

The Great October Socialist Revolution as the Starting Point of True Human History

The Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 constituted an unprecedented event in human history, one that went beyond mere political coups and state reforms. It did not just transform institutions — it reshaped the very structure of historical time, opening new horizons of possibility and a new model of social development. It symbolized the birth of a fundamentally different understanding of human history — a history created by the conscious actions of the masses, not only by the march of political processes.

In this intervention, we will not recount the well-known chronology of the October Revolution, which, in addition to necessary prerequisites (deep socio-economic contradictions and the crisis of the then society), was driven by a considerable set of accidental, concrete-historical circumstances in the Russian Empire (weakness of power, World War I, the existence and actions of the Bolshevik party). Analyzing these factors is invaluable for understanding the revolutionary tasks and tactics in future revolutions. Nevertheless, in each specific historical moment, they must be judged considering the real socio-economic and political situation in each country where a revolution occurs (as was the case in the people's democracies in Europe; in China, in Cuba, etc.). What we wish to address are the most essential meanings of the socialist revolution that give it a timeless significance for all humanity and keeps it relevant as long as societies of exploitation still exist.

Until the twentieth century, social development was often seen either as the result of a natural course of things or as the outcome of decisions by the ruling elite. October radically changed this perspective. It showed that millions of people, previously excluded from political life, could become subjects of history. Workers, soldiers, peasants — those whose role had been reduced to objects of rule — for the first time acted as a collective force shaping a new order. That is why many contemporaries perceived the revolution as a “breakthrough” into true history, a history made by people themselves rather than imposed from above — because of the masses’ creative activity.

One of the key meanings of October was the affirmation of the idea of the emancipation of labor. Its participants strove to destroy a system of exploitation, social inequality, and oppression that had been regarded for centuries as the “natural order of things,” thus echoing the Marxist idea of human emancipation (Marx, 1978). In that sense, the revolution was an attempt to build a world in which a person could govern their own destiny and be a creator of social development.

October was one of the first historical events centered not on the restoration of an old order in new forms of exploitation, but on creating a fundamentally new

society. According to Lenin, it was a revolution aimed at the future (Lenin, 1965). It asserted that society could be consciously designed and rebuilt in line with ideals of social justice, marking a shift from history understood as a chain of inevitabilities to history as a space of human choice. This realization embodied the classical Marxist thesis about breaking out of the “realm of necessity” into the “realm of freedom” (Marx, Engels, *The German Ideology*, Part I, “Feuerbach”; K. Marx, *Capital*).

The October Revolution’s influence extended far beyond Russia. It became a catalyst for anti-colonial and workers’ movements around the world, initiating a global revolutionary cycle. For millions, October represented “world history” — a history in which even oppressed colonial nations could aspire to their own destinies. Lenin’s thesis on national self-determination, consistently implemented regarding the national peripheries of the former Russian Empire, became an ideological basis for liberation movements across Asia and Africa. The workers’ and peasants’ state created by the revolution — the USSR — turned into a center of global anti-imperialism, providing a powerful example and substantial assistance to anti-colonial struggles. As a result, national liberation succeeded during the Chinese Revolution (1925–1949), the Indian movement, the Korean resistance against Japanese occupation, the Vietnamese movement, the revolutions in Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and the creation of dozens of independent African states (1951–1994).

Marxism–Leninism formulated, and the socialist revolution strove to bring to life, a new ethics and a new understanding of humanity in the highest humanistic sense. Above all, this related to labor, understood not merely as a source of wealth, but as the fundamental creative essence of man, through which he transforms nature, society, and himself. Through education, explanation, mobilization and, most importantly, by example, communists elevated the dimly aware masses of the then proletariat to a profound understanding of social processes and the necessity of transformation; they organized their spontaneous and often unconscious activity into concrete, practical, and scientifically grounded directions, infecting them with the enthusiasm of creative work. For the first time, the working person felt themselves to be a subject of history, experienced the joy of collective labor, and came to love the socialist motherland not merely as a place of birth, but as a space of personal freedom and social good. « I know of no other country in which a person breathes so freely” – so went one of the most popular songs in the Soviet Union.

Already in the early post-revolutionary years, an incredible collective creative energy of the masses was awakened, particularly evident during the socialist construction in the USSR in the first Five-Year Plans, when a powerful and advanced economic base of socialism was built. During those first Five-Year Plans, some 1,500 new factories and plants were constructed, and by 1941 the total number of newly opened industrial enterprises reached about 9,000. No capitalist

country had ever known such a rate of industrialization; it was made possible not only by effective state leadership but by the heroic collective labor of workers who had embraced socialism as “free labor of freely gathered people” (V. Mayakovsky). In their consciousness, millions of Soviet enthusiasts understood even the hardest work not as a forced, unpaid burden but as a supreme socially necessary virtue.

In the communist ideal, the person was understood not only as a component of production relations, but as a creator of society, capable of participating in collective governance. Concepts of collectivism, equality, social justice, and collective responsibility were given political meaning and became part of a new historical consciousness. Through representation in the Soviets, participation in workers’ control, other organs of self-government, and through a broad system of universal education (even of “cooks”) they were prepared for state governance at all levels — that is, the right of the people as a whole to manage production and the state was being implemented (Lenin, *Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, 1917).

Thus, the Great October Socialist Revolution not only proclaimed its essential meanings but also launched a consistent program of their realization — the practice of socialist construction, which, considered in its entirety, was the main result of the revolution. For the first time, a conscious transformation of society in the interest of the majority was set as a goal and successfully pursued; the working person was affirmed as a creator, including as a creator of history; all humanity was shown the possibility of transcending old forms of power and property; and in a worldview sense a global rethinking of justice and true freedom of human existence was opened. Millions were given a sense of historical belonging and responsibility. Building socialism in the USSR was a path of pioneers, forced at times to proceed by trial and error, overcoming the ballast of the past, but not allowing recurrences of a swept-away antagonistic formation. It was a long road of creation, gradually dispelling illusions of an immediate construction of communism — for many, the revolution was imagined as a harmonious transition to a society entirely free of social contradictions and alienation. Even the first stage of communist formation — socialism — took more than a single generation of its builders to achieve.

The contemporary bourgeois propaganda often attempts to portray The Great October Socialist Revolution as a historical artifact—a moment frozen in time, specific to the conditions of World War I and Tsarist Russia. But to dismiss it this way is to miss its profound and enduring lessons. The specific tactics of 1917 are not our literal blueprint, but the revolution’s core strategic messages remain intensely relevant for anyone engaged in the contemporary struggle for socialism

today.

First, and most crucially, is the message that **Organization is Power.**

The Bolshevik Revolution was not a spontaneous uprising. It was the product of a highly disciplined, politically coherent revolutionary party. The Bolsheviks understood that mass discontent alone could not overthrow a state. That energy needed a vehicle—an organization capable of providing theoretical direction, strategic patience, and decisive action. Lenin’s famous dictum, “Without a revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement,” was lived in practice.

In our era of various decentralized social media activism and often isolated political struggles, this lesson is more critical than ever. Online outrage can trend for a day, but it cannot, on its own, challenge the entrenched, globalized power of capital. The October Revolution reminds us that to build a new world, we must first build, maintain and develop the organizations capable of winning it. We must construct durable and militant political structures that can educate, agitate, and ultimately be prepared to govern.

The second timely message is the necessity of **a Clear Analysis of the State.**

The Bolsheviks operated on a fundamental Marxist premise: that the state is not a neutral arbiter but an instrument of class rule. They recognized that the Tsarist state, and the subsequent bourgeois Provisional Government, existed to manage the affairs in the interests of the landlord and capitalist classes. Therefore, their goal was not to take over the existing state machinery and hope to use it for different ends. Their strategy was to dismantle it and build a new, proletarian state apparatus.

This directly challenges a pervasive illusion that many opportunists still promote today: the idea that the masses can simply vote socialism into existence through a state that is fundamentally designed to protect private property, capital accumulation, and imperialist interests. The lessons of the October Revolution are teaching us that such illusions have no ground in reality, and that we too, need to conceive of building a fundamentally new form of people's power. It is a call for unflinching clarity over comforting fiction.

Thirdly, it is the message of **Revolutionary Audacity.**

The October Revolution was an act of immense political courage. When the crisis of the old order reached its peak—when the ruling class could no longer rule in the old way and the masses were no longer willing to be ruled in the old way—the Bolsheviks did not hesitate. They acted. They seized what Lenin called a “revolutionary situation,” understanding that such moments are rare and fleeting.

Today, we face a state of permacrisis: imperialist wars, spiralling inequality and exploitation, and the rise of the far-right. The lesson here is not to simply build for a distant future, but to be prepared—theoretically and organizationally—to act decisively when systemic failures create openings for radical change. It is a lesson in having the courage to fight for power when the opportunity arises, rather than always retreating to the safety of protest.

In conclusion, the October Revolution is not a precise model to be copied. But it is a compass. It points us toward the non-negotiable pillars of our struggle: the power of organization, the critical analysis of state power, and the revolutionary audacity to seize the moment. These messages are not historical footnotes. They are the essential, timely tools for our contemporary fight for a socialist future.

In a time of imperialist wars - a time of immense human suffering, nationalist fervour, and growing state repression—the struggle for socialism faces its most severe test. It is precisely in this fraught context that the lessons of the October Revolution of 1917 become not just relevant, but essential. The Bolsheviks did not seize power in a vacuum; they did so in the bloody chaos of the First World War. Their strategy under those conditions offers us several other critical messages for our own potential struggles in an era of escalating conflicts.

The first message is that **War Reveals the True Nature of the State.**

In peacetime, the capitalist state can mask its class character with promises of reform and social partnership. But war strips away all illusions. The Bolsheviks saw how the Tsarist and then the Provisional Government sent millions of workers and peasants to die for imperialist aims, while profiteers grew rich. They recognized the war not as "our" war, but as their war—a conflict between rival empires for markets and power.

Today, under conditions of war, any socialist movement must adopt this clear-sighted analysis. We must understand that the imperialist states will always prioritize the security of capital and the interests of the ruling class, using patriotism as a weapon to silence dissent and sacrifice the working people. The October lesson is to refuse to choose sides between rival imperialists, and instead to turn the guns the other way—to expose the war as the ultimate characteristic of the capitalist system and to channel popular anger not against a foreign nation, but against the capitalist class that profits from the conflict.

The second message is that **Crisis Creates Possibility, and Organization is the Key to Seizing It.**

War creates a furnace of social crisis. It shatters old loyalties, immiserates the population, and creates a deep, organic distrust of the ruling authorities. The Bolsheviks were not the only ones who saw this crisis. But they had a party structure that could function underground, a network of agitators in the trenches and factories, and a clear program—"Bread, Peace, Land"—that spoke directly to the most urgent needs of the masses.

For us, this is a dual lesson. The chaos of war can destabilize the most entrenched regimes, creating revolutionary openings. But without a pre-existing, disciplined, and politically coherent organization, that energy will be squandered or captured by fascist forces. Spontaneous anti-war sentiment is not enough. We must build the organization now that can, in a time of crisis, offer a clear alternative, provide direction, and be ready to lead when the old structures of power begin to fracture. In war time, the price of being unorganized is defeat.

Finally, the third message is one of **Revolutionary Internationalism.**

This is perhaps the most difficult and most vital lesson. The Bolsheviks championed this position arguing that the main enemy for any worker is their own ruling class. They believed that the defeat of one's own government in an imperialist war would weaken the capitalist class and pave the way for revolution. This was not treachery, but the highest form of class solidarity, rooted in an unwavering internationalism.

In a modern conflict, this principle translates to a refusal to wave any nationalist flag. Our duty is not to "defend the fatherland" of capitalism, but to build fraternity with the working people on all sides of the conflict. The goal is to transform the imperialist war into a class war—against the capitalists at home. This means organizing against the war machine and tirelessly arguing that the only true peace is one achieved through the overthrow of the system that breeds such wars.

When the war in Ukraine has started, a lot of things have changed for our daily work. Some of us were forced into exile, both by the relentless bombings and by the repression from the Ukrainian authorities who have used the war as a pretext for doubling down on suppressing all left-wing political forces. Unfortunately, some of our former long-term comrades in Russia who have chosen to support Russian government's aggression over class solidarity and proletarian

internationalism, have used this situation against our party, spreading various false and stupid accusations about us. For instance, they say that those of us who have left Ukraine for NATO countries, allegedly “have adopted the positions of the host country's governments” (!). Nothing could be further from the truth. This is completely unprecedented. The leadership of the Russian Communist Workers party also constantly bring up our founding leader Tamila Yabrova's name, citing her authority. They say she “has always supported Russia”, using her unwavering support of Donbass workers from 2014 onwards, but they fail to mention that comrade Yabrova has never set a foot outside the class position. Sadly, a couple of our own former comrades decided to join them in this slandering campaign, presenting themselves as so-called “Union of Ukrainian communists in Ukraine” (lately, RCWP even began to use for this purpose some figures we have never heard of in Ukraine and achieved taking over our old website so that they can spread their falsehoods looking like legitimate information coming from our party.)

At the moment, we are working on creating a new international theoretical and practical magazine. Therefore, we would like to ask fraternal parties, especially those that have joined the European Communist Action, to write a short essay about the history of their respective parties, describing their main program positions, highlighting their current activities, mentioning key figures (founders and significant activists, if comrades deem it possible), and describing their reasons for supporting the creation of the European Communist Action. We do not limit comrades on the length of their contributions, but we ask that they keep their content between 2 and 10 pages. With the consent of the parties, these materials would be published in the updated journal "Marxism and Modernity," the new issue of which was planned for August 2025 but now will likely be published in January 2026. Of course, we could use the basic information on your parties' websites, but we would like to add a bit of vibrant journalistic flair appropriate for a magazine. We kindly ask that you complete your submissions within the one-month deadline, December 20th. You can get our email address from our representative at the meeting. We kindly ask that you write in English if possible. If not, we'll have to work with translation. The journal's information section will be published in both Russian and English. The theoretical section will be in Russian with an English summary. Currently, the editorial board of this relaunching magazine consists of those who previously worked under T. Yabrova's leadership, as well as a few new party comrades, scholars, and publicists from Ukraine and Russia who share the positions of the European Communist Action on key contemporary issues.

In conclusion, under the terrifying conditions of imperialist war, the October Revolution serves as our most stark and strategic guide. It teaches us to see through the nationalist fog, to understand that the capitalist state is our enemy in any uniform, and that our power lies in international class solidarity. It reminds us that in the chaos that war creates, only an organized, principled, and audacious socialist movement can offer a way out—not towards one nation's victory, but towards the liberation of humanity.

Long Live the Great October Socialist Revolution!

Long Live Proletarian Internationalism!