

The Revolutionary Movement in the East

Interview Given to Mr. Fuse, Japanese Correspondent of Nichi-Nichi

July 4, 1925

Source : *Works*, Vol. 7, 1925

Publisher : Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954

Transcription/Markup : Salil Sen for MIA, 2008

Public Domain : Marxists Internet Archive (2008). You may freely copy, distribute, display and perform this work; as well as make derivative and commercial works. Please credit "Marxists Internet Archive" as your source.

Mr. Fuse's Questions and J. V. Stalin's Answers

First question. The Japanese people, being the most advanced of the peoples of the East, are most of all interested in the successes of the liberation movement of the peoples of the East. They would willingly become the ally of the U.S.S.R. in this great cause, the cause of liberating the enslaved peoples of the East from the imperialist yoke of the Western powers. Being, however, at the same time a capitalist state, Japan is sometimes obliged to go against this movement, joining in the same front as the Western powers. (For example: the Anglo-Japanese alliance, by virtue of which Japan had to help Britain in her struggle against the insurgents in India, and Japan's joint action with Britain, America and France against the Chinese workers during the recent events in Shanghai.)

What, in your opinion, could be the way out of this embarrassing situation created by the contradiction between the national strivings of the Japanese people, on the one hand, and the political and social structure of the Japanese state, on the other?

Answer. It is true that the Japanese people are the most advanced of the peoples of the East and that they are interested in the successes of the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples. An alliance between the Japanese people and the peoples of the Soviet Union would be a decisive step towards the liberation of the peoples of the East. Such an alliance would mark the beginning of the end of the big colonial empires, the beginning of the end of world imperialism. That alliance would be invincible.

But it is also true that the political and social structure of Japan impels the Japanese people along the path of imperialism and makes them an instrument of the enslavement and not of the liberation of the peoples of the East.

You ask: What is the way out of this contradiction between the interests of the Japanese people and the political and social structure of Japan?

There is only one way out: change the political and social structure of Japan to make it fit the fundamental interests of the Japanese people.

Russia, at one time, was the terror of the peoples of the East, the gendarme against every liberation movement. What is the explanation of the fact that Russia, formerly the gendarme against the liberation movement, has

become its friend and standard-bearer? The only explanation is that Russia's political and social structure has been changed.

Second question. The Eastern nationalities who inhabit the U.S.S.R. are many centuries behind the times as a result of the despotic tsarist regime, and they acquired the right to an independent development of industry, agriculture, culture, etc., only after the revolution.

Approximately how many years, in your opinion, will it take the Eastern nationalities in the U.S.S.R. to reach the cultural level of the other nationalities of the U.S.S.R.?

Answer. You ask: Approximately how many years will it take the Eastern peoples of the Soviet Union to reach the cultural level of the other peoples of the Soviet Union?

It is hard to say. The tempo of cultural development of these peoples will depend upon numerous internal and external conditions. In general, I must say that forecasts about the tempo of development have never been very accurate, especially as regards number of years. The main thing that facilitates the cultural development of these countries is that the chief obstacles to development, such as tsarism, Russian imperialism, the regime of exploitation of the border regions by the centre, have already been removed from the path. This circumstance gives a tremendous impulse to the cultural development of the Eastern peoples of the Soviet Union. But how fully this main facilitating circumstance will be taken advantage of depends upon the Eastern peoples themselves, and primarily, upon the stage of cultural development in which they were at the time of the Soviet revolution.

At any rate, one thing can be said without hesitation: under present conditions of development, the Eastern peoples of the Soviet Union have far more chances of a rapid and all-round development of their national culture than they could have under the most "free" and most "cultured" capitalist regime.

Third question. You say that the link between the national-liberation movement of the enslaved peoples of the East and the proletarian movement in the advanced Western countries will ensure the victory of the world revolution. We, the Japanese people, have the slogan: "Asia for the Asiatics." Do you not think that there is something in common between our strivings and your revolutionary tactics in regard to the colonial countries of the East?

Answer. You ask: Is there not something in common between the slogan "Asia for the Asiatics" and the Bolsheviks' revolutionary tactics in regard to the colonial countries of the East?

To the extent that the slogan "Asia for the Asiatics" is a call for a revolutionary war against Western imperialism — but only to that extent — there is, undoubtedly, something in common between them.

But the slogan "Asia for the Asiatics" embraces not only that aspect of the matter. It contains two other component elements that are totally incompatible with the Bolsheviks' tactics. Firstly, it evades the question of Eastern imperialism, as if suggesting that Eastern imperialism is better than Western, and that there is no need to fight Eastern imperialism. Secondly, that slogan imbues the workers of Asia with a feeling of distrust towards the European workers, alienates the former from the latter, breaks the international ties between them and thereby saps the very foundations of the liberation movement.

The revolutionary tactics of the Bolsheviks are directed not only against Western imperialism, but against imperialism in general, including Eastern imperialism.

These tactics are directed not towards weakening the international ties between the workers of Asia and the workers of the European and American countries, but towards expanding and strengthening them.

Hence, as you see, in addition to something in common, there are points of fundamental difference between the slogan "Asia for the Asiatics" and the Bolshevik tactics in the East.

Fourth question. In answer to my question: "Where has communism the greater chances of success, in the West or in the East?" Vladimir Ilyich, in my interview with him in 1920, said: "For the time being real communism can achieve success only in the West. The West, however, lives at the expense of the East. The European capitalist powers amass their wealth mainly by exploiting the Eastern colonies; but at the same time they are arming their colonies and teaching them how to fight, and thereby the West is digging its own grave in the East." Do you not think that the events that are occurring more and more often in China, India, Persia, Egypt and other Eastern countries are a sign that the time is drawing near when the Western powers will have to bury themselves in the grave they have dug for themselves in the East?

Answer. You ask: Do I not think that the growth of the revolutionary movement in China, India, Persia, Egypt and other Eastern countries is a sign that the time is drawing near when the Western powers will bury themselves in the grave they have dug for themselves in the East?

Yes, I do. The colonial countries constitute the principal rear of imperialism. The revolutionisation of this rear is bound to undermine imperialism not only in the sense that imperialism will be deprived of its rear, but also in the sense that the revolutionisation of the East is bound to give a powerful impulse to the intensification of the revolutionary crisis in the West. Attacked on two sides — in the rear as well as in front — imperialism will be forced to admit that it is doomed.

Pravda, No. 150, July 4, 1925

[Collected Works Index](#) | [Volume 7 Index](#)
[Works by Decade](#) | [J. V. Stalin Archive](#)
[Marxists Internet Archive](#)