



Many Happy Returns

Fifty years ago, in 1917, the Winter Palace, residence of the Romanovs and then of the Provisional government, became a museum. The socialist revolution, which Lenin had said time and again was inevitable and necessary, took place. The "spectre of communism" that had haunted Europe and about which Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had written with such fire and inspiration, acquired a living presence in the new society that had emerged over one-sixth of the globe.

What was the situation in the country where the October Revolution took place? The bourgeois democratic revolution of February 1917 had overthrown the Russian monarchy. Russia was proclaimed a republic with a bourgeois provisional government at its helm. The provisional government, from the Cabinet formed by Prince Lvov to that barrister Kerensky, talked big and accomplished practically nothing. It shuffled the ministerial portfolios like a deck of cards, issued decrees, uttered speeches and made promises – but it did not solve any of the acute problems facing Russia or produce a single fruitful idea. It was a windmill and produced nothing but bags of wind. By leaving the landowners on their estates, the capitalists in their factories, and the soldiers in the trenches – to continue shedding blood for the sake of Russian and European capitalists' profits – the Provisional government signed its own death warrant. Only a political party that had a clear goal, that understood the people's aspirations and knew how to translate them into reality could make the torch burn bright enough and continue the revolution and turn it into a truly democratic, socialist accomplishment. The Bolsheviks headed by Lenin were just this kind of Party, and Lenin became the father of a multi-national socialist state, designated on all the maps of the world as the Soviet Union.

The October Revolution was bloodless. The forces of monarchy and bourgeoisie, disregarding the laws of history, were unwilling to lose their privileges and profits, and were ready to crush everybody and everything just to preserve their privileges, their incomes and their arrogant aristocratic mode of life. The blood of the revolutionary people lay on the hands of Denikin, Yudenich, Wrangel, Kolchak and the other White Guard generals. They were the ones who, with Western blessing and support, unleashed the Civil War on Russia. When the collapse of counter-revolution became obvious, "the fathers of Western democracy" landed interventionist forces in places as far apart as Baku, Odessa, Murmansk, and Vladivostok. Whose bullets pierced the hearts of the 26 Baku Commissars? Who burned Sergei Lazo, legendary Far-Eastern guerilla leader, alive in a locomotive fire box? No one can count all the graves bearing the half-faded inscription "Done to death by the interventionists". No. We are not trying to settle accounts for what Western politicians did many years ago, but facts are facts.

The counter-revolutionaries and interventionists were routed by the people who had their happiness at stake.

The fifty years since the October Revolution show that a spirit awakened cannot be crushed! History never gave the

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capitalist system a guarantee that it would rule mankind forever. Society has always developed and will continue to do so. The international solidarity of the masses is on the side of the revolution and progress. It was thus at the time of the October Revolution – eternally inscribed in burning letters in the memory of humanity is the call of the world's working people and progressive intellectuals, "HANDS OFF SOVIET RUSSIA!"

The capture of political power was not the end of the revolution, but rather its beginning. The Bolshevik Party and Lenin, greatest of theorists and practical workers, came to the October events equipped not only with the most up-to-date materialist philosophy, a theoretically substantiated program of building a socialist society and a first-class form of state organization, consisting of the Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies. They also brought well thought out plans for re-organizing the political, economic and juridical structure of society. Just a few hours after it came into existence, the Soviet state published the Decree on Peace and the Decree on Land. It soon nationalized the factories and introduced free education and medical care. In this way, it built up the world's first social system of genuine democracy, of genuine rule by the people. For as long as a single person is forced to sell his labour and another has the right to buy it for the purpose of making a profit, all talk about "dignity of the individual" and "a society of equal opportunities" is merely a ceremonious sugaring of the pill.

Tasks of incredible difficulty still faced the young Soviet government. It had to put down the counter-revolutionaries and eject the interventionists, organize a new administrative system from top to bottom notwithstanding the great shortage of trained personnel, finish with the colonial past of tsarist Russia and build up an integrated state on the principles of equality and fraternity of nationalities; in conditions of economic dislocation, cold and hunger, it had to build up a new economy, a new industry, a new culture. There were no models to follow – all this was taking place for the first time in history.

The difficulties, indeed, seemed super-human. Counter-revolution, civil war, intervention, economic blockade, economic disruption and epidemics. That was the starting point from which socialist construction in the Soviet republic began.

Never before did civilization see the mass enthusiasm with which the free people of the Soviet Union had overcome these difficulties. No other country or nation throughout the history of mankind had made such spectacular achievements as those made by Soviet people in socialist construction – in the construction of new life and new society. The peaceful efforts of the Soviet people, however, were interrupted by the invasion of the brown hordes of nazism.

There is hardly any need to recall the Soviet heroism in that war, but one circumstance should be noted. Our opponents banked on a rift between the Communist Party and the people; they thought the peasants had been "forced" into the collective farms and that at the first convenient opportunity they would flee in search of "Western freedom". The war spiked that myth, too. The unity of Party and people withstood the severest tests. During the war more than 5,000,000 persons joined the Communist Party. On the occupied territory nobody wanted to get the land as his own private property and work for the "new order". The hopes about Soviet domestic instability were built on sand.

Notwithstanding the incalculable sacrifices and destructions suffered by the USSR in the war when it was saving the freedom and democracy of all the peoples of the world, the Soviet people had swiftly healed the wounds of war and made such outstanding progress that many "experts" in the West explain it by the word "miracle".

The world has applauded our achievements in outer space, and with full justification. Yet, there are many other indicators

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of the success of the October Revolution, less striking perhaps, but of exceptional importance for all that. The Soviet Union now accounts for nearly one-fifth of the world's industrial output. Every year, four times more engineers are trained in the Soviet Union than in the United States. One in four of the world's doctors lives in the Soviet Union. Eight or ten-year schooling is obligatory and free of charge for our children. Even these few facts give any unbiased person an idea of the Soviet economic and cultural level.

The full and final victory of socialism in the USSR is the principal result of the Soviet people's revolutionary and transforming activity under the leadership of the Communist Party.

The victory of socialism in the USSR created the economic, social, political and spiritual conditions for transition to the construction of a communist society.

The 22nd Congress of the CPSU adopted a new program which maps out the main direction of communist construction in the USSR.

The shot from the bow gun of the "Aurora" produced a blast wave that shook the old world and led to changes that would have seemed inconceivable before the Great October Socialist Revolution. In the first place, the socialist system no longer exists exclusively within the borders of the Soviet Union; in various stages of development it occupies two-thirds of Europe and extensive regions in Asia and has an outpost on the American continent.

Secondly, its political, economic and military potential, its science, culture, dynamic ideas and man-power reserves are such that it is becoming the most powerful force on earth and the mainspring of progress. Not a single question of any importance to mankind can be settled today without the approval or disapproval of the socialist countries.

Thirdly, the fact that the theoretical socialism and communism of Marx, Engels and Lenin has been clothed in living flesh and is visible from all parts of the world adds a definite colouring to modern times. Physically, the territory of socialism is defined by state frontiers, but its ideas extend over all continents. The spread of knowledge and an awareness of his own dignity inevitably leads the thinking man to a realization that the world in which one man exploits another, the world of billionaires and paupers, the world of might makes right and racial discrimination - that this world must inevitably give way to another, a better and truly democratic, world.

The October Revolution and the growth and development of the Soviet Union gave a powerful impetus to another world-wide process, to the struggle against colonialism and for national liberation. The October Revolution breached the imperialist and colonialist front and enriched the liberation movements by its ideas and its experience. The Soviet Union, true to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, has always and everywhere sided with these movements, has always and everywhere defended their interests, has always and everywhere offered them all possible assistance. It can be said with confidence that but for the October Revolution and the Soviet Union, the political and economic aspect of many regions of the globe would not have undergone such rapid and beneficial changes.

That is the reason why the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution is a day of celebration for the Soviet people and it is also a celebration of other revolutions that took place or are taking place on earth, and a celebration of progress in its international and world-wide connotation.

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