strengthened. British imperialism decided to establish a centralized, powerful and oppressive government in Iran that put an end to feudalism and the weakness of the central government in Iran and put a shield against communism in the south of Russia. British imperialism was afraid of the weakness of the central government in Iran that would led to an increase in the influence of communism; therefore it supported the Pahlavi dynasty with old servants of colonialism. Reza Khan was the father of Mohammad Reza Shah, who was a great bully and oppressor, a dictator in the service of imperialist interests. He remained in power until 1979, against the interests of the Iranian people, he served British US imperialism.

March of 2017

Italy

Communist Platform – for the Communist Party of the Proletariat of Italy

Red October and the founding of the Communist International

The first congress of the Communist International was held in Moscow from March 2 to 6, 1919, with the participation of 35 delegates with right of voice and vote, representing 19 parties and organisations, and 19 delegates with right of voice, representing 16 organisations. How did they come to this event of historical importance?

The Bankruptcy of the Second International

The founding of the Communist International was determined by some objective and subjective historical factors, prepared by the general development of the class struggle of the proletariat and matured under the impetus of the victorious October Socialist Revolution.

The collaborationism and the rejection of the means of revolutionary struggle expressed by the majority of the socialist party leaders, the substitution of revolutionary Marxism by reformism and bourgeois nationalism, the predominance of petty-bourgeois opportunism inside these parties – phenomena that revealed themselves in all their breadth and seriousness at the outbreak of the first imperialist world war – determined the bankruptcy of the Second International.

The long peaceful period of "capitalist progress" in which the Second International developed, which for some time carried out useful preparatory work for the organisation of the masses, had come to an end.

After August 4, 1914 (the vote for war credits by the French and German social-democratic deputies), the international socialist movement had to deal with an urgent problem: to achieve true international unity of the proletariat through the clear-cut, open and decisive break with the majority of the social-democratic parties, which had sided with their bourgeoisie and against the proletariat.

Only through an implacable struggle against the traitorous

leaders of socialism – the Kautskys and Plekhanovs, the Vanderveldes and Legiens, the Bissolatis and Hyndmans – was the founding of a new international organisation possible to replace the Second International undermined by opportunism.

In those years, the only great, really internationalist organisation was the Russian Social-Democratic Party, led by Lenin. This party had established as the fundamental aim of its activity the founding of a new International.

On November 1 1914, issue 33 of the *Sotzial-Democrat*, organ of the Bolshevik Party, published an important declaration, drawn up by Lenin, which asserted:

"*At this time of supreme and historic importance, most of the leaders of the present Socialist International, the Second (1889-1914), are trying to substitute nationalism for socialism..... The leaders of the International committed an act of treachery against socialism by voting for war credits, by reiterating the chauvinist ('patriotic') slogans of the bourgeoisie of their 'own' countries, by justifying and defending the war, by joining the bourgeois governments of the belligerent countries, and so on and so forth.*

"...The collapse of the Second International is the collapse of opportunism, which developed from the features of a now bygone (and so-called 'peaceful') period of history, and in recent years has come practically to dominate the International.

"...The aims of socialism at the present time cannot be fulfilled, and real international unity of the workers cannot be achieved, without a decisive break with opportunism, and without explaining its inevitable fiasco to the masses.

"...The proletarian International has not gone under and will not go under. Notwithstanding all obstacles, the masses of the workers will create a new International." (Lenin, The War and Russian Social-Democracy, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21).

In the declaration is outlined the program that Lenin and the Bolsheviks carried out with utmost determination in the following years: strengthening and developing revolutionary mass actions, establishment of illegal worker organisations, transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war against 'one's own' bourgeois government, brotherhood and solidarity of the workers and peoples, founding of a new International purged of opportunism in order to prepare the proletarian revolution.

In his writings "*The War and Russian Social-Democracy",*

"The Collapse of the Second International", Socialism and War", "The Position and Tasks of the Socialist International", "*Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*" and many other writings, Lenin elaborated the ideological and organizational bases on which the new International had to be constructed, he denounced the political content of opportunism and social-chauvinism and drew up the program of the revolutionary proletariat.

In the following years, Lenin resolutely pursued the purpose of the construction of a truly revolutionary International, opposing every attempt to restore to life the old Second International, which Rosa Luxemburg had defined as "a stinking corpse".

The Conferences of Zimmerwald and Kienthal

The struggle between the two principal tendencies in the workers' movement went on bitterly in the years following the outburst of the first imperialist world war.

The break with the opportunists was historically necessary and unavoidable. However, in many countries it was not yet immediately possible.

In spite of the difficulties of the war and the spreading of chauvinism, Lenin was able, at the Conference of Zimmerwald (Switzerland, September 1915), to organize the internationalist revolutionary Marxists and to obtain the split from the social-chauvinists, thus laying the bases for international unity under the leadership of the "Zimmerwald Left".

Lenin at the Zimmerwald Conference

Thus the ties of the international proletariat were established again, but Lenin had not succeeded in carrying out the task of the creation of a new International, because the Conferences of Zimmerwald and Kienthal did not adopt any really revolutionary slogans and did not declare themselves in favour of the creation of the Third International.

As a matter of fact, at the Conference of Zimmerwald, after many sharp ideological conflicts, the Kautskyan "centrist" delegates triumphed, who advocated peace with the social-chauvinists and the re-establishment of the opportunist Second International.

The revolutionary left in the socialist parties of the West and the "Zimmerwald Left" were too weak; they were a minority. But time was working in their favour.

Lenin observed that the common Manifesto approved at Zimmerwald – in which the "left" had been able to obtain the approval of many theses of the revolutionary Marxism – "*signifies a step towards an ideological and practical break with opportunism and social-chauvinism*" (Lenin, The First Step, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21).

We must remember as well that, during the Conference of Zimmerwald, a Socialist International Commission (ISK) was created, which played an important role in the founding of the Third International.

Therefore, we can say that Zimmerwald represented progress for the revolutionary and internationalist socialism (above all in consideration of the conditions of isolation of the Bolsheviks) and it gave an impulse to the struggle of the working class against the imperialist war.

The Second International Conference of Zimmerwald, convoked on April 1916 in the locality of Kienthal (Switzerland), in a situation made worse by the consequences of the imperialist war, was a further step forward compared to the previous one.

The resolution on the problems of war and peace, which was approved unanimously, reflected many positions of the Bolsheviks. The Conference declared openly that the only way to put an end to the wars of capitalist depredation was the overthrow of capitalist rule and the building of a socialist society.

The criticism of the attitude of the leaders of the Second International during the imperialist war was also very severe.

Nevertheless, the majority of delegates of the ten countries

represented still did not show the intention of creating a new International. The resolution approved said: "*The International will rise again from its ruins as a political power, only when the world proletariat, freed from imperialist and social-chauvinist influences, will again take the road of social struggle and mass actions*" (J. Humbert-Droz, The Origins of the Communist International, 1968).

The Gordian knot was not yet cut, but two ideologies, two conceptions of the world, two programs, two Internationals, were clashing increasingly sharply. The temporary coexistence with the "centrist" politicians was collapsing, the complete and definitive organisational separation from reformism and opportunism was becoming necessary and urgent.

The birth of the Communist International, firmly pursued by the "Zimmerwald Left" guided by Lenin and favoured by the development of the revolutionary struggle of the popular masses, was only a question of time.

The Decisive Impetus of the October Socialist Revolution

During the war, the social agitation of the workers, soldiers, women and poor peasants, developed with the increase in strikes, demonstrations and protests, repressed by fire and sword.

The development of the international communist movement – which proceeded slowly in the first years of the war – made a great leap forward with the victorious march of the Russian revolution.

In that stormy period, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party worked constantly to lay the organisational bases of the new Communist International. In his famous work of April 1917, known as the "April Theses", Lenin made a specific point of this matter:

"*10) A New International.*

"We must take the initiative in creating a revolutionary International, an International against the social-chauvinists and against the 'Centre'..." (Lenin, The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24).

The Seventh Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolshevik), held that same month, adopted a resolution that established, for the party, the task of taking the initiative in creating a Third International, to break definitively with the social-chauvinist traitors, and to fight resolutely against the wavering and opportunist policy of the Kautskyan "centre".

In the Draft Party Platform, written in May 1917, Lenin again

faced the situation of the Socialist International, asserting the duty of opposing real internationalism to verbal internationalism.

In this Draft, Lenin analysed the three trends of the international workers' and socialist movement (the social-chauvinists, the "centre" and the internationalists), reasserting the need for a resolute separation from the vacillation of the Zimmerwald organisation and for the founding of the Third International. On whom would this historical task fall?

"It is we who must found, and right now, without delay, a new, revolutionary, proletarian International, or rather, we must not fear to acknowledge publicly that this new International is already established and operating…. It is not a question of numbers, but of giving correct expression to the ideas and policies of the truly revolutionary proletariat. The thing is not to 'proclaim' internationalism, but to be able to be an internationalist in deed, even when times are most trying." (Lenin, The Tasks of Proletariat in Our Revolution, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24).

The concrete objective proposed by the April Theses was clearly affirmed in the program of the Bolsheviks after the seizure of power in November 1917, an historical event that gave a big impetus to the process of founding a new International with communist parties of a new type, free of opportunist and social-chauvinist deviations.

The October Revolution, abolishing the exploitation of man by man, was a crucial turning point in the history of humanity. It showed clearly to the working masses of all countries, and above all to the vanguard of the working class, the correctness of the revolutionary Leninist politics that triumphed over the opportunist Social-Democratic politics; it raised the banner of proletarian internationalism; it roused the proletarians of the capitalist countries and the oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies to decisive struggle for their social and national liberation; it influenced and deepened the general crisis of capitalism.

The revolutionary wave spread all over the world. With the teachings of the Bolshevik Party the consciousness of the working class developed. Marxism-Leninism established itself as the ideology of the working class, and the best representatives of the workers' parties and organizations adopted these positions.

The huge ideological, political and moral impact of the October Socialist Revolution, in the concrete situation of the imperialist war,

acted as a powerful catalyst that accelerated the unity of the genuine communists.

During the last year of the imperialist war (1918), the revolutionary storm spread over all of Europe, also reaching other continents: the proletarian revolution and the start of the civil war in Finland, January 1918; the mutiny of the sailors of Cattaro in February; the Japanese rice riots in July; the revolution in Vladaya in Bulgaria and the movements of Ukrainian rebels in October; the November revolution in Germany and the fall of the German Empire; the rebellion of the soldiers and sailors of the Allied expeditionary corps in the Russian Soviet Republic; the workers' agitations in France, the general strike of the Czech, Swiss, Iranian and Canadian workers; the development of the movement for solidarity with Soviet Russia in England and the USA; the development of a large movement of national liberation in China, India, Korea, Indochina, Turkey, Persia, Egypt, and other countries of Africa and Asia; the speedy growth of the trade unions; the exceptional increase in circulation of the revolutionary press; the development of the process of separation of the revolutionary members from social-democracy and the formation of new parties that took up the name of communists.

The reinforcement of the revolutionary positions of the proletariat was accompanied by a profound crisis of social-democracy. In this work of clarification the speeches and writings of Lenin were very important, such as the "*Letter to the American Workers"*, "*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky",* the *"Letter to the Workers of Europe and America",* and others.

Those formidable contributions, utterly unmasking opportunism and centrism, aided the internationalists, who intensified their action inside the socialist parties. In many countries they openly broke with the opportunists and created genuine communist parties.

The victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia sped up the solution of the problem of the founding of the Third International. The experience of great revolutionary events such as Red October would bring about the victory of the revolutionary policy of Bolshevism.

However, the grave military situation, the difficult connections with the revolutionary vanguards of the belligerent countries, and the efforts necessary for the strengthening of Soviet power and the

construction of socialism did not allow for the immediate formation of the new international organization of the proletariat.

Towards the Founding of the Communist International

In January 1918 were undertaken the decisive steps for the foundation of the Third International. A conference of the socialist parties and groups, summoned in Petersburg by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party, decided the convocation of an international conference with the following program: the parties that wanted to take part in a new International had to declare the necessity of the revolutionary struggle against "their" governments, the necessity to arrive as soon as possible to a democratic peace, the will to support the October Revolution and the Soviet power in Russia.

At the same time the Bolsheviks multiplied their work of organization of the left currents in the international worker movement and of preparation of new cadres.

In order to improve the leadership of the foreign communist groups and to aid them, in March 1918 were created at the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) some foreign sections, which in May of the same year grouped themselves in the Federation of the foreign sections at the same Central Committee.

Proclamations, brochures and newspapers were published in many languages. This propaganda was spread not only among the war prisoners, but also among the German troops in Ukraine, and sent to Germany, to Austria-Hungary and other countries.

In 1918 occurred two international conferences convened by the CC of the Bolshevik Party and by the Soviet of Petersburg, with the participation of a certain number of delegates.

A new stimulus was given by the foundation, in the middle of 1918, of the communist parties of Austria, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Latvia, Argentina, and, in December, of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD).

Two factors convinced the Bolsheviks that the situation was by then mature for the creation of the Third International.

The first, was the announcement, by the Social Democratic leaders, of the summoning of a Congress (that later took place in Bern in February 1919), with the intention of restoring to life the Second International. It was an anti-Bolshevik initiative, aiming to

curb the influence of the October Revolution all over the world, to consolidate the forces adverse to the socialist revolution, to put together the muddled and uncertain elements, and deceive the masses.

The second factor was the foundation of the KPD, a party of some consistence in the heart of the Western Europe, considered as the center of gravity of the revolutionary movement of the masses.

The birth of a true center of the international communist movement was at this point imminent.

At the end of January 1919 took place the assembly of the representatives of eight communist parties and organizations: Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik), Polish Worker Communist Party, Hungarian Communist Party, Austrian-Deutsch Communist Party, Latvian Communist Party, Finnish Communist Party, Federation of the revolutionary Social-Democrats of Balkans, American Worker Socialist Party.

On proposal of Lenin, the delegates decided to address to the proletarian revolutionary parties the request of putting in agenda the question of the convocation of the international communist congress.

In that appeal were formulated the aims and the tactic of the new International, were cleared the relations with the "socialist" parties, was proposed a list of Parties, tendencies and groups as participants of the congress, and was precisely indicated the name of the "First Congress of the Communist International". As the place of the encounter was chosen Moscow, the capital of the new State of the proletarian dictatorship.

The First Congress of the Communist International

Many communist and worker Parties gave their assent to the appeal of 24 January 1919. In order to reach Moscow the foreign delegates had to get over many difficulties, caused by the repressions, the events of the civil war in Russia, the bloc and the capitalistic intervention against the Soviet Russia. Nevertheless the majority of delegates arrived in time.

The First May 1919, a preliminary assembly fixed the agenda, the list of speakers and the list of committees. Moreover the delegates discussed the problem of the transformation of the meeting in the Conference of the Communist International.

On March 2, with the Lenin's opening speech, began the first

world conference of the communist Parties and of the Social-Democratic left organizations.

The conference heard the reports about the internal policy of the single countries. The delegates of the parties described the hard class struggles that were developing in the capitalistic world, the influence that the October Revolution had on the revolutionary movement of their countries, the growing of the popularity of Bolshevism and of Lenin.

The Fourth of March Lenin made his report on the bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of proletariat, denouncing the defenders of the so-called "pure democracy" and demonstrating that the bourgeois democracy, for which had declared themselves Kautsky and his accomplished on the eve and after the October Revolution, was a democracy of a minority for a minority, a form of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

Lenin confirmed the necessity of establish a new, proletarian, democracy, a democracy of the majority, founded on the demolition of capitalist yoke and on the repression of every resistance of the exploiting classes.

He cleared up that the Soviet revealed themselves to be a practical formula that allow to the proletariat to exert with success the power.

The defence of the bourgeois democracy by the Social

First Congress of the Communist International

Democrats, their attacks against the proletarian dictatorship were, on the contrary, the denegation of the right of the working class of founding its own proletarian democracy, its own State.

The theses and the discourse of Lenin on the bourgeois democracy and on the proletarian dictatorship served as the basis of the decisions of the conference.

The proposal of transforming the conference in a constitutive congress of the Communist International was put forward by the representatives of Austria, Balkan countries, Hungary and Sweden.

After a short discussion the proposal was put to the vote. Unanimously and with great enthusiasm the delegates deliberated to establish the Third International with the name of Communist International. The hall received the communication of the voting's outcome singing "*The International*".

The conference, after the decision of founding the Communist International, transformed itself in a constituent assembly, with the presence of 35 Parties and Organisations.

The Congress debated also the question of the relations with the other Socialist currents. In its deliberations the Congress pointed out that the Second International, rose again in consequence of the efforts of the right socialists, was a weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie against the international proletariat, and therefore called the workers of all countries to a relentless fight against the yellow "International".

The Congress approved the Platform of the Communist International, the Theses and the resolution on the bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of proletariat, the resolution on the attitude towards the socialist currents and the Bern Conference, the theses on the international situation and a Manifest to the proletariat around the world in which, the workers - men and women – of all countries were invited to unite themselves under the flag of the Communist International.

In order to start immediately the activity were created the leading organs: an Executive Committee, in which entered the representatives of the Communist parties of the more important countries; and a Political Bureau of five members appointed by the Executive Committee.

On March 6, 1919, the constituent assembly of the Communist International concluded its works.

Some topical conclusions

The Communist International guided during a quarter of a century the communist and worker Movement, assured the cohesion of the communist parties, gave them the methodology able to define the strategy and the tactics, used all the means and the routes necessary to defend the cause of socialism, spread all over the world the proletarian ideology, aided and educated generations of communists. Thanks to this international leading centre, the communism became the major political force of its epoch. The activity, the experience acquired and the documents elaborated by the Third International are a precious source of teaching and inspiration for the revolutionary policy of the proletariat.

Today – owing the counter-revolutionary line of the modern revisionism and reformism (in all their forms) and the transitory defeat of socialism – we live in a situation similar, for some aspects, to the situation preceding the birth of the Third International.

The struggle of Marxist-Leninist was going ahead uninterruptedly in the last decades. But the Marxist-Leninist Parties are still relatively few, and many of them are feeble. All that reflects the objective dynamics of the class struggle, the relations of force of the classes in the present historical context, the execrable role of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies, of the revisionism, the social-democracy, the populism, etc.: in summary, the difficult conditions in which the working class is living.

In spite of the weakness of the subjective factor, our epoch is still the epoch of the imperialism and of the proletarian revolution. A century after the Socialist October Revolution, the general crisis of capitalism is worsening and is entered in a new stadium. All the principal contradictions of our epoch are becoming more acute. The historical necessity of communism is persistent and its material premises are more than ever developed.

The world goes towards new revolutions. We don't know where and when will happen the next "assault to the heaven". But we know that capitalism has created a large number of its grave-diggers. We know that under the blows of the recurrent economic crises, of the anti-popular policies, of the reaction and unjust wars, new proletarians and popular revolutions will inevitably occur. We know that the capitalistic-imperialistic system is on the whole mature for a revolution that will abolish the exploitation of the man

by man and will replace the present private property of the means of production by the socialist property.

In the present stormy international situation, the necessity to have a centre of unified political direction of the world revolutionary movement is always more pressing. So as not to fall in the voluntarism, this requirement has to take into account the degree of political influence and organisation of the existent communist Parties and Organisations, and of the process of formation, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, of new parties and organisations in the countries where they do not exist.

The communists have to give an ideological, political and organisational answer up to this challenge. We are not leaving from zero. For over twenty years has been around a process of grouping and co-ordination of the Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations, the ICMLPO, that is "*the inheritor and the successor of the principles and the practice of the First International, of the revolutionary period of the Second, of the Third Internationals (Comintern) and of the Cominform"* (from the Communist Platform of the ICMLPO). In the course of time, it has become an irreplaceable reference point for the revolutionary proletariat.

Today the ICMLPO is "*the ideological, political and organizational coming together of the Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations in an international initiative that proclaimed the principles of class struggle and proletarian internationalism, the need for revolutionary violence to overthrow the rule of imperialism and capitalism, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of socialism, the struggle for communism*" (from the Rules of the ICMLPO).

As happened for the Zimmerwald left, its members are projected into the process of reconstructing the Communist International, giving impulse to the connection of the coherently Marxist-Leninist and revolutionary parties, to their strengthening and their common activity, to the formation and development of new Marxist-Leninist parties, fighting tirelessly the revisionism, the social-democracy and the opportunism, permanent allied of the imperialism.

The connection and enlargement of the ICMLPO are the path to follow of the XXI century Communist International. In order to advance toward this great aim, every Marxist-Leninist Party and

Organisation has to struggle and act with force and determination as a department of the international worker and communist movement, doing one's duty towards the proletariat and its world revolution, educating its members in the spirit of the proletarian internationalism.

The uncompromising defence of the principles of Marxism-Leninism and their application to the concrete situation, the unforgettable principles of the Red October and of the Third International, will be the steady guide throughout this way.

January of 2017

Mexico

Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist)

The Mexican Revolution of 1910-17 and the Great Socialist Revolution of October 1917

We communists in Mexico consider the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 to be a great qualitative leap of the proletarians, the broad popular masses and the peoples in the process of the emancipation of humanity. We Marxist-Leninist Communists take up its lessons and its historical perspective, and in that same sense, we evaluate our own historical experience. The valiant and heroic struggle of our proletariat, of our peasantry, of our revolutionaries, and the selfless spirit of sacrifice of the popular masses in Mexico, in the Revolution begun in 1910, which left hundreds of thousands of people dead, did not substantially change the situation of oppression and exploitation of the popular masses.

There are enormous quantitative and qualitative differences that have made the October Socialist Revolution of 1917, the classic Proletarian Revolution, its 100th anniversary still a historical event of enormous world importance. However the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917, which is an important episode in world history, did not and could not have, the transcendent weight and influence in the modern revolutionary processes as the Bolshevik Proletarian Revolution has, without detracting from the efforts, sacrifice and audacity of the popular masses. The bourgeois leadership of the revolution of 1910-17, which turned that whole effort into a mediocre bourgeois revolution, could not even elevate this Revolution to that of the one carried out in Mexico in the middle of the 19th century, much less to that of the classical bourgeois revolution: the French Revolution of 1789.

The economic and political situation in Russia in which the October Revolution of 1917 took place represented a major sharpening of the class struggle compared to that existing at the beginning of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. However, a major qualitative difference that does not depend on the difference in the situation, and which is prior to this, is the existence of a proletarian, class party, independent of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie – which were also active in the revolution – the Bolshevik Party. This Party knew

how to correctly identify the economic, political and social situation, defining and applying the tasks required in the interests of the class that it represented and its allies (the peasantry and the popular masses). It was experienced in previous battles; it knew how to learn from and assess its many defeats and its few victories in order to apply their lessons in the decisive battle for power in the year of upheaval of 1917.

In addition to this, the revolutionary cadres of October 1917, the Bolsheviks, were trained in a theory which, besides allowing them to know and interpret reality, clarified their concrete revolutionary tasks, allowed them to see clearly the infinite possibilities of revolutionary achievements at those unsettled and confused moments. The left wing of the revolutionaries of 1910 in Mexico, headed by the anarchists, were limited by their own conception. Although it allowed them to see that the political objective of the moment was the overthrow of the regime of Porfirio Diaz, at the same time, it prevented them from orienting themselves politically after his fall, to orient themselves from the class interests of the exploited, limiting all the revolutionary possibilities and tasks after the fall of Diaz. Thus without wanting to, they handed over in deed, the leadership of the revolutionary movement and the power it had won to a conservative fraction of the bourgeoisie.

The system prevailing in Mexico at the beginning of the 20th century, headed by Porfirio Diaz, was a capitalist system that was the product of the bourgeois revolution led by the radical wing of the Liberals (with Juarez and Lerdo de Tejada at the head) in the second half of the 19th century; he maintained himself in power for more than 30 years (1876- 1911). He managed to reconcile the interests of the bourgeoisie and its program (the Constitution of 1857 and the Reform Laws) with the interests of the clergy and large landowners. The latter knew how to circumvent these laws and take advantage of the respite of the Diaz Government, in order to participate in the new businesses that the imperialist era brought to the country in mining and railways, as well as in other industries, moving from the strongholds of feudalism to new capitalist ones, even when ideologically they maintained their backward feudal positions.

This capitalist system of respite and conciliation to the interests of the ruling classes, which were in conflict years before, the protector and stimulator of its business with the imperialist powers, was in contrast a regime of oppression, repression and assassination of the

popular majorities; a guarantor of the brutal exploitation of workers, of the violent dispossession of the lands of the peasants and communities, the annihilation of nationalities such as the Yaqui, the promoter of slavery in large regions of the country and industries such as henequen, of the almost absolute restriction of political (bourgeois) liberties of the majority, even though it was seen as a system of the Federal (bourgeois) Democratic Republic.

In this general situation the activity of the reformist and revolutionary opposition to the Diaz regime took place; there was great activity and lessons during almost the entire period of its existence. On the other hand, the oppressor regime accumulated great experience in maintaining its power. Without detracting from any of these earlier movements and taking into account the subject that concerns us (the Revolution of 1910-17), we will take as an immediate historical reference, as an immediate revolutionary precursor of the beginning of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, the mass actions of 1906 and 1907, and the party that took part in them.

The Cananea miners' strike of June 1906, the textile workers' strikes of Tlaxcala and Sonora in December 1906, linked to the workers' rebellion of Rio Blanco, which extended to Nogales and Santa Rosa in 1907, showed the revolutionary potential of the young working class at the beginning of the century. Their defeat and bloody repression also showed the absence of a class political leadership, a party representing the working class with its own political program (with class independence), which had well-defined socialist objectives of social transformation, with its democratic tasks, even within the framework of capitalism.

In its place there existed a bourgeois reformist party, the Mexican Liberal Party (PLM), which, using all this workers' potential and sacrifice and later the peasants' revolutionary potential, prepared and carried out several insurrections and uprisings from 1906 to 1910, sacrificing their lives with the central objective of removing Porfirio Diaz from power and handing it over to another faction of the bourgeoisie.

The PLM was a bourgeois-reformist party, whose right wing was linked to the liberal bourgeoisie that had imposed the Bourgeois Constitution of 1857 and whose left wing was represented by the radicalized petty bourgeoisie and prominent cadres under anarchist ideological influence led by the Flores Magon brothers. It was the party that managed to bring together the opposition against the

regime from 1901 until before the 1910 Revolution. Beginning with 1901, there began a constant organizational and ideological political work through the Liberal Clubs, which linked themselves to the growing discontent and rising movement against the regime, succeeding in planning and carrying out strikes and insurrections, masterfully combining open activity with clandestine work.

The reformist program adopted by the PLM did not correspond to the needs of the rising workers' and mass movement of the beginning of the 20th century. At its formal founding in 1906, it had developed a program of minimum political and economic demands for the proletariat and peasantry: the 8-hour day and better conditions of exploitation for the workers, the return of lands taken from the peasantry and a weak bourgeois agrarian reform for the countryside, while striving for the handing over of power to a sector of the bourgeoisie different from the one headed by Diaz: a constitutional reform that reduced the president's term in office, reforms that allowed more democratic possibilities to the bourgeoisie excluded from the existing regime.

The great errors and limitations of the left of the Mexican Liberal Party, which marked its great difference with the successes of the October Socialist Revolution and its Bolshevik Party, were: that for the sake of unity, it maintained its bourgeois program of 1906, as the guideline of its structures (Liberal Clubs and circles), not clarifying to the masses that it was a program of a sector of the rul-

Insurgents and the Women

ing class. What was required was a revolutionary program that put forward the seizure of power by the proletariat and peasantry, that represented the most heartfelt interests and demands of the proletariat, the peasantry and the broad masses of the oppressed. As an organization, it could not have a class independence from the bourgeoisie, nor could it break with the bourgeois organizational forms (Liberal Clubs) that limited the movement led by that party, much less was it able to introduce revolutionary forms that would empower it.

These limitations and errors from the revolutionary point of view, to the detriment of the proletariat and the peasantry, limited the possibilities of the Revolution which was to break out in the following years, handing over the political leadership of the proletarian movement, both ideologically and practically, to the liberal bourgeoisie (the right wing of the party), as well as compromising the class principles and the very class independence of the proletariat and the most revolutionary sector of the petty bourgeoisie (the peasantry).

Although ideologically, through its publications (the different stages of *Regeneration* and *The Son of Ahuizote*), the left bloc led by Ricardo Flores Magon promoted the social revolution, the economic revolution (from the anarchist point of view) never broke with the PLM program. It promoted and put at its center the fall of Diaz, without providing any concrete revolutionary perspective to the popular classes once this Took place. Thus it left this perspective to the bourgeoisie, which Francisco I. Madero and the various later bourgeois factions boldly took up. The limited anarchist perspective on power, the practical application in real revolutionary processes, in this case again appeared, and as in other processes it left power to the bourgeoisie (see *The Bakuninists in Action* by F. Engels).

The right wing, led by Francisco I. Madero, knew how to take advantage of the baptism of fire and sword of the working class and a part of the peasantry in 1906 and 1907, and of the later guerrilla warfare, organized by the PLM. This faction broke with the PLM, forming its own anti-Diaz bourgeois party, the National Anti-Re-Election Party. This party immediately made its main form of struggle the electoral one, taking part in the elections for the presidency of the republic in 1910. Therefore it definitively separated itself from the PLM, with its own bourgeois class program. This elimi-

nated any substantial demands of the working class and peasantry, which earlier existed in the PLM program, having as its maximum objective *the struggle for democracy, the struggle for the replacement of public officials, beginning with the President and Vice President of the Republic,* summed up in the slogan: *Effective Suffrage, No Re-Election*.

Having been defeated in the elections, adopting the plan of the PLM that planned the insurrection in September of 1906, this sector of the bourgeoisie called for an armed uprising on November 20, 1910, a brave call, that only one bourgeois family took seriously (the Serdans, who were massacred in their house). In several parts of the country the most advanced sector of the PLM was already fighting with arms in hand, but being unable to follow this up with a bold tactic that corresponded to the high spirit of the masses and the need to take power for and by the exploited and oppressed.

However, as we mentioned above, the rising revolutionary tendency, the quantitative changes in the material conditions of the masses and in the class struggle were ripe for a qualitative leap. This situation was exploited by the class in the best position at that time (the bourgeoisie), which knew how to appreciate the situation. It had its own party and program, knew how to make alliances with other classes and sectors opposed to the regime, putting itself at their head. Finally, however derisory was its call for an armed uprising on November 20, 1910, in the absence of another alternative for the rising revolutionary movement, the masses gradually joined the armed movement. Although its perspective was clearly bourgeois, it did achieve the fall of Porfirio Diaz in May 1911, and the rise to power of the bourgeois faction of Madero, whose weak and mediocre administration from 1911 to 1913 had no achievement worthy of mention. He showed his anti-popular character, was physically eliminated by the same bourgeoisie, putting into power another representative of the bourgeoisie. This was where the real possibilities of leading the revolution led to and of giving it another class character by the left of the PLM, the radicalized petty bourgeoisie and a sector of anarchism. The lack of clarity of previous years turned to confusion and later dispersion, breaking up into further struggles for power within the bourgeoisie from 1911 to 1917. Thus this Mexican Revolution was bourgeois because of its class character.

However, this bourgeois perspective of the Mexican Revolution did not limit the potential and creativity of the oppressed masses

who had risen in armed struggle, despite the lack of a revolutionary leadership of its own class. This was shown by the popular movements within the revolution, led in the south by Emiliano Zapata and in the north by Francisco Villa.

The peasants led by Emiliano Zapata took over lands in the state of Morelos beginning in 1910, and they kept them in their possession with arms in hands, against Diaz and then against the following governments that were the product of the revolution. They organized their armed force in the Liberation Army of the South, which among other exploits in the first years of the revolution defeated the best battalion of the army of Porfirio Diaz: the Fifth Gold Regiment. They did not surrender the weapons with the fall of Diaz, and moreover they demanded the return of confiscated lands to the peasants and communities and dividing up of the lands at the expense of the counter-revolutionaries. They managed to establish their own organization in the lands that they took over, based on ejidos [communal lands] and communities, as collective forms of land ownership (also called social ownership of the land); they worked them and guaranteed their survival and economic perspective in the regions under their control. This faction of the bourgeoisie knew how to be consistent in the realization of its program, managing with its persistence to keep and make use of the lands taken over, even after the assassination of their maximum leader. They made sure that in a large part of their program was established the 1917 Constitution, in Article 27, particularly the Nationalization of land (from a bourgeois perspective), having as a later achievement the agrarian reform implemented under the government of Lazaro Cardenas in the 1930s.

Pancho Villa (whose real name was Doroteo Arango) was a very talented revolutionary despite being used politically from the beginning of the revolution by several factions of the bourgeoisie for their own ends, the most outstanding being first Madero and then Carranza. In spite of his minimal political and academic education, Villa managed to lead himself towards the interests of the peasantry and popular masses. He knew how to revolutionize the rising tendency of struggle and the great discontent of the popular masses, forming armies from these masses of peasants and farm hands. He won historic battles, even forming a revolutionary army: the Division of the North, which kept the counter-revolution at bay in the north, and which forced the bourgeois faction in the center to recognize his power, naming him provisional governor of Chihuahua in 1914.

This is to recognize his importance as a leader of a radicalized faction of the petty bourgeoisie within the revolution, who despite his political limitations, managed to temporarily overcome the confusion in his short term of governor in Chihuahua, and to put forward a revolutionary-popular program, as a minimum aspiration of the masses who had risen up.

During the government of Pancho Villa in Chihuahua, the most advanced achievements of the bourgeois revolution were made. There were real attempts to control the economy in order to solve the serious problems of the masses. They issued their own currency, they intervened in the economy, against speculation, putting it in order, requisitioning basic grains and agricultural products, regulating the railroads and telegraphs despite the fact that these were federal services that legally were beyond their competence; public education was strengthened, dozens of public schools, science and art institutes were established. The counter-revolutionaries were expelled and expropriated, among other achievements.

The reactionary and "revolutionary" bourgeoisie of that period and their leaders scoffed at those measures, seeking to minimize them and prevent them from being carried out to their full extent. These were the most advanced achievements of the Mexican Revolution, the most consistent of its radicalized revolutionary faction, which only resumed with the government of Lazaro Cardenas.

A common lesson of the Zapatistas and Villistas was to unify the forces of the revolutionary groups in the Revolutionary Convention of 1914, from which a united revolutionary government arose.

This, however, was not able to oppose the government of the bourgeoisie headed by Carranza, although it militarily seized the capital of the country, using the main forces the armies of Villa and Zapata. Once again the lack of clarity and ability in the political leadership condemned the bourgeois revolution of 1910 to carry out the program of the most moderate wing of the bourgeoisie, which finally took shape in the 1917 Constitution, including some of the most heartfelt (bourgeois-democratic) demands of the (still armed) peasant movement and the proletariat.

As a general conclusion about the Mexican Revolution and the Great October Socialist Revolution, we can state that all the potential and creative capacity of the masses due to the explosive situation of the class struggle in both countries at the beginning of their revolution was organized and led from different class perspectives. Therefore the results were that the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917, by its content and achievements, was a bourgeois revolution of the common type, without being able to come near to much less surpass the French revolutionary experience of 1789. While the October Russian Revolution meant in form and content a proletarian, socialist revolution, the classic socialist and Proletarian Revolution par excellence.

March of 2017

Norway

Revolusyon

Alexandra Kollontai and the Bolshevik Influence on the Norwegian Labour Movement in the Period of the October Revolution

The impact of the October revolution on the Norwegian labour movement was immense. Here we must limit ourselves to present just a few facets of this influence, personalized through Alexandra Kollontai and her bonds with Norwegian communists during her exile from 1915 until the revolution in 1917, and later, during her diplomatic assignment in our country and thereafter in Stockholm, Sweden.

Alexandra Kollontai is well known as a revolutionary pioneer on the question of liberation of the working women. Besides Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg, she probably was the internationally most renowned female communist in the years prior to and after the October Revolution.

Kollontai was the first woman in the world to be accredited as a foreign ambassador. In 1923 she became the official representative of the Soviet Union in Oslo; from 1930 onwards she also was representative and ambassador in Stockholm, Sweden. She later played an important role in preparing for the peace negotiations between Finland and the USSR in the so-called Winter War of 1939-40.

While many Russian emigrants like Nikolai Bukharin, Georgy Pyatakov and Alexander Shliapnikov spent a lot of time in Sweden in the pre-revolutionary period, Kollontai was imprisoned and then expelled from Sweden. In neighbouring Norway she swiftly got in touch with the revolutionary labour movement.

Kollontai developed a strong affiliation to Norway, a country that on numerous occasions she stated was her second fatherland. It was no coincidence that she was appointed to Oslo by the new Soviet government, although Trotskyites and

Alexandra Kollontai

others claim she was "exiled" by Lenin and Stalin because of her old past as a Menshevik and her alleged sympathy with the "Labour Opposition". The rational truth of the matter is that Madame Kollontai stayed frequently in Norway in the years prior to the October revolution, from 1915 to 1917, where she acquired excellent knowledge of and close relationship with the Norwegian revolutionary movement and the Norwegian Labour Party. If Lenin and Stalin didn't trust her, they would logically never have assigned her with such an important task, nor would they have shouldered her with such responsibility for Scandinavia in the years to come, as they obviously did.

She was very active and played a direct and sometimes prominent role in the Norwegian labour and women's movement. On March 8, 1915, the international working women's day was celebrated for the first time in Norway. Kollontai was one of the main speakers in the Oslo manifestation.

One of her main objectives of work was to mobilize against the imperialist war. No doubt she had a positive influence in revolutionizing the Norwegian labour, youth and women's movement.

Living in exile in a country bordering Russia and Finland (part of Russia at that time), Kollontai along with Norwegian communists like Adam Egede-Nissen were involved in providing Russian revolutionaries with shelter, acting as couriers for the Bolsheviks and printing and smuggling revolutionary literature back and forth across the border. Given the backward means of communication, it was a toilsome task to bring people or messages the long way from the Russian border. From Oslo the messages from the Bolsheviks could be telegraphed to the world.

First Council of the People's Commissariats (Ministers) of the Revolutionary Government, formed after the victory of the October Revolution. Alexandra Kollontai was part of this Council as Commissar of Public Welfare

Unlike most of the former Social-Democratic parties, the Norwegian Labour party was member of the Comintern from 1919 until the party eventually split in 1923, resulting in the founding of the Communist Party of Norway (NKP). Once again back in Norway, Alexandra Kollontai was an important link between the NKP and the Comintern, although Moscow allegedly told her to keep a low political profile due to her diplomatic responsibilities.

She never forgot her relationship with Norway and communists like Adam Egede-Nissen. The latter was a colourful revolutionary who, amongst many other things, organized a general strike in the city of Stavanger in 1919 as an "action of solidarity with the Russian revolution". He was at the same time the city postmaster, a prominent position at that time, and was of course punished for his disobedience. Many years later, in 1934, he became chairman of the Norwegian Communist Party.

In her birthday greeting to Adam Egede-Nissen, Kollontai let us get a feeling of the close relationship between Russian and Norwegian communists during these revolutionary years that shook the world.

Alexandra Kollontai
Norway's First Bolshevik (1948)

Greeting Speech to Adam Egede-Nissen's 70th birthday.

What worker, male or female in Norway, in Scandinavia, yes, even beyond its borders, does not know Comrade Egede-Nissen. For certain, in the Soviet Union his name is beloved, admired and honoured. Was it not Comrade Egede-Nissen who was among the first ones during the first fiery months after the October Revolution to come to our Soviet republic to greet the young Soviet republic and to shake hands with Lenin and Stalin.

The situation was then very serious. The Soviet republic was threatened by the German offensive and the interventionist armies from 14 capitalist states.

And already many years before the October Revolution it was comrade Egede-Nissen who supported the Bolsheviks in their struggle against tsarism. Already in 1905, immediately after the first unsuccessful Russian Revolution, Egede-Nissen was in touch with the Russian revolutionaries. At that time the Bolsheviks were fighting against the worst reaction in Russia.

Not many socialists dared at that time to support and help the Bolshevik struggle through which the party not only worked and fought for the Russian people liberation from Tsarist tyranny, but also was the driving force throughout the world's struggling labour movement.

Because of his deep and correct revolutionary conception, because of his courageous determination, Egede-Nissen could not tolerate the opportunist politics, which began to spread from Germany to all countries and paralyzed the working-class struggle. Egede-Nissen knew he belonged to Lenin's and Stalin's battalions.

40 years ago, Egede-Nissen was the first Norwegian Bolshevik. However, Egede-Nissen has also been a good son of his people. As such, he loves his country and is fighting for its progress. Bolshevism is about workers' solidarity across borders but always maintains warm feelings for one's own country and people.

In the year 1915, in the middle of the World War, at a time when the Social Democratic leaders had betrayed the working class

Adam Egede-Nissen

and when the masses stood perplexed and deceived, social democracy preached class harmony and castle peace. Only the Bolsheviks – followers of Lenin and Stalin – remained faithful to Marx's teachings. No class harmony; an imperialist war can turn into a revolutionary war, this was the Bolshevik standpoint. The Social Democratic opportunists responded with attacks on the Bolsheviks: Bolshevism is a utopia, Bolshevism is a dangerous frenzy! But Comrade Egede-Nissen only smiled when he heard all the scorn and hatred towards the faithful revolutionary Marxists. He belonged to the labour movement's vanguard and he believed in the Russian workers' victory over tsarism, reaction and war.

I recall 1 May 1915, when Egede-Nissen interpreted my speech in the Oslo People's House, a speech that built upon Lenin's program. Egede-Nissen's brilliant interpretation enraptured all in the People's House. He fought against imperialism and reaction and was convinced of the proletariat and the victory of socialism.

Then came the October Revolution in 1917. Already a few months after the victorious revolution, Egede-Nissen left for Petrograd to convey the Norwegian workers' greeting to the first socialist soviet republic in the world.

Egede-Nissen attended as a guest at the Congress of workers, peasants and soldiers, the first after the October Revolution. His fiery internationalism was expressed in his brilliant welcome speech. He was a frequent guest in Smolny and often had conversations with Lenin. Egede-Nissen also participated in a conference that prepared for the new 3rd International.

In February 1918 when Egede-Nissen went home through Finland, we met in a very grave situation on the frozen Finnish bay after we were abandoned by our icebreaker and were alone onboard our little steamer. The Central Executive Committee had sent its first official delegation abroad. As People's Commissar for Social Welfare, I was the delegation's chairman. The aim of the journey was to go to Scandinavia and to inform the world about what had happened in the Soviet Republic. One must not forget that our republic was under blockade and that the truth could not break its way abroad.

Our delegation met Egede-Nissen near Åbo (Turku). He came over on the little steamer "Mariograf" that the delegation would take to Sweden. But it was a hard, cold winter. The Finnish bay was frozen stiff. "Mariograf" was a simply equipped coastal vessel and

could not plough its way without an icebreaker. Progress was very slow. One day the icebreaker simply left us in the lurch and "Mariograf" froze stuck in an ice floe. This floe drifted next to a mine belt and mines began to explode all around as soon as they hit our shelf of ice.

Never shall I forget one evening with a wonderful red sunset, with the blue ice cubes on the Finnish bay and the big red Soviet flag on the bough of the steamer. There we stood, Comrade Egede-Nissen and I, watching the exploding mines around us. They set off giant fountains and I remember Egede-Nissen's words: "Is it not beautiful with the red flag against the blue ice. If we go under, it is a nice way to die with the red flag in the fore."

A coincidence helped us out of the catastrophic situation.

I again met Egede-Nissen in 1922 in Norway when I came to take over work at the Legation. As Member of Parliament Egede-Nissen spent all his energy on achieving recognition of the Soviet government. His energy was as immovable as a Norwegian mountain when he worked for reconciliation between Norway and the Soviet Union. Indeed, the mutual recognition was achieved. And today I will pronounce my heartfelt gratitude to Comrade Egede-Nissen for all his help during this time, which was so full of difficulties, disappointments and resistance, but also joyful and profitable for the best of the toiling peoples in these two countries.

All of us who know Egede-Nissen admire him for the personification of all the best traits of the Norwegian people: energy, frankness, reliability and courage.

His life's mission has always been working class happiness and the victory of socialism. We admire Egede-Nissen as a faithful Soviet friend and student of Marx, Lenin and Stalin. Lenin warmly praised Egede-Nissen's friendship.

Egede-Nissen will be 70. But he was, is and will be a revolutionary youth to the very end. His unwavering faith in the working people moves everyone who comes in touch with Egede-Nissen.

May Egede-Nissen live on for many years, years of creativity and happiness!

My heartfelt congratulations to the 70-year-old youngster!

Friheten (central organ of the NKP) 21 June 1948

March of 2017

Peru

Peruvian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)

The Alliance of the Working Class, the Poor and Middle Peasantry in the October Revolution and the Building of Socialism

The hundredth anniversary of the victorious Proletarian Revolution of October, which crowned the first experience of the building of the State of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, is celebrated as the most advanced form of the exercise of democracy, where the working people exercised their organized class force to overcome the resistance of the exploiting classes and to abolish bourgeois private property over the means of production, without which it is impossible to build Socialism and pass on to scientific Communism.

We Marxist-Leninists situate ourselves in the working class, the class that by its position in the process of capitalist production and in that social system, can and should be the vanguard class in the struggle to bury this system and end the division of society into social classes.

To secure its victory, the working class must unify the aspirations of other classes and strata oppressed by capitalism around its objective for social transformation. That is, it needs allied forces that will fight to improve their material conditions of existence, that understand that there is a common enemy to overthrow, to overcome the decadent state of things that consigns them to exploitation and poverty. One of these classes, allied to the working class in tsarist Russia, was the peasantry, which was the majority sector of the Russian population.

It was in the October Revolution and other victorious proletarian revolutions that one can appreciate how the alliance of the working class and the middle and poor peasantry built a strategic alliance to overthrow the exploiting classes. They then consolidated that alliance, with the leadership of the working class and its Party, for the building of a social economic system in which the material and cultural aspirations are concretized in the context of the reorganization of work, centralized planning, diversification of the economy, the promotion of the development of the productive and technical forces. Their priority was the constant improvement of the material

and cultural conditions of the working people, in the process of the building of the Socialist society.

The situation of the Russian working class and peasantry before the October Revolution

The articles published by Lenin show that the situation of the Russian working class was unsustainable, that the exploitation of capitalist industry and tsarist oppression weighed down upon it, which violently prevented its trade union and political organization. Through the Okhrana, tsarism repressed any form of organization that sought to the most basic economic demands.

The Bolshevik party in its various stages of construction had as its central axis of its policy the problem of power, the organization and carrying out of the revolution. This is why it centered its action on agitation, propaganda, organization and education of the working class based on its own experience of struggle, in order to make a qualitative leap and to pass over from being a class for itself to being a class in itself, with political objectives. In addition, the Bolshevik party directed its action to awakening the consciousness of the exploited, oppressed and impoverished sectors that aided the struggle to wring political and economic victories from tsarism. The struggle for the overthrow of the tsar along with his entire aristo-

cratic and capitalist coterie was put on the agenda.

It is in this sense that the Bolshevik Party formulated a program to solve the problem of the peasantry, immersed in the feudal exploitation that existed in the countryside, the backwardness of its cultural level and impoverished by the speculation of the middlemen, who imposed very low prices for their agricultural products. That is, the peasantry was oppressed by the archaic social relations of the feudal system and also by the increasing development of the capitalist market, which ruined the poor and middle peasantry that based its economy on individual production. This showed that the peasantry still struggled for the distribution of the land by confiscating the land of the landlords and kulaks. This would be a step forward, but within the framework of capitalist social relations this could not ensure the improvement of their material conditions of existence. In this situation, the Bolshevik Party raised the need to organize the peasantry as an ally of the working class for the realization of the Socialist Revolution. This was because the peasantry, after the experiences of the 1905 Revolution, led by the party of the liberal bourgeoisie and the bourgeois-democratic revolution of February 1917 in whose provisional government were Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries, became disillusioned with these parties. The peasants would not obtain the land from them and furthermore, after the February Revolution, they would not pull Russia out of the imperialist war.

The poor and middle peasantry and the popular character of the revolution

When we speak of the peasantry as a general category, we omit an objective fact that should always be clarified: the existence of social classes and strata within the peasantry, which had and still have a different behavior according to their interests and a class struggle is also being waged among these sectors in the countryside.

The rich peasantry is the one who has concentrated large tracts of land, has agricultural implements, and which also needs the additional labor power, without which it cannot work its tracts of land. In early twentieth-century Russia this class was known as the class of the "Kulaks," which became a counter-revolutionary force that sought to maintain its privileges in the countryside; that is, to continue exploiting the poor and middle peasantry.

The middle peasantry is one that owns means of production, farming implements, but which, by not having large tracts of land,

does not make extensive use of the labor power of others, but uses family labor and other forms of social cooperation appropriate to its situation. This social stratum was the object of contention by the forces of the kulaks and other reactionaries on the one hand, and on the other by the revolutionary forces led by the Bolshevik Party, which sought to win them as a reserve of the proletarian revolution. By their number and activity they could tilt the political balance in the contention for power in the civil war. Because of their individual production that is the seed of the development of capitalist production, they had to be encouraged to develop the cooperative economy – the kolkhozes, for the building of Socialism.

The poor peasantry is one who sometimes does not own enough land for his own subsistence, which is why he is forced to sell his labor power in order to survive, in periods where his situation is unsustainable or he finds no work on the land, he migrates to the cities to sell his labor power, forming part of the proletariat or semi-proletariat. Due to its condition this stratum is the closest ally of the working class in its political tasks and by its position in the countryside it is the most consistent sector in developing the class struggle.

From the characterization of each stratum one can understand the behavior of the peasantry; the tactics of the Bolsheviks consisted in attracting the poor and middle peasants to embrace the path of the Socialist Revolution and that of the collective farming.

Congress of Peasant Soviets, May 1917

The peasantry, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of socialism

After the October Revolution, the problem of agriculture and the peasantry was one of the most difficult points of the program to resolve, since the building of Socialism requires a material base to ensure the industrialization of the country and also the socialist transformation of agriculture, branches that are only unified on the basis of socialist ownership of the means of production and collective labor. Thus the peasantry was encouraged to take the path of cooperative production, which they could only grasp through their experience of the superiority of cooperative production compared to individual production. With the former, their instruments of production, labor power and lands are joined together. The State of the dictatorship of the Proletariat supports this organization by the technical development, machinery and everything necessary for agricultural production to develop along the path of cooperation.

With regard to this Comrade Stalin pointed out. "Under the old system the peasants worked singly, following the ancient methods of their forefathers and using antiquated implements of labor; they worked for the landlords and capitalists, the kulaks and speculators; they worked and lived half-starved while they enriched others. Under the new, collective-farm system the peasants work in common, cooperatively, with the help of modern implements – tractors and agricultural machinery; they work for themselves and their collective farms; they live without capitalists and landlords, without kulaks and speculators; they work with the object of raising their standard of welfare and culture from day to day." ["Speech at the First All-Union Congress of Collective Farm Shock-Brigaders," *Works*, Vol. 13, p. 247.]

The peasantry as an allied class of the working class is took part in the exercise of the Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat as "a special form of class alliance between the proletariat, the vanguard of the working people, and the numerous non-proletarian strata of working people… or the majority of these; it is an alliance against capital, an alliance aiming at the complete overthrow of capital, at the complete suppression of the resistance of the bourgeoisie and of any attempt on its part at restoration, an alliance aiming at the final establishment and consolidation of socialism." [Quoted

from "Concerning Questions of Leninism," in Stalin's *Works*, Vol. 8, p. 28.]

Forge the worker peasant alliance in Peru!

From the experience of the building of Socialism in the USSR, we must draw a lesson about the consistent position of the Bolsheviks regarding the problem of power and the organization of the forces allied to the proletariat for winning and maintaining the new society.

In Peru, the concentration of the rural, peasant population, who were the majority until the end of the 1970s, has varied in the last decades; there is a decrease in the percentage of the economically active population in these regions.

The distribution by place of residence of the Economically Active Population shows that in the urban areas there is a population of 11,549,006 people and in the rural areas there are 3,991,009 people. In 2015 the population the in urban areas reached 76.7% with 23,893,654 inhabitants and the rural population was 23.3% with 7,257.989 inhabitants. Of this total, the department of Lima has the largest population concentration in the country with 9,835,000 inhabitants, which represents 32% of the total population of the country, where the largest number of employed people is also concentrated.

The concentration of the population has changed more rapidly in the last three decades: due to the forced displacement to which the peasantry was subjected by the paramilitary activities of Senderista [Shining Path] terrorism and the dictatorship of Fujimori, the robbing of their means of production to hand them over to the mining, gas and oil transnational companies; the abandonment of the countryside by the State, which makes the survival of the peasantry in their places of origin unsustainable, who are pushed by necessity to migrate to the cities to sell their labor power. All these phenomena have been analyzed in our 7th National Conference that characterized Peruvian society as follows:

"The characterization which we arrived at after the last studies of Peruvian society is that of backward capitalism, dependent on imperialism in the framework of neocolonialism. That is, within the framework of the existence of a multipolar world, where the Chinese and Russian imperialist powers have been contending for mar-

kets, raw materials and spheres of influence in a fiercest way, but where hegemony is still maintained by US imperialism."

And further on it points out:

"We have a society of backward capitalism, deformed by imperialist domination, so that the tasks of development of the productive forces and the industrialization of the country are among the democratic tasks of the worker-peasant alliance in Power."

According to these theses, the Party has indicated the immediate tasks for the peasant front, where a call has been made for the membership to organize the peasantry to constitute a reserve for the People's Democratic and Socialist Revolution, supporting their struggles that, in the present context, coincide with the struggles against imperialist domination, for their direct confrontation with the transnational corporations and the policies of the government that support the dependence of the country.

In recent years, the Peruvian peasantry has shown a high degree of combativeness, mainly the poor and middle peasantry, in defense of national production, food sovereignty, the environment, water, their lands and communal territories that the onslaught of the transnational corporations, with the complicity of the State, is trying to seize. These forces collude to increase the extraction of minerals, gas and oil, to eliminate any organized group that is located near the sources of raw materials.

The poor and middle peasantry is resisting and is realizing from its own experience that the peasants with large tracts of land, the rich peasants, are a force allied to the transnational corporations and reaction. They are in agreement with the plans of destruction of the communal lands, since they also takes part in land grabbing and the destruction of any form of cooperation since they are concerned largely with their own interest.

The peasantry in struggle also realizes that it is in the working class, the youth, the peoples and working people in general who are the forces on which it can count as support for the defense of their interests. In this sense, the Party has emphasized the necessary link between the struggles of the peasantry and the working class, the forging of the worker-peasant alliance and the struggle to always provide it with a proper front line Party orientation.

Long Live the Hundredth Anniversary
of the October Socialist Revolution!
Long Live the Worker-Peasant Alliance for
Revolution and Socialism!
Long live the 7th National Conference of the PCP (m-l)!

April 2017
CC of the PCP (m-1)

Spain

Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist)
Raul Marco

Stalin and the Revolution

"The leaders come and go, but the people remain. Only the people are immortal, everything else is ephemeral." (Stalin)

> *"It is the history of three revolutions: the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905, the bourgeois-democratic revolution of February 1917, and the Socialist revolution of October 1917.*
>
> *"The history of the C.P.S.U.(B.) is the history of the overthrow of tsardom, of the overthrow of the power of the landlords and capitalists; it is the history of the rout of the armed foreign intervention during the Civil War; it is the history of the building of the Soviet state and of Socialist society in our country."*[1]

There has perhaps never in the world been a struggle as heroic, as continuous, as emotional as the Russian revolution, of its peoples and nationalities.

To these revolutions, we must add the decisive struggle and participation of the USSR in World War II. An epic struggle, unparalleled, in which Hitler's Germany was decisively defeated by the Soviet army. It was not the Yankees who dealt the Nazis the final blows; it was in the battles of Stalingrad and Kursk, in which the German divisions and their powerful tanks were defeated by the heroism, the capacity for resistance, sacrifice and combativeness of the Soviets. It is worth remembering the attempts of the British and U.S. to set Germany against the USSR and the refusal to open the second front demanded by the USSR. The "allies" preferred the open confrontation between Germany and the USSR. The Soviets, aware of the situation, had to gain time to prepare themselves, and hence the USSR's maligned pact with Germany.

[1] History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik), International Publishers, New York, 1939, p. 1-2..

Much has been written about this, and although the history of the events justifies the USSR using the opportunity given by that pact to prepare for the war, to move entire factories to where the Nazis could not reach, to prepare the defenses and partisan bands, etc., the anti-communist reactionaries, opportunists of all kinds, Trotskyists, etc., continue to use the German-Soviet pact to attack the communists.

But, surprise, while the leading role of Lenin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov and Trotsky in the revolutions of 1905 and 1917 is pointed out in almost all works, the important, sometimes decisive role of Stalin is hidden or minimized. But in order to accuse him of all the past and future ills, the "historians of fantasies" have written tons of articles and books.

And yet Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, from the beginning held leading positions of responsibility in the three revolutions. It should be noted that, already in his student years, Stalin actively participated in the struggles and demands that were being made.

He was born in Gori, Georgia, on December 21, 1879. After the school in his town, at age 15 (in 1894) he entered the seminary of Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, which was a colony of the vast tsarist empire, which with Armenia and Azerbaijan formed Transcaucasia. Like all the colonies, they suffered oppression in all fields (beginning with linguistic repression) of the dominant empire, which, in those years, led to revolts, demonstrations and uprisings that almost always ended in a bloodbath. There were many peoples who lived together for better or worse: Georgians, Armenians, Kurds, Turks and others.

In those years (1870-1880), the populist movement exercised great influence, together with elements of the bourgeoisie, who advocated a revolution whose main element and motive force would be the peasantry (they completely ignored the proletariat, which was still a minority). Plekhanov correctly led the denunciation and struggle against populism, recognizing that for an eventual revolution the role of the proletariat had to be taken into account, and therefore a working class party had to be formed.

> "*It was on the proletariat and on its growth that the revolutionaries should base their chief hopes. Because the proletariat, although it was still numerically small, was a labouring class*

which was connected with the most advanced form of economy, large-scale production..."[2]

Marxism, introduced into Russia by Plekhanov, was embraced by Vissarionovich, who devoted his energies to spreading it. But in the seminary he was soon discovered and expelled. Then Stalin joined with the workers in the struggle, with the railway workers of the region. Soon he had to go into hiding and used the "nom de guerre": David, Koba and others, until finally he adopted Stalin.

"*According to his comrades of that time, there was a predominant quality in him: his language was simple, direct, comprehensible to all, and even more so to the workers. In his mouth Marxism, scientific socialism appears clear, reasonable and the outline of the future...*

"*Contrary to others who tried to make themselves understood, everything was natural to him, he was not the intellectual who spoke to the people, it was the people who spoke as well.*

"*...In those early years, the organization of workers' struggle was his reason for living, above all other concerns.... Constantly forced to hide, often hungry (Stalin) was pure dynamism and joy. His influence among his comrades did not stop growing....*"[3]

[2] Ibid., p. 13.

Stalin dedicated his body and soul to the spreading of Marxism, to the revolutionary strike struggle, to the organizational formation of the revolutionaries (at that time he led two militant circles), he participated directly in the great May Day demonstration that took place in Tbilisi in 1901.

At that moment, the first issue of "Iskra" ("The Spark") arrived clandestinely (produced abroad and smuggled into Russia), the newspaper conceived by Lenin and published with the support of Plekhanov and Axelrod, who led the "Emancipation of Labor" group. This newspaper played a key role in spreading the positions of Lenin. As the Poet Pushkin cried out: "***from the Spark, the flame will be born.***"

Despite the many precautions taken by Stalin, which had repeatedly saved him from being detained by the police, in Batumi he was taken prisoner and deported to Siberia. Young Stalin was not there long. He managed to escape and to reach Batumi after many eventful journeys, where he again joined the fight.

Later, the Bolshevik Ordzhonikidze, wrote:

> "*From 1904 to 1905, Koba* [*one of Stalin's "nommes de guerre*] *was for the Mensheviks the most hated man ... he became the recognized leader.*"

As such, he continued the fight, gaining a prestige that he never lost, in spite of the many attacks he suffered. In December 1905, a conference was convened in Tammefors (Finland), which Stalin attended as a delegate. There Stalin met Lenin, and there they began to forge a camaraderie based on Marxism, (one could say "and Leninism"). According to Stalin's comments on his meeting with Lenin, he "**was not only the undisputed leader of the Bolsheviks, but the greatest revolutionary of all times, the true 'mountain eagle'**."

The Russian-Japanese war, in which Japan defeated the Tsarist fleet and army (1904), led to a broad movement in Russia against the war and rejection of the Tsar. There the differences between the Leninists or Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks were clearly manifested. The Mensheviks, among whom was Trotsky:

[3] M. Hartmann, "Stalin".

"*were sinking to a position of defending the 'fatherland' of the tsar, the landlords and the capitalists. The Bolsheviks, headed by Lenin, on the other hand, held that the defeat of the tsarist government in this predatory war would be useful, as it would weaken tsardom and strengthen the revolution.*

"...The tsar wanted to use the war to stifle the revolution. He achieved the very opposite...."[4]

Indeed, because of the war, in all of Russia there was a formidable movement, in which Stalin played a prominent role.

In December of that year, 1904, the Bolshevik Committee organized and led a major strike in Baku.

That strike, as Stalin pointed out "***...was the signal for the glorious actions in January and February all over Russia.***"[5] The year 1905 was marked by great strikes and, above all, clashes with the police and the repressive Tsarist forces, such as "Bloody Sunday" on January 9, in which a demonstration of 140,000 workers, women and children were shot at and massacred by the Tsarist infantry. This demonstration, which took place against the advice of the Bolsheviks, who saw in it the provocative maneuver of Father Gapon, showed the masses the true nature of Tsarism and its lackeys. It was really the beginning, the first steps of the political struggle of the workers, of a revolutionary movement. It also began to show the difference between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

"*At this period Comrade Stalin was carrying on tremendous revolutionary work in Transcaucasia. He exposed and lashed the Mensheviks as foes of the revolution and of the armed uprising.... Speaking at a meeting of workers in Tiflis... Stalin said*:

"'*What do we need in order to really win? We need three things: first – arms, second – arms, third – arms and arms again!*'"[6]

In the three years that the revolution lasted (1905-1907), the repression was terrible. At that time, Stalin played a tremendous role; he actively participated in the ideological battles that arose, always

[4] History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), p. 55-56.
[5] Ibid., p. 56.
[6] Ibid., p. 81.

in defense of Marxism and the positions of Lenin. Its prestige grew from day to day. As a convinced Leninist he won the appreciation and admiration of his comrades, as well as the hatred and resentment of people who would later be exposed.

The struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks was intensifying, on important questions such as whether or not to participate in the parliament (Duma) and the question of legal and illegal work of the Party. The repression had struck hard and in some places discouragement arose. This discouragement, fostered by the Mensheviks, showed itself at the Stockholm Congress (April 1906), to which the Bolsheviks could not send representatives of all their organizations, weakened by repression.

Stalin once again demonstrated his loyalty to Marxism and to Lenin. He distinguished himself by his speeches. But in that congress the Bolsheviks were in the minority. The Central Committee elected at that congress was composed of six Mensheviks and three Bolsheviks.

At the Fifth Congress (in London in 1907), the Bolsheviks achieved victory over other tendencies, particularly the Mensheviks. On his return from the Congress, Stalin rejoined the struggle in Baku and took the leadership of "The proletarian of Baku," an organization that played an important role in the ideological struggle raised: again, the Mensheviks advocated the total liquidation of clandestine work.

Stalin lashed out at the "legalists," who rejected any clandestine activity. The detentions that he suffered prevented him from deepening that work. Stalin was one of the revolutionaries most wanted by the police. It is not known exactly how many times he was detained, how many months he spent in prison. But nothing broke his spirit as a militant revolutionary.

Let us look at some facts that show by themselves what the temper of Joseph Vissarionovich was: He was arrested in 1907, in 1908 he fled the Siberian camps; he was arrested again in 1910, fled in 1911 also from Siberia, he settled in St. Petersburg, where he worked tirelessly. He was arrested again, but soon escaped and returned to St. Petersburg. The vicissitudes mentioned above made it impossible for him to attend the party conference held in Prague in 1912, but Stalin was already a leader recognized even by his enemies, who tried several times to eliminate him politically. He was elected to the Central Committee. Stalin participated in the creation

of the newspaper "Pravda" (The Truth), which served to promote the struggle against the opportunists. He attended the conference held in Krakow at the end of 1912, where the break with the Mensheviks took place.

In March 1913, Stalin was again arrested. In addition to his work as an organizer and propagandist, he found time to write about ideology, etc. That same year, Lenin wrote a letter to the newspaper "Social-Democrat":

> *"We have received (suffered) several blows and detentions: Koba has been detained, but he had the time to write a great article for three issues, on the national question. It is very good, we must fight for the truth, against the separatists and opportunists of the Bund and the liquidators."*

His famous work "Marxism and the National Question," clearly took up the national question. It is a work that has served all the parties in the world where the national question exists, to deal with this question ideologically. Suffice it to say that this work of Stalin served as the basis for the first constitution of the USSR (in 1922).

Molotov stated, years later,

> "*Stalin was not only an effective popularizer of Lenin's ideas. No, he introduced something new in Leninist theory, no question about that. First, it should not be forgotten that even before the Revolution Lenin praised Stalin for his work on the national question and called him 'the wonderful Georgian.' In my time I read Stalin's booklet, a splendid booklet. It played, of course, an exceptional role in elucidating Marxist theory on the national question, which is of colossal significance.*"[7]

Stalin continued his activity, and collaborated on "Pravda". Molotov stated: "*Stalin mastered the exceptional language of the propagandist – classical language, precise, terse, and clear. Yet he got this notion into his head.*"[8]

On June 18, 1917, the Bolshevik Party called a demonstration. Stalin, in the newspaper "Pravda," proclaimed: **"it is our task to make sure that the demonstration in Petrograd on June 18**

[7] Molotov Remembers, Albert Resis, ed. Chicago, 1993, p. 198.
[8] Ibid., p. 92.

takes place under our revolutionary slogans." [9]And it was so; the demonstration with 400,000 demonstrators was a resounding proof of the decisive influence of the Bolsheviks, and a failure of the Mensheviks with their slogans of collaboration with the government and in favor of the continuation of the imperialist war. Contrary to their vacillating and opportunist slogans, those on the Bolshevik banners won out: **"Down with the war! Down with the vile capitalist ministers! All Power to the Soviets!"**

Barely a month later, on July 16, the spontaneous demonstrations in Petrograd multiplied, leading to a general demonstration with arms.

> "*The Bolshevik Party was opposed to armed action at that time, for it considered that the revolutionary crisis had not yet matured.... But when it became obviously impossible to keep the masses from demonstrating, the Party resolved to participate... This the Bolshevik Party succeeded in doing. Hundreds of thousands of men and women marched to the headquarters of the Petrograd Soviet and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets, where they demanded that the Soviets take the power into their own hands, break with the imperialist bourgeoisie, and pursue an active peace policy.*"[10]

In July the Sixth Congress was held; Lenin and other leaders could not attend due to police persecution. But Stalin was able to attend, along with Molotov, Sverdlov and Ordzhonikidze. The report was presented to the Congress by Stalin. In that report, Stalin exposed one by one the positions of the Mensheviks and those of Trotsky, who joined the ranks of the Bolsheviks, but with his own opportunist positions.

In the report, Stalin raised issues such as: worker control over production and distribution; hand over the land to the peasants, wrest power from the bourgeoisie and to give it to the workers and poor peasants. He insisted that in order to achieve all this it was necessary for the Party to prepare for armed insurrection.

Against the positions of the Trotskyists, who asserted that "the country could only follow the socialist path if the proletarian revolution broke out in Western Europe," Stalin stated:

[9] History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), p. 192.
[10] History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), p. 194.

> "*The possibility is not excluded that Russia will be the country that will lay the road to Socialism.... We must discard the antiquated idea that only Europe can show us the way. There is dogmatic Marxism and creative Marxism. I stand by the latter.*"[11]

Stalin's Report, which contained Lenin's theses (the famous "April Theses"), was approved. The (pro-Trotskyist) positions of Bukharin and other Mensheviks were defeated.

Faced with the vacillating, pacifist, etc. positions, Stalin stated:

> **"*The peaceful period of the revolution has ended; a non-peaceful period has begun, a period of clashes and explosions.*"**[12]

From that moment on, the repression by the provisional government of the bourgeoisie against the Bolsheviks intensified. The Mensheviks, with their opportunist policies, were powerless. They kept insisting on the peaceful transition when the revolution was already in the street, on the march to "take heaven by assault."

* * *

In October, Lenin, who had already returned from Finland, convened the Central Committee, where the decision was taken to organize the insurrection. Zinoviev and Kamenev opposed it with the argument that the working class was not ready to seize power.

On October 16, at a meeting of the Central Committee, enlarged with various members who carried out various responsible tasks of, a body was created to lead the insurrection. **Stalin was elected as responsible** for the body. At the Second Congress of the Soviets, on October 25, although fighting continued in the streets, at 10:45 PM the congress affirmed the victory of the insurrection and proclaimed that power belonged to the Soviets.

Some "historians" and intellectuals, or their likes, point to Trotsky as the main element in the October insurrection. It is true that Trotsky intervened actively, but it is even truer that Lenin was the main leader, the soul of the insurrection, with Stalin the second. Both had to refute and combat the positions of Trotsky and his fol-

[11] Quoted in above, p. 197.
[12] Quoted in above, p. 197.

lowers, for example on signing the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty, and his military plans were repeatedly opposed by Stalin, supported by Lenin. Stalin, always in agreement with Lenin, were the main leaders in those days. As to Trotsky, we quote this paragraph from Lenin: "Trotsky... as always, entirely disagrees with the social-chauvinists in principle, but agrees with them in everything in practice."[13]

And in February 1917, a month before the collapse of Tsarism, Lenin insisted: "*Trotsky's name means: left-wing phraseology and a bloc with the right against the aims of the left*."

It is significant that Lenin called Trotsky "*the Judas of the Russian revolution*"...

* * *

Those "ten days that shook the world" (John Reed), were able to succeed, among other reasons, due to the relentless struggle against the opportunists and liquidators.

This is what the History of the CPSU points out:

> "*It may seem to some that the Bolsheviks devoted far too much time to this struggle against the opportunist elements within the Party... Opportunism in our midst... must not be tolerated. The Party is the leading detachment of the working*

[13] Sayers and Kahn, "The Great Conspiracy: The Secret War Against Soviet Russia," New York, 1946, reprinted by Proletarian Publishers, p. 187 fn.

class, its advanced fortress, its general staff. Sceptics, opportunists, capitulators and traitors cannot be tolerated on the directing staff of the working class. If, while it is carrying on a life and death fight against the bourgeoisie, there are capitulators and traitors on its own staff, within its own fortress, the working class will be caught between two fires, from the front and the rear."

"*Our Party," Comrade Stalin says, "succeeded in creating internal unity and unexampled cohesion of its ranks primarily because it was able in good time to purge itself of the opportunist pollution, because it was able to rid its ranks of the Liquidators, the Mensheviks. Proletarian parties develop and become strong by purging themselves of opportunists and reformists, social-imperialists and social-chauvinists, social-patriots and social-pacifists. The Party becomes strong by purging itself of opportunist elements.*" (Joseph Stalin, *Leninism*.)[14]

* * *

In just a few pages it is evidently impossible to write about everything that he was, everything that he did, the whole story of that great man, a true revolutionary titan. Upon his death on March 6, 1953, Soviet radio broadcast this message of the Party:

"To all members of the Party. To all the workers of the Soviet Union, the heart of Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, Lenin's comrade-in-arms and brilliant continuator of his work, a wise guide and educator of the Communist Party and the Soviet people, has ceased to beat."

Years later came Khrushchev's coup. The story is already well-known. The destruction of the USSR as a socialist country, and the establishment of capitalism. And all this accompanied by a ferocious worldwide campaign against Stalin...

Our comrade Carlos Hermida took up this question in the preface to "Stalin's Political Biography," edited by the PCE (M-1):

"*Stalin does not need absurd exaggerated biographies or excessive praise. It is as simple as writing history in a rigorous and scientific way. Without denying the errors, his policy of*

[14] Ibid., p. 360-361.

economic planning made the USSR a great industrial power in ten years and created the scientific and technical base that allowed the Soviet Union to defeat Nazi Germany in World War II. The stories concocted at the time by Robert Conquest, disseminated with the generous economic support of the CIA by alleged cultural foundations, and repeated in our country by tellers of fables such as César Vidal, Pio Moa and Ricardo de la Cierva, not to mention professors with an academic pedigree, not only attempt to defame the person of Stalin. Behind this demonization there is a more ambitious goal: the criminalization of communism.

"*Today the term Stalinist is commonly used as an insult, but it should be borne in mind that these reviled Stalinists fought fascism in the 1930s, defended Madrid against Franco's troops, fought in the resistance against Nazi occupation, defeated it in Stalingrad and reached Berlin in 1945*."

We end this article by recalling a few words from Stalin; unfortunately, subsequent events proved him right. At the XVII Party Congress, he stated:

"one of the fundamental political tasks is to overcome the survivals of capitalism in economic life and in the minds of people."

Can we say that we have already overcome the survival of capitalism in the minds of people? No!, Stalin answered categorically and

"not only because in development the minds of people lag behind their economic position, but also because the capitalist encirclement still exists, which endeavors to revive and sustain the survivals of capitalism in the economic life and in the minds of the people of the U.S.S.R., and against which we Bolsheviks must always keep our powder dry."[15]

March of 2017

[15] Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress, Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 13, p. 356.

Tunisia

Workers' Party of Tunisia

The Role of Women in the Great October Revolution

"*In the course of two years of Soviet power in one of the most backward countries of Europe more has been done to emancipate woman, to make her the equal of the 'strong' sex, than has been done during the past 130 years by all the advanced, enlightened, 'democratic' republics of the world taken together*." (Lenin, "Soviet Power and the Status of Women," November, 1919.)

On the eve of the revolution, although Russia was still an agricultural country, the development of capitalism brought about the birth of a working class, mainly composed of former peasants brought into industry. Later, with the departure of the men to the war, women were more numerous in the factories and workshops, and so they took a very active part in the pre-revolutionary period and in the revolution itself.

The Situation of the Working Women

But if the conditions of the workers were very bad, those of the working women were even worse. On the eve of the war and despite the fights that were waged, the women workers still worked 12 hours a day. The working day for women could even reach 14 hours. Maternity leave was not recognized and pregnant women continued to work until their first contractions. Often, working women gave birth at the workplace, without protection or medical assistance, for fear of being fired if they asked for a few days of prenatal leave. Thirty thousand women died every year in Russia in childbirth. The salary of the working women was 50% less than that of men. Illiteracy was almost total among women and sexual harassment was normal.

In the revolutionary movement of 1905-1906 the demands of the working women began to take shape. However, in none of the pamphlets distributed among the workers' sectors with a big concentration of women were these demands (maternity leave of ten weeks, breaks for breastfeeding of infants, nurseries in the factories) put forward. Because of this situation, the young Russian workers'

movement took up the specific demands of working women and made them a part of its fighting program. Alexandra Kollontai wrote:

"In its essential nature, the movement of women workers is inseparably linked with the entire proletarian movement as one indivisible whole. The woman worker... participated together and on an equal footing with the workers in all worker uprisings, in all the factory revolts so hated by tsarism.... The April revolt at the Yaroslavl factory in 1895 received vigorous support from the women weavers. Nor were women workers less active than their male comrades during the economic strikes of 1894-1895 in St Petersburg. When, in the summer of 1896, St Petersburg became the scene of the historic strike by textile workers, the women weavers courageously and unanimously walked out of the workshops together with the men weavers.... At a time of disturbances and strikes the woman worker, oppressed, timid, without rights, straightens up to her full height and becomes equal as a fighter and comrade. This transformation takes place unconsciously, spontaneously, but it is important and significant. It is the path along which the workers' movement is leading the woman worker to liberation, not only as one who sells her labour, but also as a woman, a wife, a mother and a housewife."[1]

The Role of Women in the Social and Political Movement (1905-1913)

Despite those inhumane working conditions, or perhaps because of them, the women were not long in joining the revolutionary movement in all its forms. Some examples show this well.

- In the populist movement, of the 43 militants convicted for "terrorist" actions, 21 were women.
- Women represented 14 % of the members of Revolutionary Socialist Party. They were less numerous in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (10 delegates out of 171) at the Sixth Congress of the Party (August 1917), recruited at first among the upper classes, and later among the advanced sectors of the working class (printing, railways, etc.).

[1] From "On the History of the Movement of Women Workers in Russia," in *Kollontai: Selected Articles and Speeches*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1984

- But most of all were the different attempts to create specific organizations for women.

For example, in 1905, the "Women s Union for Equality of Rights" was born. Its members were recruited from the middle classes and the intelligentsia (journalists, teachers, of both genders; the organization, despite its name was mixed), and some elements of the liberal bourgeoisie. The Union grew rapidly. In a few months, it counted 30 local groups spread out in 19 towns. In March of 1905 the Union held its first congress and drew up its program:

- The unity of women of all social strata in the fight against the autocracy.
- For a republican form of government.
- Universal suffrage regardless of sex, nationality or religion;
- National autonomy for the non-Russian peoples.
- Equality of the sexes before the law.
- Equal rights for the peasant women in any agrarian reform.
- Social protection for the workers through pertinent laws.
- The reform of laws relating to the prostitution.

But after the defeat of the insurrection in Moscow, the tsarist regime unleashed its terror. The repression affected the workers' struggles and the trade union organizations. The workers' fights slowed. In 1905 there were more than 1.8 million political strikers, in 1906 there were 651,000, and in 1909 only 8,000. The trade union membership also fell. In 1907, the unions had 245,000 members, in 1908 they had 40,000 and in 1910 only 13,000.

With the economic recovery, particularly strong in Russia, the workers' movement had a new growth beginning in 1910-1911. There were mainly economic strikes, but the advanced sectors of the working class also carried out political strikes. The women workers took part in these strikes with more force than in 1905, and obtained their demands: maternity leave, changing rooms with running water, an increase in salaries, and most of all, more and more strikes took place as a response to sexual harassment and humiliation.

The Mobilization and Increase in Number of Women in Industry

Between 1914 and 1917 the number of workers in Petrograd went from 242,000 to 400,000 (there were 3.4 million that same year in Russia; the workers of St. Petersburg represented 10% of them). The women workers were about 130,000, 83,000 of them were housekeepers. In 1914, they represented a quarter of the industrial work force and about 40% in 1917.

The mobilization modified the proletariat, of which 40% was renewed, with many women coming from the countryside. In Petrograd, the iron and steel industry employed the 2/3 of the number of workers…. Women represented 1/5 of the wage earners and were employed in the mass production of bullets, shells and other arms. The textile industry employed about 1/4 of the labor force of the city, the great majority of whom were unskilled women.

All this did not change the fact that political work among women faced a lot of difficulties.

The Difficulties of the Organization of Women and the First Years of the Bolshevik Work among Women

Russian society had a great deal of prejudice against women. On the eve of the revolution, the peasants constituted 80% of the population, most having recently emerged from serfdom. Their life in the countryside was still governed by the traditional institutions, marked by a rigid patriarchal hierarchy. The institutions of the community determined the redivision of village property and of the means of subsistence of each person and perpetuated the degradation of women. Let us listen to the testimony of a peasant woman:

"*In the countryside a woman is considered as a beast of burden. You work all your life for your husband and your family, you*

endure the blows and all sorts of humiliations, but nothing happens, you have nowhere to go, you are bound by marriage".

In 1914 women constitute one third of the Russian industrial work force, not big, but powerful. For the Bolsheviks, work among women was an imperative necessity. The women who remained under the yoke of family traditions, isolated from the social and political movement, formed a reserve of social backwardness. The Bolsheviks began to direct themselves to the women workers in the factories. The Bolshevik program responded to all their aspirations, with demands such as "equal pay for equal work", maternity leave, and nurseries in the factories. The party defended the women workers against marital abuse and violence. It fought against all forms of discrimination and oppression wherever they took place, playing the role of a popular tribunal, as Lenin explained in "What Is To Be Done?" (1902).

The party began to form transitional organizations and established special newspapers, such as "Rabotnitsa" (the Woman Worker), which had a great success. The newspaper organized mass meetings and protests in Petrograd against the war and the rise in prices, the two issues which mainly mobilized the women workers. The propaganda work of the newspaper "Rabotnitsa" became more and more central for the Bolsheviks. Its editorial committee included some famous militants such as Krupskaya, Ines Armand, Stahl, Kollontai, Eliazarova, Kudelli, Samoilova, Nokolajeva, and other women workers of Petrograd. These women devoted themselves totally to the revolutionary cause. They played a central role in the organization of women workers and the development of the revolution. Every factory had one or more representatives in the editorial committee of Rabotnitsa. They met every week and discussed the reports coming from the different neighborhoods. Rabotnitsa sensitized the political and trade union organizations, which were backward on this question, to the importance of the work among women.

After the February Revolution, the members of the party struggled within the trade unions against a proposal to fight unemployment by firing the married women whose husbands were working, because they saw this as a threat to the political unity of the proletariat. Before the revolution, hundreds of women had joined the Bolshevik Party and they took part in all the aspects of its work, legal or clandestine, and they occupied positions of responsibility in

the local committees of the party or as liaison agents, agitators and propagandists.

But these militant women workers did not only confront the employers; they also had to fight against the sexist prejudices of their male comrades. This is what one militant woman worker wrote in the newspaper of the leather workers about the behavior of the men:

"*Instead of supporting and working hand in hand with the women, they behaved as if we were not equal members of the workers' family and sometimes they wanted to have nothing to do with us. When the question of firing and unemployment arises, they wanted to make sure that the men would stay and the women would lose their jobs, hoping that women could not resist because of their weakness and lack of organization. When we women try to speak and explain that the men are behaving badly and that we have to find common solutions, the men refuse to let us speak and don t listen to us. It is hard for women, even the most conscious of them, to fight in such conditions, especially when most of the women don't understand and don't want to listen to us either*."

To these difficulties must be added the fight against the feminist currents which tried to keep their predominance over the Russian women's movement. In fact, since the involvement of the women in the social and political movement, two opposed conceptions confronted each other: For the Marxists, the special oppression of women has its origins in class society and it could be eradicated only with the destruction of the private ownership of the means of production. The entry of women into the proletariat opens the way for their liberation: being integrated into production gives them the necessary social power, together with their male comrades at work, to change the capitalist system, and lay the bases for the social independence of women, liberated from the constraints of the institution of the family.

Marxism disagrees with bourgeois feminism essentially on the question of knowing where the main division in society lies: the feminists claim that it is between men and women; for the Marxists, it is between classes, that is, between the exploiters and exploited. The woman worker has more in common with her male worker comrades than with her female boss, and the emancipation of women is the task of the entire working class.

In 1913 Kollontai summed up the disagreement as follows:

"*The woman question, according to the feminists is a question of 'rights and justice.' According to the proletarian women the woman question of is a question of 'a slice of bread to eat.' The awakening of the woman and the development of her special needs and demands will come only if she joins the army of the independent wage-earning population. There is no independent woman question. The woman question arose as an integrated element in the social process of our time. The liberation of woman as a member of society, worker, individual, wife and mother, is therefore possible only together with the solution of the general social question and with the fundamental transformation of the present social order*." (*The Woman Worker in Contemporary Society*)

1917: The Revolution

It has been seen that the February Revolution was unleashed by the women decided to go on strike to celebrate International Women's Day, February 23 (corresponding to March 8 on the Gregorian calendar). With women workers and housewives in the front line, in the beginning they paraded peacefully. In a few days, hundreds of thousands of people went on strike in the factories. The people demanded: "Bread!," "Down with the War!," "Down with the Autocracy!" Four days later, the revolution was victorious and the monarchy was abolished. The women played a determining role in the fact that the garrison, 140,000 soldiers, joined the movement and assured the victory of the insurrection.

From February to September, trade union organizations were created in the textile and food industries. In the textile industry, women represented 66% of the total work force and 80% of the members of the union; in the food industry, they represented 69% of the work force and 70% of the members.

Despite that, women were under-represented in the trade unions, Soviets and committees as a whole. One woman worker described her reality as a woman facing the sexist prejudices:

"*The backward male workers could not imagine that a woman would be able to organize the broad masses. They mock the elected women workers as if they were savages, saying 'Do you see this? These are our elected representatives*'."

This raised again the question of the organization of women; should they organize separately? The party leaders had a different point of view. In a famous talk with Clara Zetkin, Lenin said:

"*Unless millions of women are with us we cannot exercise the proletarian dictatorship, cannot construct on Communist lines. We must find our way to them.... Our ideological conceptions give rise to principles of organization. No special organizations for women. A woman Communist is a member of the Party just as a man Communist, with equal rights and duties.... Nevertheless, we must not close our eyes to the fact that the Party must have bodies... whose particular duty it is to arouse the masses of women workers...*"[2]

In March of 1917, the Bolsheviks opened an office in St. Petersburg to promote the work among women. With great determination, the women rallied the base of the party and managed to call a Congress of women workers in Petrograd, to discuss the best way to mobilize and organize women in the revolutionary movement. At that period Lenin wrote many articles about how to define new strategies and models of transitional organizations to bring women workers close to socialism. The Congress was first delayed, but the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks soon placed this on the agenda. The Congress took place from the end of 1917 and the beginning of 1918 through the Soviets.

The massive and active participation of women in the revolutionary process brought profound changes in their conditions. The new Soviet Russia allowed for the rapid achievement of the civil rights that capitalism could never guarantee at that time. The participation of women workers in the direct management of the production and services, through the Soviets, opened the possibility to a true emancipation of women.

March of 2017

[2] Zetkin: "Reminiscences of Lenin"

Turkey

Party of Labour (EMEP)
Aydın Çubukçu

Culture and Revolution

The October Revolution and Culture

In the long history of humanity, the French Revolution of 1789 was the first great revolution with worldwide effect. With its fundamental principles, objectives and new world view it reshaped the understanding of the state, political tendencies and popular demands, and was an inspiration not only in France but also everywhere its proclamation reached. It also affected the medium and long-term plans of the ruling classes, changed their ways of governance and at least paved the way to reformist initiatives. Being a bourgeois revolution it has given rise to projects such as "progress" and "modernisation" as well as lessons for the reactionary forces to renew themselves.

Undoubtedly, there was a long period of bourgeois development prior to the Great French Revolution; the new ideas, philosophical and art schools, scientific developments and the transforming revolutionary thrust that sprang out of this process shadowed the actual-material causes of the revolution, and led to a great deal of mistaken evaluations of this subject. Despite material social conditions and profound class conflicts as its basis, it was claimed that the French Revolution was a product of the "ideas" that were visible on the surface, and this approach was widely recognised.

This illusion is understandable and tolerable to an extent, as the French Revolution embodied the whole outcome of the 300-year-long bourgeois development across Europe as its own reality; and it claimed as its own property all intellectual, scientific, cultural and artistic heritage that was progressive against the feudal aristocracy, church hegemony and scholastic world view, also succeeding to get an approval from a wide circle.

There is an important aspect here that draws one's attention: every revolutionary theory, philosophical idea, artistic and literary work that was put forward in the long pre-revolutionary years, was now in a position to claim to have been proven by the revolution. It was generally overlooked that this was possible not because of their

own forcefulness but through politics which took them out of their forgotten corners, museums and shelves and brought them into public life and the class struggle. In other words, the bourgeois political revolution was the ultimate manifestation of capitalism becoming a social lifestyle. Among all the factors that paved the way to the revolution, bourgeois cultural accumulation played a significant role, but it was not the only and decisive element in its materialisation. However, this example presents important information in terms of analysing the relation between political revolution and the cultural environment and accumulation.

The relations between cultural elements and the political revolution are very complicated and cannot be expressed by direct and basic relations of cause and effect. Sometimes, historically long-standing approaches and at other times current requirements of politics and its future plans may necessitate this interaction. It is not possible to talk about a rigid framework that explains why a certain philosophical view, artistic-literary school or scientific theory gains popularity in a revolution. When a prominent scientist, A.L. Lavoisier, who made a great contribution to scientific progress with his theories and inventions, was sent to the guillotine as an opponent of the revolution, the revolutionary judge said "*The Great French Revolution does not need your theories*". Yet, having to deal with some ridiculous practices that had to be abandoned later, such as the removal of Sundays from the calendar and reducing the week to six days in order to eliminate religious influence, the revolutionary regime needed the materialist views the most, such as Lavoisier's law of "conservation of mass" [1]. However, current tendencies, direct and immediate necessities may not always be in harmony with long-term basic needs, they may even seem to have contradictory characteristics. This is not an indicator of whether a decisive policy in that process was right or wrong. It only has a warning function in terms of the importance of being mindful of the conditions of the period when evaluating the solutions brought about by political action which contains various and sometimes contradictory elements to the problems of that particular historical scene.

The proletarian socialist revolution has a significant aspect which distinguishes it from bourgeois political revolutions. The latter is completed with the seizure of political power at a particular level of capitalist economic and social development. Political power is the final destination following on a long process of developments.

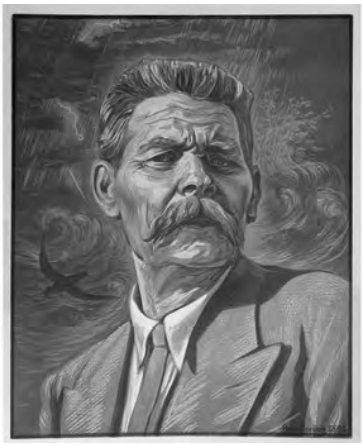
Before seizing political power the bourgeoisie became dominant economically and socially, founded cities to meet their needs, as well as an apparatus to govern them (municipalities), and took decisive steps in transport and architecture, building roads and ports. All this went along with developments in science, arts and philosophy. In this respect, the seizure of political power meant the completion of a social and economic evolutionary process with a political revolution, in other words, reaching the "ultimate goal" within capitalist development.

However, as far as the proletariat and socialism is concerned, the seizure of power is in many ways just the beginning. Theoretically, what this means for the bourgeoisie is the continuation of its power by consolidating its own class hegemony, but for the proletariat political power aims to eradicate all class hegemonies, including its own.

Yet, this important qualitative difference does not mean that there is no correlation between the cultural heritage of society and the socialist revolution. It just sets an important yardstick as to how to evaluate the form of the relation of socialist revolution with this heritage and in terms of the question of the organisation of society on a new and completely different basis.

In this respect, the ideas Lenin expressed when criticising the theory of "Proletcult", which became dominant for a short while following the October Revolution, have important lessons for the present as well.

Those who brought forward the theory of Proletcult did in fact reach exaggerated conclusions on the basis of revolutionary devel-



opments in Russia. According to them, the culture of proletarian revolution was to be a totally new, distinctive culture, free of any connections with and in full contradiction to the old one. The art of past centuries had to be rejected completely. One of the leaders of this movement, Vladimir Krilov said this in one of his poems: "*Let's burn Raphael, for our future's sake! Let's destroy museums, and trample down the flowers of art...*" They attached an exaggerated value to the artist's class identity, and believed that it was not possible for an artist to create significant works of art if they were not from within the working class. The subject and content of this new art, they thought, was to be based on the interests and aspirations of the international proletariat, and Proletcult authors and artists were to extol proletarian life. This movement had its brightest and most influential period from 1918-20; it was under the People's Commissariat of Education during the civil war, and even gained some kind of autonomy from Soviet power.

In his draft resolution to the Proletcult Congress, Lenin stated his opposition to such tendencies and recommended that all Proletcult organisations should come under the People's Commissariat of Education and they should consider themselves as its auxiliary organs. Later in 1920, in his preface to the second edition of *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Lenin draws attention to serious problems created by this movement: disseminating bourgeois and reactionary views in the guise of "Proletcult culture"... This warning served as the beginning of serious criticism, fully removing the autonomy of Proletcult. This ever weakening movement lost support and disintegrated entirely with the departure of Gorki, who began leading the "Socialist Realism" movement.

The most significant outcome of the Proletcult experience was the rich lessons it brought as to how the socialist revolution should deal with the question of culture in terms of the concepts of "disengagement and continuity". In fact, Lenin did not have any hesitation on this matter, and he knew how infantile it was to try to create a new culture by disregarding the accumulated knowledge of thousands of years. For him, Marxism, for instance, had risen on "the entire development of mankind". Similarly, proletarian culture *"...must be the logical development of the store of knowledge mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist, landowner and bureaucratic society*". He also said that proletarian culture "*is not clutched out of thin air; it is not an invention of those who call*

themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense". (Lenin, The Tasks of the Youth Leagues, speech at the Third Congress of the Youth League, October 1920)

Later, in his draft resolution "On Proletarian Culture" Lenin wrote the following:

"*Marxism has won its historic significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat because, far from rejecting the most valuable achievements of the bourgeois epoch, it has, on the contrary, assimilated and refashioned everything of value in the more than two thousand years of the development of human thought and culture. Only further work on this basis and in this direction, inspired by the practical experience of the proletarian dictatorship as the final stage in the struggle against every form of exploitation, can be recognised as the development of a genuine proletarian culture.*"

Aware of the fact that the enthusiasm of the revolutionary period could give rise to such tendencies amongst the intellectuals, who were full of excitement "to create a new world and a new type of human being", Lenin observed the developments for some time and waited until those enthusiastic intellectuals realised how unfruitful their work was, how baseless their claims and how unrealistic their promises were. Pro-Proletcult intellectuals, who also included some of those who wanted to flee the USSR but could not, those who came close to the party and the revolution because of financial difficulties, adventurists, and untalented people who hoped their ideas would flourish in revolution, in short, the kind of people one could find in the intellectual strata of any country, all "disintegrated" later, together with their theory.

Undoubtedly, the cultural work of the initial years of the revolution did not consist only of what the pro-Proletcult people did, or in fact could not do. The Soviets organised a great mobilisation to educate the youth, women and peasants, implemented an educational programme for workers in production with "Communist Saturdays" to overcome the disconnect between theory and practise, and aimed for a continuous and effective enlightenment through millions of new books, newspapers and pamphlets. With its strong roots, Russian art and literature were taken to the masses; in cinema and theatre prized productions were developed with form and content new not only for Russia but for the whole practise of art around the world.

Moreover, great importance was attached to the development of the culture, art and literature of all the nations within the Soviet Union. Those nations who were left uneducated for centuries, many of whom had just recently began to use machines in production, began to understand the value of their historical accumulation and realised that they had things to say to the peoples of the Soviet Republic and to the whole world in their own languages and cultures. Millions of people who were engaged in nomadic life and feudal relations were now aware for the first time of their potential to work for a shared future with all people in the world and began to take steps in this direction.

Socialist Realism

The Soviet Writers Congress of 1934 marked an important defining moment for the art and culture of the revolution which was now running smoothly. In his still controversial speech Zhdanov [2] summarised the achievements of the proletarian rule in industry, agriculture, international relations, etc. since the start of the revolution and emphasized the need for a new spurt in art and literature. In the presence of additional guests of revolutionary writers at the Congress, he concluded his remarks as follows:

"*Create works of high attainment, of high ideological and artistic content. Actively help to remould the mentality of people in the spirit of socialism. Be in the front ranks of those who are fighting for a classless socialist society."*

Zhdanov openly called writers and artists into action and to "take sides". In many intellectual circles and in endless discussions his speech was misinterpreted and presented as designed to "create subservient writers". However, we find in his speech a wide summary of the scope of the construction of socialism and its different aspects. It was not understood that it was natural, even inevitable, for him to make a clear definition of the intellectuals' and writers' responsibilities towards society and to remind them of the needs of the masses of people who took power in the one sixth of the world. Unless the great value and the results of history's most significant mass movement are taken into consideration and the tasks and responsibilities of a party that aims to create "a new world and a new human being" is understood correctly, every discussion is limited by the narrow framework of the concepts of freedom and independence under ordinary bourgeois conditions. Thanks to the Bolshevik Party, the October Revolution never fell into the nonsense that the Great French Revolution sometimes fell into. Besides, some might even be horrified to just imagine what could happen in the process of a social movement in which millions of people who were uneducated, who were squeezed by their daily necessities, who did not have any tools but their bare hands, stand up. In this regard, compared to the French Revolution, the Soviet Revolution was a "very gentlemanly, polite and a very careful" revolution. From the first moments of the uprising, the Tsar's palaces, jewels and valuable art works were taken into protection by the Bolsheviks. Plunder or angry destruction was not allowed and punished harshly.

The theses which were developed later by the Proletcult movement fully contradicted this attitude. If the Bolsheviks had shared their ideas in the initial days of the revolution, there might not have been anything left from the cultural heritage of old Russia.

There is a constant and unbreakable link between this first step and the concepts such as "socialist realism" and "writers and artists taking side". Lenin's frequent emphasis on the principle of "*laying claim to whatever positive and valuable there is from the past and making it a part of the construction of socialism*" was a call to

action in Zhdanov's slogans. This is how the folk songs of the Central Asian steppes became the subjects of great symphonies, and how literature, which was at the point of degeneration in the form of revelations of the depressed petty bourgeois life, blossomed in the novels, poetry and stories of the fight of the great masses to build a bright future. The value and significance of Tolstoy, Gogol, Chekhov and Pushkin were never understood better than under Soviet power. The works of these great authors were never before published and circulated in hundreds of thousands. Theatre and cinema were never before carried in train wagons from Siberia to the Caucasus, from the Ural Mountains to Kamchatka.

The Revolution opened the door to the creation of new and most interesting works in the fields of plastic arts, painting and sculpture. The huge gap between the large scale of the great cause that was to be explained and the uneducated state of the masses to whom this had to be explained necessitated new ways of narration. In order to pass the message fully, a direct, clear and simplified language had to be used, which led to the emergence of new currents which broke new ground. Although in the revolutionary atmosphere they had influences in breaking the moulds of the epoch, a significant section of these currents were linked with the Proletcult movement to a large extent and disintegrated later. However, there were also other art circles which continued to exist without any political support and produced work that contributed to the enrichment of revolutionary culture.

Conclusion

We have a few instruments at hand that we can use today to see the magnitude of the cultural heritage of humanity, such as museums, libraries, archaeological sites and artefacts, etc. However, in order to utilise all this as part of our daily lives we need to know the historical conditions in which every one of them was created, and the development process of human knowledge and labour that is manifested in those. In order to assess what the Soviet Revolution did in the cultural field, one needs to equip oneself with some knowledge, just as when we visit a museum. The Soviet Revolution deserves to be recognised as the highest culmination of the effort of humanity for progress and liberation as a whole.

In spite of the time passed, the remains from that great revolutionary drive prove that the working class can achieve in a

few decades what the bourgeoisie did in five hundred years. Despite the long period of civil war, followed by the Nazi attack, big cities were built, a distinctive architecture was created, and lasting works were produced in the fields of art and literature. Under the leadership of the working class one of the greatest achievements of socialist construction was in the cultural field. The working class does not find any economic element of socialism ready-made in capitalism. All social, economic and cultural institutions have to be created from scratch by the working class which seized political power. Especially, as far as culture is concerned, contrary to bourgeois culture which developed over a long historical process, *socialist working class culture* will be created in revolutionary thrusts.

Here, the initiative and the creative role of the masses play a strategic role. All social and political institutions that were created in the revolutionary process were considered in terms of their essence as the bases of cultural development, and Russia's rich heritage was for the first time utilised successfully to educate the masses of the people through these institutions. Opera, ballet, symphonic music, modern art, etc. all had been the subject of this extensive education, and the worker and peasant masses came face to face with this great treasure that had accumulated completely outside of their lives. What is important here is not "the presentation of readily available materials", but rather the mobilisation of the need of the masses for those materials.

The Soviet Revolution assessed cultural heritage and cultural and artistic production in the light of new needs that emerged from the rise of the working class to the position of the "ruling class".

This could be seen as a new attempt of socialisation by the workers and masses of people, who were completely isolated from all opportunities of mental production as well as from the ownership of the means of production in the present political and social traditions of capitalism. Socialisation of culture was carried out hand-in-hand with the reproduction of culture in the meantime.

The role of the October Revolution in the common cultural heritage of humanity remains to be great and invaluable despite all attempts at slander, undervaluation and disregard.

As far as literature, art, science, philosophy, etc. is concerned, the greatest contribution it made is the fact that it showed that it was possible to produce these socially with the power of the working

class. It changed the social conditions of cultural-scientific production, and opened a new window by showing that all utopian ideas about the power of the masses could be materialised.

[1] The law of conservation of mass states that mass can neither be created nor destroyed, although it may be rearranged in space, or the entities associated with it may be changed in form, but the total mass remains the same from start to end.

[2] Zhdanov was a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the USSR responsible for propaganda and agitation. He undertook various positions in the party from the start of the October Revolution, and took part in the defence of Leningrad against fascism during World War II. He died in 1948.

March 2017