



19th International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties, St Petersburg 2-3 November 2017

“The 100th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution: The Ideals of the Communist Movement, Revitalising the Struggle against imperialist wars, for peace, socialism.”

Comrades,

The Workers Party of Ireland is honoured to be present in Russia on this historic occasion. The Central Executive Committee of our Party wishes to thank the Working Group of the IMCWP and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation for hosting this meeting and providing the facilities for our work.

In these next few days we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, one of the greatest events in human history, an occasion of historic global significance which changed forever the power relations between exploiters and exploited and made real the vision of a new socialist society. The socialist revolution that took place in Russia in October 1917 was the first and the greatest successful workers’ revolution in history, translating into practice the revolutionary ideas of Marx and Engels and providing a momentous catalyst for the revolutionary process throughout the world.

First workers state

The October Revolution transferred power to the working class, broke down the machinery of the bourgeois state and established the world’s first workers’ state. The object of the October Revolution was to abolish all forms of exploitation and oppression and to construct a new society based on socialist ideas.

The October Revolution transformed the world. It constituted a decisive break with the old world order, abolished private ownership of the means of production and laid the basis for the political, social and economic liberation of humankind. The Revolution inspired the workers and oppressed of the world and offered real prospects for change, investing the workers’ movement with a revolutionary consciousness and objective and educating, organising and mobilising the mass of the working people in the task of building a new society, fundamentally altering the balance of forces across the globe.

In Ireland, in February 1918, some 10,000 people attended a rally in Dublin to greet the success of the October Revolution.

A free and fulfilled life

Under Soviet power life expectancy and literacy levels were increased, the living conditions and material well-being of the people were improved and the health and education of citizens was secured. The October Revolution created the basis for material and social advancement, for the transfer of power to the working people, the creators of wealth, and provided the workers with the opportunity, through their labour and struggle, to build the social, political, economic and cultural conditions which offered the prospect of a free and fulfilled life.

Rights for women

The Revolution declared important rights for women, equality under the law, the right to divorce, and the right to free and legal abortion. These gave women the right to control their wages and property, maintain a claim to their children in the event of divorce, and to decide where they wanted to live, go to school, and to work.

Accomplishments

The industrialisation of the economy, the expansion of medical and health services, the development of educational provision and training, the measures taken to provide for culture, literature and sport, the development of agriculture, scientific and technological progress and the improvement in the material conditions of working people were among the many accomplishments of the revolution.

The October Revolution confirmed that the purpose of the revolution is to establish workers' power and that socialist construction begins with the revolutionary acquisition of power by the working class. The workers' state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, is an instrument of the working class in the class struggle. Real, fundamental, transformative change requires a rupture with the capitalist system and its abolition, to create a world where the working class controls its own destiny under socialism-communism and a society which maximises human potential, dignity and development rather than a system driven by the relentless pursuit of profit for the benefit of the few.

The struggle for socialism

We are here, as communists, not only to celebrate the October Revolution but to learn from it, to revitalise the class struggle and to strengthen the struggle for socialism.

Across the world, tens of millions of workers live and work under worsening social and economic conditions without any possibility that their lives can be improved under the existing capitalist system.

The expansion of NATO; the growing militarisation of the EU; an emboldened imperialism increasingly ready to use military force, either directly or through its proxies; unilateral imperialist threats, intervention, aggression and war, all represent a serious threat to peace and the peoples of the world.

As Lenin stated, imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established. Socialist and capitalist relations of production cannot coexist, one beside the other. As communists we stand for an end to the capitalist system and the abolition of the bourgeois state.

The lessons of Red October

The ruling class, the capitalist class, will never voluntarily surrender its power without being forced to do so. The weapon in the hands of the working class is the power of class struggle.

Marxism provides us with a vital theoretical tool for interpreting the world and Lenin and the October Revolution demonstrated how that revolutionary theory provides the basis for changing it.

The October Revolution took place because the Bolsheviks were armed with two indispensable weapons - first, a dynamic revolutionary theory and secondly, a disciplined revolutionary party committed to leading the working class to power.

The task of socialist revolution is difficult and complex. The central issue of a socialist strategy is, accordingly, to create the conditions for a revolutionary transformation of society. In order to attain such conditions it is necessary not only to build the vanguard party but to actively engage and mobilise the broad popular masses of the working class. The leading role of the working class is secured by conscious planned action. In this respect each revolutionary party must be prepared to take the necessary steps to raise and strengthen class consciousness and to build an organisation capable of taking power for the working class.

As Lenin stated: "If you work consistently, if you work devotedly, if this work is linked up with the interests of the oppressed masses, who make up the majority, revolution will come; but where, how, at what moment, from what immediate cause, cannot be foretold."

These are the lessons of Red October. Now is the time to revitalise the struggle against imperialism, against the power of capital, for solidarity, peace, for socialism.

Long live the ideas of the Great October Socialist Revolution!

Long live Marxism-Leninism!

Long live proletarian internationalism!