

## ***Important historical experience that sheds light on why it was necessary to vote for Biden in 2020.***

In future messages, I will get directly into why it was necessary to vote for Biden in 2020—and why it would be very wrong and harmful to vote for Biden again. But first, as indicated in my previous message, it is worthwhile looking at important experience from the history of communist revolution that sheds light on all this.

Let's begin with the leadership of V.I. Lenin, in the Russian revolution, in the first part of the 20th century.

In early 1917, a revolution took place in Russia, which overthrew the system headed by an absolute ruler (the Tsar). Although some supposed “socialists”—as well as the genuine communists (Bolsheviks), led by Lenin—took part in this revolution, it was not yet a *socialist* revolution, and the immediate result was a bourgeois (capitalist) government, headed by Aleksander Kerensky. At the same time, “soviets”—organizations of masses of people, including soldiers in the government army—had a lot of power and influence in society. And, as the bourgeois government continued Russia's involvement in World War 1—which was causing tremendous suffering for the Russian soldiers, and the Russian people overall—the conditions were ripening for the much more fundamental, *socialist* revolution. But, only a couple of months before that socialist revolution succeeded, forces in the Russian military, headed by its commander-in-chief, Lavr Kornilov, attempted to carry out an armed coup against the Kerensky government as well as the soviet in the major city of Petrograd. Lenin insisted then that people must be mobilized to defeat this attempted coup—even though, in immediate terms, this amounted to defending the bourgeois Kerensky government, as well as the soviets.

Why did Lenin adopt this stand? Because he recognized that, although things were ripening toward a situation where a revolution could be carried out to overthrow the bourgeois government and establish a socialist government, the situation had not yet become *fully ripe* for that; and if the Kornilov coup succeeded, it would seriously set back the advance toward the socialist revolution, perhaps even eliminating that possibility completely, at least in the situation at that time. And, in fact, the defeat of the attempted Kornilov coup led to the further advance of the revolutionary struggle for socialism, which actually succeeded in seizing power only a couple of months later.

(To be clear, although in these messages overall I have been emphasizing the very important point that revolution is *possible in this time we are living in now*—and not just some far distant time—I am *not* suggesting that this revolution is going to happen in this country *as soon as the next couple of months*. In calling attention to important historical experience, the point is not that the situation now is exactly the same, or that the process of revolution overall will follow the exact same course. What I am focusing on here are matters of principle and method that are of decisive importance—and which are very important in working for an actual revolution now.)

Here is another important experience from the history of the Russian revolution, which brought into being the Soviet Union. As noted, this revolution occurred in the context of World War 1, and toward the end of that war, in 1918, the newly formed Soviet government, headed by the Bolsheviks, signed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with imperialist Germany (and its allies). As a result of this Treaty, the Soviet government gave up a large expanse of territory, which contained a significant population as well as major production capacity, transportation and fuel sources. And the Soviet government was required by this Treaty to *pay war reparations* to Germany.

When Germany was finally defeated in this world war, later in 1918, the Brest-Litovsk Treaty no longer had effect—it became null and void. But, before that, the signing of this Treaty caused certain “leftists” (the “left Socialist-Revolutionaries”) to quit the Soviet government and then launch a rebellion against it. Lenin and the Bolsheviks (Soviet communists) were *right* to sign this Treaty, while the “left Socialist-Revolutionaries” were *wrong* to oppose this, and their rebellion against the Soviet government was not justified but was in fact reactionary, counter-revolutionary.

Why is this the case? Because, in the concrete circumstances, the Soviet republic would very likely have been wiped out, if it had not signed this Treaty. And by signing the Treaty, the Soviet government bought time to consolidate revolutionary state power, which in turn enabled it to then win a civil war against powerful forces of the former Russian empire which were supported and aided by a number of imperialist countries (including the U.S.).

*What was involved in all this was the correct handling of acute contradictions: defending what was achieved at a crucial point, as a basis to fight further as conditions changed and the capacity was built up to carry forward this fight. **It is very likely that there would have been no successful socialist revolution, and no Soviet Union, if Lenin had not led things in the way he did through the Kornilov revolt and the Brest-Litovsk Treaty—even as that Treaty in particular was opposed and attacked by infantile “left” forces who had no serious basis and approach to carrying out a revolutionary transformation of society, in the face of powerful hostile forces.***

Turning to the Chinese Revolution, at a crucial turning point in that revolution, in the context of an invasion and occupation of China by Japanese imperialism, the Chinese Communist Party, led by Mao Zedong, entered into a united front with the reactionary blood-soaked Kuomintang government headed by Chiang Kai-shek. Mao and the Chinese communists did this, after having fought the Kuomintang for nearly a decade and having suffered massive losses at the hands of Kuomintang, which was strongly backed by the U.S. and other “western” imperialist powers.

Here again, the truth is that the revolutionary forces, led by Mao, might have been wiped out (by the Japanese occupying forces and/or the Kuomintang) if the revolutionaries had not entered into this united front. In any case, it is entirely possible that there would have been no successful Chinese Revolution, and no socialist China, if Mao had not led in adopting this profound shift—which, again, involved uniting with murderously oppressive forces. But, as I pointed out in message number Forty-Five, as a result of this major shift in policy, which involved the *united front* with the Kuomintang, the war of resistance against Japanese imperialist occupation of China, in the context of World War 2, became a major turning point in the Chinese revolution, through which the revolutionary forces made a crucial leap toward the final victory of that revolution a few years later, in 1949.

What is highlighted, in these crucial experiences of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, is that revolution is a very complex matter, which repeatedly requires handling the very difficult contradictions involved in advancing the revolution: dealing with the objective reality (the necessity) with which the revolution is confronted, at different points, while at the same time— even in making necessary adjustments in policy and approach—not *abandoning* the strategic orientation of working for revolution, but instead handling contradictions in a way that actually does advance the revolution overall.

All this sheds further light on why adopting policies that, in immediate terms, or for a certain period, objectively involve unity with (or even support for) reactionary forces can be a necessary part of dealing with, and advancing through, the contradictions that are posed, at times very acutely, in the course of carrying out an actual revolution.

This applies to why it was correct to say it was necessary to vote for Biden in 2020—and why voting for Biden again would *not* be correct, but a profound error, now—which I will get into further in the messages that follow.

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