

JV Stalin

The International Character Of The October Revolution

On the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the October Revolution

Pravda, No. 255, November 6-7, 1927

From J. V. Stalin, Problems of Leninism, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1976, pp. 266-77

Prepared for the Internet by David J. Romagnolo

www.marx2mao.com

The October Revolution cannot be regarded merely as a revolution "within national bounds." It is, primarily, a revolution of an international, world order, for it signifies a radical turn in the world history of mankind, a turn from the old, capitalist world to the new, socialist world.

Revolutions in the past usually ended by one group of exploiters at the helm of government being replaced by another group of exploiters. The exploiters changed, exploitation remained. Such was the case during the liberation movements of the slaves. Such was the case during the period of the uprisings of the serfs. Such was the case during the period of the well-known "great" revolutions in England, France and Germany. I am not speaking of the Paris Commune, which was the first glorious, heroic, yet unsuccessful attempt on the part of the proletariat to turn history against capitalism.

The October Revolution differs from these revolutions in principle. Its aim is not to replace one form of exploitation by another form of exploitation, one group of exploiters by another group of exploiters, but to abolish all exploitation of man by man, to abolish all groups of exploiters, to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, to establish the power of the most revolutionary class of all the oppressed classes that have ever existed, to organize a new, classless, socialist society.

It is precisely for this reason that the victory of the October Revolution signifies a radical change in the history of mankind, a radical change in the historical destiny of world capitalism, a radical change in the liberation movement of the world proletariat, a radical change in the methods of struggle and the forms of organization, in the manner of life and traditions, in

the culture and ideology of the exploited masses throughout the world.

That is the basic reason why the October Revolution is a revolution of an international, world order.

That also is the source of the profound sympathy which the oppressed classes in all countries entertain for the October Revolution, which they regard as a pledge of their own emancipation.

A number of fundamental issues could be noted on which the October Revolution influences the development of the revolutionary movement throughout the world.

1. The October Revolution is noteworthy primarily for having breached the front of world imperialism, for having overthrown the imperialist bourgeoisie in one of the biggest capitalist countries and put the socialist proletariat in power.

The class of wage-workers, the class of the persecuted, the class of the oppressed and exploited has for the first time in

the history of mankind risen to the position of the ruling class, setting a contagious example to the proletarians of all countries.

This means that the October Revolution has ushered in a new era, the era of proletarian revolutions in the countries of imperialism.

It took the instruments and means of production from the landlords and capitalists and converted them into public property, thus counterposing socialist property to bourgeois property. It thereby exposed the lie of the capitalists that bourgeois property is inviolable, sacred, eternal.

It wrested power from the bourgeoisie, deprived the bourgeoisie of political rights, destroyed the bourgeois state apparatus and transferred power to the Soviets, thus counter-posing the socialist rule of the Soviets, as proletarian democracy, to bourgeois parliamentarism, as capitalist democracy. Lafargue was right when he said, as far back as 1887, that on the morrow of the revolution "all former capitalists will be disfranchised." [53]

The October Revolution thereby exposed the lie of the Social-Democrats that at the present time a peaceful transition to socialism is possible through bourgeois parliamentarism.

But the October Revolution did not and could not stop there. Having destroyed the old, bourgeois order, it began to build the new, socialist order. The 10 years of the October Revolution have been 10 years of building the Party, trade unions, Soviets, co-operatives, cultural organizations, transport, industry, the Red Army. The indubitable successes of socialism in the U.S.S.R. on the front of construction have clearly shown that the proletariat can successfully govern the country without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie, that it can successfully build industry without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie, that it can successfully direct the

whole of the national economy without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie, that it can successfully build socialism in spite of the capitalist encirclement.

Menenius Agrippa, the famous Roman senator of ancient times, was not the only one to uphold the old "theory" that the exploited cannot do without the exploiters any more than the head and other parts of the body can do without the stomach. This "theory" is now the corner-stone of the political "philosophy" of Social-Democracy in general, and of the Social-Democratic policy of coalition with the imperialist bourgeoisie in particular. This "theory," which has acquired the character of a prejudice, is now one of the most serious obstacles in the path towards the revolutionization of the proletariat in the capitalist countries. One of the most important results of the October Revolution is that it dealt this false "theory" a mortal blow.

Is there any further need to prove that these and similar results of the October Revolution could not and cannot fail to exert an important influence on the revolutionary movement of the working class in the capitalist countries?

Such generally known facts as the progressive growth of communism in the capitalist countries, the growing sympathy of the proletarians of all countries for the working class of the U.S.S.R. and, finally, the many workers' delegations that come to the Land of Soviets, prove beyond doubt that the seeds sown by the October Revolution are already beginning to bear fruit.

2. The October Revolution has shaken imperialism not only in the centres of its domination, not only in the "metropolises." It has also struck at the rear of imperialism, its periphery, having undermined the rule of imperialism in the colonial and dependent countries.

Having overthrown the landlords and the capitalists, the October Revolution broke the chains of national and colonial oppression and freed from it, without exception, all the oppressed peoples of a vast state. The proletariat cannot emancipate itself unless it emancipates the oppressed peoples. It is a characteristic feature of the October Revolution that it accomplished these national-colonial revolutions in the U.S.S.R. not under the flag of national enmity and conflicts among nations, but under the flag of mutual confidence and fraternal rapprochement of the workers and peasants of the various peoples in the U.S.S.R., not in the name of nationalism, but in the name of internationalism.

It is precisely because the national-colonial revolutions took place in our country under the leadership of the proletariat and under the banner of internationalism that pariah peoples, slave peoples, have for the first time in the history of mankind risen to the position of peoples that are really free and really equal, thereby setting a contagious example to the oppressed nations of the whole world.

This means that the October Revolution has ushered in new era, the era of colonial revolutions which are being carried out in the oppressed countries of the

world in alliance with the proletariat and under the leadership of the proletariat.

It was formerly the "accepted" idea that the world has been divided from time immemorial into inferior and superior races, into blacks and whites, of whom the former are unfit for civilization and are doomed to be objects of exploitation, while the latter are the only bearers of civilization, whose mission it is to exploit the former.

That legend must now be regarded as shattered and discarded. One of the most important results of the October Revolution is that it dealt that legend a mortal blow, by

demonstrating in practice that the liberated non-European peoples, drawn into the channel of Soviet development, are not one whit less capable of promoting a really progressive culture and a really progressive civilization than are the European peoples.

It was formerly the "accepted" idea that the only method of liberating the oppressed peoples is the method of bourgeois nationalism, the method of nations drawing apart from one another, the method of disuniting nations, the method of intensifying national enmity among the labouring masses of the various nations.

That legend must now be regarded as refuted. One of the most important results of the October Revolution is that it dealt that legend a mortal blow, by demonstrating in practice the possibility and expediency of the proletarian, internationalist method of liberating the oppressed peoples, as the only correct method; by demonstrating in practice the possibility and expediency of a fraternal union of the workers and peasants of the most diverse nations based on the principles of voluntariness and internationalism. The existence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which is the prototype of the future integration of the working people of all countries into a single world economic system, cannot but serve as direct proof of this.

It need hardly be said that these and similar results of the October Revolution could not and cannot fail to exert an important influence on the revolutionary

movement in the colonial and dependent countries. Such facts as the growth of the revolutionary movement of the oppressed peoples in China, Indonesia, India, etc., and the growing sympathy of these peoples for the U.S.S.R., unquestionably bear this out.

The era of tranquil exploitation and oppression of the colonies and dependent countries has passed away.

The era of liberating revolutions in the colonies and dependent countries, the era of the awakening of the proletariat in those countries, the era of its hegemony in the revolution, has begun.

3. Having sown the seeds of revolution both in the centres of imperialism and in its rear, having weakened the might of imperialism in the "metropolises" and having shaken its domination in the colonies, the October Revolution has thereby put in jeopardy the very existence of world capitalism as a whole.

While the spontaneous development of capitalism in the conditions of imperialism has passed -- owing to its unevenness, owing to the inevitability of conflicts and armed collisions, owing, finally, to the unprecedented imperialist slaughter -- into the process of the decay and the dying of capitalism, the October Revolution and the resultant dropping out of a vast country from the world system of capitalism could not but accelerate this process, undermining, bit by bit, the very foundations of world imperialism.

More than that. While shaking imperialism, the October Revolution has at the same time created -- in the shape of the first proletarian dictatorship -- a powerful and open base for the world revolutionary movement, a base such as the latter never possessed before and on which it now can rely for support. It has created a powerful and open centre of the world revolutionary movement, such as the latter never possessed before and around which it can now rally, organizing a united revolutionary front of the proletarians and of the oppressed peoples of all countries against imperialism.

This means, firstly, that the October Revolution inflicted a mortal wound on world capitalism from which the latter will never recover. For that very

reason capitalism will never recover the "equilibrium" and "stability" that it possessed before October.

Capitalism may become partly stabilized, it may rationalize its production, turn over the administration of the country to fascism, temporarily hold down the working class; but it will never recover the "tranquillity," the "assurance," the "equilibrium" and the "stability" that it flaunted before; for the crisis of world capitalism has reached the stage of development when the flames of revolution must inevitably break out, now in the centres of imperialism, now in the periphery, reducing to naught the capitalist patch-work and daily bringing nearer the fall of capitalism. Exactly as in the well-known fable, "when it pulled its tail out of the mud, its beak got stuck; when it pulled its beak out, its tail got stuck."

This means, secondly, that the October Revolution has raised to such a height the strength and importance, the courage and the fighting preparedness of the oppressed classes of the whole world as to compel the ruling classes to reckon with them as a new, important factor. Now the labouring masses of the world can no longer be regarded as a "blind mob," groping in the dark and devoid of prospects; for the October Revolution has created a beacon which illumines their path and opens up prospects for them. Whereas formerly there was no world-wide open forum from which the aspirations and strivings of the oppressed classes could be expounded and formulated, now such a forum exists in the shape of the first proletarian dictatorship.

There is hardly room for doubt that the destruction of this forum would for a long time cast the gloom of unbridled,

black reaction over the social and political life of the "advanced countries." It cannot be denied that the very existence of a "Bolshevik state" puts a curb upon the dark forces of reaction, thus helping the oppressed classes in their struggle for liberation. It is this that explains the savage hatred which the exploiters of all countries entertain for the Bolsheviks.

History repeats itself, though on a new basis. Just as for merly, during the period of the downfall of

feudalism, the word "Jacobin" evoked dread and abhorrence among the aristocrats of all countries, so now, in the period of the down fall of capitalism, the word "Bolshevik" evokes dread and abhorrence among the bourgeois in all countries. And conversely, just as formerly Paris was the refuge and school for the revolutionary representatives of the rising bourgeoisie, so now Moscow is the refuge and school for the revolutionary representatives of the rising proletariat. Hatred of the Jacobins did not save feudalism from collapse. Can there be any doubt that hatred of the Bolsheviks will not save capitalism from its inevitable downfall?

The era of the "stability" of capitalism has passed away, carrying away with it the legend of the indestructibility of the bourgeois order.

The era of the collapse of capitalism has begun.

4. The October Revolution cannot be regarded merely as a revolution in the sphere of economic and social-political relations. It is at the same time a revolution in the minds, a revolution in the ideology, of the working class. The October Revolution was born and gained strength under the banner of Marxism, under the banner of the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, under the banner of Leninism, which is Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolutions. Hence it marks the victory of Marxism over reformism, the

victory of Leninism over Social-Democratism, the victory of the Third International over the Second International.

The October Revolution has brought into being an impassable chasm between Marxism and Social-Democratism, between the policy of Leninism and the policy of Social-Democratism.

Formerly, before the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Social-Democracy, while refraining from openly repudiating the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat but doing nothing, absolutely nothing, to bring nearer the realization of this idea, could flaunt the banner of Marxism, and it is obvious that this behaviour of Social-Democracy created no danger whatever for capitalism. Then, in that period, Social-

Democracy was formally taken as identical, or almost identical, with Marxism.

Now, after the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, when everybody has seen for himself to what Marxism leads and what its victory may signify, Social-Democracy is no longer able to flaunt the banner of Marxism, can no longer coquet with the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat without creating a certain danger for capitalism. Having long ago broken with the spirit of Marxism, it has found itself compelled to discard also the banner of Marxism; it has openly and unambiguously taken a stand against the offspring of Marxism, against the October Revolution, against the first dictatorship of the proletariat in the world.

Now it has had to dissociate itself from Marxism, and has actually done so; for under present conditions one cannot call oneself a Marxist unless one openly and devotedly supports the first proletarian dictatorship in the world, unless one wages a revolutionary struggle against one's own bourgeoisie,

unless one creates the conditions for the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in one's own country.

A chasm has opened between Social-Democracy and Marxism. Henceforth, the only bearer and bulwark of Marxism is Leninism, communism.

But matters did not end there. The October Revolution went further than drawing a demarcation line between Social Democracy and Marxism; it relegated Social-Democracy to the camp of the direct defenders of capitalism against the first proletarian

dictatorship in the world. When Messieurs the Adlers and Bauers, the Welses and Levis, the Longuets and Blums abuse the "Soviet regime" and extol parliamentary "democracy," these gentlemen mean that they are fighting and will continue to fight for the restoration of the capitalist order in the U.S.S.R., for the preservation of capitalist slavery in the "civilized" states.

Present-day Social-Democratism is an ideological support of capitalism. Lenin was a thousand times right when he said that the present-day Social-Democratic politicians are "real agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement, the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class," that in the "civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie" they would inevitably take "the side of the 'Versaillese' against the 'Communards.'"[54]

It is impossible to put an end to capitalism without putting an end to Social-Democratism in the labour movement. That is why the era of dying capitalism is also the era of dying Social-Democratism in the labour movement.

The great significance of the October Revolution consists, among other things, in the fact that it marks the inevitable victory of Leninism over Social-Democratism in the world labour movement.

The era of the domination of the Second International and of Social-Democratism in the labour movement has ended.

The era of the domination of Leninism and of the Third International has begun.