

Leninism: An Ideology Indispensable for Opening the Path for the Progress of Society

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The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917 was the most outstanding example of work guided by the outlook of Leninism. It proved that for the working class to be successful in its nation-building project to move society forward, it must be guided by the most advanced theory at each stage of its development based on its own ideological and world outlook. This is not a matter of choice; it is a necessity. Any individual, collective, political movement or party that did not take up the outlook of Leninism at the beginning of the 20th century failed, and in Europe many degenerated into European socialism and chauvinism.

Leninism was not a peculiar leftwing extremist ideology, which could be characterized as being as good or as bad as any other ideology that one could choose, be it liberalism, social democracy or some variation. Leninism was the renaissance ideology of that time and space, the outlook necessary to respond to the exigencies of the here and now, to deal with the political, social and cultural problems of the day to move society forward and open the door to progress. Leninism was the natural development of the renaissance outlook of 18th century Europe and the Marxist ideology of the international proletariat of the 19th century.

Renaissance Outlook

The Renaissance challenge to medievalism was the necessary outlook guiding the industrial revolution and bourgeois nation-building projects in England and northern Europe and the organization and victory of the 1789 French Revolution over the ruling elite of landlords and clerics and their state-organized political, intellectual and military forces. The state medievalist outlook based on Divine Right of Kings had to be overthrown for society to progress. Scientific discoveries could not be transformed into consistent practice throughout society and the economy in the absence of an ideology that recognizes that the basis for change, development and motion is found in internal contradictions with external conditions as the extenuating circumstances. The Renaissance outlook and thinking provided the ideology

for the victory of capitalism over feudalism, mass industrial production over petty production, science over superstition and idealism, and modern bourgeois organization based on bourgeois "people's" democracy over absolutism, rule by decree and the Divine Right of Kings. The Renaissance outlook prepared the subjective conditions necessary to resolve the internal contradictions of the objective conditions that were ripe for change in medieval Europe, in particular the main contradiction between the advanced productive forces and the backward relations of production. The internal contradiction of medieval Europe, resolved through revolution, corresponds to Canada's present unresolved internal contradiction between the advanced socialized productive forces and the backward private monopoly-controlled relations of production.

Marxism

In the conditions of the development of capitalism in the 19th century, Marxism was the development of the Renaissance ideology explaining: the origin of profit from the work-time of the working class transforming natural resources; the internal motive force within society as class struggle and under conditions of capitalism that the leading force can only be the working class; and, that class struggle led by the working class must overthrow capitalism and replace it with socialism. Marxism laid bare the backwardness and shortcomings of existing European philosophy and provided the working class and all humanity with a consistent outlook of dialectical and historical materialism and the insistence that "philosophers have hitherto interpreted the world, the point however is to change it." Marxism was the required ideology of the period of the infancy of capitalism, the birth of the modern working class and development of the objective conditions to replace capitalism with socialism leading to the emancipation of the working class and the elimination of social classes and class society.

Leninism

Leninism was the renaissance ideology required by the working class in the conditions of the development of capitalism to its mature stage of monopoly ownership and rule at the end of the 19th century. Monopoly capitalism is the merging of industrial and banking capital into finance capital and its creation of a bureaucratic militarized state and aggressive imperialism. The objective

conditions for proletarian revolution were mature, unleashing the necessity to organize the subjective conditions. Leninism provided the scientific guide and outlook to accomplish that historic mission. The necessity had arisen to organize the working class as an independent political force with its own thinking, outlook, headquarters, defence organizations and vision for a socialist future free from the rule of the capitalists and their bureaucratic militarized state. Only in Russia did Leninism guide the working class and peasantry with consistency and steadfastness resulting in the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917.

Modern Communism

In the conditions of the 21st century, modern communism is the required ideology. Today, modern communism is the renaissance theory based on the outlook needed by the working class and people to guide their struggles to victory. Unless individuals, collectives, political movements and parties take up the outlook of modern communism and elaborate modern definitions for all social, political, economic and cultural issues confronting humanity, the necessity for change cannot be fulfilled. Modern communism is not a peculiar leftwing extremist ideology, which can be characterized as being as good or as bad as any other ideology that one could choose, be it liberalism, social democracy or some variation. Modern communism is the renaissance ideology of this time and space, the outlook necessary to respond to the exigencies of the here and now, to deal with the political, social and cultural problems of the day to move society forward and open the door to progress leading to the emancipation of the working class and the elimination of social classes and class society worldwide. Modern communism requires an individual act of conscious participation in the act of finding out to build the alternative based on recognition of the Necessity for Change.

Leninism and the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution

Leninism built a political organization of the working class based on dedication to the vision to overthrow the capitalist state and replace it with a socialist state that could prepare conditions for the emancipation of the working class. The Leninist political party of the working class developed rules and structures consistent with the level of the working class and its needs in the here and now, especially democratic centralism, a spirit of

sacrifice for the cause of the working class and contempt for betrayal of the socialist vision, and a sense of self-confidence that workers and peasants are their own liberators. The Leninist communist party did everything in its power to raise the thinking, outlook and organization of the workers and peasantry to the level necessary to overthrow the ruling capitalist class.

Leninism and the October Socialist Revolution pioneered a model for Russian communists based on their revolutionary practice in confronting their own capitalist class and ruling elite. Leninism developed Marxism under the conditions of the highest stage of capitalism, imperialism and the proletarian revolution. Leninism and the revolutionary activity of the working class and people transformed in practice the Russian proletariat, turning it into an advanced contingent of the international proletariat offering its resources to develop the international communist and workers' movement for the emancipation of the working class and liberation of the oppressed peoples from the colonial yoke.

Leninism taught in practice that each and every contingent of the international working class had to create models out of their own revolutionary practice. "We are our own models!" needed to resound wherever workers were organizing. Revolutionary models based on the thinking and practice of communists and workers energize and give material meaning to the difficult work of communists leading the working class within their national boundaries, confronting their own capitalist class and ruling elite.

Marxism developed to Leninism was the theoretical expression of the material developments with the maturing of capitalism into monopoly, its spread throughout the world and the consequent growth and maturing of the working class itself. Leninism was the guide to organizing the working class and peasantry and moving them towards revolution in the early decades of the 20th century in every national setting. The unity of the international proletariat developed with its material expansion and by successfully organizing the working class in each national setting as an independent voice and material force for revolution and as a sure thinking base and contingent of the international communist and workers' movement for the emancipation of the working class.

Detractors of Leninism, both within Russia and the Soviet Union and abroad, used the Russian model, which emerged from the revolutionary practice within Russia, to block the development of revolutionary models based on the practice of the communists and the working class in each national setting guided by the ideology of Leninism. These detractors stopped the development of Marxist-Leninist theory and thinking communists by converting Leninism into a dogma and not taking it up as a guide to analyze the concrete conditions prevailing in each national setting and the actions necessary to create the subjective conditions on the basis of Leninist organization and tactics. Certain detractors from Leninism introduced into Canada models from the Soviet Union to block the development of Canadian models based on revolutionary practice and thinking in confronting the Canadian reality and ruling elite. This blocked the Leninist outlook from taking root among Canadians as a guide to developing the communist and workers' movement in Canada to achieve its inherent aim.

On a world scale, detractors from Leninism did everything in their power to block the use of Marxism-Leninism as a guide to action and supplanted it with exceptionalism. This was most notable in the U.S. when Earl Browder captured leadership of the Communist Party of the U.S. and introduced the exceptionalist line of "progressive" U.S. imperialism, which did not require its revolutionary overthrow. In Canada, the line of exceptionalism declared Canadian democracy a "model" and gave rise to the Liberal Labour Alliance whereby the role of the communist was to join forces with social democrats to deliver the vote of workers to the Liberal Party. Elsewhere the anti-Leninist line of exceptionalism was pushed in agrarian countries as socialism with specific national characteristics, as if fire, gravity or any science has "national characteristics." These attacks, such as importing models and its flipside of exceptionalism, were directed against the science of Marxism-Leninism and to block its development within the concrete conditions of the here and now and the Necessity for Change.

In Canada, the revolutionary youth confronted the importing of models and exceptionalism. Denouncing exceptionalism as an attack on science and a return to medievalism, the revolutionary youth insisted on the necessity to have our own models based on our own revolutionary practice. This enabled

the Canadian communists and the working class to develop their own work based on their own conditions and thinking guided by the most advanced ideology. This led to the affirmation and deepening of Leninism in the conditions of the last decades of the 20th century and to the renovation and reaffirmation of Leninist principles on organization and tactics when the revolution went into retreat by the turn of the century. The leadership of CPC(M-L) insisted on contemporary Marxist-Leninist Thought as the basic ideology guiding our thinking and on the conscious participation of each and every individual communist and worker in revolutionary practice to build an alternative, giving rise to the Necessity for Change analysis from which arose the motto of CPC(M-L), *The Party's Deed Is Its Word*. In this way the Canadian working class can assume its proper place among other national contingents of the international proletariat organizing and fighting for the emancipation of the working class and the elimination of classes and class society.

Leninism and the October Socialist Revolution moved theory forward and added to the ideological richness or storehouse of Marxism and the Renaissance outlook. Lenin showed in practice that theory is a living thing that must develop with the changing conditions. This neither negates existing theory nor supplants it with something else but adds to the basic richness of the science of communism, which is the movement for the emancipation of the working class and the elimination of class society and classes internationally.

The October Socialist Revolution proved that socialist revolution can be done. Leninism and subsequent developments in the 20th century disproved in practice the theory of European socialism that society could advance through class conciliation with pro-worker representatives taking over and winning leading positions within the capitalist state machinery and pressuring the ruling elite and capitalists to make socialist concessions for the good of humanity. Leninism proved that socialism was possible only through the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the ruling elite, and by establishing the working class as the ruling class with its own state machinery, especially its own military. The defeat of the Paris Commune of 1871 had already proved that European socialism was the basis for the

bourgeoisie's nation-building project, later establishing social-democracy as the form of rule after capitalism passed from its *laissez-faire* stage into state monopoly capitalism and the liberal-democratic form of rule. The Marxist conclusion was that the working class needed to create from scratch its own nation-building state with its own military and could not simply take control of the existing capitalist state and its institutions. The October Revolution showed in practice that the working class could seize power, discard the capitalist state machinery and replace it with new governing institutions of its own making, such as the Soviets of Workers and Peasants and the Red Army.

The development of the renaissance ideology to Marxism, Leninism and Contemporary Marxist-Leninist Thought constitutes the modern communism of today and represents a guide and vision for the emancipation of the working class and the elimination of classes and class society. Modern communism is a practical guide to thinking and action in the present time and space, as Leninism was in the here and now at the dawn of the 20th century. Modern communism is a vision that must be concretized in the here and now, by recognizing the necessity to build the organizations that move the working class and society forward towards its vision. Modern communism opens the door to progress, to accomplish those big revolutionary leaps, such as the French and October Revolutions, that take years in the making but when they occur propel social conditions forward with breakneck speed.

The general task facing the communists is the organizing of the working class into its own communist organization and to prepare itself to assume political and economic power and build socialism as the transition to the emancipation of the working class, towards attaining the vision of communism and a classless society.

Modern communism is bound up with the emancipation of the working class internationally and cannot reach its goal of emancipation of the working class and a classless society without the vast majority of the world's proletariat uniting in this project. The October Revolution established Russia as a liberated homeland of the international proletariat providing contingents everywhere around the world with concrete support and inspiration for their own organizing and revolutionary efforts.

International unity of the proletariat is concretized in the many working class nation-building projects based on the concrete conditions of the time and space in which they unfold, the here and now and its necessity for change, which is the alternative the working class strives for and consciously organizes. The international movement of the proletariat depends on each and every nation-building project led by the working class. Every nation-building project depends on the solidarity and unity of the international proletariat and the joint effort to defeat the imperialist system of states. The October Socialist Revolution established a base from which the support for the international proletariat was concretized. Detractors of Leninism used this base as a substitute for building a revolutionary base within their own national boundaries. They rested on the victory of the October Socialist Revolution and became organizers of solidarity for the Soviet Union as their end all and be all rather than working to transform their own national proletariat into another liberated contingent of the international proletariat and support the Soviet Union from that standpoint. The quantification of liberated contingents of the international proletariat provides a guarantee that the successes achieved by the movement for emancipation of the international working class can be transformed into the victory of the elimination of classes and class society worldwide. The Russian people and other nations that were to become the Soviet Union took a step towards the emancipation of the international working class and a classless society with the victory of the October Socialist Revolution. They opened the door to progress. Workers, peasants and revolutionary anti-colonialists around the world were energized by the October Revolution, which deprived the imperialists of one world market and an international system of states under their thumb, creating a flow. Everywhere, at all levels of struggle whether working class or anti-colonial, those who called themselves communists became leaders of the progressive movement.

In practical terms the October Revolution propelled communism and the science of Marxism-Leninism to unparalleled heights and popularity amongst the masses worldwide. Communist parties were formed in country after country including Canada in 1921. The quantification of communist parties demanded a new quality, a development of Leninism to modern communism.

For many however, the existence of an organization calling itself communist and members calling themselves communist working for social justice and building solidarity with the Soviet Union became enough, including in Canada. A new quality of thinking Canadian workers and communists conscious of their mission and armed with Leninist strategy and tactics to realize the necessary changes engendered by the concrete reality was not developed. The quantification of the communist party as an ally of the Soviet Union was deemed sufficient. Many communist parties failed to grasp the necessary missing quality that had been started in the Leninist Party in Russia but needed to be developed anew in each and every quantification. This quality of Leninism was the ability to theorize on the political, social and economic conditions of the late 19th century, which had propelled capitalism to its highest form, imperialism, which is the amalgam of the state with the most powerful monopolies. The lessons of the Paris Commune first touched on by Marx in *The Civil War in France* became central to the new thinking of Lenin.

The Leninist thesis was presented at the Second International in the period of imperialist war preparations leading to the First World War: the working class in each country must oppose its own bourgeoisie and settle accounts with it by seizing power. This means first and foremost that the working class must be organized to oppose imperialist war and the war preparations of its own bourgeoisie. European socialism opposed the Leninist thesis and organized the working class of its respective countries to support its own bourgeoisie in war and peace, turning the working class into a reserve of the bourgeoisie. European socialism was dealt a deathblow by World War I and the October Socialist Revolution. However, European socialism reorganized after the war as representatives of the October Revolution by turning the Soviet Union into either a sterile model to be followed for which solidarity was organized or by criticizing the model of the Soviet Union and its perceived shortcomings. Both were meant to stop the development of revolutionary practice and the settling of accounts with their own capitalist class. New contingents of liberated homelands of the working class were not established through revolution in the triad of Western Europe, North America and Japan. Leninist theory was relegated to phrases used as dogma not as the

summation of concrete experience giving rise to principles that guide thinking and action. Instead, organizing in the triad ensured social democratic conciliation of the class struggle and reduced communists to coordinators of decisions taken behind their backs in the style of bourgeois parties, which constitute factions that vie for power within the bourgeois state apparatus.

The October Revolution showed in practice the dead-end of European socialism. The Bolsheviks put an end to Russian participation in the imperialist war. The Bolsheviks gave all power to the Soviets as an institution to mobilize and elevate the working class, peasants and soldiers to the position of rulers of society and the new state. The October Revolution transformed the imperialist First World War into a revolutionary war on the Russian front to establish peace in Europe. The October Revolution immediately asked for a just peace treaty with Germany, which resulted in one that pulled Russia out of the war.

The October Revolution proved that the working class can have its own independent view of how to organize the economy and politics. Not only can it have its own view and practice but that it must have its own view and practice if it is to be successful in opening the door to progress, ensuring peace among nations based on recognizing all nations big and small as equal and with their right to self-determination, and moving the world towards the emancipation of the working class and the elimination of class society.

The October Revolution put the resources of the Russian nation behind solving the problems of hunger and want and providing education and health care for all, and established concrete state mechanisms that were dedicated to solving social problems in practice without hindrance from vested private interests and the theft and draining of added-value by a privileged idle class.

The October Revolution began the process to bring ownership of the socialized economy into the hands of the working class and collective organizations of the peasantry. This meant first the nationalization of the major industries and resources. Owners of capital that gave up opposition to the October Revolution were rewarded with compensation but removed from all positions of authority within the economy. All capitalist inheritance was banned. Those that refused to cooperate with the new working class state had

their capital expropriated without compensation and were expected to work for a living.

The October Revolution began the process to harmonize the production of goods and services and the delivery of those goods and services to the people. This entailed removing the parasites from the banking and insurance sectors and eventually from all sectors of circulation of goods and services, especially the wholesale sector in the beginning.

The October Revolution began the process to solve the land question and organize the liberation of the oppressed peasantry in Russia, the Ukraine and other peasant nations and regions of the Soviet Union. This required the most difficult struggle to move farming from petty production to mass industrialized farming without destroying the peasants and forcibly removing them from the land and depopulating the countryside. This meant first expropriating the land and power of the landlords and secondly to organize the poor and landless peasants for an eventual showdown with the kulaks or rich peasants. For the first time in world history a revolution of a social class, the poor and landless peasants, was supported by the state and by the urban working class that went in great numbers to the countryside to assist the peasantry in this epic battle to collectivize and to transform agriculture from petty to mass industrialized production and to bring them machinery and help their peasant Soviets in assuming real effective political power.

The October Revolution began to reform the methods the state used to claim revenue to fund social programs, the government bureaucracy, the Red Army and police. Government claims were established and determined at the centres of production of added-value. Revenue gathered from the wealth produced by the working class and peasants first had to go towards guaranteeing the well-being of the masses in all its forms, especially their social programs and into defending the revolution from imperialist aggression and subversion. The claims of owners of equity and debt (foreign and Russian) on realized added-value were mostly eliminated. This left the claims of the state and the claims of the actual producers as the sole claimants on the added-value produced by the working class and peasants. Russian colonial ownership of land and means of production abroad was

repudiated and handed back to the existing authorities in the respective countries.

Leninism and the October Revolution unblocked the movement for enlightenment in Russia. This gave rise to significant advances in the field of rights, especially economic rights, directing the Soviet state to guarantee livelihoods and the well-being of all throughout life. This movement for rights culminated in the 1936 Constitution of the Soviet Union, which was certainly the most advanced at that time and later influenced the deliberations on the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

The October Revolution began the historic transition period of socialism. Socialism is the heroic period of class warfare bridging the gap between the 4,000-year grip on human society by ruling social classes and their exploitation of fellow human beings and the new era of communism, which represents the emancipation of the working class and the total elimination of classes and class society. The period of socialism has to solve the problem of eliminating Bourgeois Right and the arrangements based on it from the thinking and practice of society, just as bourgeois society had to eliminate the thinking and practice based on Absolute Right. Today, bourgeois society faced with the need for profound democratic and constitutional renewal is reverting to arrangements based on Absolute Right, making the recognition of Necessity for Change increasingly urgent. Among other things socialism is a period of unremitting struggle against the remnants of class society in terms of culture, especially in ideological and social forms and for an international transition to a new socially conscious human being and societies without social classes and exploitation of humans by humans.

The October Revolution was the first break in the chain of imperialist states. The imperialist system of states was breached and severely weakened by the removal of such a huge land mass and population from its control. The breach in the imperialist system of states deepened the crisis of capitalism in its constant search for markets to exploit and natural resources to plunder. The October Revolution added a new contradiction to those plaguing the imperialist system of states: the contradiction between the countries within the imperialist system of states led and dominated by the most powerful

versus the new liberated homeland of the international proletariat, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

As Lenin predicted: after the working class seizes power the bourgeoisie becomes even more ferocious and determined to regain political and economic power by any means. The history after the October Revolution is one of constant and unremitting class struggle for the working class to retain power in the Soviet Union and resist the attacks of those determined to restore capitalism. The working class under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Stalin fought heroically to defend the nation-building project of the working class from the imperialist system of states and from the intrigue and subversion of the overthrown classes within the liberated homeland of the international proletariat.

The industrialization of the Soviet Union, spread of science and the application of technology to production and distribution, especially during the 1930s when the imperialist system of states was gripped by a devastating worldwide depression, was an heroic feat accomplished without plundering foreign lands for investment funds, raw materials and markets. This was the first time that any large country accomplished the transition from petty production to mass industrial production without foreign plunder for investment funds and without mass dislocation and devastation of the peasantry. This showed the world that a socialist self-reliant economy can be built and that accumulated-value (investment funds) for social programs and extended reproduction can come from within the economy, from the hard work of the working class and peasantry combined with science and modern technology. However, this is only true when the society is free from the claims of an idle ruling class, which owns the socialized economy and directs it for its own narrow aim towards recurring crises and war. With a self-reliant socialized economy under the control of the working class and peasantry and freed from an idle ruling class, the added-value from production can go to the living conditions of the people, investments in social programs, the needs of the state and into extended reproduction of the socialized means of production and distribution.

The socialist transition period to communism in the Soviet Union was sabotaged when those in authority refused to continue the class struggle

against the remnants of class society in political, economic, cultural, ideological and social forms. This led to a block in the leadership to resolving in particular the political problem of raising the working class to the position of ruling class in practice. This refusal to lead the socialist transition period to deal with its contradictions opened the floodgates for a return to capitalism; this refusal and capitulation to capitalist restoration was officially announced by Nikita Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956. The October Revolution came to an unofficial official end at that time whereupon the Soviet Union was converted into a social-imperialist power competing for world domination with its nemesis, the United States. But the lessons and glorious accomplishments of the October Revolution in all fields of human endeavour will live forever. The rule of the working class lasted far longer than the Paris Commune of 1871 creating an enormous wealth of direct experience to assist the international workers and communist movement and its future nation-building projects.

Socialist society is the most revolutionary and dynamic of all human societies that have hitherto come into being; it must be so in order to mobilize the masses to oppose the remnants of class society especially in political and social form and in culture especially its ideological and social forms.

The key issue is that communists and the revolutionary working class must rise to the occasion of the here and now and the necessity to change the world they face. The working class and communists struggle in the conditions that they have been handed whether as revolutionary communist cadre within the former Soviet Union fighting to advance socialist society, fighting might and main to stop the remnants of the capitalist class from retaking political power or fighting to organize the working class in the imperialist countries for proletarian revolution whether that revolution is in flow or retreat. There is no good time or bad time or worse time or better time for communists and the working class; there is only this time and space, the here and now and the necessity for change. Sometimes communists forget the long difficult days for the Bolsheviks during the period of Stolypin reaction after 1905 following the cruel defeat of what Lenin called the "dress rehearsal for the October Revolution." The situation for the Bolsheviks became even worse

still when communist parties, especially in Europe within the Second International, deserted revolution and betrayed the working class by supporting their own capitalist class and its war preparations prior to and during World War I. It must have seemed for Lenin and the Bolsheviks that they stood alone as the only defenders of communism and the international proletariat. But the important and great thing was they persisted, and they led the working class and peasantry to the victory of the October Revolution and the "Ten Days that Shook the World!" Whatever level of development of the productive forces in the era of imperialism and its mature stage of capitalism, the working class and its communist party are confronted with the task of working out their strategy and tactics to open society's path to progress by ensuring the working class constitutes the nation and vests sovereignty in the people. That is what is required, just as Marx pointed out in the 19th century and Lenin achieved in his time and space and others are doing in their conditions.

By elevating the working class to political power to begin its own heroic nation-building project for socialism and the transition to communism, historic successes will be transformed into historic victory. As a contingent of the international proletariat, the working class in all countries whether large or small, in the midst of changes from petty to mass industrial production or within a fully developed monopoly capitalist system, all are charged by history to make a real contribution to the international struggle for the emancipation of the working class and the preservation of world peace, and the march forward to the elimination of classes and class society once and for all. The Great October Socialist Revolution led by Lenin and Leninism made such a contribution. Let us mark its anniversary by upholding modern communism and redoubling our efforts to prepare conditions for the coming revolutionary storms and to accomplish our own plans to turn historic successes into historic victory!

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