

LENIN

ON

NATIONAL LIBERATION

Compiled by Alberto Moreau

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

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Lenin's writings on the national question and the problems of national liberation are profuse, invaluable and rich in content. They serve as a guide to the understanding and solution of the multitude of problems arising out of the world-wide struggles and wars of national liberation. Hundreds of millions are actively engaged in the transformation of the world, a phenomenon unprecedented in the history of mankind, but clearly foreseen by Lenin decades ago. These writings, the result of Lenin's activities, polemics and victorious achievements, are so voluminous that they can hardly be contained within a 500-page volume.

In presenting a few pages of selections of Lenin's writing on this subject, we hope to initiate the activists in this field of struggle into a deeper and more extended study. The selections we have chosen, in our opinion, help guide us in search of the basic solutions to some of the problems we face today. They deal with the historic roots and the development of nations; the struggle for self-determination; internationalism, and the struggle against national chauvinism, racism and anti-Semitism; the many forms of struggle for national liberation and their inevitable socialist directions, etc.

Of special significance are Lenin's repeated explanations regarding the special responsibility of the workers of the oppressing nations to support the peoples' struggles for national freedom as an integral part of the workers' own social emancipation. Is this not truly expressed in the unwavering demand of millions of North Americans for an end to the barbaric war in Indochina? An end to Israel's aggression? Non-intervention in Cuba? Support to the liberation movements in the rest of Latin America? The cry for the independence of Puerto Rico?

Lenin's scientific forecast of the world revolutionary process is a reality today and is expressed in the Resolution adopted by the Moscow Conference of the Communist and Workers Parties in June 1969:

". . . In the past decade the role of the anti-imperialist movements of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America in the world revolutionary process has continued to grow. In some countries, this movement is acquiring an anti-capitalist content."

Of special importance to us are Lenin's sharp observations and comments on the position of the Black people, a position which he characterized as "unworthy of a civilized country." "Shame on America for the plight of the Negroes," he wrote. (Collected Works, Vol. 18, p. 544.)

The Communists in the U.S., inspired by Lenin's teachings, raise demands for the rights of other minorities also: Mexican-Americans, Indians, Puerto Ricans -- rights which are constantly denied and violated, says Lenin, "in all capitalist countries, despite their 'democratic' constitution." (Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 146)

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LENIN on NATIONAL LIBERATION

(Selections compiled by Alberto Moreau)

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CAPITALISM AND THE RISE OF NATIONS AND NATIONAL STATES

Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with the national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated. Therein is the economic foundation of national movements. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity and unimpeded development of language are the most important conditions for genuinely free and extensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for a free and broad grouping of the population in all its various classes and, lastly, for the establishment of a close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big or little, and between seller and buyer.

Therefore, the tendency of every national movement is towards the formation of national states, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied. The most profound economic factors drive towards this goal, and, therefore, for the whole of Western Europe, nay, for the entire civilized world, the national state is typical and normal for the capitalist period.

Consequently, if we want to grasp the meaning of self-determination of nations, not by juggling with legal definitions, or "inventing" abstract definitions, but by examining the historic-economic conditions of the national movements, we must inevitably reach the conclusion that the self-determination of nations means political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state.

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The categorical requirement of Marxist theory in investigating any social question is that it be examined within definite historical limits, if it refers to a particular country (e.g., the national programme for a given country), that account be taken of the specific features distinguishing that country from others in the same historical period.

What does this categorical requirement of Marxism imply in its application to the question under discussion?

First of all, it implies that a clear distinction must be drawn between the two periods of capitalism, which differ radically from each other as far as the national movement is concerned. On the one hand, there is the period of the formation of the bourgeois-democratic society and state, when the national movements for the first time become mass movements and in one way or another draw all masses of the population into politics, through the press, participation in representative institutions, etc. On the other hand, there

is the period of fully formed capitalist states with a long-established constitutional regime and a highly developed antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie - a period that may be called the eve of capitalism's downfall.

The typical features of the first period are: the awakening of national movements and the drawing of the peasants, the most numerous and the most sluggish section of the population, into these movements, in connection with the struggle for political liberty in general, and for the rights of the nation in particular. Typical features of the second period are: the absence of mass bourgeois-democratic movements and the fact that developed capitalism, in bringing closer together nations that have already been fully drawn into commercial intercourse, and causing them to intermingle to an increasing degree, brings the antagonism between internationally united capital and the international working class movements into the forefront.

Of course, the two periods are not walled off from each other; they are connected by numerous transitional links, the various countries differing from each other in the rapidity of their national development, in the national make-up and distribution of their population, and so on. There can be no question of the Marxists of any country drawing up their national programme without taking into account all these general historical and concrete state conditions.

("The Right of Nations to Self-Determination,"
Collected Works, Vol. 20, pp. 396-397, 400-401.)

NATIONAL OPPRESSION; STRUGGLES AGAINST IT; SELF-DETERMINATION
AND ITS RELATION TO SOCIALISM

Is the actual condition of the workers in the oppressor and the oppressed nations the same, from the standpoint of the national question?

No, it is not the same.

(1) Economically, the difference is that sections of the working class in the oppressor nations receive crumbs from the superprofits the bourgeoisie of these nations obtains by extra exploitation of the workers of the oppressed nations. Besides, economic statistics show that here a larger percentage of the workers become "straw bosses" than is the case in the oppressed nations, a larger percentage rise to the labor aristocracy. That is a fact. To a certain degree the workers of the oppressor nations are partners of their own bourgeoisie in plundering the workers (and the mass of the population) of the oppressed nations.

(2) Politically, the difference is that, compared with the workers of the oppressed nations, they occupy a privileged position in many spheres of political life.

(3) Ideologically, the difference is that they are taught, in school and in life, disdain and contempt for the workers of the oppressed nations. This has been experienced, for example, by every Great Russian who has been brought up or who has lived among Great Russians.

Thus, all along the line there are differences in objective reality, i.e., dualism" in the objective world that is independent of the will and consciousness of individuals.... In real life the International is composed of workers divided into oppressor and oppressed nations. If its action is to be monistic, its propaganda must not be the same for both. That is how we should regard the matter in the light of real (not Duhringian) "monism," Marxist materialism.

("A Caricature of Marxism," Collected Works, Vol. 23, pp. 55-56.)

The socialist revolution is not a single, it is not one battle on one front, but a whole epoch of acute class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e., on all questions of economics and politics, battles that can only end in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution or of hiding, overshadowing it, etc. On the contrary, in the same way as there can be no victorious socialism that does not practice full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy.

The right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence in the political sense, the right to free political separation from the oppressor nation. Specifically, this demand for political democracy implies complete freedom to agitate for secession and for a referendum on cessation by the seceding nation. This demand, therefore, is not the equivalent of a demand for separation, fragmentation and the formation of small states. It implies only a consistent expression of struggle against all national oppression.

In this respect, countries must be divided into three main types.

First, the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and the United States. In these countries progressive bourgeois national movements came to an end long ago. Every one of these "great" nations oppresses other nations both in the colonies and at home. The tasks of the proletariat of these ruling nations are the same as those of the proletariat in England in the nineteenth century in relation to Ireland.

Secondly, Eastern Europe: Austria, the Balkans and particularly Russia. Here it was the twentieth century that particularly developed the bourgeois-democratic national movements and intensified the national struggle. The tasks of the proletariat in these countries, both in completing their bourgeois-democratic reforms, and rendering assistance to the socialist revolution in other countries, cannot be carried out without championing the right of nations to self-determination. The most difficult and most important task in this is to unite the class struggle of the workers

of the oppressor nations with that of the workers of the oppressed nations.

Thirdly, the semi-colonial countries, such as China, Persia and Turkey, and all the colonies, which have a combined population of 1,000 million. In these countries the bourgeois-democratic movements either have hardly begun, or have still a long way to go. Socialists must not only demand the unconditional and immediate liberation of the colonies without compensation and this demand in its political expression signifies nothing else than the recognition of the right to self-determination; they must also render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national liberation in these countries and assist their uprising - or revolutionary war, in the event of one - against the imperialist powers that oppress them.

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The proletariat of the oppressor nations must not confine themselves to general, stereotyped phrases against annexation and in favor of the equality of nations in general, such as any pacifist bourgeois will repeat. The proletariat cannot remain silent on the question of the frontiers of a state founded on national oppression, a question so "unpleasant" for the imperialist bourgeoisie. The proletariat must struggle against the enforced retention of oppressed nations within the bounds of the given state, which means that they must fight for the right of self-determination. The proletariat must demand freedom of political separation for these nations oppressed by "their own" nation. Otherwise, the internationalism of the proletariat would be nothing but empty words; neither confidence nor class solidarity would be possible between the workers of the oppressed and the oppressor nations.

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On the other hand, the socialists of the oppressed nations must, in particular, defend and implement the full and unconditional unity, including organizational unity, of the workers of the oppressed nation and those of the oppressor nation. Without this it is impossible to defend the independent policy of the proletariat, of their class solidarity with the proletariat of other countries in face of all manner of intrigues, treachery and trickery on the part of the bourgeoisie.

("The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" - Collected Works, Vol. 22, pp. 144, 146-48, 150-52.)

The proletariat cannot be victorious except through democracy, i.e., by giving full effect to democracy and by linking with each step of its struggle democratic demands formulated in the most resolute terms. It is absurd to contrapose the socialist revolution and the revolutionary struggle against capitalism to a single problem of democracy, in this case, the national question. We must combine the revolutionary struggle against capitalism with a revolutionary programme and tactics on all democratic demands: a republic, a militia, the popular election of officials, equal rights for women, the self-determination of nations, etc. While capitalism exists, these demands - all of them - can only be

accomplished as an exception, and even then in an incomplete and distorted form. Basing ourselves on the democracy already achieved, and exposing its incompleteness under capitalism, we demand the overthrow of capitalism, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, as a necessary basis both for the abolition of the poverty of the masses and for complete and all-round institution of all democratic reforms. Some of these reforms will be started before the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, others in the course of that overthrow, and still after it. The social revolution is not a single battle, but a period covering a series of battles over all sorts of problems of economic and democratic reform, which are consummated only by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It is for the sake of this final aim that we must formulate every one of our democratic demands in a consistently revolutionary way. It is quite conceivable that the workers of some particular country will overthrow the bourgeoisie before even a single fundamental democratic reform has been fully achieved. It is, however, quite inconceivable that the proletariat, as a historical class, will be able to defeat the bourgeoisie, unless it is prepared for that by being educated in the spirit of the most consistent and resolutely revolutionary democracy.

("The Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination," Collected Works, Vol. 21, pp. 408-409.)

What is left is capitalism's world-historical tendency to break down national barriers, obliterate national distinctions, and to assimilate nations - a tendency which manifests itself more and more powerfully with every passing decade, and is one of the greatest driving forces transforming capitalism into socialism. Whoever does not recognize and champion the equality of nations and languages, and does not fight against all national oppression or inequality, is not a Marxist; he is not even a democrat. This is beyond doubt. But it is also beyond doubt that the pseudo-Marxist who heaps abuse upon a Marxist of another nation for being an "assimilator" is simply a nationalist philistine.

("Critical Remarks on the National Question," - Collected Works, Vol. 20, p. 28.)

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We demand freedom of self-determination, i.e., independence, i.e., freedom of secession for the oppressed nations, not because we have dreamt of splitting up the country economically, or of the ideal of small states, but, on the contrary, because we want large states and the closer unity and even fusion of nations, only on a truly democratic, truly internationalist basis, which is unconceivable without the freedom to secede.

("The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination," Collected Works, Vol. 21, pp. 413-414.)

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NATIONALISM AND PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM; BY-PASSING
CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT

The age-old oppression of colonial and weak nationalities by the imperialist powers has not only filled the working masses of the oppressed countries with animosity towards the oppressor nations, but has also aroused distrust in these nations in general, even in their proletariat. The despicable betrayal of socialism by the majority of the official leaders of this proletariat in 1914-19, when "defence of country" was used as a social-chauvinist cloak to conceal the defence of the "right" of their "own" bourgeoisie to oppress colonies and fleece financially dependent countries, was certain to enhance this perfectly legitimate distrust. On the other hand, the more backward the country, the stronger is the hold of small-scale agricultural production, patriarchalism and isolation, which inevitably lend particular strength and tenacity to the deepest of petty-bourgeois prejudices, i.e., to national egoism and national narrow-mindedness. These prejudices are bound to die out very slowly, for they can disappear only after imperialism and capitalism have disappeared in the advanced countries, and after the entire foundation of the backward countries' economic life has radically changed.

It is therefore the duty of the class-conscious communist proletariat of all countries to regard with particular caution and attention the survivals of national sentiments in the countries and among nationalities which have been oppressed the longest; it is equally necessary to make certain concessions with a view to more rapidly overcoming this distrust and these prejudices. Complete victory over capitalism cannot be won unless the proletariat and, following it, the mass of working people in all countries and nations throughout the world voluntarily strive for alliance and unity.

("Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Question,
2nd Congress of the Communist International,"
Collected Works, Vol. 31, pp. 150-151.)

Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the "most just," "purest," most refined and civilised brand. In place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism, the amalgamation of all nations in the higher unity, a unity that is growing before our eyes with every mile of railway line that is built, with every international trust, and every workers' association that is formed (an association that is international in its economic activities as well as in its ideas and aims).

The principle of nationality is historically inevitable in bourgeois society and, taking this society into due account, the Marxist fully recognizes the historical legitimacy of national movements. But to prevent this recognition from becoming an apologia of nationalism, it must be strictly limited to what is progressive in such movements, in order that this recognition may not lead to bourgeois ideology obscuring proletarian consciousness.

The awakening of the masses from feudal lethargy, and their struggle against all national oppression, for the sovereignty of

the people, of the nation, are progressive. Hence, it is the Marxist bounden duty to stand for the most resolute and consistent democratism on all aspects of the national question. This task is largely a negative one. But this is the limit the proletariat can go to in supporting nationalism, for beyond that begins the "positive" activity of the bourgeoisie striving to fortify nationalism.

("Critical Remarks on the National Question,"
Collected Works, Vol., 20, pp. 34-35.)

In my writings on the national question I have already said that an abstract presentation of the question on nationalism in general is of no use at all. A distinction must necessarily be made between the nationalism of an oppressor nation and that of an oppressed nation, the nationalism of a big nation and that of a small nation.

In respect of the second kind of nationalism we, nationals of a big nation, have nearly always been guilty, in historic practice, on an infinite number of cases of violence; furthermore, we commit violence and insult an infinite number of times without noticing it. It is sufficient to recall my Volga reminiscences of how non-Russians are treated; how the Poles are not called by any other name than Polyachiskha, how the Tatar is nicknamed Prince, how the Ukrainians are always Kholkhol and the Georgians and other Caucasian nationals are Kapkasians.

That is why internationalism on the part of oppressor or "great" nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as bullies), must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality of the oppressor nation, the great nation, that must make up for the inequality which obtains in actual practice. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question, he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view.

What is important for the proletarian? For the proletarian it is not only important, it is absolutely essential that he should be assured that the non-Russians place the greatest possible trust in the proletarian class struggle. What is needed to insure this? Not merely formal equality. In one way or another, by one's attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russians for the lack of trust, for the suspicion and the insults to which the government of the "dominant" nation subjected them in the past.

I think it is unnecessary to explain this to Bolsheviki, to Communists, in greater detail . . . for nothing holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity so much as national injustice; "offended" nationals are not sensitive to anything so much as to the feeling of equality and the violation of this equality, if only through negligence or jest - to the violation of that equality by their proletarian comrades. That is why in this case it is better to overdo rather than underdo the concessions and leniency towards the national minorities. That is why . . .

the fundamental interest of proletarian solidarity, and consequently of the proletarian class struggle, requires that we never adopt a formal attitude to the national question, but always take into account the specific attitude of the proletarian of the oppressed (or small) nation towards the oppressor (or great) nation.

("The question of nationalities or 'Autonomisation,'" Collected Works, Vol. 36, pp. 607-609.)

At the same time, as a result of the last imperialist war (1914-1918-Editor), a number of countries of the East, India, China, etc., have been completely jolted out of the rut. Their development has definitely shifted to general European capitalist lines. The general European ferment has begun to affect them, and it is now clear to the whole world that they have been drawn into a process of development that must lead to a crisis in the whole of world capitalism On the other hand, precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has been definitely drawn into the revolutionary movement, has been definitely drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement.

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 during the past few years it is this majority that has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the complete victory of socialism is fully and absolutely assured.

("Better Fewer, but Better," Collected Works, Vol. 33, pp. 499-500.)

Here I would also like to emphasise the significance of the movement in the colonies. In this respect we see in all the old parties, in all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois labour parties affiliated to the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals, survivals of the old sentimental views: they insist on their profound sympathy for oppressed colonial and semi-colonial peoples. The movement in the colonial countries is still regarded as an insignificant national and totally peaceful movement. But this is not so. It has undergone great change since the beginning of the twentieth century: millions and hundreds of millions, in fact, the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe, are now coming forward as independent, active and revolutionary factors. It is perfectly clear that in the impending decisive battles in the world revolution, the movement of the majority of the population of the globe, initially directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and will, perhaps, play a much more revolutionary part than we expect. It is important to emphasise the fact that, for the first time in our International, we have taken up the question of preparing for this struggle. Of course, there are many more difficulties in this enormous sphere than in any other, but at all events the movement is advancing. And in spite of the fact that the masses of toilers - the peasants in the colonial

countries - are still backward, they will play a very important revolutionary part in the coming phases of the world revolution.

("Third Congress of the Communist International," Collected Works, Vol. 32, pp. 481-482.)

The question was posed as follows: are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, the Soviet governments come to their aid with all means at their disposal - in that event it will be mistaken to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development . . . the Communist International should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical groundings, that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage.

("The Second Congress of the Communist International," Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 244.)

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THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE SOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN THE SOVIET UNION. LESSONS FOR THE WORLD NATIONAL-LIBERATION MOVEMENTS.

The orgy of Black-Hundred nationalism, the growth of nationalist tendencies among the liberal bourgeoisie and the growth of nationalist tendencies among the upper classes of the oppressed nationalities, give prominence at the present time to the national question.

The state of affairs in the Social-Democratic movement (the attempts of the Caucasian Social-Democrats, the Bund and the liquidators to annul the Party Programme, etc.) compels the Party to devote more attention than ever to this question.

This conference, taking its stand on the Programme of the R.S.D.L.P., and in order to organize correctly Social-Democratic agitation on the national question, advances the following propositions:

1. In so far as national peace is in any way possible in a capitalist society based on exploitation, profit-making and strife, it is attainable only under a consistently and thoroughly democratic republican system of government which guarantees full equality of all nations and languages, which recognizes no compulsory official language, which provides the people with schools where instruction is given in all the native languages, and the constitution of which contains fundamental law that prohibits any privileges whatsoever to any one nation and any encroachment whatsoever upon the rights of a national minority. This particularly

calls for wide regional autonomy and fully democratic local self-government, with the boundaries of the self-governing and autonomous regions determined by the local inhabitants themselves on the basis of their economic and social conditions, national make-up of the population, etc.

2. The division of the educational affairs of a single state according to nationalities is undoubtedly harmful from the standpoint of democracy in general, and of the interests of the proletarian class struggle in particular. It is precisely this division that is implied in the plan for "cultural-national" autonomy, or for "the creation of institutions" that will guarantee freedom for national development adopted in Russia by all the Jewish bourgeois parties and by the petty-bourgeois, opportunist elements among the different nations.

3. The interests of the working class demand the amalgamation of the workers of all the nationalities in a given state in united proletarian organizations - political, trade union, co-operative, educational, etc. This amalgamation of the workers of different nationalities in single organizations will alone enable the proletariat to wage a victorious struggle against international capital and reaction, and combat the propaganda and aspirations of the landowners, clergy and bourgeois nationalists of all nations, who usually cover up their anti-proletarian aspirations with the slogan of "national culture." The world working class movement is creating and daily developing more and more an international proletarian culture.

4. As regards the right of the nations oppressed by the tsarist monarchy to self-determination, i.e., the right to secede and form independent states, the Social-Democratic Party must unquestionably champion this right. This is dictated by the fundamental principles of international democracy in general, and specifically by the unprecedented national oppression of the majority of the inhabitants of Russia by the tsarist monarchy, which is a most reactionary and barbarous state compared with its neighbouring states in Europe and Asia. Furthermore, this is dictated by the struggle of the Great-Russian inhabitants themselves for freedom, for it will be impossible for them to create a democratic state if they do not eradicate Black-Hundred, Great-Russian nationalism, which is backed by the traditions of a number of bloody suppressions of national movements and systematically fostered not only by the tsarist monarchy and all the reactionary parties, but also by the Great-Russian bourgeois liberals, who toady to the monarchy, particularly in the period of counter-revolution.

5. The right of nations to self-determination (i.e., the constitutional guarantee of an absolutely free and democratic method of deciding the question of secession) must under no circumstances be confused with the expediency of a given nation's secession. The Social-Democratic Party must decide the latter question exclusively on its merits in each particular case in conformity with the interests of social development as a whole and with the interests of the proletarian class struggle for socialism.

Social-Democrats must moreover bear in mind that the landowners, the clergy and the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations often cover up with nationalist slogans their efforts to divide the

workers and dupe them by doing deals behind their backs with the landowners and bourgeoisie of the ruling nation to the detriment of the masses of the working people of all nations.

("Resolution on the National Question," Collected Works,
Vol. 19, pp. 427-429.)

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The subject of my address is current affairs, and it seems to me that the most essential aspects of this question at present are the attitude of the peoples of the East to imperialism, and the revolutionary movement among those peoples. It is self-evident that this revolutionary movement of the peoples of the East can now develop effectively, can reach a successful issue, only in direct association with the revolutionary struggle of our Soviet Republic against international imperialism. Owing to a number of circumstances, among them the backwardness of Russia and her vast area, and the fact that she constitutes a frontier between Europe and Asia, between West and the East, we had to bear the whole brunt - and we regard that as a great honour - of being pioneers of the world struggle against imperialism. Consequently, the whole course of development in the immediate future presages a still broader and more strenuous struggle against international imperialism, and will inevitably be linked with the struggle of the Soviet Republic against the forces of united imperialism - of Germany, France, Britain and the U.S.A.

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I think what the Red Army has accomplished, its struggle, and the history of its victory, will be of colossal, epochal significance for all the peoples of the East. It will show them that, weak as they may be, and invincible as may seem the power of the European oppressors, who in the struggle employ all the marvels of technology and of the military art - nevertheless, a revolutionary war waged by oppressed peoples, if it really succeeds in arousing the millions of working and exploited people, harbours such potentialities, such miracles, that the emancipation of the peoples of the East is now quite practicable, from the standpoint not only of the prospects of the international revolution, but also of the direct military experiences acquired in Asia, in Siberia, the experience of the Soviet Republic, which has suffered the armed invasion of all the powerful imperialist countries.

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The period of the awakening of the East in the contemporary revolution is being succeeded by a period in which all the Eastern peoples will participate in deciding the destiny of the whole world, so as not to be simply objects of the enrichment of others. The peoples of the East are becoming alive to the need for practical action, the need for every nation to take part in shaping the destiny of all mankind.

That is why I think that in the history of the development of the world revolution - which, judging by its beginning, will continue for many years and will demand much effort - that in the revolutionary struggle, in the revolutionary movement you will be called upon to play a big part and to merge with our struggle against international imperialism. Your participation in the international revolution will confront you with a complicated and

difficult task, the accomplishment of which will serve as the foundation for our common success, because here the majority of the people for the first time begin to act independently and will be an active factor in the fight to overthrow international imperialism.

In this respect you are confronted with a task which has not previously confronted the Communists of the world: relying upon the general theory and practice of communism, you must adapt yourselves to specific conditions such as do not exist in the European countries; you must be able to apply that theory and practice to conditions in which the bulk of the population are peasants, and in which the task is to wage a struggle against mediaval survivals and not against capitalism.

Such are the problems whose solution you will not find in any communist book, but will find in the common struggle begun in Russia. You will have to tackle that problem and solve it through your own independent experience. In that you will be assisted, on the one hand, by close alliance with the vanguard of the working people of other countries, and, on the other, by ability to find the right approach to the peoples of the East whom you here represent. You will have to base yourselves on the bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken, among those peoples, and which has its historical justification. At the same time, you must find your way to the working and exploited masses of every country and tell them in a language they understand that their only hope of emancipation lies in the victory of the international revolution, and the international proletariat is the only ally of the hundreds of millions of the working and exploited peoples of the East.

(Excerpts from "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organizations of the peoples of the East," Collected Works, Vol. 30, pp. 151-162.)