



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

Webinar celebrates Lenin's contributions to socialist struggle

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 7, 2020



As part of a series of Marxism classes sponsored by the Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido and Struggle-La Lucha newspaper, a special webinar was held April 26 to mark the 150th birthday of V.I. Lenin, founder of the Bolshevik (communist) party and leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

Presentations and discussion focused on Lenin's contributions to revolutionary Marxism as a tool for the emancipation of workers and oppressed peoples, including what we can learn from his example at this moment of global political, social and economic crisis.

The webinar kicked off with a diverse group of activists reading passages from Vince Copeland's pamphlet, ["Lenin: Thinker, Fighter."](#) Copeland described Lenin as "The 'beginner' ... part of the inevitable and unconscious force of history, [who began] a whole chain of revolutions and a new phase in the world socialist revolution first conceived by Karl Marx."

Lenin recognized that the cause of world socialism "requires a relentless struggle against the ruling-class enemy, which resists the coming into being of the socialist age with all its might," wrote Copeland. "This struggle, in turn, requires a different kind of person to engage in it. It also requires a plan, a strategy, a theory and a leadership.

"Lenin provided all those, but in order to do that effectively he had to conduct himself and even shape himself in a certain way," Copeland explained.

How to build unity?

John Parker, a leader of the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in Los Angeles and national spokesperson for the Socialist Unity Party, talked about the importance of Lenin's historic contribution to understanding the struggle of oppressed nationalities and people with special oppressions.

"The question for the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution was, how were they going to build unity? How could they unify the fighting army that was needed to take state power? How could they convince oppressed non-Russian workers and peasants, who historically didn't trust the majority Russian population, to even desire a socialist state?

"The solution came through trying to build trust through political and economic solidarity, using the right of self-determination."

Miranda Etel, an activist with Youth Against War and Racism and the Peoples Power

Assembly in Baltimore, recalled Lenin's Marxist analysis of imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, and urged participants to review Lenin's five-point definition of imperialism.

"Why does the U.S. spend billions on the Pentagon and almost nothing on public health, education and jobs? Why is the U.S. government intent on inflicting pain and suffering around the world through sanctions? Why can't we get life-saving medicine from Cuba during this pandemic?

"To understand these questions, it's important to understand what imperialism is. Lenin, building on Marx, developed the theory that explained imperialism," she said.

From New York, Struggle-La Lucha co-editor Greg Butterfield spoke of what Lenin's example can teach communists about responding to moments of sharp change in capitalist society to further the fight for revolutionary socialism.

After the Russian Revolution, Lenin wrote the book "Left-Wing Communism" to explain the history of the Bolshevik party and how it altered its tactics to meet the challenges of a variety of situations, from times of reaction and repression to workers' upsurge. These experiences, Butterfield said, made it possible for Lenin and the Bolsheviks to take the right course of action when a revolutionary situation arose during World War I.

"Lenin couldn't predict the exact date of the revolution even shortly before it happened, just like we can't predict what will happen in two months or two years. But like Lenin, we can strive to be prepared, to be flexible and take advantage of those opportunities when they do come."

The webinar was recorded and is available to view on the [Struggle-La Lucha YouTube channel](#). You can also read more at Struggle-La Lucha's [page devoted to #Lenin150](#).

Online Marxism classes are held on the second and fourth Sundays of every month. Visit and “like” the [Struggle-La Lucha Facebook page](#) for updates and to register for upcoming classes.

