

Leninist Theory Building as Ideological-Political Foundation of the October Revolution

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For the first time in the history of humankind, the Great October Revolution of 1917 introduced a transitional phase from capitalism to socialism. Even if it failed to unleash the proletarian revolution in the remaining imperialist countries, the October Revolution was nevertheless a groundbreaking historical success **based on the unity of revolutionary theory and practice.**

It was only possible through a preceding comprehensive philosophical dispute by Lenin in all key questions that had to be solved in practice for revolutionary party building and the proletarian revolution. Among various organizations and parties which today defend the importance of the October Revolution for the future of humanity, exactly this crucial significance of theoretical and ideological work as a preliminary battle of the international socialist revolution often still is underestimated. It is necessary, however, to learn from Lenin's theory and method with which he worked out and fought through the ideological, political and organizational foundations of the October Revolution in the struggle against all shades of bourgeois ideology and petty-bourgeois trends within the working-class movement.

Lenin stated, “***Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. ... the role of a vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory***” (*What Is To Be Done?*). He studied the writings of Marx and Engels, in particular their dialectical-materialist method, and applied this to the analysis of the development of capitalism in Russia, as well as to the struggle for the proletarian party and its strategy and tactics. He led an irreconcilable ideological struggle against the idealist views of the Narodniks, who opposed the development of capitalism in Russia and assumed that the peasantry and not the working class would have to play the main role in the revolution. Instead, Lenin proved that it was exactly through the transformation of the feudal into the capitalist mode of production in the countryside that a modern industrial proletariat was developing as the decisive revolutionary force. He developed the idea of the alliance of the working class and the peasants. Lessons must be taken from that for today, when the capitalist mode of production prevails worldwide, but there are countries in which feudal or semi-feudal conditions still remain in the countryside.

Written in Munich in 1902, *What Is To Be Done?* was not only a passionate appeal to better organize and overcome the circle stage and primitivism which still dominated in party building at that time. It was a systematic **philosophical debate with** the influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology in the form of **a worship of spontaneity and the negation of the leading role of the party.** To refrain from working out and continuously developing an ideological-political line for today would condemn the revolutionaries to trailing behind the spontaneous movement of the masses. In many countries today this movement is experiencing an upswing, but is more or less

influenced by bourgeois or petty-bourgeois ideas. It is therefore of primary importance to build up a Marxist-Leninist party in every country, for which Lenin developed a clear **ideological foundation** in his writing ***One Step Forward, Two Steps Back***. With this as guideline and under the complicated conditions of German imperialism and the reorganization of international capitalist production, the MLPD built up a revolutionary **party of a new type**, a party that works on the **foundation of the proletarian mode of thinking**.

Following the defeat of the revolution in 1905, Lenin wrote ***Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*** in the struggle against rising liquidationism, which was supported mostly by petty-bourgeois intellectuals within the party. There he defended dialectical materialism against a philosophical revisionism and its attempts to revive idealism under the guise of Marxism. This and his later writings, ***Philosophical Notebooks***, as well as shorter articles like “**On the Question of Dialectics**”, are essential theoretical weapons to come to grips with the empirio-criticism of a new type, today’s widespread **positivism**. Positivism is a philosophical foundation of modern anti-communism and denies the existence of objective laws in nature and society that function independently of human will. It thus also negates the necessity and possibility to work out and implement scientific strategy and tactics for revolutionizing society.

Taking the new manifestations and essential changes through the development of capitalism of free competition to monopoly capitalism/imperialism into consideration, Lenin decisively advanced scientific socialism. His groundbreaking work, confirmed in its fundamental statements again and again through today, was written: ***Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism***. There he qualified the essence of imperialism in a way that remains generally valid to this day: “*Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom. Whatever the political system, the result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction and an extreme intensification of antagonisms in this field.*” (“Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism”, Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 297) Lenin termed tsarism to be a “military-feudal imperialism” (quoted in Stalin, “The Foundations of Leninism”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 105). On this basis the Bolshevik Party proved to be the only party during the first imperialist war which did not go over to the social-chauvinist position of the defense of the fatherland. Instead it remained true to the cause of socialism and internationalism and organized the revolution against the imperialist government of its own country.

From August until September 1917 Lenin drafted his work ***State and Revolution***. This was not only a refutation of the predominating opportunism in the question of the state among the great majority of the parties of the Second International, but was an ideological preparation of the Bolsheviks for conducting the proletarian, socialist revolution. Building on the doctrines of Marx and Engels on the dictatorship of the proletariat as a transitional society from capitalism to communism, he there substantiated how this transition could be implemented under the concrete socio-economic conditions of Russia.

In his analysis of imperialism Lenin proceeded from the inner mobility and changes of imperialism. In “For Bread And Peace”, published in December 1917, he wrote: “*Capitalism had developed into imperialism, i.e., into monopoly capitalism, and under the influence of the war it has become state monopoly capitalism We have now reached the stage of world economy that is the immediate stepping stone to socialism.*” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 386) Without a doubt, Lenin

himself here speaks of a new stage and a crucial change in the development of the political economy of imperialism. This shows that one must differentiate between the universally valid, **universal essence** of imperialism and the changing **particular essence** of imperialism.

With the **reorganization of international capitalist production** since the 1990s the emergence of **international supermonopolies** became a characteristic feature of the development of the imperialist world system. Imperialism's general proneness to crisis is today developing universally. In the worldwide production systems and the special economic zones a cross-border organized, international industrial proletariat arose. This signifies a **qualitative change of societal development**, a new phase in the development of imperialism and a change in its **particular essence**, where a global interaction of national and international class struggles is developing in which the newly arisen international industrial proletariat plays the decisive role.

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