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The Significance of the October Revolution in the Era of the Transition from Capitalism to Socialism-Communism

In 2017 we will honour the 100th anniversary of the Great Socialist Revolution that took place in 1917 in Russia. This event marked and determined the course of millions of people, not just within the geographical confines of the first workers' state in the history of humanity, the USSR, but it also had an impact of every corner of the planet for many decades.

October demonstrates the working class's potential and capacity to implement its historical mission as the only truly revolutionary class, to lead the first attempt to construct socialism-communism.

At the same time, October shows the irreplaceable role of the guiding force of the socialist revolution, the communist party.

Great October demonstrates the enormous strength of proletarian internationalism. Despite the developments after the overthrow of socialism in 1989-1991, the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution, with all the theoretical and practical experience and maturity that we have acquired over the years, makes us even more certain and categorical about the timeliness and necessity of socialism-communism.

The counter-revolutionary overthrows do not change the character of the era. The 21st century will be the century of a new upsurge of the global revolutionary movement and a new series of socialist revolutions.

The daily struggles for partial and more general gains are undeniably necessary, but they cannot provide substantial, long-term and permanent solutions. Socialism remains the only way out.

The necessity of socialism is highlighted by the sharpening of the contradictions in the contemporary capitalist world, the international imperialist system. The material preconditions for socialism, i.e. labour power and the means of production, have matured within capitalism itself.

Capitalism has socialized labour and production to unprecedented levels. The working class, the main productive force, constitutes the majority of the economically active population. However, the means of production, the products of social labour are privately owned by the capitalists.

This contradiction is the root cause of all the crisis phenomena of contemporary capitalist societies, such as economic crises, the destruction of the environment, the drug problem, the long working day despite the great increase of labour productivity, and which of course coexists with unemployment, under-employment and semi-employment, the intensification of the exploitation of labour power etc.

At the same time, however, this reality signals the need to abolish private ownership of the concentrated means of production, to socialize them and use them in a planned way in social production, the planning of the economy by workers' power so that the relations of production correspond to the level of development of the forces of production.

The impact of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the first victorious battle in history for the emancipation of the working class, remains undiminished to this day. Socialism was transformed from a prediction into a specific reality.

The victory of the revolution provided the possibility of condensing its lessons into a complete theory for socialist revolution and the party. The lessons from it provided the ideological and political basis for the establishment of the Communist International, for a new impetus for the international communist movement.

The theoretical legacy of October, enriched by the experience of the socialist revolutions that then followed, is priceless.

It confirmed in practice the correctness of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the revolution, which flows from the complete systematic analysis of imperialism i.e. that the revolution matures over the course of historical developments and breaks out in a period determined by a combination of objective and subjective causes.

The imperialists and all kinds of renegades distort or conceal the importance of the October Revolution because they obviously understand full well that through its victory the theory and ideas of Marxism became a material force, that millions of workers all over the world mobilized and continue to mobilize against capital's power, were victorious and organized their own state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is founded on the direct producers, the working majority, and is the highest form of democracy that humanity has ever seen.

The Paris Communards in the 19th century took and held power for just 70 days; the new charge to heaven lasted 70 years, constructed socialism, and made an enormous contribution all over the world, surpassing the confines of one country.

The nihilistic stance towards the socialism we knew, the adoption of views that say it was a total failure-because its course was interrupted-is an unscientific stance and an ahistorical one and leads to impasses.

Socialism was constructed, developed, and began to solve the major economic and social problems. It was not possible for a number of reasons for it to highlight and most of all liberate, over the entire course of its construction, the inherent potential for the constant development and perfecting of production, to consolidate itself in its struggle against the capitalist system.

However, this does not negate the contribution and role of the socialist system, as it was formed in the 20th century, irrespective of deficiencies, weaknesses and mistakes that appeared during this difficult course.

What the October Revolution objectively signaled is the undeniable fact that socialism is the future of humanity. It is the system that through the historical development of society will create new social relations, socialist-communist ones, focusing on the people and the satisfaction of all their needs.

The October Revolution in practice confirmed the Leninist analysis concerning the weakest link in the imperialist chain. Up until that point what was missing in the international movement was the theoretical foundation for the possibility of the socialist revolution being victorious in one country or a group of countries, which would emerge as weak links, as a result of the sharpening of the internal contradictions under the influence of international developments.

Of course due to uneven economic and political development, such characteristics can manifest themselves in countries of a medium and lower level of development, where the revolutionary process of course can begin more easily but where it is exceptionally difficult for socialist construction to continue victoriously. Lenin's analyses contributed to the development of Marxism and to the strategic thinking of the Bolsheviks as a whole.

The contribution of Lenin and the Bolshevik party was decisive in the confrontation against the section of social-democracy which, violating the decisions of the 2nd International, supported the bourgeois classes of their countries, sometimes by voting for war credits in Parliament, other times by participating in governments that waged wars, supposedly so that there could be a 'peaceful development', defending the 'imperialist peace' with a gun to the people's heads. A political line which inevitably entangled them even more deeply in the imperialist war, in the sharpening of the contradictions and antagonisms of the imperialist states and their alliances.

Lenin with the strategic line that he followed determined that from the standpoint of the revolutionary movement of the working class that aims to take power via a revolution, the issue is not a simple 'pacifist' opposition to war, but chiefly the utilization of ruptures, which objectively in such conditions, are created in the imperialist camp, the utilization of the weakening of the bourgeoisie in each country with the aim of transforming this imperialist war in each country, whether the country is an 'aggressive' or 'defensive' stance, into a struggle to overthrow bourgeois power that brings death and poverty for the children of the working class and people.

The October Revolution confirmed the Leninist position that the modern era, the era of monopoly capitalism, i.e. the imperialist stage of capitalism, is the era of the transition from capitalism to socialism-the era of socialist revolutions.

The Great October Socialist Revolution also confirmed the role of opportunism as the ideological-political expression of bought off sections of the working class, as the impact of bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology on the labour movement.

Lenin, on the basis of the experience of the October revolution, engaged in particular with issues of the power of the new workers' state, the dictatorship of the proletariat. He studied the experience of the Paris commune in detail, the experience of the Soviets of the 1905 revolution in Russia, the role of the state on the basis of the conclusions of Marx and Engels.

He made a particular contribution to identifying the seeds of the organs of the new power, the character of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as a higher form of state organization of class power for the transition from the early imperfect socialist society to the fully communist society, in both form and content.

These are lessons and experiences that have timeless value for today as regards the organization of the workers'-people's struggle, when the class struggle is sharpening in

conditions of a revolutionary crisis, a revolutionary situation, as regards the organization and expression of the alliance of the working class with the poor popular strata, its natural allies, the poor farmers and self-employed, with the working class in the vanguard, their transformation into a revolutionary forces capable of leading the decisive confrontation against bourgeois power and forming new worker's-people's institutions of the new power.

The KKE, studying the valuable experience of the October Revolution, Lenin's legacy, the experience of the International Communist Movement itself expressed the conclusions from this research in a number of analyses and documents (Reflections on the causes of the overthrows in 1995, the 18th Congress' decision in 2009 on the experience of the USSR and socialist construction and the causes of the overthrows, the National Conference on the History of the Party in 2011, the elaboration of the new Programme and Statutes of the Party at the 19th Congress in 2013).

We came to the crucial conclusion that the definition of the political goal, worker's power, must be carried out on the basis of the objective definition of the character of the era, something that determines the class that is objectively in the foreground of social development.

This defines the character of the revolution and not the correlation of forces which other Communist Parties focus on.

Of course, the correlation between the two basic rival classes, the bourgeois class and the working class, as well as the stance of the intermediate strata, is a decisive factor for the timing of the socialist revolution. In this sense, a CP must take the correlation of class forces into account, in Leninist terms, i.e. in terms of the relations of the classes with power.

The CP must at the same time take into account and calculate the correlation of forces inside the labour movement, the movements of its social allies, as an necessary element for suitable maneuvers, slogans so that the masses can be drawn to the struggle for power on the basis of their own experience.

However this can in no instance become an alibi for the submission of the labour and communist movement to any form of bourgeois governance, for its participation in or toleration of this in the framework of capitalism.

All the flowers of bourgeois and opportunist ideological constructs bloomed in Greece in recent years. There was and still is a lot of discussion in relation to the need to create 'left', 'progressive', 'democratic', 'anti-right', 'anti-memorandum', 'patriotic', 'national', 'ecumenical' government (All these names have been used to describe such governments) as an immediate proposal for a way out of the economic crisis and anti-people political line.

These proposals are being made both by the traditional and the newly formed bourgeois parties, as well as by parties on the 'left' wing of the political spectrum. The labour movement must reject all those traps that aim to manipulate the workers'-people's struggle and to co-opt the movement.

Of course, the unrepentant 'Mensheviks' are also present today along with other tardy 'communists' who, apart from anything else, follow the development of revolutionary thinking in a delayed way. They ahistorically promote Leninist analysis dating from before the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia in February 1917, regarding the possibility of a temporary government of workers and peasants, in conditions when Tsarist power had not

yet been overthrown. What has this got to do with the situation today?

It is undeniable that the conditions of that period were entirely different, as we are talking about a revolutionary situation, with the people organized in the Soviets, armed. We are talking about a bourgeois state that had not had time to establish all its mechanisms.

In the current conditions of a non-revolutionary situation, of bourgeois power well established for many decades with a fully organized bourgeois state, such a goal of a transitional-temporary government in essence means cooperation with bourgeois forces in order to provide capitalism with breathing space, so that the system can overcome temporary or more general difficulties.

And what is even more important. Why should the revolutionary movement elevate a thought concerning a possible scenario, which was never realized in the end, into a general theoretical principle and not generalize the strategy of Lenin and the Bolsheviks that actually led to victory?

Of course, all these well-wishers today say nothing about the positions and political actions of Lenin, beginning in April, after the fall of Tsarism, proclaiming the victorious social revolution in Russia and leading the proletariat for the first time in history to storm heaven and carry out the revolution, breaking the ice, opening up and forging the path for socialism-communism.

Historical experience has taught us that first 'workers' and 'left' governments emerged from social-democratic parties or as coalition governments of social-democratic parties with other bourgeois parties. There has been no instance in the history of the international labour movement and in the period immediately after World War I in particular, when such governments did not arise as a result of the maneuvering of the bourgeoisie in order to deal with a revolutionary upsurge, in order to assimilate the workers'-people's discontent in conditions of a very deep economic crisis before or after a war.

The goal of such a 'left', 'workers' government in the framework of capitalist power, without a revolutionary overthrow, via parliamentary processes, was later adopted by CPs as an intermediate goal with transitional measures. The aim of this, as they believed, was to facilitate the struggle for socialism and solve some pressing popular demands.

However, experience demonstrates that, despite the good intentions of CPs, they were not able to open a window even and certainly not a path to socialism anywhere, and were also not able to stabilize some gains of the people's movement. This includes the experience before and after World War II and up to the present day. Communist Parties found themselves in the end organizationally, ideologically and politically disarmed.

The historical experience and significance of the Great October Revolution is incomparable. It confirms that the salvation of the working class and the other popular strata, in conditions of an economic and political crisis, in conditions of imperialist war, is only possible by overthrowing capitalist power and ownership, which of course presupposes the weakening and complete bankruptcy of its various 'left' forms, represented by the dangerous trends of reformism-opportunism and the governmental left, as is expressed in Greece by SYRIZA, as well as by its occasional satellites, such as Popular Unity, ANTARSYA and other marginal groups-both in quality and quantity-which give them the pretext of a false broadness.

The experience and theoretical analysis of the Bolsheviks together with their revolutionary activity in the period from the 1905 revolution to the October Revolution of 1917 has major timeless importance for communists all over the world. It is related to every aspect of the activity of a revolutionary party, which has not lost the goal of workers' power.

It provides valuable experience for the work of communists amongst broad working class masses, inexperienced working class masses and poor popular strata. It demonstrates the constant and at the same time contradictory features of the development of the working class's alliance with other allied popular strata.

It teaches us that heightened militant and even revolutionary attitudes coexist with confused and disorienting standpoints and views. Of course the most robust attitudes develop amongst the industrial workers, the working class.

Consequently, it is very important for the ideological and political vanguard, the communist party, to elaborate and stick closely to the political line, to intervene substantially and specifically so that the movement of insurgent masses, the militant protests, planned confrontation and subversive activity take on a revolutionary orientation. Indeed, it must take into account that within the ranks of the movement there are forces active which are influenced by bourgeois ideology, a plethora of wavering petty bourgeois forces that bring these views into the ranks of the vanguard.

The ability of the Bolshevik Party, headed by Lenin, to constantly adapt did not lead it into following the mistaken path of erasing the essence of its goal for the revolutionary overthrow of the system and workers' power. The ability to fulfill each task through correct adjustments should not lead to the gradual change of the strategic goal in the name of being adaptable. This is a crucial question for every CP.

Otherwise, there is a real danger of being dispersed amongst the masses, of being co-opted to positions inside the system, of transforming your strategy into one continuous set of maneuvers and tactics. Of course, one must always be aware that you can also be led onto a path that is equally painful for the working class and of course painless for the bourgeois class i.e. the path of isolation, retrenchment and dogmatism.

The communist parties today must constantly seek to creatively use the method and experience of the Bolsheviks, of that party's leadership and Lenin, in their daily activity and the way in which they combined theoretical work with the study of domestic and international developments and the experience of the class struggle itself.

Through this process, a clear Marxist-Leninist answer can be provided to the following question, why was the victorious strategy of the Bolsheviks not at the centre of the analyses of the International Communist Movement, why did the CPs operate mainly on the basis of the previous analyses, in essence depriving the Leninist line of its revolutionary workers' content and leading many CPs into sliding into social-democratic positions and opportunism?

The fact that the revolutionary content and gains which came as a result of the October Revolution over the course of decades were weakened due to the impact of trying to solve existent problems of socialist construction in a mistaken direction, by following capitalist recipes, as we often say, a course that chronologically coincided with the decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956, does not change or alter the internal dynamism of

socialist construction or of course the decisive importance of the Great October Revolution of 1917.

Socialism did not endure in its first great attempt, in the struggle against the old, against reaction both domestically and internationally, something that resulted in its degeneration and in the end its overthrow, which entered its final phase in the 1980s through the notorious Perestroika and was completed through the counter-revolution and capitalist restoration in the USSR and the other socialist countries of Europe and Asia at the beginning of the 1990s.

Of course, the imperialist encirclement of the socialist system was a powerful fact that fed the internal problems and contradictions. It led to decisions that made socialist construction more difficult. One aspect, which is very rarely highlighted, is the objective fact that the arms race that the socialist countries were driven into participating in, above all the USSR, in confrontation with imperialist barbarity absorbed a large section of the economic and other resources of the Soviet Union and the other countries.

At the same time, the line of 'peaceful coexistence' that mainly developed at the 20th Congress of the CPSU and afterwards, allowed for the fostering of many utopian views that it is possible for imperialism to give up on war and military methods.

The developments in the International Communist Movement, the split in the ICM, issues to do with its strategy also played a serious role in the formation of the global correlation of forces.

The dissolution of the Communist International in 1943, under specific historical political conditions, signaled in any case the absence of a centre for the elaboration of a revolutionary workers' strategy against the international bourgeoisie, the international capitalist system.

Despite the fact that the conditions for the sharpening of the class contradictions during the 2nd World War sharpened, the anti-fascist struggle of the peoples led to the overthrow of bourgeois power only in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, with the decisive contribution of the Red Army.

The Communist Parties in the capitalist West were not able to elaborate a strategy to transform the imperialist war or liberation struggle into struggle to conquer state power.

After the end of World War II, the lack of organizational connection between the CPs to form an independent strategy against the unified strategy of international imperialism became apparent. The International Conferences that took place later were not able to contribute to the ideological unity and the formation of a revolutionary strategy.

Our party has learned from its weaknesses and mistakes during the past, such as the lack of theoretical and political readiness to understand the development of the counterrevolution in the USSR in a timely fashion.

We consider that it is the responsibility and right of every CP to study the theoretical issues of socialism, to evaluate the course of socialist construction, to draw conclusions for the battle against opportunism at an international level, to prepare the party and class forces in general in order to explain the class struggle at an international level, to provide a scientific class explanation of the setbacks to social progress and development. In this internationalist and communist spirit, we try to follow the developments today in countries like China, Vietnam, Cuba and other countries.

The scientific explanation and defence of socialism's contribution in the 20th century is an element that strengthens the revolutionary strategy of the communist movement.

The study of the contradictions, of the subjective mistakes of the historical progress as a whole is a process that develops the theory of socialism-communism, which will revive the communist movement ideologically and politically and will provide it with overwhelming strength in its new offensive and final victory.

We are convinced that the final victory will emerge from the repeated defeats. The 'defeat' of the October revolution by the counter-revolution of 1989-1991 can become a school for the next revolution. As a great intellectual wrote (the Hungarian, Laszlo Gurko): 'The revolution is the greatest elation of humanity. Whoever has tasted it once never forgets its taste.'

Amongst our most important tasks today is to restore the workers' knowledge about the truth of socialism in the 20th century, without idealizations, objectively and free of the slanders of the bourgeoisie, which are based on the catastrophes brought about by the counter-revolution.

Capitalism may still be strong today, but it is not invincible. The people are powerful when they struggle with the correct strategy. We look upon the 21st century with optimism.

The 20th century began with the greatest offensive launched by the proletariat in any era and ended with its temporary defeat. The 21st century will bring new offensives and revolutionary victories, the final and this time irreversible overthrow of capitalism and the construction of socialism-communism.

The spectre of socialism-communism is today haunting the bloody dreams of the bourgeois the world over. We must take the decision to become their permanent nightmare.