

Centenary of the October Bolshevik Revolution - The oppressed need another October!

by Max Q., CPAML VANGUARD Australia, Comment No. C02 to the „International Internet discussion on the significance of 100 years October Revolution“, 24 September 2017

November (Gregorian calendar Nov 7th/ Julian calendar Oct 25th) this year marks the 100 anniversary of the October Bolshevik Revolution that took place in Russia. This momentous historical event was the first time workers and peasants overthrew the exploitative power of the capitalist class and took state power completely into their own hands.

Imperialism world-wide trembled with fear because the bourgeoisie was annihilated by an armed revolution that was led by a communist party. Through the Soviets (Councils) of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers a dictatorship of the proletariat was established.

In other words a democracy for the working class emerged, whereas the bourgeoisie's 'democratic right' to exploit and oppress workers came to an end. One sixth of the world was liberated from the rule of - capital, one sixth of the world broke free from the imperialist exploitation system and one sixth of the world created socialism.

Under the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the means of production were run for and by the working class. However the Soviet revolution had to withstand a violent civil-war against counter-revolutionary forces backed directly by imperialist states of Europe, United States and Japan.

This took a tremendous toll on the first socialist state. Nevertheless it survived because it had the active support of the overwhelming majority of workers, peasants and soldiers in Russia, guided by a tried and tested Bolshevik (Communist) Party that had deep connections with the labouring masses.

Why did the October Revolution Happen?

The October Revolution was the result of the terrible devastation wreaked on soldiers at the front and labouring masses at home during the First World War. This war was an imperialist struggle between the two rival powers, the Anglo-French-Russian and the Austro-German who were determined to conquer each others markets, resources and labour, for a territorial division of the world as a result of capitalism's unfolding contradictions of economic expansion.

The horrors of war had revolutionized soldiers and the shortages and inflation had done the same to the workers and peasants. Towards the end of 1917 the push to overthrow the bankrupt Tsarist and bourgeois state had swelled support amongst the overwhelming majority of the working class, poor peasants and soldiers, who were thirsting for a better livelihood, land and peace.

From February to October 1917 the Bolsheviks carried out a consistent policy of isolating political parties that wanted to compromise with the Tsarist Duma in the February Revolution and with the Provisional Government in the October Revolution. The Bolshevik Party had only small support in the Soviets at the start of 1917 but it grew as it unwaveringly opposed bankrupt policies of continuing the war, first by the Duma and later by the Provisional Government, calling for "Land, peace and bread" and "All power to the Soviets".

Through uncompromising political agitation the Bolsheviks continually isolated and condemned those parties that compromised with and supported the Duma (bourgeois parties such as the Kadets) and the Provisional Government (social democratic parties such as the Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks). These parties supported a 'capitalist democracy' continuing the war and opposed a socialist revolution, in effect becoming enemies of the revolution.

Bolsheviks by October had hundreds of thousands of worker-members and a solid majority within the Soviets. Support from within the army and the navy enabled them to set up the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee that successfully carried out the October uprising.

The October Revolution was an inspiration to working classes in other countries and later insurrections occurred in Germany and Hungary. Unfortunately these revolts were crushed by far stronger bourgeois forces whose control of the state and armed forces had not weakened enough from the First World War.

Uneven development and Class Struggle

"Uneven economic and political development," said Lenin, "is an absolute law of capitalism..." as a result of which revolutions successfully breaking out in other countries is not always guaranteed.

Socialism in the Soviet Union survived and was later joined by Eastern European countries, China, Cuba, Vietnam etc after the Second World War. Regrettably Imperialism did not collapse despite its defeat at the hands of the October Revolution and successes of other peoples' revolutions.

In fact imperialism recovered ground with the help of revisionists, opportunists and bourgeois-aspiring technocrats within the Soviet Union and China who overturned socialism and reintroduced capitalism. This left the world's working classes severely weakened and demoralised; nevertheless, it confirmed Mao's point that 'class struggle continues throughout socialism'.

However imperialism's and capitalism's own contradictions have not gone away. It is an inherently unstable mode of production that immiserates its working class and is predisposed to fight wars of hegemony.

That is why the oppressed in the world will inevitably have to carry out two, three and more Octobers!