

Vanguard

For an Independent Australia and Socialism

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Celebrate the 1917 October Revolution: Fight for an Australian independent working class agenda

by Nick G.

The 1917 Great October Socialist Revolution was the result of the Bolshevik Party's outlining for the Russian working class, its own independent class agenda, and doing patient mass work so that the Bolsheviks, as the vanguard of the working class, moved from a minority within the Petrograd Soviet to the majority.

Unlike the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who held a majority on the Petrograd Soviet throughout most of 1917, the Bolsheviks absolutely refused to surrender the initiative to the parties of the capitalists and landlords (the Cadets and Decembrists) in the Provisional Government.

Australia in 2017 is obviously not Russia of 1917. We are not engulfed in the midst of a fierce war between rival imperialist blocs; we do not have a semi-feudal landlord class and overwhelming numbers of impoverished and uneducated peasants; we have unpopular politicians, but not an autocratic Tsar.

In short, we are not in a revolutionary situation and the revolutionary movement is tiny.

But a revolutionary movement there is, and it exists to position the best elements of the working class within the unions and community organisations to offer conscious direction and purpose to otherwise spontaneous and fragmented groups engaged in struggles that ultimately share the common thread of anti-imperialist independence and socialism.

In Australia today, the independent working class agenda draws connections between workers' immediate struggles for wages, conditions and the right to organise and strike, and capitalist class relations, the capitalist state, imperialism and imperialist wars. The independent working class agenda promotes the interests of the entire working class.

The legal basis for class struggle in Australia is severely circumscribed. It is illegal in all but the circumstance of enterprise bargaining, and then the right to utilise the strike weapon is blunted



by a cumbersome process, and the "matters pertaining" to such industrial action is very limited.

Workers are no longer able to hold "sympathy" strikes - those expressions of class consciousness through which workers in industries not directly involved in a strike, nevertheless walked off the job to support their class brothers and sisters elsewhere.

Even the simple expedient of a picket line is under attack: we have to go through the pretence of a "community picket" to protect the union and its members from hefty fines and jail.

Most of the significant stoppages in recent times have been "breakout" strikes - defensive fightbacks against attempts by employers to lower wages and conditions. There are very few examples of aggressive attempts by workers to win newer and better conditions, or to smash through what has been, for several years now, an effective wage freeze.

It is true that some union leaders are prepared to push the envelope, but this rarely involves the patient education and long-term mobilisation of the membership; rather, there is the large-scale drawing down of union funds instead of the drawing in of members in struggle.

When union legal action over some

issue is defeated (eg the recent decision by the Federal Court on penalty rates), there is no unleashing of the workers. Instead, union leaders vow to "continue the fight", "continue to challenge", "continue to speak out". In other words, to continue to avoid direct action by the workers, and to keep on with the same old, same old.

It is the less well-organised sections of the working class such as the hospitality industry with high turnover of labour and high casualisation that have been purposely targetted first by the ruling class to reduce wages through cuts to penalty rates. Combined with anti-worker laws, organising and mobilising of these workers in collective action involves slow, patient mass work similar to the decades-long struggle to organise production workers in the manufacturing industries in the 1940s and 1950s.

We know that the correct approach is mass work with workers to patiently educate them in the necessity for their own independent class agenda, and their own struggle in support of that agenda.

Lenin had no idea at the beginning of 1917, sitting in exile in Switzerland, that he would soon be back in Russia writing the April Theses and directing a revolutionary struggle for Soviet power.

Nor is it given to us to know when and where, and in what form, a single spark might lead to a qualitative change in the consciousness of Australian workers and to their breaking through the legal restrictions on their ability to fight as a class against imperialism and its local hangers-on.

All we can say is that the time will come. Sooner or later, and preferably sooner, some event or incident or issue will cause such an upsurge of anger that the workers will not be able to be held back. Our task is to win their trust and assist them to put spontaneity on a firm, purposeful and conscious footing.

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The victory of the October Revolution was a victory over revisionism

by Nick G.

The Great October Socialist Revolution, the centenary of which we celebrate this year, was the greatest practical vindication of genuine Marxism.

Its success was guaranteed by the leadership of the great V.I. Lenin and his unremitting struggles against every kind of bourgeois reformism and unprincipled opportunism.

In particular, it was his opposition to the watering down of Marxism, to the stripping away of its revolutionary essence, that educated the class-conscious workers of Russia, raising their ideological level to the point where, in the incredibly complex and ever-changing situation after the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in March 1917, they kept their eyes on the prize of a workers' and peasants' state rather than the bourgeois state of Kerensky, the Cadets and the Octobrists (parties of the capitalists and landlords).

Marx and Engels fought utopian and idealistic versions of socialism

Marx and Engels fought to establish their theories from the laws of dialectical and historical materialism. They analysed the history of class society from its inception through to the revolutionary upheavals of mid-nineteenth century Europe and wrote the *Communist Manifesto* in opposition to various types of utopian and idealist "socialism". They also wrote at length to refute the influential, but unscientific, views of Duhring and Proudhon.

The ideological struggles led by Marx and Engels resulted, as Lenin noted, in the defeat of "pre-Marxist socialism". From that point on, bourgeois efforts to turn the workers from revolution and proletarian dictatorship could no longer stand "on its own independent ground, but on the general ground of Marxism, as revisionism" (Lenin *On Marxism and Revisionism*).

European revisionism

Scientific socialism extends recognition of the class struggle to the necessity for the overthrow of the capitalist ruling class by means of revolution. It requires that the workers smash the old machinery of state and create their own institutions to keep the restorationists of the old order in check.

Opportunists seeking to build parliamentary careers on the backs of the oppressed were then forced to "stand



on the ground of Marxism" in order to fight it. Only as "Marxists" could they have the access to the advanced workers, could they have the credibility with the revolutionary vanguard of workers, that would enable them to divert the workers from the path of the revolutionary movement.

The German Eduard Bernstein was the first significant "Marxist" to "interpret" Marxism to support opposition to it. He argued that the Marxism of the Manifesto was too impetuous, too youthful, and that in their later years, Marx and Engels matured to a point where achieving peaceful reforms through parliament was preferable to upheavals and revolution. Of course, it would be wonderful to peacefully legislate the ruling class out of existence, but it has never once happened in history. What Marx and Engels knew to be true still stands.

Other significant "Marxists" (some of whom were indeed Marxist at one time or another) included the Russian Plekhanov and another German, Karl Kautsky.

In 1895, Engels discovered that his introduction to a new edition of *The Class Struggles in France*, written by Marx in 1850, had been edited by Bernstein and Kautsky in a manner which left the impression that he had become a proponent of a peaceful road to socialism. On April 1, 1895, four months before his death, Engels wrote to Kautsky:

"I was amazed to see today in the *Vorwärts* an excerpt from my 'Introduction' that had been printed without my knowledge and tricked

out in such a way as to present me as a peace-loving proponent of legality quand même (at all costs). Which is all the more reason why I should like it to appear in its entirety in the *Neue Zeit* in order that this disgraceful impression may be erased. I shall leave Liebknecht in no doubt as to what I think about it and the same applies to those who, irrespective of who they may be, gave him this opportunity of perverting my views and, what's more, without so much as a word to me about it."

The "peace-loving proponents of legality", who sought to distort Marxism in their own image, later formed the core of those who placed defence of their respective fatherlands ahead of proletarian internationalism following the outbreak of the predatory imperialist war for the division of the world (1914-18).

Lenin denounced Plekhanov, Kautsky, and other leaders of the Second International as social-patriots (socialists in words, but bourgeois patriots in deeds), social-pacifists (socialist in words but pacifists rejecting revolutionary struggle against one's own bourgeoisie in deeds), social-chauvinists (socialists in words, but reactionary chauvinists in deeds), social-nationalists (socialists in words but narrow bourgeois nationalists in deeds) and social-imperialists (socialists in words but supporters of imperialism in deeds).

These hyphenated "socialists" were the revisionists of a particular time and place, the time when competing capitalist ruling classes were using their "own" workers to kill other workers for

the sake of a redivision of the colonies and financial spheres of interest of the world.

The fight for Red October

The February Revolution in Russia that led to the abdication of Nicholas II in March was the result of proletarian action but a gift to the capitalists and landlords. The provisional government first of all refused to accept the overthrow of the Tsar, urging Nicholas to abdicate in favour of his young son who would ensure the Romanov dynasty via a Regency under his brother Michael. They wanted to keep as much of the old state intact as was needed for a more vigorous prosecution of the war effort.

From exile, Lenin exerted every effort to prevent revisionist elements from giving legitimacy to the new bourgeois rulers. Intense struggles between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks were played out in the Petrograd Soviet and other centres of workers' revolutionary organisation. The subsequent victory of the October Revolution was a victory over revisionist influence in the working class.

Building socialism means fighting revisionism

After the death of Lenin in 1924, the key leadership of the Soviet Union was taken up by Joseph Stalin who, together with the Soviet people, was relentlessly demonised and maligned by the international bourgeoisie and imperialists. In the 1930s, at a time when the rest of the capitalist world was in deep economic depression

wreaking enormous hardships, hunger, homelessness and poverty on the majority of the world's people, the Soviet Union was in the throes of rapidly industrialising its economy and collectivisation of agriculture, able to provide full employment, housing, high standard free education and health, real equality for women, free child care, security for the people and promote vibrant and powerful art and culture of the working people.

The key to the successful construction of socialism by Stalin and the collective leadership around him was confidence in the strength of the working class and its ally, the peasants.

Stalin, and the majority of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union maintained confidence in the working class to achieve their goals at a time when so many around him argued that building socialism in such a backward and impoverished country as Russia was impossible without simultaneous socialist uprisings in the more advanced European countries. They argued that support from the latter was an essential precondition for building socialism in Russia.

The people of the Soviet Union could not have achieved such momentous social and industrial progress without enormous confidence, support and enthusiasm for socialism and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Indeed, revisionism feeds primarily on the lack of courage, the lack of confidence in the ability of the people to surmount incredible difficulty, evident in backward, wavering sections of the working class and the petty-bourgeois elements that are drawn to it.

The strength of the economic and political foundations of the Soviet Union enabled it to withstand the horrific loss of life and destruction of cities and infrastructure that were inflicted by the Hitlerites, with the urgings and support from other imperialist powers, in World War 2. Indeed, the turning tide of World War 2 was the succession of defeats inflicted on the Nazis by the Soviet Red Army.

Yet war took its toll. Up to 20 million Soviet people had died, and there was huge economic destruction. The greatly increased economic and military power of the USA was now mobilised against a weakened Soviet Union. The 1948 Berlin Airlift hammered this power imbalance home. Not all Soviet leaders maintained Stalin's confidence in the future.

Revisionism an ever-present danger

Following Stalin's death in 1953, Khrushchev - in the face of strong opposition by leaders such as Molotov and Kaganovich - together with his revisionist followers in the Party, used

the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to rewrite essential teachings of Marxism, introducing economic and political policies that refuted the continuing class struggle under socialism on the one hand, and on the other, created and favoured a new privileged social and political elite, and sought cooperation with, rather than defeat of, imperialism.

Erroneous theories such as the "state of the whole people", the "party of the whole people" and the "disappearance" of the dictatorship of the proletariat facilitated the anti-socialist activities of managers now given responsibility for pursuing profit at all costs including the reduction of wage costs by putting workers on the scrap heap.

It enabled party and government leaders to make decisions about the allocation of socially- and increasingly, privately-appropriated surplus value that took away the leading role of the working class and vested it in a new bourgeoisie.

As the power and influence of this group grew it quite deliberately sought the restoration of capitalism in the USSR. State-owned means of production were transferred, either overtly or covertly, to private hands and those that remained state-owned functioned as components of state monopoly capitalism.

With such a high level of centralisation and monopoly in the formation of private and state-monopoly capital under Khrushchev, the drive for capital accumulation inevitably took on an imperialist perspective, in the first place through the unequal economic and political relations embedded in COMECON (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) and the East European "people's democracies".

The imperialism of the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and his heirs, carried out by a party and nation still cloaked in the garb of Marxism-Leninism, was correctly characterised through a revival of Lenin's term "social-imperialism". The post-Stalin Soviet Union, unfortunately and regrettably, was indeed socialist in words, but imperialist in deeds.

The logical conclusion of Khrushchev's revisionism was the formal dismantling of the great Soviet Union by Gorbachev in 1991, and its degeneration into a land of corrupt and gangsterish rulers and an increasingly impoverished populace.

The rejection of revisionism by the people of former Soviet Union is expressed in the continuing public support for Lenin and Stalin and longings for the socialist country before dismantling of socialism starting with the Khrushchev era.

In contrast, there's been no sign of support for Khrushchev and his successors.

Editorial

Build the Party, Build the movement!

In celebrating the 1917 October Revolution, the CPA (M-L) affirms the strategic political line of socialist revolution in stages, the current stage being anti-imperialist struggle to free Australia from the economic, political and military domination of US imperialism in particular.

In this struggle, we promote and encourage working class leadership to ensure that revolutionary change continues through to socialism.

In building our Party and in our political work, we strive to meet the standards set out by V. I. Lenin when he summed up the Bolshevik victory in his 1920 work, *Left-wing Communism – an infantile disorder*. Our circumstances are vastly different, but the hard-won lessons of Lenin's time have provided us with some important guiding principles.

"Only the history of Bolshevism during the entire period of its existence can satisfactorily explain why it has been able to build up and maintain, under most difficult conditions, the iron discipline needed for the victory of the proletariat.

"The first questions to arise are: how is the discipline of the proletariat's revolutionary party maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced?

"First, by the class-consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its tenacity, self-sacrifice and heroism.

"Second, by its ability to link up, maintain the closest contact, and - if you wish - merge, in certain measure, with the broadest masses of the working people - primarily with the proletariat, but also with the non-proletarian masses of working people.

"Third, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard, by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided the broad masses have seen, from their own experience, that they are correct.

"Without these conditions, discipline in a revolutionary party really capable of being the party of the advanced class, whose mission it is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and transform the whole of society, cannot be achieved.

"Without these conditions, all attempts to establish discipline inevitably fall flat and end up in phrase-mongering and clowning. On the other hand, these conditions cannot emerge at once. They are created only by prolonged effort and hard-won experience.

"Their creation is facilitated by a correct revolutionary theory, which, in its turn, is not a dogma, but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement."

Nor has revisionism disappeared. The Chinese Communist Party invented the "Theory of the Three Represents" to facilitate its transformation from a party of the proletariat to a party of new capitalist elements. According to the Chinese Communist Party its priority is to build "harmony" between classes.

Mao Zedong had taught that contradiction resides in all things, that class contradictions and class struggle would exist throughout the entire socialist era, and that ideological struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology would be required "for a fairly long period of time".

History proves that in all Communist Parties existing in class societies, capitalist or socialist, revisionism is an ever-present danger, and class struggle doesn't cease.

In the circumstances of a party such as our own, a small party in a developed country, perseverance in building a revolutionary movement will always be

under an immense pressure of bourgeois influence, ideas of class reconciliation, lack of scientific confidence based on dialectical materialism, and hence of revisionism. Nevertheless, we must persevere with the organisational, political and ideological principles drawn from scientific socialism, from Marxism-Leninism.

Is the cup half empty, or is the cup half full? Are we inspired by October 1917, or gutted by December 1991? Times are tough and the Australian people are yet to build leadership or mass organisations capable of overthrowing capitalism. Yet, under the most difficult circumstances imaginable, the Soviet people managed to do just that. There can only be one answer: the cup is neither half full nor half empty: it is overflowing with lessons to integrate into Australian reality.

Lenin's victory over revisionism, and the creation of the first workers' state in history, continue to inspire us.

On-going Lessons from the October Revolution

by Josh S.

The 1917 Russian revolution, though occurring a century ago, still provides salutary lessons about many current issues including:

- the futility of terrorism.
- the nature of revolutionary resistance to state violence.
- the struggle for power and control of space.
- the need for leadership by a revolutionary party organisation.

The futility of terrorism

During the latter decades of the nineteenth, and in the early twentieth, centuries, many Russian revolutionaries sought to weaken or overthrow the Tsarist regime by attacks on, or assassinations of, nobles and government officials. However, not only were innocent people killed, but assassinated officials were merely replaced by others similar or worse, the masses were not roused or organised, and the anarchist or Narodnik groups were easily infiltrated by the secret police.

These desperate, idealistic rebels had no understanding of the need to educate, organise and lead the masses, particularly the working class, to overthrow the regime. They believed that heroic actions would create fear and paralysis in the regime and set an example for the passive masses, and this would all somehow lead to the downfall of the regime.

More recent terrorists, whether so-called revolutionaries in, for example, the USA, Europe and South America, or religious fundamentalists, have been variously motivated by:

- the desire to strike symbolic blows against capitalism, governments, and/or the armed forces, or the West, opponents of Islam, Shi'ites, or other supposed apostates;
- the belief that terrorist acts will inspire the masses to join the revolutionary struggle;
- the intention to incite the state to repress the people, who will then rise up against the state;
- the belief that military acts are educative for the population, giving them the confidence to challenge the state.

However, the terrorist actions have served only to:

- isolate the terrorists and enable governments to belittle and vilify opponents, and label all activists under the same umbrella;

- allow governments to get away with increased repression, and curtailment of hard-won civil liberties;

- alienate many in the population who either are unimpressed and remain passive, or who then support, or rally to, the government;

- fail completely to educate, organise and lead the population to take their own action leading to mass revolutionary action.

These terrorist acts, whether indiscriminate or targeted, are not only callously murderous, they have always been and always will be futile and counter-productive – they have never led, and never will lead, to the overthrow of governments or systems.

The nature of revolutionary resistance to state violence

The use of violence in revolutionary struggle must be careful, responsible and calibrated. It must serve the political struggle, and must involve the masses in appropriate, careful ways.

Initially, the people, under the leadership of communists who understand the violent nature of the capitalist state, will take defensive measures to protect themselves against state violence and repression, and/or against violent attacks or repression by criminals, armed gangs etc.

These people's actions may involve overt mass actions, covert organised actions, or actions by types of people's militias on behalf of the people and their struggle. In every case, the actions need to be part of an overall political strategy, and to be carefully planned so that the people are protected as much as possible.

The recent attacks on the Burmese military by the so-called Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, in response to the vicious repression of Rohingyas, seem to be sheer adventurism; they appeared to have no capacity or preparedness to protect the Rohingyas from government reprisals.



In contrast, during the Vietnam war, the Viet Cong were very careful to avoid the association of the population in contested areas with Viet Cong military actions; indeed, the people often posed as government supporters or innocent bystanders, demanding government protection or that the government honour its promises; claiming that youths who had run off into the jungle to avoid being drafted into the South Vietnamese puppet army had been “kidnapped by the Viet Cong”. These tactics were developed by the National Liberation Front and local people working together.

The long period during which the revolutionary forces develop their military strength, experience and knowledge, and the people learn that political and military revolution is required to solve their basic problems, is often called the “strategic defensive”. The government forces are not challenged to major battles in fixed positions. The revolutionary forces gradually build their capacity and organisation, spread their influence over wider areas and gradually tie down the enemy, limit its ability to manoeuvre and attack at will, and force it to adopt a more and more defensive posture in larger and larger formations, and therefore, in fewer and fewer positions.

1917 February Revolution

In Russia in 1917, the February Revolution overthrew Tsarism, and

freed the hands of the bourgeoisie to pursue a slightly more modern, less constrained capitalist system, and to continue to pursue Russia's imperialist objectives in World War I. The February revolution was in fact achieved by the workers of the major cities, the unrest in the countryside, and rebelliousness in the armed forces. The workers, and soldiers and sailors, established representative organisations, called Soviets, through which they attempted to define and pursue their demands, and to exercise political influence.

The Revolution was appropriated by the bourgeoisie, and remnants of the old feudal classes, aided by weak, opportunist organisations, like the Mensheviks and (so-called) Socialist-Revolutionaries, who constantly compromised with, and toadied to, the bourgeoisie. These latter groups held leadership of the Soviets and trade unions. The Bolsheviks waged a relentless struggle during 1917 to convince the workers, soldiers/sailors and peasants that a complete change of social and political system was required, and that the Soviets should take power to achieve the change.

That struggle involved intensive organisation and agitation around key popular demands to win support.

It also involved strong political actions to defend the people and their newly won rights. Soldiers and sailors elected committees which demanded a role in military decision-making. They overthrew the absolute control of the officer class and the death penalty in the armed forces, and resisted vigorously the Provisional Government's attempts to re-introduce it. They expelled, punished and sometimes executed the worst officers. They increasingly refused to obey orders unless these were endorsed by the relevant Soviets. They took their own independent action to protect the revolutionary forces. They increasingly became an independent political and military force as they realised that fundamental changes were required to end Russia's involvement in the War, and to provide land, food and



hope to the Russian masses.

As well as agitation, the Bolsheviks also organised their own members and the working class, particularly in the big factories, into workers militias, independent of the Government. There was intense struggle during 1917 as the workers militias got organised, took arms, trained, and forced employers to pay the wages of workers on militia duty, while the Government tried every effort to circumscribe the independent workers militias and to bring them under government control.

The workers militias enrolled women (for the first time ever Russia), kept peace and order in working class districts, distributed food in an attempt to avert famine, kept factories working as many employers tried to undermine the growing movement by closing factories to starve the working class into submission, regulated industrial disputes between employers and workers, protected meetings, and released political prisoners.

These militias and their actions taught the workers about the need for, and possibility of, completely replacing the old regime with new people's organs, and prepared for the overthrow of the government and its armed forces.

October :The struggle for power

The period between the February and October Revolutions was a period of Dual Power, as the people's organised forces challenged the old system and gradually neutralised its forces, took power in increasing aspects and areas, until by October, the regime was sufficiently weak and isolated, and the few military forces that it could muster were easily and quickly defeated. The Socialist revolution achieved victory and power was formally vested in the Soviets.

The revolutionary military process during 1917 was closely linked to the strategic political process, which itself involved organising and educating the masses, particularly the workers, soldiers and sailors, and to some extent the peasantry, although the latter's actions in attacking landlords, burning manor houses and seizing land were probably less organised and largely spontaneous.

The military defeat of the feudal/capitalist system was the culmination of long-term political struggle and strategy, and went through defensive and stalemate stages before the final offensive in October.

Subsequently, the remnants of armed forces loyal to the bourgeoisie or even Tsarism, combined with the intervention of 14 capitalist countries which were aghast that Russia had both left the War and had a Socialist revolution, mounted a counter-revolution. The ensuing civil war bled Russia dry, but the courage,



determination and inspiration of the Soviet people, of all nationalities, again with strong clear leadership of the Bolshevik Party, enabled the revolution to defeat the counter-revolution, and then commence the construction of socialism.

The need for leadership by a revolutionary party organisation

The difference between the failed terrorist attacks of the nineteenth century and the unsuccessful Revolution of 1905, was due to two key factors:

(1) The overall political and military situation. By 1917, the whole Russian system was collapsing; people were starving, crops were unplanted or unharvested because peasants were sent off to the war, the transport system was in chaos, and soldiers were being slaughtered or dying of cold, hunger and disease at the front. But the tsarist regime and its feudal and capitalist supporters would not, could not, change course because of their subservience to, and reliance on, French and British capital.

(2) The steady construction and maturation of a revolutionary organisation that was capable of seeing what was required and of providing leadership to the people to achieve it.

As soon as the February Revolution occurred, clear differences were apparent among the supposed revolutionary parties. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries could not see, refused to see, that merely overthrowing the Tsar would change little. They compromised and cowered, more afraid of militant uncontrolled masses than of the disastrous situation across the country.

The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, demanded that the revolution continue to a socialist conclusion, that power be taken by the people, in the form of the Soviets.

Bolshevik organisation, discipline

The Bolshevik Party had been steeled in struggle for decades, by the experience of struggle, and repression, jail and execution.

As a tight, experienced organisation, it had the capacity to pool information, perspectives and knowledge from across the whole Russian Empire, across all nationalities, and develop demands and strategies that responded to the political and military situations as they unfolded, and to the masses' needs and consciousness. It modified and refined strategies and tactics as situations changed, and these changes were implemented by the Party membership across the empire.

The leadership carefully analysed the changing situation, the strength of the government and of the revolutionary forces.

In late June, the workers of Petrograd and Moscow and some other industrial centres, were completely fed up with the Provisional Government and were ready for the next revolution. Spontaneous demands for a confrontation with the government and its armed forces broke out, and massive demonstrations were organised.

The Bolshevik leadership realised that, as yet, there was insufficient support for an insurrection across the whole country, that rebelliousness in the armed forces had not matured enough, and that an uprising would be crushed. At the same time, they recognised that the revolutionary consciousness of the workers was the result of Bolshevik agitation, and that the Party still had to supply responsible leadership in this difficult situation.

The Bolsheviks assumed leadership of the (early) July demonstrations which were attacked by the regime, but (doing the most difficult thing for a revolutionary organisation), reined in the spontaneity and adventurousness, and avoided the confrontation that

the government tried to provoke. The movement had to take a step back, the Bolsheviks were hounded by the regime, and a military coup was prepared by the army and government leadership.

Although driven underground, the Bolsheviks kept agitating and organising across the empire, preparing the ground for a successful insurrection when the time was ripe.

The Russian empire covered many nationalities, who had long been oppressed by the great Russian chauvinism of the Tsarist regime. The overthrow of Tsarism created the opportunity for local bourgeois nationalists among most, if not all, nationalities, to agitate for secession from the empire, and the establishment of nationalist bourgeois or (semi-)feudal governments. The Bolsheviks, pooling information from across the empire, and determined to fight for a socialist revolution for all, agitated and organised both against the chauvinist Russian Provisional Government, and also against the opportunist local nationalist leaders, and advocated the maintenance of unity among all nationalities toward a socialist revolution across the whole empire.

After the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries deserted the socialist revolution, and used their leading positions in the Soviets and trade unions to oppose the continuation of the revolution, the Bolsheviks shelved their slogan "All Power to the Soviets" and adopted the strategy of concentrating their efforts on the workers and soldiers committees and the factories, steadily winning mass support which was organised into cells, committees and militia.

The Party had clear strategies for the development of Dual Power, for the organisation of workers militias, and for the preparation for the military insurrection. The Party carefully monitored events and the mass mood and consciousness, and the disposition and weaknesses of the enemy forces. It considered timing – when the enemy would be weak enough, and the people's forces strong and well enough organised, to stage the insurrection.

The Russian revolution would not have happened, could not have happened, without a committed, tightly organised and disciplined Party, to make the ongoing analyses, to develop the strategies, to agitate consistently across the vast empire, to organise the people politically and militarily, and to possess the accumulated pooled wisdom and courage to brave the tsarist and bourgeois repression and know when and how to strike.

Today's advocates of spontaneity, of movementism, of no organisation, of opposition without positive demands, of isolated acts, would do well to learn.

1917, the year of Referendum, Revolt and Revolution

by Max O.

The year 1917 was a momentous turning point of World War One for both Europe and Australia. It was the year when the Australian military casualty rate was the highest, with 22,000 troops killed on the Western Front.

The death, destruction and terrifying conditions that soldiers faced on the Western Front produced desperate opposition to the war amongst the Allied troops. Riots and mutinies occurred amid French, British, Australian and New Zealand soldiers; the most famous being French units who disobeyed orders to attack German positions and inspired by the Russian February Revolution established Soldiers' Councils.

These Soldiers' Councils refused to fight and raised demands for an end to the war. The French High Command viciously suppressed the mutiny, arrested and court-martialled thousands of troops, executed the ring leaders and concealed any news of the rebellion.

Australian troops from the 59th and 1st Battalions in September 1918 who after an extensive period of fighting on the front line had just started R&R, refused to return to the front line after being quickly ordered back. Many of the soldiers had had enough and deserted, with over half of the 1st Battalion combatants gone missing.

War-time recruitment and conscription

With news coming home from the front of the appalling casualties, voluntary enlistment for military service fell away dramatically. Australian recruitment plummeted from 165,912 in 1915 to 28,883 in 1918.

Britain put pressure on the then Australian Labor Prime Minister Hughes to supply more troops to fill the devastated ranks on the Western Front. After narrowly losing the first conscription referendum of 1916, Hughes attempted another referendum in December 1917 and lost again by a larger majority.

Opposition to military conscription came from many sectors of Australian society: pacifists, Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies), Catholic Church, progressive sections of the Labor Party and the Irish Australian community.

Some of the largest protest rallies in Australia's history took place against conscription. Fearing the anti-conscription campaign, the government enacted the Unlawful Associations Act and the War Precautions Act to attack dissidents.

The famous anti-conscription



Anti-conscription rally Melbourne 1916

conspiracy called The Sydney Twelve, was undertaken by Prime Minister Hughes and NSW Labor Premier Hollman to frame-up charges and crush the militant Wobblies. Leaders of the Wobblies in Sydney were charged with bogus claims of arson, felony, treason and forgery then sentenced and goaled until their acquittal and release in 1920.

The conscription issue morphed into class hostility over a range of other crises. By 1917 wages in Australia had been forced down and productivity increased, whilst the cost of living had increased over 30 percent on pre-war prices.

Over 15,000 women, in August 1917, rallied in Melbourne to protest against rising food prices and war profiteering. Demonstrations like these were brutally broken up causing riots to erupt over a number of days.

Volunteer police patrols were organised by the Burghers of Melbourne to implement a ban on public meetings. The city authorities feared that the February Revolution in Russia was just around the corner for Australia.

They were right to be fearful. The February and October Revolution made

a deep impression on the Australian working class at the time.

Hard to believe now but the then Victorian and NSW Labor Party actually passed resolutions praising the Russian workers for overthrowing the Czarist regime and condemning capitalism for igniting the World War.

The 1917 Great Strike

Coalescence of rising prices, falling wages, divisions over the two conscription referendums and the industrial bloodbath of the World War became a catalyst for industrial trouble inside the country. The most famous of these was the 1917 Great Strike that took place in Sydney at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops.

Workers went on strike in August 1917, at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops and Randwick tram sheds to oppose the implementation of time cards which scrutinized the performance of workers. It was a Taylorist time-management system to control and speed-up the workforce to support the 'war effort'.

Initially 6000 rail and tram workers went out in protest against this new card system. Eventually the strike expanded

to other towns and industries and saw 77,000 strike in NSW and 100,000 nationwide.

Whilst The 1917 Great Strike had popular militant support, with frequent massive rallies in Sydney's Domain, it collapsed by September 1917.

The defeat saw 22 unions deregistered and militant workers sacked, blacklisted and discriminated against.

The war-time attacks on workers' living standards and intensified exploitation at the workplace saw an increase in Australian workers' class consciousness. The defeat of workers' industrial strike activity by business and government only increased their class hostility.

Combined with the news of the successful October Revolution in Russia, which sparked revolutionary upsurges in a number of other European countries, it radicalised many workers in Australia, giving them a vision and hope of a new cooperative society, socialism.

Soon after the First World War these events attracted the most advanced workers to revolutionary struggle and convinced them to establish the Communist Party in Australia by 1920.



Railway workers' strike 1917

October 2017 - Time to celebrate workers' struggles

by Ned K.

October 2017 marks the centenary of the historic Russian Revolution of 1917 when workers broke one key link in the imperialist chain which enslaves the workers of the world.

The victory of workers in the Russian Revolution gave Australian workers great hope that a better world was possible when workers take control of the whole society.

It inspired workers in the 1920s and 30s to struggle for better pay and conditions in many developing industries in Australia.

Those experiences extended after WW2 to include an embryonic car industry which was taken over by US imperialist interests led by General Motors, Ford and Chrysler and more recently Japanese imperialist interests, led by Toyota.

As imperialism expanded production of motor cars and car components in factories built in Australia it strengthened and expanded core elements of the industrial working class (proletariat) in Australia.

The very conditions of working life in the large car and car component factories compelled workers to organize in mass organisations to defend and advance their own interests.

The tremendous gains made by workers in the Soviet Union after the 1917 October Revolution inspired thousands of working class leaders and activists in many industries, including the large car industry factories in Australia.

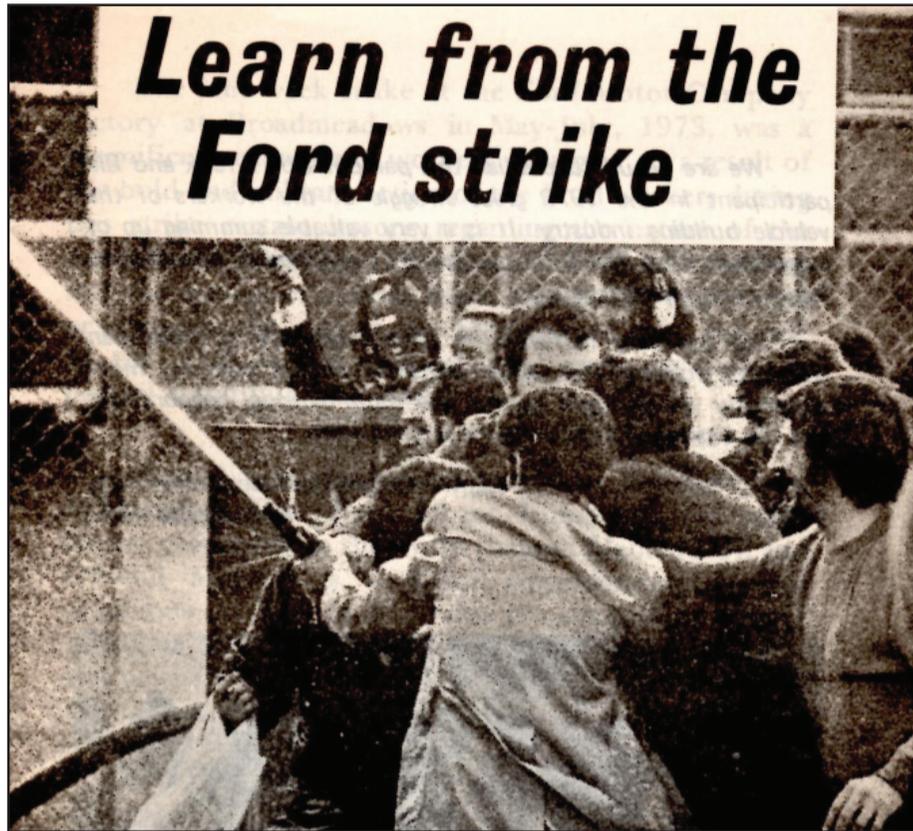
The great 1964 four-week strike by 20,000 General Motors Holden workers for higher wages and better working conditions was led by progressive rank and file workers including Communist Party members and supporters.

In the late 1960s and 1970s the struggle of car industry workers escalated with US-owned Uniroyal car component workers in Adelaide striking for six weeks.

The Ford Broadmeadows strike in 1973 was a highpoint of worker militancy. For nine weeks, a largely migrant workforce battled their US bosses and a subservient union leadership which included prominent revisionists.

The political consciousness of car industry workers was high with their shop floor leaders campaigning for nationalization of the car industry in response to US imperialist car industry barons developing the "world car".

It was car workers' political consciousness and agitation that provided the impetus to Labor Minister Mick Young in the Whitlam Government



Striking Ford workers resisting attack

period calling for "Nationalization Of GMH".

The world car concept was a deliberate strategy by the imperialists to weaken the working classes of individual countries by spreading the design and production of cars and components across multiple countries.

This was the start of US imperialism's assault on the working class internationally by playing one country off against another.

It started closing plants in some countries where the working class was strong, such as Australia, and opening new ones where it estimated there would be less resistance to its profit maximization goals.

This assault on the working class in 'the West' complemented its relentless attempt to divide and conquer the workers of the Soviet Union.

This strategy by car industry multinationals in Australia was accelerated by mass sackings of workers due to overproduction and also automation and use of robotics. In the 1970s and 1980s many progressive workers in the car and car component factories were targeted for redundancy.

This included the very effective Rank and File organisation at Chryslers in Adelaide. Hundreds of workers were sacked in 1977 to ensure that a core group of militants were removed.

US imperialism succeeded in

smashing the Soviet Union, aided by the bureaucrat capitalist roaders within the Soviet Union.

However the car and car component workers in Australia, although diminishing in numbers, continued to struggle together to defend their living standards right in to the 21st Century and up to the present day, sometimes with little or no assistance from the union official leaderships and neo-liberal politicians of both major political parties.

While it is true that the economic imperative of profit maximization of imperialism has led to car and car component factories being moved around the world like pawns on a chess board, it is also true that the only way the imperialist corporations could defeat these car and car component industry workers in Australia was to close the whole industry down and move it to where it hoped to find less organised workers and even more compliant governments.

So in October 2017 when General Motors and Toyota and their component suppliers have closed their production lines in Australia, remember that like the workers of the great October Russian Revolution of 1917, the car and car component workers in Australia provided magnificent leadership and inspiration to the working class of Australia as a whole stretching across three generations.

Their legacy of daring to struggle and daring to win against the show pieces of imperialism in Australia over the last century will continue in the working class communities which nurtured them and which they enriched and continue to do so.

Discarded car industry workers are a valuable asset

For full article see <http://www.cpaml.org/posting1.php?id=539>



GMH workers strike meeting 1964

In October this year the last remaining pieces of the car industry manufacturing mosaic closes in Australia with Toyota and Holden production plants in Melbourne and Adelaide respectively shutting their doors.

The first cut of one thousand, so to speak, came in the 1970s with closure of Holden's Woodville plant in Adelaide, putting thousands out of work. On that site now is a Bunnings store where nearly all the goods for sale are made off-shore.

In 2017 one of the largest car component plants in Adelaide's inner southern suburbs, Toyoda Gosei (formerly Bridgestone, Uniroyal and SA Rubber Mills) is also closing and the property has been purchased by ? Yes, you guessed it! Bunnings!

That pretty well sums up what

has happened to the Australian large city economies with destruction of manufacturing skilled and semi-skilled jobs which were full time with reasonable pay and conditions won by workers' collective strength and their replacement with warehousing and retail jobs selling imported goods of all descriptions.

Workers thrown out of closed down manufacturing plants also take with them a basic experience of collective action and what it can achieve.

They have a valuable role to play in organizing workers in the private sector to see that it is only collective strength that can prevent a downward spiral in wages and conditions, a collective strength that is needed whether workers are in an established union or take effective collection action themselves

Honour and learn from the Great Russian October Socialist Revolution!

Joint statement issued by the
CPA and CPA (M-L)

The Communist Party of Australia and the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist), the names of which enshrine the objective of the revolutionary working class, jointly honour the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 in this, its centenary year.

While acknowledging differences in some aspects of ideology, politics and organisation, we are united in professing the significance of what was undoubtedly the greatest political event for the revolutionary working class movement of the Twentieth Century.

The October socialist revolution was the first successful coming to power of the working class, but not the first attempt to do so. The Parisian workers established the Commune in 1871 but were eventually defeated and slaughtered by the French bourgeoisie.

Marx and Engels, the pioneer analysts of the economic laws of motion of capitalist economy, drew important lessons from the failure of the Paris Commune. One of these was that it had proved impossible to maintain a working class state power through reliance on the old machinery of government, including its political, judicial and coercive (army, police, gaols) institutions.

Lenin and his Bolshevik comrades utilised the economic and political theories of Marxism, and further developed theories on the role of a required vanguard party, on methods of revolutionary struggle, on new political, judicial and coercive institutions, and on the fight against the watering down of Marxism by opportunists and revisionists, to the point where it was appropriate to refer to the whole of these teachings as Marxism-Leninism.

The Great October Socialist Revolution inspired workers and other exploited people around the world. It lit a spark which inspired peoples'



movements for liberation across the world, including in Australia.

Empowered by the revolution and the Communist Party, Soviet workers enjoyed expanded educational opportunities, free basic health care, improved housing, a rich cultural life, and women were supported to enter the workforce on the basis of equal pay for equal work.

All this in a society untouched by the ravages of the Great Depression, a society in which unemployment was abolished.

Inevitably, given the rising strength of US imperialism in particular, and the massive losses suffered by the Soviet Union and its people in World War Two which broke the back of fascism in Europe, there were both gains and losses.

The Revolution led to the foundation of the Communist Party of Australia in 1920, from which both the current CPA and CPA (M-L) derive, and lifted the spirits of workers engaged in many trade union and other struggles. Historic gains were made by these struggles that featured Communist leadership and the influence of its revolutionary ideology.

Poll after poll and public outpourings in recent years testify to a genuine support and longing by the Russian

people for the conditions of the socialist era in the Soviet union.

While this sentiment has yet to develop into a qualitatively different phenomenon – conscious mass revolutionary struggle for a refreshed attempt at building socialism – our two Parties are confident that the peoples of the former socialist Soviet Union will sooner or later embark on that path.

Our two Parties absolutely reject the defeatist view that, with the ending of the first Soviet Union, socialism has failed. The main class contradictions and class struggle between labour and capital, revealed by Marx and Engels, and further enriched by Lenin, have not disappeared, but are sharper than ever.

Class struggle has intensified around the world. The resolution of the antagonistic contradiction within the capitalist relations of production, between social production and private appropriation, can only be resolved through the revolutionary working class and its allies, led by a genuine Communist Party of the working class, replacing the capitalist means of production and its state apparatus, and building a new socialist society that serves the needs and interests of the people and the environment.

The revolutionary change towards

socialism and communism proceeds unevenly, there are both advances and temporary set-backs, but the principal trend is towards communism. This is the dialectical principle and practise of Marxism-Leninism. The Australian revolutionary movement can learn a great deal both from the giant achievements, and some retreats, in the prosecution of revolutionary change.

The revolutionary communists in Australia pay tribute to and honour the legacy of the Great October Socialist Revolution by learning the lessons from the work of the Bolshevik Communist Party and the revolutionary masses in the years leading up to the revolution, and later in building socialism.

The greatest tribute we can pay to the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 is to absorb the lessons from its experiences and struggles and apply them to building a revolutionary mass movement and revolutionary communist party in Australian conditions.

In 2017 in Australia we are witnessing aggressive and increasingly draconian attacks on Australian workers through anti-trade union legislation, the rise of racist and arguably neo-fascist movements like the Hanson and Bernadi Parties, a lowering of ordinary living standards through low or non-existent wage growth, unemployment, under-employment and casualisation, and a housing crisis driven mainly by speculation and tax laws that favour the rich.

There is no doubt that these factors will become more acute in the future.

Our two Parties have absolute confidence that the Australian people will ultimately heed and learn from the example and lessons of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 and build socialism in our country.

Glory to the Great October Socialist Revolution!

Workers of the world, unite!

