

19. RESOLUTE SUPPORT FOR THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONAL-LIBERATION MOVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES MUST SUPPORT WORLD REVOLUTION

The October Revolution gave a great impetus to the international proletarian revolution and the national-liberation movements in the colonial and dependent countries. As Stalin said, the October Revolution "*erected a bridge between the socialist West and the enslaved East, having created a new front of revolutions against world imperialism, extending from the proletarians of the West, through the Russian revolution, to the oppressed peoples of the East*".¹ The October Revolution ushered in a new era, i.e., "*the era of proletarian revolutions in the countries of imperialism*", "*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*".²

After the October Revolution Lenin repeatedly stated that the defence of the Soviet Republic and the building of socialism would be of paramount importance in pro-

¹ Stalin, "The October Revolution and the National Question", *Works*, Moscow, Vol. 4, p. 170.

² Stalin, "The International Character of the October Revolution", *Works*, Moscow, Vol. 10, pp. 246, 248.

moting the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed peoples and nations. But he never suggested that the building of the Soviet state could replace the liberation struggles of the peoples of the world.

In the thick of the civil war, Lenin said:

... our problem now is — to support, defend and preserve this force of socialism, this socialist torch, this source of socialism that actively influences the whole world; this problem, in the present situation, is a military one.¹

When the civil war had almost been brought to an end he said that the victorious proletariat was capable of building communism, affirming that "this task is of worldwide significance",² and that communist economic construction in Russia "will become a model for the socialist Europe and Asia of the future".³ When the Soviet state began to embark on peaceful construction Lenin made socialist economic construction the main task for the Soviet state, saying, "At present we are exerting our main influence on the international revolution through our economic policy."⁴

¹ "Speech at the Joint Meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet, the Factory and Works Committees and Trade Unions of Moscow on July 29, 1918", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 28, p. 14.

² "Our External and Internal Situation and the Tasks of the Party", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 31, p. 391.

³ "Report on the Work of the Council of People's Commissars, Delivered at the Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, December 22, 1920", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 31, p. 486.

⁴ "Speech at the Conclusion of the Tenth All-Russian Conference of the R.C.P. (B.)", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 32, p. 413.

The building of socialism, a system far superior to capitalism, in countries where proletarian revolution has been victorious, will promote the world revolution, and, likewise, only the world revolution can ensure that socialism will achieve final victory in these countries. Lenin again and again emphasized:

. . . our cause is an international cause, and until a revolution is accomplished in all states — and this includes the richest and most civilized states — our victory will be only half a victory, or perhaps even less.¹

. . . capital, by the very nature of the case, cannot be defeated to the end in one country. It is an international force and in order to defeat it to the end the joint action of the workers is necessary on an international scale as well.²

. . . the final victory of socialism in a single country is impossible.³

The Congress sees the most reliable guarantee for the consolidation of the socialist revolution that has triumphed in Russia only in its transformation into an international workers' revolution.⁴

¹ "Speech at the Commemorative Meeting of the Moscow Soviet, the Moscow Committee of the R.C.P. (B.) and the Moscow Provincial Trade Union Council for the Third Anniversary of the October Revolution, Nov. 6, 1920", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 31, p. 371.

² "Speech at the Fourth All-Russian Congress of Clothing Workers, February 6, 1921", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 32, p. 92.

³ "The Activities of the Council of People's Commissars, Report Delivered to the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets, January 24 [11], 1918", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 7, p. 280.

⁴ "Resolution on War and Peace, Seventh Congress of the R.C.P. (B.)", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 27, p. 95.

The opportunists of the Second International and the leaders of certain self-styled Communist Parties substituted national egoism and pacifism for proletarian internationalism. Lenin scathingly condemned this kind of treachery, saying:

I must argue, not from the point of view of "my" country (for this is the argument of a poor, stupid, nationalist philistine who does not realise that he is only a plaything in the hands of the imperialist bourgeoisie), but from the point of view of *my share* in the preparation, in the propaganda, and in the acceleration of the world proletarian revolution.

This is what internationalism is, and this is the duty of the internationalist, of the revolutionary worker, of the genuine Socialist. This is the ABC that Kautsky the renegade has "forgotten".¹

Bolshevik tactics were based not on fear of world revolution, nor on the philistine feelings of "disbelief" in such a revolution, but on correct assessment of the world revolutionary situation. Lenin put forward two fundamental principles of proletarian internationalism:

. . . firstly, the subordination of the interests of the proletarian struggle in one country to the interests of the struggle on a world scale; and secondly, it calls for the ability and readiness on the part of the nations which are achieving victory over the bourgeoisie to make the greatest national sacrifices for the sake of overthrowing international capital.²

¹ "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 7, p. 177.

² "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, pp. 235-36.

Lenin was fiercely opposed to the tendency of great-power chauvinism on the part of a socialist country. He said that "it is our duty . . . to combat very vigorously the survivals (sometimes unconscious) of Great Russian imperialism and chauvinism among 'Russian' Communists",¹ and that "I declare war to the death against great-Russian chauvinism. As soon as I get rid of this accursed tooth, I will eat it up with all my sound teeth".²

Revolution cannot be exported and the liberation of the peoples of the various countries is their own affair. This is the view firmly held by all true Communists since the time of Marx. But a socialist country must be in sympathy with and give support to the cause of the people's liberation in all countries. Setting an example in the performance of this proletarian-internationalist duty, Lenin formulated the international policy of the Bolsheviks and the Soviet government. In a rough draft of the Party Programme which Lenin drew up for the Seventh Congress of the R.C.P. (B.), he stressed the "support of the revolutionary movement of the socialist proletariat in the advanced countries" and "support of the democratic and revolutionary movement in all countries in general, and particularly in the colonies and dependent countries".³ In the resolution he drafted for the congress, Lenin wrote that "the socialist proletariat of Russia will with all its strength and by all means at its disposal support the

¹ *The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, p. 34.

² "Note to the Politbureau Concerning the Struggle Against Great-Nation Chauvinism", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 33, p. 335.

³ "Rough Draft of a Programme", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 8, p. 334.

fraternal revolutionary movement of the proletariat of all countries".¹

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED NATIONS OF THE WORLD,
UNITE, OPPOSE THE COMMON ENEMY!

The opportunists of the Second International cut the links between the national-liberation struggles of the oppressed peoples and the proletarian revolutionary movement in the capitalist-imperialist countries, regarding the former as of little importance to the latter. Lenin to the contrary held that "the socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie — no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries against international imperialism".² On the one hand, the proletariat in the capitalist countries "will not be victorious without the aid of the toiling masses of all the oppressed colonial peoples, and of the Eastern peoples in the first place".³ On the other, the liberation struggles of the oppressed nations are able to develop smoothly only when they are linked up with the anti-imperialist revolutionary struggles of the international proletariat. In the "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions" Lenin wrote that the Soviet Russian Republic "is inevitably

¹ "Resolution on War and Peace, Seventh Congress of the R.C.P. (B.)", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 27, p. 95.

² *Address to the Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, pp. 20-21.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

grouping around itself the Soviet movement of the advanced workers of all countries, as well as all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities".¹ Also, he stated:

... the cornerstone of the whole policy of the Communist International in the national and colonial question must be to bring together the proletarians and the masses of the toilers of all nations and countries for the joint revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the landlords and the bourgeoisie; for this alone guarantees victory over capitalism, without which the abolition of national oppression and inequality is impossible.²

Lenin considered entirely correct the slogan put forward by the Communist International — Workers and oppressed nations of the world, unite!

The opportunists of the Second International paid only lip-service to the condemnation of imperialism. They talked glibly about internationalism but in fact gave no support to the revolutionary struggles in the colonies and semi-colonies. Lenin mercilessly exposed the hypocrisy of the parties of the Second International. He said:

Those English, French, Dutch, Belgian, etc., parties which are hostile to imperialism in words, but which in deeds fail to wage a revolutionary struggle within "their own" colonies for the *overthrow* of "their own" bourgeoisie, do not systematically assist the *revolutionary* work already commenced everywhere in the colonies, and do not send arms and literature to the revolu-

¹ *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, p. 233.

² *Ibid.*

tionary parties in the colonies, are parties of scoundrels and traitors.¹

He also said:

Every party that wishes to affiliate to the Third International must ruthlessly expose the tricks of "their" imperialists in the colonies; they must support not merely in words but by deeds, every liberation movement in the colonies, demand the expulsion of their imperialists from these colonies, imbue the hearts of the workers of their respective countries with a truly fraternal attitude toward the toiling population of the colonies and of oppressed nationalities, and carry on systematic agitation among the armed forces of their own country against all oppression of colonial peoples.²

THE PROLETARIAT MUST LEAD THE NATIONAL- DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

After making a scientific analysis of the socio-economic and class conditions in the colonial and backward countries, Lenin arrived at the belief that the proletariat in these countries must lead the peasantry in the national-democratic revolutionary movement, and that it must also unite with the bourgeoisie but at the same time maintain its independence. The proletarian parties in these countries must creatively apply the general principles of Marxism to the concrete conditions in their respective

¹ "The Tasks of the Third International", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 29, p. 467.

² "The Conditions of Affiliation to the Communist International", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, p. 203.

countries and correctly resolve the problems that arise in the course of the revolution.

Lenin pointed out that feudal relations were predominant in the colonies and backward countries and the peasant masses constituted the bulk of the population. It was also necessary to oppose feudalism in these countries, as well as imperialism. He said:

. . . it is necessary to render special assistance to the peasant movement in the backward countries against the landlords, against large landownership, against all manifestations or survivals of feudalism; to strive to give the peasant movement the most revolutionary character. . . .¹

He said further:

It would be utopian to think that proletarian parties . . . could pursue Communist tactics and a Communist policy in these backward countries without having definite relations with the peasant movement and without effectively supporting it.²

Lenin made a profound analysis of the dual character of the bourgeoisie in the colonial countries. He said:

A certain rapprochement has been brought about between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and those of the colonial countries, so that very often, even in the majority of cases, perhaps, where the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries does support the national

¹ "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, p. 236.

² "The Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions at the Second Congress of the Communist International", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, pp. 240-41.

movement, it simultaneously works in harmony with the imperialist bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, it joins the latter in fighting against all revolutionary movements and revolutionary classes.¹

While uniting with the bourgeoisie that supports the national-liberation movement, the proletariat must oppose its readiness to compromise. Lenin said:

. . . the Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in colonial and backward countries, but must not merge with it, and must unconditionally preserve the independence of the proletarian movement even in its most rudimentary form. . . .²

He also said:

. . . we Communists should, and will, support bourgeois liberation movements in the colonial countries only when these movements are really revolutionary, when the representatives of these movements do not hinder us in training and organising the peasants and the broad masses of the exploited in a revolutionary spirit. Even if these conditions do not exist, the Communists in these countries must fight against the reformist bourgeoisie, among which we include the heroes of the Second International.³

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

² "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions", *op. cit.*, p. 237.

³ "The Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions at the Second Congress of the Communist International", *op. cit.*, p. 241.

Lenin analysed the new historical conditions under which liberation struggles were being waged in the colonial and backward countries after the October Revolution. He pointed out that if the revolutionary, victorious proletariat carried on systematic propaganda among them, if the Soviet governments rendered them all the assistance they possibly could, and — under these conditions — if the proletariat and its parties in those countries firmly took the leadership of the national-democratic revolution into their own hands and carried it to complete victory, then the backward countries might pass over to the Soviet system and, after a definite stage of development, go on to communism, without passing through the capitalist stage of development.

THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD WILL BE DECIDED
BY THE PEOPLE, THE GREAT MAJORITY
OF ITS POPULATION

The opportunists of the Second International and those in Russia constantly used the argument that "Russia has not attained the level of development of productive forces that makes Socialism possible",¹ and denied the possibility of achieving socialism in economically backward Russia. They held that socialism was possible only when an economic and cultural level corresponding to that of the developed capitalist countries of Western Europe had been attained.

Lenin ridiculed the "heroes" of the Second International and their Russian counterparts, saying:

¹ Quoted by Lenin in "Our Revolution", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 726.

They all call themselves Marxists, but their conception of Marxism is impossibly pedantic. They have completely failed to understand what is decisive in Marxism, namely, its revolutionary dialectics.¹

Taking advantage of the revolutionary situation created by the first imperialist world war, economically backward Russia made its socialist revolution ahead of the economically advanced countries in Western Europe, and this is a special feature of the Russian revolution. To the opportunists of the Second International Lenin replied:

You say that civilization is necessary for the building of Socialism. Very good. But why could we not first create such prerequisites of civilization in our country as the expulsion of the landlords and the Russian capitalists, and then start moving towards Socialism?²

This was so in Russia, and it would be so in the East which was even more backward than Russia. Lenin said:

Our European philistines never even dream that the subsequent revolutions in Oriental countries, which possess much vaster populations and a much vaster diversity of social conditions, will undoubtedly display even greater peculiarities than the Russian revolution.³

It was with such confidence that Lenin assessed the revolutions in the Eastern countries. He firmly believed that the people of the colonial and dependent countries would certainly rise up against imperialist oppression, achieve their own liberation and become an important

¹ "Our Revolution", *op. cit.*, p. 724.

² *Ibid.*, p. 727.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 727-28.

force in the world revolutionary movement. He said that anti-imperialist national-liberation wars were inevitable under imperialism.

. . . weak as they [the peoples of the East] may be, and invincible as may seem the power of the European oppressors, who employ in the struggle all the marvels of technology and the art of war — nevertheless, a revolutionary war waged by oppressed peoples, if it really succeeds in arousing the millions of toilers and exploited, harbours within it such potentialities, such miracles, that the emancipation of the peoples of the East is now quite practicable. . . .¹

In the article “On the Significance of Militant Materialism”, Lenin wrote:

. . . every day of the awakening to life and struggle of new classes in the East (Japan, India and China) — i.e., the hundreds of millions of human beings who form the greater part of the population of the world and whose historical passivity and historical torpor have hitherto been conditions responsible for stagnation and decay in many advanced European countries — every day of the awakening to life of new peoples and new classes serves as a fresh confirmation of Marxism.²

The future of the world will be decided by the people, the great majority of its population. Lenin said:

World imperialism must fall when the revolutionary onslaught of the exploited and oppressed workers in

¹ *Address to the Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, p. 10.

² *Marx — Engels — Marxism*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, p. 481.

each country, overcoming the resistance of the petty-bourgeois elements and the influence of the small upper stratum of the labour aristocracy, will unite with the revolutionary onslaught of hundreds of millions of people who up to now have stood outside of history and have been regarded merely as the object of history.¹

Lenin pointed out, in “Better Fewer, But Better”:

In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And it is precisely this majority that, during the past few years, has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest shadow of doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the complete victory of Socialism is fully and absolutely assured.²

¹ “The International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International”, *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, p. 197.

² *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 750.