

## 70 YEARS OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

3rd November, 1987

### OCTOBER AND PERESTROIKA: THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES

"SEVEN decades is not a long time in world civilisation's ascent over the centuries, but history has known no other period like it for the scale of the achievements that our country has attained since the victory of the October Revolution," said CPSU Central Committee General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachyov in his report at the formal meeting in Moscow to mark the Revolution's 70th anniversary.

After giving a basic analysis of the major development landmarks of the revolutionary movement in Russia, the Soviet leader noted in particular that Marxism-Leninism as a creative teaching is not a compendium of ready-made guidelines and doctrinaire precepts. Those who treat Marxism dogmatically and pendantly cannot understand its main element: its revolutionary dialect.

It is the highlight of all of Lenin's post-revolution activity. As an example of this, Mikhail Gorbachyov called the "political and moral exploit of the Brest peace," the decision to launch "a new economic policy, which substantially widened the motions of socialism" and Lenin's thesis on socialism as a society of "civilised cooperators."

speaking of the period after Lenin's death, the CPSU Central Committee General Secretary stressed that in the 1920s and the 1930s, although the Party and society had Lenin's blueprint for socialism, the search of the road went in a sharp ideological struggle. The report mentions as the characteristic traits of this struggle the complexity of the problems around which it was waged (industrialisation, collectivisation, the possibility of building socialism in the USSR).

The character of the ideological struggle, Mikhail Gorbachyov noted further, was also complicated by personal rivalries in the Party leadership. Some authoritative leaders had taken a factional stance and were provoking a split in the Party. This applies first of all to Trotsky, who had, after Lenin's death, shown excessive pretensions to top Party leadership. A further compounding fact was that the Trotskyites were acting in common with the new opposition led by Zinovyev and Kamenev.



But in the end the Party spoke out for the line of the Central Committee and against the opposition. The Party's leading nucleus headed by Stalin upheld Leninism in the ideological battle and got approval of its political line from most of the communists and working people.

At the same time, notes the report, that period also saw some losses. Mikhail Gorbachyov mentioned specifically the rise of the command and administer system of Party and state direction of the country long established in the economy, it spread to its restructure, holding back the progress of socialist democracy, the strengthening of bureaucracy and the retreats from Lenin's policy in regard to the peasantry during collectivisation. "Quite obviously," said the Soviet leader, "it was the absence of a proper level of democratisation in Soviet society that made possible the personality cult, the violations of legality, the wanton repressive measures of the thirties."

To remain faithful to historical truth, continued Mikhail Gorbachyov, we have to see both Stalin's incontestable contribution to the struggle for socialism, to the defence of its gain, and the gross political errors, and the abuses committed by him and by those around him. The Stalin personality cult was not inevitable, because it is alien to the nature of socialism, represents a departure from its fundamental principles and, therefore, has not justification. However neither gross errors, nor departures from the principles of socialism could divert the Soviet people from the road it took by the choice it made in 1917.

This was also brought out in the grim trials of the Great Patriotic War - one of the most glorious and heroic chapters in national history. The war showed that the Soviet people, the Party, socialism and the October Revolution are inseparable, notes the report.

After the war the Soviet people in an extremely short period rebuilt the war-ravaged towns and villages, raised from their ruins factories and mills, collective and state farms, schools and colleges, and institutions. But during this very same time a contradiction between what our society had become and the old methods of leadership was making itself felt ever more appreciably.

It required no small courage of the Party and its leadership, headed by Khrushchev, to criticise the personality cult and its consequences, and to re-establish socialist legality. The old stereotypes in domestic and foreign policy began to crumble. Attempts were made to eliminate the bureaucratic command methods of administration, which were firmly established in the 30s and 40s, and to impart greater dynamism to socialism.

However, noted the Soviet leader, no small number of subjectivist errors were committed and they did much to discredit the progressive initiatives. The main cause of the failures of the reforms was that they had not been backed up by an unfolding of the democratisation process.



After the October 1964 plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, when there was a change of Party and state leadership, decisions were taken to overcome the voluntaristic tendencies and twists in domestic and foreign policy. New approaches to economic management were put forward, changing for the better the situation in the country at that time. But to utilise these resources, said Mikhail Gorbachyov, cardinal new changes were needed in society and the corresponding political will. There was a shortage of both. The pace of development considerably slowed down.

The April 1985 plenum of the Central Committee and the 27th Congress of the Party frankly named the causes of the situation that had arisen, laid bare the deceleration mechanism and gave it a basic assessment.

The healthy forces in the Party and society, the report says further, were becoming more and more acutely aware of the pressing need to overcome negative phenomena and to reverse the course of events.

The answer to this extremely acute social need was the decisions of the April 1985 plenum and its course for socialist renovation, which were theoretically and politically developed by the 27th Party Congress and plenary meetings of the Central Committee. Assuming final shape in the general line of conducting a revolutionary rearrangement of socialist society's life, stressed Mikhail Gorbachyov.

Perestroika aims not only at ending the stagnation and conservatism of the preceding period and correcting mistakes but also at overcoming historically limited and obsolete features of social organisation and methods of work, Mikhail Gorbachyov said. As a result of perestroika socialism can and must be able to utilise to the full extent its potentialities as a truly humane system which serves and ennobles man.

There are two major problems of society's development that decide the fate of perestroika. It is democratisation of all life in society and radical economic reform.

Democratisation of society is the soul of perestroika and progress in this field is essential for success of perestroika and - I am not exaggerating - for the future of socialism.

We believe that socialism is a society characterised by increasing diversity in opinion and in people's relations and activities. We must not be afraid of openly discussing and tackling difficult problems of social development and of criticism and discussion.

Speaking about fundamental changes in the economy, Mikhail Gorbachyov said that the aim of the radical economic reform launched in this country was to ensure transition, within the next two or three years, from an excessively centralised and regulated system of management to a democratic system based largely on economically-sound methods and a balanced combination of centralism and self-management.

Then the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee dealt with the nationalities problem. We justly say that we have solved the nationalities problem. The revolution paved the way to both legal and social and economic equality of different nationalities and erased substantial distinctions in the levels of economic, social and cultural development of all republics and regions and all nationalities.



We must be extremely considerate and tactful in everything that concerns the national interests or national feelings of people.

Summing up progress made during two and a half years that passed since the April 1985 plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, Mikhail Gorbachyov said that we had reached a turning-point. The first stage of perestroika has almost been completed. A concept of perestroika has almost been formulated on the basis of in-depth analysis of the present situation and prospects for the country's development in the future. A new political, moral and psychological climate has been created in the country.

The next two or three years will be the most difficult, decisive and, in a sense, critical period, Mikhail Gorbachyov said. The main reason for this is that we simultaneously shall have to tackle large-scale problems in the economy and the social sphere, in restructuring the system of administering the state and society and in ideology and culture.

We are convinced that broad popular support for perestroika will continue to determine the situation in the country, Mikhail Gorbachyov said.

One of the greatest accomplishments by Lenin was his theoretical substantiation of the possibility of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. In the nuclear age, Mikhail Gorbachyov stressed, it has turned into a primary condition for the survival of mankind.

Reminding the audience of the key peace initiatives of the USSR, notably of the project to build a comprehensive system of international peace and security, Mikhail Gorbachyov pointed out that new political thinking with its common human criteria and orientation to reason and openness is not a declaration or an appeal, but a philosophy of action and life - a philosophy that is developing and already working. The meeting in Reykjavik in October 1986 imparted practical energy to that thinking, helped it get settled in various social and political circles and made international contacts more meaningful and productive.

Speaking of the prospects of further vigilance towards stable peace, Mikhail Gorbachyov pointed to such a crucial circumstance as the ascent by socialism to a new level in its development. There is a sizable reserve for peaceful coexistence, he said, in the ongoing restructuring in the Soviet Union. It will enable the USSR to join in the division of labour and resources on a scale never known before. The material base of the comprehensive system of peace and international security will be decisively expanded and reinforced due to the scientific, technological and production potential of the USSR becoming markedly more important element of world economic links.

Objective political processes and the course of the struggle for peace is influenced by class struggle and other manifestations of social antagonisms, by factors which make up a new impulse of activity of the developing nations, by the many million-social movements against the nuclear threat, for the protection of the environment, against racial discrimination and policies that split societies into the lucky and the doomed. The greatness and novelty of our time is in the peoples' more obvious and open participation in the making of history. The human factor is intruding in world affairs headlong. Without new attitudes to fit modern realities and the will of nations politics would



be unpredictable improvisation, risky both for one's own country and for others, concludes Mikhail Gorbachyov.

Emphasising the optimism of the Soviet leadership's view of the prospects of the establishment of a comprehensive system of international security, Mikhail Gorbachyov also notes, however, that the danger of war still remains and that the USSR will keep doing everything needed to maintain its defence capability at a level precluding military superiority of imperialism over socialism.

Reminding the audience that the contemporary international communist movement consisting of fully and irreversibly independent parties is open for a dialogue, cooperation, mutual understanding and alliance with any other revolutionary, democratic and progressive forces, Mikhail Gorbachyov noted: the CPSU has no doubt that about the future of the communist movement - the bearer of the alternative to capitalism and a movement of most courageous and consistent fighters for peace, independence and progress of their own countries and for friendship with all nations of the world.

The world socialist system is named in the report as the most crucial landmark in the post-October world's history. The system itself and the quest and experience tested by it in practice, said M. Gorbachyov, have common importance for the whole of mankind.

Underlining the historical responsibility of the living generations for the future of civilization and life itself on our planet and for the choice of whether the beginning of the new millennium of world history will be a tragic epilogue of an inspiring prologue to the future, that fully depends on them, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee says: "We see opportunities for endless progress".

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