



April 22, 2020

150th Anniversary of the Birth of the Great Lenin

The Name and Work of V.I. Lenin Will Always Have a Place of Honour



Lenin declares the victory of the socialist revolution at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets at the Smolny Institute in Petrograd, November 7, 1917. (D. Nalbandyan, 1950)

The great Russian revolutionary Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov was born 150 years ago, on April 22, 1870 in Simbirsk, Russia which is on the river Volga. He adopted the pseudonym Lenin in 1901 following his exile in Siberia by the regime of the Czar. He is known by the name V.I. Lenin ever since.

V.I. Lenin was not only a revolutionary but, of even more significance, the greatest Marxist theoretician of the 20th century. Amongst his greatest feats were to create the revolutionary party of the proletariat as distinct from the parliamentary parties adhered to by the Second International; establish the proletarian state of the workers and peasants in Russia, as well as lay down the analysis and the ideological and organizational lines for the development of the revolution and socialism in the conditions of imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism and proletarian revolution.

From the beginning, Lenin set his work along the theoretical conclusions of Marxism. In this respect, he had a holistic socialist outlook based on the firm belief that the only road to open the path for the progress of society is the road of the emancipation of the working class through proletarian revolution. This belief of Lenin, far from being invalidated by the developments which led to the collapse of the former Soviet Union and since then, has been fully validated by these developments.



Lenin addresses workers at the Putilov Factory, May 1917. (I. Brodsky, 1929)

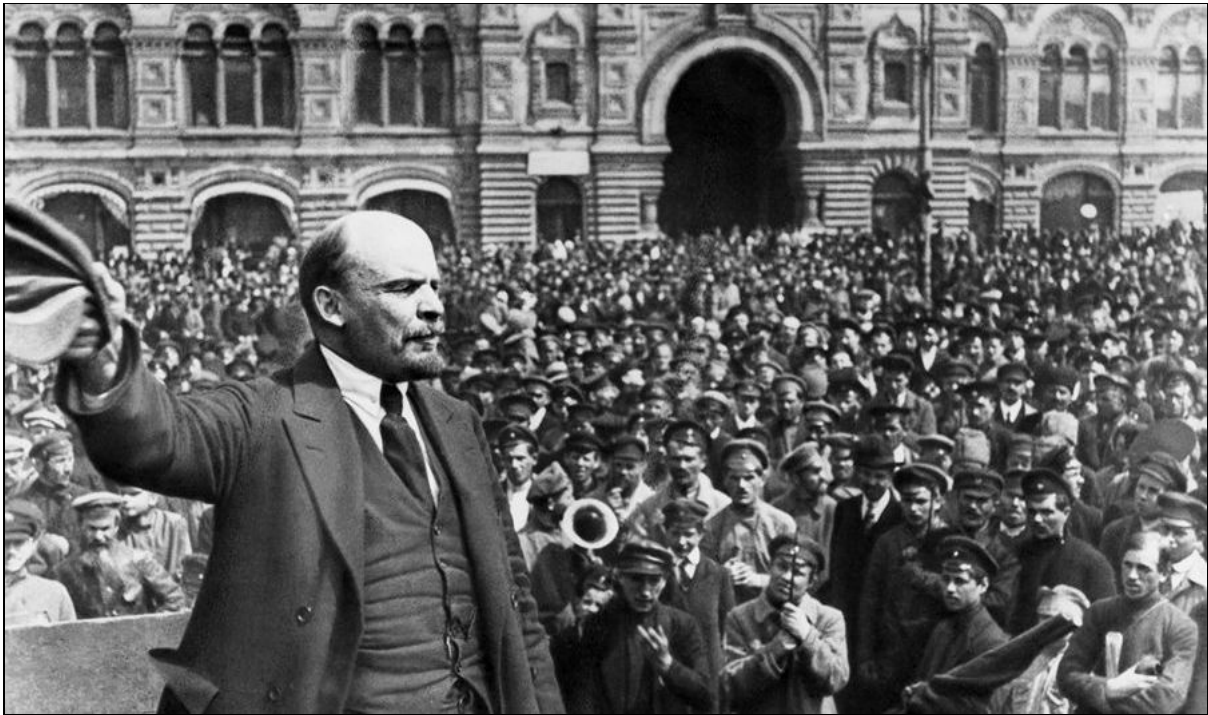
Lenin's first ideological consideration was the defence of the Marxist trend -- that is, the trend based on the conclusions of Marxism. He presupposed that the unity of the movement hinged on the defence of this trend, which means on the development of Marxist thought and its elaboration taking into account the conditions of his time. Besides other things, he defended the need for the elaboration of a plan for the building of the movement and condemned the spontaneist idea of "tactics as a process." The conclusions he drew from his work at the beginning of the 20th century have profound validity in the present day.

One of the ideas which has profound significance for the present is his conclusion that the task of emancipating the working class belongs to the workers themselves.

Another idea which has great validity and profound significance is his conclusion that without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. The idea of developing Marxist thought and elaborating it, in close connection with the revolutionary movement, has remained the line of demarcation between all schools of opportunism and revolutionary Marxists. For opportunists, revolutionary politics means detaching politics from their revolutionary essence, emasculating and transforming revolutionary theory into a series of dogmas while transforming politics into an adjunct of the bourgeois rule. On the other hand, for revolutionary Marxists, revolutionary theory develops in the course of revolutionary practice. It is an integral part of carrying out both economic and political forms of class struggle. The defence of this very idea of Lenin's is a form of class struggle which they wage.

Recognizing the objective condition where capitalism had developed to its last stage, its parasitic and moribund stage, Lenin drew the conclusion that there is no other stage of capitalism and that it

is ripe for its revolutionary overthrow and for the building of socialism. Such an idea based on the conclusion of Lenin has great significance. There is ongoing pressure to abandon this idea and replace it with the idea that capitalism has many stages ahead of it and that it is capable of overcoming its own contradictions. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the regimes in eastern Europe with all their capitalist reforms showed that capitalism has no other stage of development. Just like the advanced capitalist countries that did not form part of the socialist world, countries which embarked on the construction of capitalism under the pretext of a "free market economy securing prosperity" are mired in anarchy and economic chaos and their reflection in politics.



V.I. Lenin speaks in Red Square, May 25, 1919.

Lenin's conclusion that imperialism is the eve of the proletarian revolution remains valid today. This idea is another point of ideological struggle and its defence and elaboration are the order of the day. It is one thing to describe the progression of imperialist decay; it is another to develop the proletarian front and provide an alternative so that the New can overcome the resistance of the Old and prevail.

Having an acute sense that his period was one of imperialism and proletarian revolution, Lenin drew the conclusion that a new kind of political party is needed in order to address the new problem of proletarian revolution. His organizational principle of democratic centralism has profound relevance today. One of the causes for the difficulties facing the communist and workers' movement today continues to revolve around the emasculation of this idea, under the heavy weight of bureaucracy which refers to indifference towards the problems of the party and the class and the role of the membership in the life of the Party which tends to be reduced to the most perfunctory level, coupled with the refusal to do theoretical work.

Communist Party members become apolitical if they do not enable themselves to exercise decision-making power over matters that affect them, including the decisions of the state. This depoliticization necessarily takes place when the relation between the citizens and the polity is destroyed in favour of executive rule as is happening today. Liberal democratic forms of rule reduce democracy to an idea devoid of the democratic principle and to a series of organizational

hierarchies which operate to keep the people disempowered. The defence of the organizational principle of democratic centralism is one of the most important tasks in laying the foundation for the mass communist party and leading the working class to empower the people.

Today, the world is witnessing a new clash between the Old and the New; a clash of world proportions. This requires a profound elaboration of the theory required so break with the repetition of false ideological belief that the anachronistic liberal democratic institutions can renovate themselves and provide the democracy people need to affirm the rights which belong to them by virtue of being human. The aim of the polemic today, of the battle of democracy, is to enable the modern democratic personality to emerge in today's conditions, in the form of anti-war governments capable of providing the world with the peace, democracy and freedom the peoples of the world need.

Lenin, early in his revolutionary work in 1908, devoted time to defending dialectical and historical materialism -- the world view, method and outlook for the study of the ensemble of relations between humans and humans and humans and nature, the fundamental problem which theory and philosophy present for solution. Through his work, Lenin revealed how, under the cover of science, various people posed as Marxists to attack the theory of dialectical and historical materialism.

Lenin's work has profound value in carrying out similar work at the present time, in order to defend the theory of dialectical and historical materialism which is under attack from many quarters. The attack on this theory is blurring the high road of civilization, its definition and its content so as to deprive the people of the reference points they need to avert the traps which deprive their struggles of revolutionary vigour and divert them into dead-ends.

Lenin's conclusions about the state and revolution, the role of the working class and its organizations, the role of the peasantry and other social strata, the role of the communist party to lead in a step-wise manner, the stages in the revolution and their completion and the building of the unity of all toiling masses around the working class, the waging of the class struggle, with the international proletariat playing its role as the strategic reserve of revolution, and the study of the objective conditions and strategy and tactics, taken together constitute a whole; a body of ideas which need to be defended and elaborated. This body of ideas must be developed from the present conditions with a unique and fresh quality, which means that the aim is to give rise to modern definitions on the basis of which the New can be born and prevail.



These ideas have a profound meaning as they were brought into being in this epoch defined by Lenin as the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution. For this reason, the work to bring out their significance and not permit them to be reduced to a dogma has great relevance.

Just as Lenin defended the Marxist trend, today defending the Marxist-Leninist trend is indispensable for the building of the revolutionary movement, and this defence has to be carried out in close connection with the movement, with the practical work of opening society's path to progress, the work to make sure the crisis is resolved in favour of the peoples, not the rich. This defence of the Marxist-Leninist trend creates Contemporary Marxist-Leninist Thought, the

revolutionary theory guiding the revolutionary movement. This work cannot be reduced to repeating quotes from the works of Lenin or anyone else. The content of the defence of the Marxist-Leninist trend must be consistent with the demand of the times. One of the most important elements is to make sure the mass communist party is built to lead the peoples in averting the dangers which accompany day-to-day living in the present and which lie ahead.

It is not for nothing that Lenin's work began with taking up the tasks required to build the Party. The essence of this work has to be understood and applied. The essence is that without a revolutionary party there can be no revolution and the building of such a party has to be consistent with the conditions. There are not a few who accused Lenin of abandoning Marxism because he built the Party according to the conditions of his time. In the same fashion, many blamed their failure on blind adherence to what was called "the Soviet model" but dogmatic renderings blocked many from drawing warranted conclusions on how to take up the great task of building the mass communist party today. No-one should fear being accused of abandoning Leninism, only of showing a lack of conviction.

The life and work of V.I. Lenin are a great asset to the movement for emancipation. It is crucial to make use of this asset in the best possible way and to the greatest advantage of the working class and peoples of the world. A lot of changes have taken place since the time of Lenin. These changes are of a calibre that if their profound significance is not appreciated in detail and in time, the asset of Lenin will be frittered away which the world cannot afford.

The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) is of the opinion that just as in his day Lenin found in the national liberation movement a great reserve of the proletarian revolution, so too today, all movements of the peoples for improvements in their conditions, especially for the democratization of life and their own empowerment, must be vigorously supported.

Furthermore, how to put Leninism at the disposal of the revolutionary cause necessarily involves an appreciation of its essence, that it is by grasping the crucial link in the chain of how things stand that it is possible to get hold of the entire chain and bring about the empowerment of the people. In the sphere of preparing the working class to turn things around in its own favour, involving the advanced forces to provide modern definitions is that link which is directly connected with the revolutionary work under the condition of the retreat of revolution. It is that link which enables the working class to carry out a contest to win the people to its side. The working class cannot prepare itself for final victory if it either does not carry out this contest or does not set itself up to win key battles with the bourgeoisie during this period.

The cause of V.I. Lenin for the victory of revolution and socialism is as urgent today as it was at the beginning of the 20th century. As long as the struggle to create a new society exists, the name and work of V.I. Lenin will have a place of honour.



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