

Strategy and tactics of the democratic, anti-imperialist and socialist revolution as lesson from the October Revolution

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The October Revolution in Russia in 1917 was by nature a part of the international revolution, and Lenin consciously classified it as such even though, in its form, it remained limited to Russia. Today it is also necessary to integrate every revolution into the strategy and tactics of the international socialist revolution and its concrete course. The **particular essence of the October Revolution** is, among other aspects, determined by its **two stages**: building upon the democratic February Revolution against tsarist rule it carried out the social liberation of the working class from Russian imperialism as socialist, proletarian revolution.

Lenin wrote:

“The specific feature of the present situation in Russia [in April 1917 – The author] is that the country is passing from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organisation 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.” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 20)

Only the overthrow of the brutal tsarist regime made it possible for the movement of the working class and the masses, and the organized force of the Bolshevik party, to gain enough strength for carrying out the proletarian revolution. Only then, within the Soviets a Bolshevik majority emerged which mobilized the workers, the proletariat in the countryside and the small peasants for the proletarian revolution.

The **dialectics of the democratic and the socialist/proletarian revolution is fundamental**. In the “old” imperialist countries of the world, the democratic revolutions were already carried out during the past centuries. Most of the countries exploited and oppressed by old colonialism became formally independent only during the last century through bitter democratic struggles and revolutions. But imperialism continued to exploit and oppress them by a new type of neocolonial system.

With the collapse of the bloc of bureaucratic-capitalist countries a unified world market emerged; the **reorganization of international production essentially changed the imperialist world system**. With the internationalization of the productive forces and the dictatorship of solely ruling international finance capital increasingly spreading all over the world, some former neocolonially dependent countries have developed into capitalist or even new-imperialist countries. Others were ruined by imperialism to such a degree that in many cases they do not even have a functioning state apparatus and infrastructure anymore. But even in those countries, the workers and broad masses

have to deal with solely ruling international finance capital, which exploits their raw materials and labor, occupies their country, etc.

In all countries with capitalist production, independent of how far developed it is, the **national bourgeoisie has since been interpenetrating most closely with solely ruling international finance capital**. Their investments, financial flows, their capital invested in machinery and equipment, their factories, as in joint ventures, agricultural capital, etc. are twisted together into an almost inseparable tangle. This is the basic reason why in these countries **national as well as social liberation**, carried out with the main thrust against the ruling class in one's own country, can **only be completed in connection with the worldwide overthrow of international finance capital**.

In the book, *Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution*, Stefan Engel wrote in 2011 about the countries striving for imperialist power:

“To create the preconditions for the building of socialism, the revolutionaries in these countries must also – under the leadership of the international industrial proletariat, and in alliance with the broad masses and parts of the nonmonopoly national bourgeoisie – solve agrarian revolutionary tasks, overcome backwardness and unbalance in the economy and feudal remnants. ... The more the imperialist character of these countries asserts itself, the more will revolutionary uprisings in the industrial centers determine the proletarian character of the revolution.” (p. 310)

The **fundamental character of a revolution** is determined **by the qualitative level of development a specific society has reached**. When a country has changed into an imperialist country the preparation of the socialist revolution is put on the agenda. Because of remnants of neocolonial exploitation and oppression or feudal structures, special forms of national, racist or other kinds of oppression, a **democratic revolution must be coupled with it or must be carried out as the first stage of the socialist revolution**.

After the February Revolution in 1917, Lenin fought against objections raised by various dogmatists who maintained that the democratic revolution had not been completed and that a socialist revolution was therefore premature. Lenin identified as main criterion whether power had already gone over into the hands of a new class different from feudal tsarist rule. The **main aspect** of the revolution in February 1917 was *“the passing of state power to the bourgeoisie.... To this extent, the bourgeois, or the bourgeois-democratic, revolution in Russia is completed.”* (“Letters on Tactics”, Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 42–54) Of **secondary importance** was the necessity to overcome feudal remnants. Lenin opposed *“reiterating formulas senselessly learned by rote instead of studying the specific features of the new and living reality.”* (ibid.)

If a country is imperialist, **only a socialist revolution can complete democratic liberation**. On the “Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution”, Lenin wrote: *“We solved the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in passing, as a 'by-product' of our main and genuinely proletarian-revolutionary, socialist activities.”* (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 51–59) The struggle for democratic liberation strengthens the forces of socialist revolution – the socialist revolution resolutely achieves democratic and social liberation.

Objections are raised that in new-imperialist countries an **anti-imperialist revolution has priority in the beginning** and that the preparation of the socialist revolution would weaken the forces of the anti-imperialist struggle. However, the dialectics of the democratic and the socialist revolution

cannot be replaced by a metaphysical succession and rigid separation of the two. Their fundamental connection must be analyzed and creatively applied in agreement with the specific characteristics of the country by carrying out a **concrete analysis of the concrete situation at the level of the doctrine of the mode of thinking**. The concrete forms in the particular countries are as manifold as life itself. Thus, in new-imperialist Turkey, under the fascist form of rule, an antifascist-democratic system under the leadership of the working class is the next step on the path towards socialist revolution. The struggle for the national liberation of the oppressed Kurdish people is integrated here. In new-imperialist South Africa, the struggle for completely overcoming the racist Apartheid regime, in new-imperialist India, the smashing of the feudal caste system will be a part of, or even the next strategic step on the path to, the socialist revolution.

The **forms of struggle** must be dealt with dialectically also. In the beginning, the October Revolution was an armed uprising. But this is true only regarding the overthrow of bourgeois power. After the revolution, until 1924, **partisan struggle** against different feudal lords had to be fought, and an **anti-imperialist war of resistance** against the invasion by several capitalist and imperialist countries to destroy socialism.

Without a doubt, the **potential for armed uprisings of the working class has clearly expanded and increased**: through the considerable growth of the working class in the new-imperialist countries, the proletarianization of further strata of society, and the fraternization of more and ever broader parts of the oppressed with the working class. Armed uprising interacts dialectically with democratic uprisings and struggles, people's wars in certain periods, etc.

The **international socialist revolution consists of the entire scope of democratic and socialist revolutions** and their combination. The revolutionaries of the world must **analyze concretely** the specific situation in their countries. It is important to determine the concrete **dialectics of the struggle for democracy and freedom and the struggle for genuine socialism, of the national and international revolution**. This will considerably enhance the potentials of the international socialist revolution!

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