SEVENTY YEARS OF WORKERS' POWER

A TRIBUTE BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

SEVENTY YEARS OF WORKERS' POWER

A DAY APART

November 7th is noted, discussed, celebrated and recalled each year almost everywhere in the world, sometimes by governments and whole nations, sometimes only by organisations, groups or sects. It is, in all the calendar of events, perhaps the only truly internationally celebrated anniversary — a day apart from all the others.

Why should this be? What, after all, is so special about the date of a single revolution in a world which has seen and recorded so many? To understand that, it is necessary not just to tell the history of the day — which after all is, as for any anniversary, available from the history books — but to go back to the origins of the revolution, to discover its special meaning for men and women worldwide, then and now.

SOUTH AFRICAN WORKERS HAIL THE REVOLUTION

This booklet aims to do just that. It is dedicated to the peoples of the USSR who made the revolution and pioneered the creation of socialism against enormous odds. Before telling the story of their achievements for the benefit of new generations of South African freedom fighters, we need to remind ourselves of the impact of the Russian Revolution on our country and its people — both oppressors and the oppressed — six thousand miles distant from the centre of the revolution and the rise of Soviet Power.

The International Socialist League (ISL), a forerunner of the Communist Party, closely followed events in Tsarist Russia and correctly interpreted their development. Nowhere was the 1917 Revolution greeted with more jubilation than by the ISL in South Africa. It never hesitated in hailing Lenin's policy as a magnificent advance in the history of mankind and, from the outset, recognised its importance for the fight against racial discrimination and national oppression. The Russian Revolution, commented *The International*, official organ of the ISL in June 1917, 'implied the solidarity of Labour irrespective of race and colour, and extended a welcoming hand to the native working man into the fullest social and economic equality he is capable of attaining with the white working man'. When the revolu-

tion moved to its climax in the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks, *The International* declared that they had given a material form to Karl Marx's vision. *'The Word becomes Flesh in the Council of Workmen'.*

That conviction and consequent commitment never weakened. Militant socialists from the big industrial centres joined hands on 30 July 1921 in the setting up of the Communist Party of South Africa and deciding to seek affiliation to the Communist International. In the decade that followed the communists, who used to be the militant, radical wing of the white Labour Movement, took their place with Africans, Coloureds and Asians in the fight for national liberation. Guided by the Comintern and Lenin's theses of 1920 on the national and colonial question, the CPSA, after much discussion and some defection, adopted in 1928 the famous **Black Republic** policy. It called for a national democratic revolution, the introduction of majority rule and the elimination of race discrimination — now known as apartheid — as a precondition for the building of a socialist order.

A growing section of the African National Congress — prime mover in the struggle for national liberation — endorsed the slogan and established warm relations with the Soviet Union. Their sentiments were expressed by Josiah Tshangane Gumede, soon to be elected President of the ANC. Returning from the Soviet Union in January 1928, he told audiences that the Communists alone *'stood by us and protested when we have been shot down'.* Speaking of his experiences in the USSR, he testified to having seen *'the new world to come, where it has already begun. I have seen the new Jerusalem'.* He claimed to have brought with him a key which, with their help, would unlock the door to freedom. *'Others are persuaded to be communists. The Bantu has been a communist from time immemorial. We are disorganised, that's all'.*

From such beginnings emerged in later years a Congress Alliance, uniting organisations opposed to apartheid and committed to the establishment of People's Power. This Alliance is based on the Freedom Charter, adopted in June 1955 by a Congress of the People. It represents, for us in South Africa, the equivalent of the minimum programme adopted in 1903 by the Second Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party calling for the overthrow of the Tsarist autocracy, the establishment of a democratic republic and the achievement of radical social and economic reforms.

The achievement of this programme will lay the foundations for the creation of conditions for the building of a South Africa which

is both liberated and socially emancipated — a socialist South Africa! This is the dream that inspired the Soviet workers.

A DREAM OF SOCIALISM

There has never been a time when people did not rebel against the difficulties and miseries of everyday life. In every age of which we have record, whether from history, literature and song, or from legend, men and women have dreamt of a new and better world; the record is filled with accounts of their longings, and sometimes too of their actions to bring that better world about. The greater the brutalities and oppressions of the world in which they lived, the more people turned to dreaming, fantasising of a way of life which would redress their sufferings. Such dreams inspired religions, prophets and sects of many kinds who have visions of a new dawn, a new social order.

Through the ages a common thread runs through those dreams and visions. In the new world — so different from the old — in which there would be harmony, brotherhood and mutual aid. In the new world — so the dream almost invariably ran — there would be no more divisions, no more hostilities, between masters giving orders, and servants carrying them out; there would be neither rich, powerful and privileged, nor poor, weak and impoverished. Instead there would be a community of equals, like brothers in a single family, all taking part in the decision-making, all co-operating in carrying out the daily tasks of living, all sharing the distribution of the fruits of their common labour. The old world of private accumulation of wealth which provided plenty and leisure for the rulers, and toil and privation for the ruled, would be replaced in that new world by co-operation in work, and by equality for all people.

That thread of co-operative and early socialist idealising can be traced far back through history.

The trail of socialist vision and dreaming extends back to the very earliest times of English history.

The dream is to be found in the Christian bible, with Christ's followers urged to abandon their worldly goods and follow him, its parables about the obstacles for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and its instructions to 'love thy neighbour as thyself'. And it is found back beyond even that, differing only slightly in form or language, from country to country, and from age to age. The classless, co-operative world of socialism is the most long-lived and persistent of all mankind's social yearnings.

MEMORIES OF A COMMUNAL WAY OF LIFE

Yet for centuries it remained a dream without substance. Only in a few countries — and ours is one of that few — there were surviving memories amongst the very old, kept alive in folklore handed down from generation to generation, which tell of a past akin to the socialist dream. We South Africans are indeed only a few generations from an age when private ownership of land was YET unknown. Land in those days was 'public' — that is, a common good for all the community to use for grazing, hunting or crop-gathering as of right. Land, which was the source of wealth of the whole society could neither be bought nor sold; and because that was so, there existed a society not divided between 'masters' who owned and 'men' who laboured, but a society of co-operators. These folk memories of a recent past not rent by class divisions and class conflicts, fuel today's strong South African demands for a new order based on socialism; they explain, in part, why the belief in a socialist future is so strong here today, despite the official opposition to all socialist ideas and teaching.

Rose-coloured pictures of the past as an era of contentment and harmony would distort the reality. That past was marked also by recurring famines and starvation, sweeping epidemics, pestilence and diseases common to people who live at the mercy of natural forces which they cannot control. It was a period marked also by deep superstitious fears, by witch-craft, cruelties, constant armed clashes and even, at times, by despotic rulers. There should be no desire anywhere to revive the negative aspects of the past.

SOCIALISM LOOKS FORWARD

Socialism indeed, — whatever inspiration it may draw from aspects of the past — looks forward, not back. It looks to change in the real world in which we live, with its real, present-day sores and blemishes. It looks at a world in which all of the sources of society's wealth have passed into the private hands of those who use that wealth only to produce further private wealth for themselves. Alongside this shrinking group of capitalists, it is a world where a vast army of workers, without any share in the wealth-producing resources, depends totally on labour for wages in order to stay alive. In this real world, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. This real world is a world of gross inequality, of deep class division and of new 'modern' miseries which take the place of the outmoded miseries of ages past.

Not surprisingly, then, the dreams of a new socialist order grow stronger as the real nature of this modern class-divided social order is revealed. Capitalism, which provided fertile soil for the rapid growth of a class-divided and class-oppressed world, provides also the soil for the growth and development of the socialist dream.

LIFE UNDER CAPITALISM

Life under capitalism in the 18th and 19th centuries — the centuries of its development — was harsh. For the overwhelming majority in Europe, it was a life of misery, privation and injustice. Millions of peasants and farm labourers who had worked the land for generations were summarily turned off the land to supply labour for the new industrial weaving and spinning plants. Millions of families drifted rootlessly, searching for the means to stay alive; they drifted into sprawling slums and shanty-towns which mushroomed around the few towns, to suffer a life of squalor, without sewerage, clean water supplies, health or sanitary services of any kind, the prey of epidemic diseases bred of dirt and poverty. Work, where it was to be found, drafted men, women and children alike into the mines, factories and railway construction camps of the new machine age, with working days unlimited by any regulation, and without health or safety regulations.

In circumstances such as these the socialist dream grew stronger along with a rising mood of revolt and rebellion against intolerable conditions. Socialism began to draw together the dream of the future, and the movement of revolt and rebellion against the old order.

Revolt requires organisation, and the banding together of like-minded people to effect it. Socialist societies, dedicated to making a socialist future through revolt, began to spring up everywhere — first amongst the masses in the industrial towns of capitalism; later spreading outwards to the countryside and even to colonies far removed from the centres of capitalist development.

THE AGE OF REVOLT

Nineteenth century Europe was a continent seething with revolt. On to the surviving divisions and conflicts of the feudal system, capitalism was adding its own diversions and conflicts. A new underclass of urban proletarians was growing up in the slums of industrial cities in conditions of misery, without social or political rights. Throughout the first half of the century, in one country of Europe after another, that proletariat rose in protest against the conditions of their lives; protests grew in size and in anger, combined with the protests of the oppressed rural peoples, and finally burst into revolt.

Whatever the immediate grievances which set these revolts into motion the long-term aim of the proletarian revolutionaries was the destruction of the whole existing capitalist-cum-feudal order, and the building of a socialist society.

For their examples of how such revolutionary changes might be made, they looked back to the great revolutionary overthrow of the feudal state by the French Revolution of 1789; but they also looked forward to the overthrow of the capitalist system which that revolution had enthroned in the bourgeois republic.

In 1830 and again in 1848, waves of revolt and revolutionary uprisings swept the continent.

'When the February (1848) revolution broke out,' Friedrich Engels wrote, 'all of us were under the spell of previous historical experience, particularly that of France. It was therefore natural and unavoidable that our conceptions of 'social' revolution proclaimed in Paris in February 1848 should be strongly coloured by memories of the prototypes of 1789 and 1830. Moreover, when the Paris uprising found its echo in the victorious insurrections in Vienna, Milan and Berlin; when the whole of Europe right up to the Russian frontier was swept into the movement; when thereupon the first great battle for power between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was fought; when the very victory of its class so shook the bourgeoisie of all countries that it fled back into the arms of the monarchist-feudal reaction which had just been overthrown — there could be no doubt for us ... that the great decisive combat had commenced, that it would have to be fought out in a single long and troubled period, but that it could only end in final victory of the proletariat'.

(Preface to Karl Marx: *The Civil War in France.*)

Engels's belief was spreading to many countries. It influenced the development of the organisations of the working people — trade unions and socialist societies alike.

Everywhere in Europe, in that age of rebellion and revolt, working peoples' organisations were spreading. From their beginnings, they plunged into frontal struggle against the new capitalist order which was bringing acute misery along with industrialisation. Better working class conditions were not conceivable without working class struggle; struggle was not possible without class organisation, and class policy. Dreams of the social order of the future were giving way to clear theories of revolution.

The questions about socialism — 'How would it be realised? When? By whom? — changed from the subject of Utopian theorising to vital issues of practical working-class politics.

THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

In the early years of the century, an international association had been established, representing the main socialist societies of Western Europe. At a secret congress held in London late in 1847, it asked the two most prominent thinkers and writers from its German section, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, to prepare '... a detailed theoretical and practical programme for the international body, the Communist League.' From the brilliant pens and minds of these two men came a document which was to change the world for ever — the Communist Manifesto. Here for the first time was a passionate clear exposition of the case against capitalism and for the socialist revolution. It finally transformed the socialist future from dream to practical political programme.

'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles' the *Manifesto* begins.

'... Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses however this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat ... In proportion as the bourgeoisie, ie. capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed — a class of labourers who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital.

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie ... Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product ... The proletarian movement is the

self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up without the whole super-incumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.'

Here then is the Marxist answer to the age-old question: Who can lead the way to socialism?

Answer: the proletariat 'springing all other strata into the air' — in revolution.

These first sections of the Manifesto provided an explanation and justification of the separate organisation of the working class, its role as the leader of the march to socialism; and the programme of the Communist League itself.

'In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole?' asks the second chapter of the *Manifesto*. *'The Communists do not form a party opposed to the other working class parties. They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all the other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat ... The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.*

Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win! Working men of all countries, Unite!'

The *Communist Manifesto* became the clarion-call from the Communists to the proletarians of the world — a clarion call to unite and break the chains of capitalist slavery which bound them. It marked the end of the period when socialism remained only an ideal — a dream of the future and the beginning of the age of direct class action to construct it.

The *Manifesto's* clarion call reached the European socialist movement just as the great revolutionary wave of 1848 passed its peak; the revolutionaries were being beaten back by the superior force, a savage ruling-class counter revolution.

THE PARIS COMMUNE.

And burst it did! In 1871, working-class Paris — once again Paris — rose in revolt against its rulers, seized political power and proclaimed

the first working peoples' republic — the Paris Commune. In the period leading up to that dramatic revolt, the French government had fought — and lost — a war with Germany. The German army stood at the gates of the city, poised to overrun it. In these circumstances — rising in their own defence — the workers seized power from the feeble hands of government and took it to themselves. Paris would remain free, whatever armies were thrown against it!

The Paris Commune was intended to be the first — the model — for a network of communes to spread right across France, from which working people would exercise not just city power, but national power. For the moment, the workers ruled only in Paris. They rapidly created a new social order, and, in the words of the Central Committee of the Socialist International, 'rendered themselves masters of their own destinies by seizing upon the governmental power.'

It was the most electrifying class action the world had ever known. It not just shook the foundations of France, but sent tremors through all the countries of Europe.

The Paris Commune marked the most advanced forward post reached by the proletariat in any of the revolutionary upheavals of the late nineteenth century. The 'crumbling into dust' of the bourgeois society which Marx had foreseen in those events however, was not to be a short process. Strengthened by the Manifesto and subsequent treatises from Marx, Engels and others, and by the experience of the Commune, the socialist movement continued to grow, even though the revolutionary movement was forced into retreat before European militarism and oppression.

RUSSIA — THE NEW CENTRE OF REVOUTION

As the revolutionary wave retreated in the proletarian centres of France and Germany it was rising anew in Russia. The storm centre of socialist revolution and of new developments in socialist revolutionary theory shifted decisively to Russia and above all to its capital city of Petrograd (now Leningrad).

In Russia, all the contradictions of the age combined most critically. Peasant revolts had compelled the Tsars to abolish serfdom and end the buying and selling of the rural serfs only in 1861. The abolition of serfdom, however, was no emancipation. Instead it robbed the peasants of much of the land they had occupied and handed it over to the landlords; it forced the remaining peasants to pay so dearly for the land left to them that half a century later most were still paying off the landlords for the so-called 'emancipation'. Constant

peasant revolts continued and were suppressed with brutality. Landlords and the new rural capitalists — the so-called 'Kulaks' — bled the peasants white. In the towns, capitalist industry, developing later than in most of Europe, and with large-scale factories, operated without any labour laws or protection. Most of the workers lived in factory barracks not unlike South African mine compounds, forced to buy food and necessities from company stores at company prices. Four out of five of the population were illiterate, and what little education there was beyond the most elementary was closed entirely to the working class and peasant children. Within the vast backward empire built by Tsarism, rights, such as they were, were reserved for ethnic Russians — just over half the total population. For the remainder, the subject peoples, there was autocratic and brutal rule by arbitrary 'administrators' of the Tsar. Russia was best described as 'a prison of the peoples', in which the authorities ruled by the whip and the gallows, while inciting the racial passions of the 'subject' races against each other in a blatant exercise of 'divide and rule'.

'Capitalist Russia was succeeding serf-owning Russia' wrote Lenin, the greatest disciple of Marx and the *Manifesto.* 'A new generation of peasants, who had engaged in seasonal work, lived in the cities and learnt a thing or two from their bitter experience as migratory wage workers ... the number of workers was growing steadily in the big cities, and in the factories and mills. Associations of workers gradually began to be formed for joint struggle against the capitalists and the government. By conducting this struggle the Russian working class was helping millions of peasants to stand up and straighten their backs and discard the habits of bonded slaves.' How reminiscent it all sounds of South Africa.

Yet so different. In Russia, the capitalist class was too servile to overthrow the Tsarist autocracy. The backward institutions of feudal barbarism produced a rebellious and sullen peasantry, and an even more rebellious and politically conscious urban proletariat. In the late nineteenth century and into the 20th, as the wave of revolution declined in Western Europe, it rose afresh in Russia. By the turn of the century, it was apparent that revolution in Russia was maturing, and would burst at any time.

THE 1905 REVOLUTION — SOVIETS EMERGE

It was the age of imperialism — of sharp conflict between the great capitalist powers, as they strove to grab the earth's resources for themselves by colonial conquest and super-exploitation of the

colonised peoples. In one of the first of such conflicts, in 1905, Russia and Japan confronted each other in war over the right to occupy and exploit undeveloped areas of the Far East, including Korea and Manchuria.

The Tsarist forces, incompetently and corruptly organised, stumbled from defeat to defeat. The war was unpopular in Russia from the very outset. The defeat fostered revolutionary protest from all the democratic forces, who realised that the Russian army had been defeated because of the rottenness of the entire autocratic regime.

'Defeat ... greatly undermined the prestige of the tsarist government ... The war was the last drop that filled the people's cup of patience to overflowing. A profound revolutionary crisis matured in the country.' *(History of the CPSU, 1960)*

The working people of Russia took to the streets! From city to city there were general strikes, demonstrations and clashes with armed forces of the Tsar; the revolutionary turmoil spread to the ranks of the army and to the peasants. In that rising tide of revolution, Councils of Workers and of Soldiers' Deputies sprang up everywhere, created spontaneously by the working class to organise the revolt — the first Soviets were born in the model of the Paris Commune.

'Formed originally to direct economic and political strikes and as representatives of workers, the Soviets became organs for preparing insurrection; they were the embryo of a new public authority. In defiance of all the institutions of the tsarist government, they introduced their own decrees, orders and instructions, and introduced on their own authority the 8-hour working day, and democratic liberties.'*(History of the CPSU).*

Once again, as in the Paris Commune, the working class in revolt established its own direct, popular organs of government; but once again, not strongly enough yet to hold that power against the superior armed forces of the old order. But the uprising struck fear into the tsarist ranks, and forced promises of concessions: of freedom of speech and assembly, and of a Parliament — a State Duma — with legislative powers. Through the combination of such promises and the mailed fist, the ruling class managed to turn back the revolutionary tide, suppress the armed revolutionaries and extract a terrible vengeance on those who dared to challenge their rule. The revolution ended — as did the Paris Commune — in defeat. But the 1905 revolution provided lessons and understandings which Russian revolutionaries would carry forward into the next round of their unquenchable struggle for a new social order.

'The events of 1905,' Lenin wrote, 'proved beyond doubt ... that freedom cannot be won without the greatest sacrifice, that the armed resistance of tsarism must be broken and crushed with the armed hand.'

It was a lesson that the Russian people — and above all the Communists — would carry into the next phase of the revolution. All the festering sores of tsarist society which had given rise to revolution remained basically unchanged. Revolution would unquestionably rise again until the social system was finally transformed.

WAR AGAINST WAR

As the war and revolution of 1905 ended, throughout Europe the armies of the main imperial powers were being gathered for another struggle over the redistribution of the world's resources. Alliances between great powers were being made and secret treaties drawn up in preparation for war. Many minor wars of conquest of colonial people marked the maturing of the age of empire building. National chauvinism and racism with concepts of 'lesser' breeds of nations and jingo patriotism were rife in all the imperialist countries. Jingoism seeped down into the ranks of the working people, even corroding the internationalism of the socialist organisations and corrupting their principles.

IMPERIALIST WAR OF 1914

The Socialist International, in repeated conferences, warned of the danger of impending imperialist war. It declared that the workers of every country had nothing to gain from their country's victory in such a war. All the burdens of war would fall on the shoulders of the working people on both sides of the conflict. Conference resolutions declared that the duty of all socialist organisations was to oppose every preparation for war; and if war none-the-less broke out, to turn the war against their own governments, and seek revolutionary transfer of power to the working class.

But the jingoism and racism of social democracy had eaten too deeply into their ranks. When their worst fears and predictions were realised, and war broke out on a continental scale in Europe in 1914, socialist internationalism had been deeply corrupted by national chauvinism. Workers, socialists, even revolutionaries of long standing in almost every country of Europe betrayed the decisions to struggle against the war. Almost everywhere the parties of the Second International went over to the support of 'their own' ruling class

and its war aims. Only in France and Russia with their fresh memories of revolution did the socialist majority stand by its decisions to make revolutionary war against war.

In South Africa, far from the centre of the revolutionary tide, socialist organisations under the umbrella of the Second International, and their main component the SA Labour Party, had long been infected with white racism. In the chauvinistic atmosphere of war, they shelved their socialism 'for the duration' and threw themselves fully into support of the British imperialist war effort. Here, as in most warring countries, only a minority stood by their internationalist undertakings, and opposed the imperialist war. This minority formed the War-on-War League, upholding socialist revolutionary internationalism and creating a base from which, eventually, a South African Communist Party would be built.

The Russian socialist movement proved itself the most thoroughly revolutionary detachment of the whole International. There, despite some minority differences and confusions, the main socialist movement — the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, now calling themselves the Communist Party — followed the internationalist line. It worked to turn the war against Germany into a war against the Tsarist ruling class.

WAR ON WAR

GAZETTE.

...the War on War League (South Africa.)

...Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper.

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Answers to Correspondence

...With reference to the letter in Central Hansard and the Supreme Council, published in last week's Gazette, with the following reply to the latter, did have to my honour, how to be best answered.

Supreme Council's Office,
Pretoria, 19th December, 1914.

I am directed by the Supreme Council to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th inst. and to say that the Supreme Council is not interested in the objects of your League of this country.

P.O. Box 1176,
Johannesburg.

working class, and on the destruction and consequent impoverishment of many small capitalists. For the sake of the 'country' the workers were asked to work longer hours and take less pay, to pay higher prices for necessities, and to sacrifice their sons and husbands to the war machine. In order to enable their masters especially on the munitions trades, to make as the dividends as they desired. Such was the ship-building trade at Port Glasgow, my old home, where the workers, I agree with their employers Chronicle in the war, while the employers 'make war pay for itself'. Not to strike! Why of course they ought to strike now is the very time to strike, if workers have anything to gain by striking. Always let your enemy when he is weak. But they won't, we know they won't. Their loyalty is (as one newspaper) for that. To try and organise a strike on the Rand to-day for anything would be as silly as suicide, although we know that the Chamber of Mines on its part is, before our eyes, taking advantage of the war and the enemies to the west to replace white men by black at the drilling." And we should further have found that all this was very good reason.

Supreme Council's Office,

Sir, Pretoria, P.O. Box 1176, Johannesburg.

Dear Gentlemen, I acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 4th inst. and regret very much that I am unable to say that the Supreme Council is interested in the objects of your League of this country.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
[illegible]

The world war began in 1914, dragging on through the following years, widening the circle of destruction, and constantly drawing new countries into the conflict. On both sides of the battle front the number of dead mounted relentlessly, until the figures stood at millions. Thousands of young men, sometimes tens of thousands, died in a single day's battle along a small stretch of the front for a negligible gain of territory. Food supplies ran short everywhere as ships were sunk and railways and roads destroyed.

By 1917 and the third winter of war, misery and hunger stalked the streets of all the combatant nations; there was war weariness and rising popular discontent everywhere. The old social order was going down to its own destruction in a welter of blood.

In Russia, all the worst effects of the war were intensified by the continuing corruption, incompetence and cruelty of its ruling class. At the front, a conscripted peasant army dragged itself ingloriously from defeat to defeat, incompetently led by aristocratic officers, badly supplied by corrupt officials, starving and near to exhaustion.

THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

It was a country on the edge of collapse. The demand for an end to the war and the overthrow of the ruling classes rose to new heights. Revolt burst through all the brutal repression. Strikes racked the towns, paralysed transport and industry; in the countryside, revolting peasants sacked the landlords' storehouses and pillaged their estates. At the front, the army began to dissolve, soldiers simply 'voted with their feet' and returned home; whole units mutinied and refused any longer to accept orders from the old commanders.

Once again, as in 1905, Tsarist rule was being directly challenged and rejected by a revolutionary population. The working class was once again setting up its own, directly elected soviets, which emerged everywhere as the organs of authority of workers and soldiers; but this time with a difference.

In February 1917, first in Petrograd, then in other cities across the country, there were armed uprisings. To try once again to prevent the total collapse of the regime in face of revolution, the political parties of the bourgeoisie set up a Provisional Government to take the affairs of state out of the hands of the Tsar, establish their own power, and put down the workers' revolution. The wall of Tsarist power had been breached and the conditions for its revolutionary removal had been prepared by the working people.

'The workers of Petrograd, like the workers of the whole of Russia,

self-sacrificingly fought the Tsarist monarchy,' wrote Lenin, 'fought for freedom, land for the peasants, and for peace, against the imperialist slaughter. To continue and intensify that slaughter, Anglo-French imperialist capital hatched Court intrigues, conspired with the officers of the Guards ... and fixed up a completely new government, which in fact did seize power immediately the proletarian struggle had struck the first blows at Tsarism'. *(Letters from Afar)*

That new government, headed by Kerensky, set out at once to restore the 'law and order' of the ruling class. It restored the state power as it had been before the revolution, reinstating administrators, police chiefs and officials of the old regime who had been turned out of office by the revolution. In direct opposition to the demand for peace, which had brought Tsarism to its knees, it sought to intensify the war by more efficient mobilisation and allocation of support and materials.

Once more Russia's ruling class sought that victory over Germany which the Tsarist state had proved too feeble to accomplish.

It was a new government, headed by a new class, but practising an old policy. There is nothing new in this experience. Kings, dynasties and governments have often been tumbled, only to be replaced by pale shadows — or monstrous caricatures — of themselves.

Whatever similarities there might seem to be between the Kerensky period and other revolutionary experiences, the events of 1917 in Russia remind us that history does not simply repeat the past. The Russian revolution for all its echoes of past history and past revolutions, proved to be an event apart, pioneering a new passage of history.

Two new factors proved decisive to the fate of the Russian revolution: first the existence everywhere of Soviets; and next the profound influence of the Bolshevik Party amongst the masses and in the Soviets.

A PARTY OF A NEW TYPE

The Bolshevik Party had been founded in conditions of illegality and persecution. In the fervid atmosphere of the decaying feudal order, it had been embroiled from the beginning in fierce class confrontations: industrial strikes fought without legal 'rights' or safeguards, against a brutal police and a militaristic regime; peasant revolts against brutal landowners backed by a backward-looking Cossack mercenary force; and the very heart of the searching debate about the nature of society, the state, the future, and the process of revolution.

In such experiences the Party had developed a comprehensive theory of revolution out of the experience of revolutionary struggle in Russia and elsewhere. Its ideology answered many of the problems thrown up in real political battles in an era of growing revolutionary crisis. For this reason, the fierce polemics, the profound analyses and theses of these Russian Bolsheviks became the leading theoretical texts, not just for the Russian revolution, but for the revolutionaries world-wide — and remain so to this day.

In 1908 at a secret Second Congress of the illegal Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, the Party split irreconcilably on a matter of the Party rules and constitution. The Leninists proposed that membership of the Party should be open only to those who took part in active political work under the direction of a leading Party committee. There would be no place for sympathisers or fellow-travelling supporters. The Party would be truly 'a party of a new type, designed

for and dedicated to the socialist revolution.

The split between the majority 'Bolsheviks' and the minority 'Mensheviks' goes to the very core of the concept of what a proletarian revolutionary party should be. The Bolshevik concept was clear. The Party would **not** be that type of socialist party which had grown up in many European countries where parliamentary democracy and civil rights were well established. It would **not** be a broad alliance of all those who could be persuaded to accept a common programme and would seek majority representation in parliament, thus forming a government under the existing constitution. It **would** be instead a party for revolution — a party to bring about the overthrow of the existing order and its constitution, and establish a new socialist order, based on a new system of laws and a new constitution.

To carry out its aims, Lenin and the Bolsheviks argued, the Party must demand the highest standards of unity and discipline amongst its members. It must be composed only of those who are totally dedicated to the socialist revolution, and who would abide by all Party decisions reached through democratic majority decision. Only such a party, the Bolsheviks reasoned, would be able to pursue its socialist programme without falling prey to the lures of popularity or expediency. Only such a party would be able to lead the whole of the working class to socialism.

It was on this basis that the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin built the Communist Party. The Bolsheviks of 1917 were members of this new type of Party, men and women steeled in the forefront of the workers' struggles everywhere — in the revolution of 1905, and in all the strikes, army mutinies and peasant uprisings which had led up to the February revolution of 1917. After the formation of the Provisional Government in 1917, they — and the Soviets — moved to the centre stage of the Russian revolution.

THE CALL TO ARMS

In the face of popular demands for peace, bread and land, the Kerensky government sought to reverse the revolutionary tide and to turn the country back towards the war. To do so, it attempted to reinstate pre-revolutionary 'law and order' through parliament as a counter to the Soviets and the revolutionaries. Yet, the Soviets persisted, spreading across the country, taking up positions ever more challenging to the old order and its Kerenskyite rescuers.

Regardless of the Kerensky government — and in direct challenge to it — the Soviets issued their own orders to the population and

carried them into effect with their own militia of armed citizens, regardless of the administrators and officials of the government. A dual authority existed in the state, with neither at first able to suppress the other, neither in total control.

DUAL POWER

'The government,' wrote Lenin 'are representatives of the new class that has arisen to political power in Russia, the class of capitalist landlords and bourgeoisie which has long been **ruling** our country economically ... Side by side with this government ... there has arisen the chief, unofficial, as yet undeveloped and comparatively weak **workers' government,** which expressed the interests of the proletariat and of the entire poor section of the urban and rural population. This is the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, an organisation of the workers, and embryo of a workers' government, the representative of the interests of the entire mass of the **poor** section of the population, ie. nine-tenths of the population, which is striving for **peace, bread and freedom**.' *(Letter from Afar.)*

Within the Soviets everyone realised that the situation of two authorities within one state could not continue; one or other would have to give way. But which? Should the Soviets cede all power to the Provisional government? Or should the Provisional Government, which could not claim majority public support, cede authority to the Soviets who had been created by those mass popular actions which had ended forever the 'legal' rights of Tsarism. This argument was the consistent position of the Bolsheviks in public debate everywhere as they demanded 'All Power to the Soviets'.

When the debate opened in February, the majority of the Soviets were for a negotiated compromise with the government, and a continuation of traditional working class respect for the parliamentary process, for 'law and order'. The Bolsheviks took the alternative view. The bourgeois state institutions represented the power and rule of the bourgeoisie, its 'dictatorship'; the bourgeois state should not be taken over, but overthrown; the workers should build their own state on the foundations of the Soviets, to exercise their own class power — their own 'dictatorship'.

'... the first step in the revolution by the working class' Marx had written in the Manifesto seventy years before, 'is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class, to win the battle for democracy ... Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another.'

The Bolsheviks, using their experiences from 1905, argued fiercely for the abolition of the Provisional government, and the passing of all power to the Soviets. The working class, they argued, should not permit the bourgeoisie to consolidate their power by entrenching the Provisional Government, but should seize the opportunity of the bourgeoisie's weakness to overthrow that government through armed uprising as soon as the majority of the working class was ready to do so.

Lenin, as always, was single-minded in his advocacy of an uprising, campaigning fiercely for the Bolshevik view, in the full belief that: 'In the Soviets', as he wrote to the Party Central Committee, 'we have in Russia a state of the type of the Paris Commune'.

How then should the Bolsheviks resolve the matter of dual power, and the future of the Provisional Government?

'My answer is,' wrote Lenin, 'it should be overthrown, for it is an oligarchic, bourgeois, and not a people's government, and is unable to provide peace, bread, or full freedom'.

The Bolsheviks, following Lenin's line, threw themselves vigorously into the battle to 'clear the proletarian minds of illusions' about the Provisional Government. As the debate raged within the Soviets, the tide began to turn decisively towards the Bolsheviks and their battle-call: 'All Power to the Soviets!'

For the first time in its history, the Party was operating legally and in the open, publishing its views everywhere through a legally circulated press. Its members were building trade unions in the industrial plants, and making propaganda amongst the soldiers in the army camps. Peasants were being urged to fix their own rents for land, and to take over uncultivated land from the landlords. Finally, the crucial Petrograd Soviet opted for a Bolshevik majority!

Kerensky fought back. In a desperate attempt to stem Soviet power, his government withdrew some of his still loyal troops from the front for a campaign of repression especially in the storm centre — Petrograd. They carried out mass searches through working-class districts, disarmed the workers, wrecked working-class printing presses and banned newspapers like the communist *Pravda*. Revolutionaries were arrested; Lenin and many others went into hiding as charges of treason were levelled against them.

As winter drew on, the Soviets prepared for a national Congress of Soviets to be held in Petrograd, with representatives of the Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Soviets from every corner of the country to debate their own future relationship with the Provisional

Government. At the same time, while the working class waited on the Congress of Soviets, military conspiracies were being hatched between Kerensky and General Kornilov to stage a military putsch, with the connivance of all the warring powers, and bringing whatever armies they could muster into direct attack on the Petrograd Soviet.

'With all my might, I urge comrades to realise that everything now hangs by a thread; that we are confronted by problems which are not to be solved by conferences or congress (even congresses of Soviets) but exclusively by people, by the masses, by the struggle of the armed people,' Lenin wrote from his underground hiding place to the members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on November 6th.

'The bourgeois onslaught ... shows that we must not wait. We must at all costs, this very evening, this very night, arrest the government having first disarmed the officer cadets (defeating them if they resist) and so on.

We must not wait! We may lose everything!

The value of the immediate seizure of power will be the defence of the people (not of the Congress, but of the people, the army and the peasants in the first place) from the Kornilovite government ...

History will not forgive revolutionaries for procrastinating when they could be victorious today (and they certainly will be victorious today) — while they risk losing much tomorrow.

The government is tottering. It must be given the deathblow at all costs.

To delay is fatal!'

GLORIOUS NOVEMBER 7TH

The Party Central Committee agreed. On the following day, November 7th, in a planned uprising in Petrograd, armed peoples' units under the direction of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Party, stormed and seized the command centres of the government, declared the old regime ended and the Government dissolved. All power in the country had passed to the Soviets.

'The Provisional Government has been deposed,' read the proclamation to the nation on the same day.'State power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies — the Revolutionary Military Committee which heads the Petrograd proletariat and the garrison.

The cause for which the people have fought, namely the immediate offer of a democratic peace, the abolition of landed proprietorship,

workers' control over production, and the establishment of Soviet power — this cause has been secured.
Long live the revolution of workers, soldiers and peasants!'
These words signalled the end of one era of Russian history, and the opening of another.

CONSTRUCTING THE SOCIALIST ORDER

Thus, in barest outline, began the days that shook the world — the days in which, for the first time in human history, men and women began to construct a socialist country. For the world's socialists, November 7th was thus the day of the breakthrough for which so many in every country have campaigned, fought, been persecuted and died.

It was for them all the dawning of a new age of mankind. The new age of socialist construction had begun! Not yet, as they had almost certainly all anticipated, on a world scale, in all countries at once, but in one country alone — in that vast sprawling empire that bridges Europe and Asia and covers one sixth of the Earth. But it had begun!

The exhilaration and wonder which swept socialists everywhere throughout the world at this epoch-making event is hard to recapture today, seventy years after the event. But everywhere there was excitement, anticipation and the dawning of a new age — the kind of excitement which had moved Wordsworth to greet the French Revolution of 1789:

'Bliss it was in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven'.

THE NEW ERA

In Russia, hard on the proclamation of Soviet power, the long-awaited Second All Russian Congress of Soviets finally assembled in Petrograd. The debates were heated, but serious. The delegates had come from all over Russia not just to talk, or to debate, but — in the manner of Soviets — to take decisions and to carry them into effect. To rule.

Lenin, recognised everywhere as the inspiration and leader of the revolutionary deposition of the old government, finally took the stand. This was a Congress of a new state such as the world had never seen, under a new type of leadership.

'Lenin — great Lenin, took the speakers' rostrum at last. A short, stocky figure, with a big head set down on his shoulders, bald and bulging' is how the American reporter and socialist, John Reed, *

described the scene. 'Gripping the edge of the reading stand, letting his little winking eyes travel over the crowd he stood there waiting, apparently oblivous to the long-rolling ovation which lasted several minutes. When it finished he said simply: "We shall now proceed to construct the Socialist order". Again that overwhelming roar.

The workers of Russia, under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, stepped off into the unknown: into the construction of the new social order along the path without maps or sign-posts, guided only by their Marxism, their revolutionary passion and their learning from the history of other revolutions in other times.

Lenin again. 'The first thing is the adoption of practical measures to realise peace ... We shall offer peace to the peoples of all the belligerent countries upon the basis of the Soviet terms — no annexations; no indemnities; and the right of self-determination of peoples. At the same time, according to our promises, we will publish and repudiate the secret treaties ...'

He then read a draft proclamation from the Soviet state to all the people of the warring countries proposing an immediate peace; it called on the people of all nations, if their government were unwilling to reach an armistice, to rise in action and enforce the people's will.

From the Proclamation on Peace, to a Proclamation on Land. Once again Lenin read a draft decree: 'All private ownership of land is abolished immediately without compensation. All landowners' estates, and all lands belonging to the Crown, to monasteries, church lands ... are transferred to the disposition of the township Land Committees and the District Soviets of Peasants' Deputies ... The land of peasants and Cossacks serving in the army shall not be confiscated ... Confiscated property from now on belongs to the whole people'.

More debate, passionate appeals from all sides. But finally agreement with only one against, and the peasant delegates wild with joy ... And then, to the final business of Congress: the composition of a government. Lenin's draft decree looked ahead to the convening of a democratically elected Parliament — a Constituent Assembly. But '... until the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, a Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government is formed, we shall be named the Council of Peoples' Commissars ... Control over the activities of the Peoples' Commissars, the right to replace them, shall belong to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies, and its Central Committee'.

Even as these last passages of the historic gathering were drawing

to a close, the threat of civil war was in the air.

Even then, more debate, argument, passion, before the vote which carried the Council of Peoples' Commissars into office with an enormous majority.

'Thereupon the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets was dissolved, so that the members might hurry to their homes in the four corners of Russia, and tell of the great happenings.'

Ten days of the revolution that had shaken the world were over. But the civil war with mutinous generals, and the wars of intervention by forces of many of the imperialist powers was just beginning. The almost bloodless period of the revolution was ended, and the era of war and bloodshed to maintain it was beginning.

AND AFTERWARDS.

It was not my intention here to give either a complete summary of the history of the Russian revolution, or an account of the seventy years of Soviet power which have followed it. My intention was merely to explain why the annual memorial of that revolution has been, from the very beginning, an international celebration of a kind apart, special and unique to all socialists, and all who dream or organise for a new age of freedom for the common people.

Yet, to complete the explanation of why international celebration of this day still continues 70 years after, some attempt must be made to weigh up the experience of Soviet power against the aims and ideals of those who celebrate its anniversary. Seventy years after all, though it is less than the life span of many people still alive today, is a considerable proving time in our age of rapid change, and rapid development.

No serious consideration of the triumphs and failures of Soviet power can be made without heavy emphasis on the debilitating, destructive influences of war — or perhaps more correctly, wars — wars which were not of Soviet making, but were launched upon it from both inside and abroad for the exclusive purpose of destroying the Soviet state, undoing every change Soviet power had brought about, and returning the country to something of the old order which the Soviets had rolled in the dust.

Soviet power arose in struggle against the Great War of 1914-18. The first deed of Soviet power was to call, over the heads of governments, to the peoples of the world to end the war. Yet sadly, the first major task of Soviet government was to summon a battered, war-weary people back to arms to defend the revolution; to muster a

people's army against hyena packs which fell upon the state from all corners of the compass, with encouragement and finance from the ruling classes of all imperialism. The first test of the revolution and of Soviet power was its ability to raise its war-battered people to fight yet again — but this time for their own country, their own land.

That first test ended in a triumph of Soviet morale, Soviet patriotism under arms, and in the routing of the invaders. 'Nobody can ever vanquish a people' Lenin said afterwards. 'Most of those workers and peasants have come to know, feel and see that they are defending their own Soviet power ... that they are defending a cause the triumph of which will enable them and their children to enjoy all the benefits of culture, all the creations of human labour.'

When war ended in 1921, with the counter-revolutionary armies broken and dispersed, and foreign invaders driven out, the country lay in ruins — road and rail networks shattered, large tracts of agricultural land laid waste, towns and villages battered, industries crippled. Only in 1921 could Soviet power, starting from the lowest ebb, begin to rebuild one sixth of the earth's surface, and redirect the energies of one tenth of the earth's people.

Eighteen years later, when the Second World War swept across Europe in 1939, once again Soviet priority had to be given to military preparations. From 1941, once again, invading foreign armies began massive, deliberate destruction of everything Soviet power had built — laying waste the main grain-producing lands, systematically destroying its industrial plants, smashing its communications. Before Soviet morale and discipline could once again triumph in arms over the German invaders and drive them out of Soviet territory, an estimated twenty million citizens died, including a large part of the vital generation of young men and women which assumed the main burdens of Soviet reconstruction. Those war years of 1941-45 were years of heroism, death and destruction.

Yet the Soviet people emerged from unimaginable suffering still with the energy and belief in their future to begin once again, to reconstruct what had been destroyed, and pass on beyond to new levels in all fields of life. That once again is testimony to the strength, the flexibility and the morale of the Soviet system.

With full recognition of the setbacks of wars — how then does the record of Soviet socialism stand? These are the triumphs.

- There is now a Soviet Union of free republics, enjoying full legal and social equality, in place of the old Empire composed of a Russian master race and grossly exploited, nationally oppressed

subject nations. National oppression and inequality have been banished by law, and national rights and equality enshrined.

- Land, mines, factories, transport services and power supplies have been made the property of the whole people, producing goods in accordance with decisions of elected Soviet bodies of state to meet needs, not to make profits.
- The old class divisions which made some few into 'masters' and the rest into 'servants' whose duty was to labour as commanded, has disappeared, together with the power and institutions of private ownership of capital on which they were based.
- Legal and traditional discrimination against women has been outlawed in all fields of life and work.
- 'From the cradle to the grave', a network of social services has been created, open to all, free, without regard to 'ability to pay'
- The war-battered economy and industry have been raised from the lowest levels to advanced, and in some cases, as in space travel exploration, post advanced levels. Standards of comfort, security and prosperity for all working people exist on a level undreamt of in former times.
- The chauvinism and race hatreds of the old Empire have gone, replaced by a new socialist-inspired internationalism, displayed in an unwavering search for roads to world peace. Self-sacrificing Soviet aid is given freely, fraternally, to people everywhere who struggle against the odds for their own freedom. We South Africans, and our liberation struggle, are amongst the beneficiaries of that Soviet material, political and diplomatic aid for our freedom fighters and organisations.

There are other triumphs of Soviet power. Socialism **has** realised many of the dreams and hopes mankind has held for it. And yet much remains to be done. It is a beginning, not an end.

But for many socialists there has been dismay that Soviet socialism has not been a uniform seamless, triumphal progress, without blemishes — the perfect social system of the dream, or the blueprint from a textbook of Utopia. Real life has not been like that. There have been many triumphs: but there have also been pockets of failure, of error, of departures from socialist legality, of the cult of the leader, of inadequacies and of departures from ideals. Neither socialist life, nor any other, is free of the consequences of human weakness, of failings, of incompetence, of indifference or of crimes. Nor can it be, until mankind itself has been remade anew by a new society. Until that time, the future has to be pursued with trial and error, along a

path blazed out through virgin territory, by pioneers without maps or signposts.

'We committed follies enough in and around the Smolny period (1917/18)' Lenin told the 9th Congress of the Communist Party. 'There is nothing to be ashamed of. How were we to know, seeing that we were undertaking something absolutely new? We tried first one way, then another. We swam with the current, because it was impossible to distinguish right from wrong; that requires time.'

TOWARDS GREATER ACHIEVEMENTS

Naturally along with the Soviet triumphs there have been failures, and disasters, some of which have left deep scars still not healed. Land reform has produced some negative aspects, resulting in shortages in the town shops. Industrial reforms have produced inefficiencies of waste, unsold and unsellable goods not wanted by the market. Laws have been ignored, and standards departed from. The catalogue of such blemishes on achieving the triumphs have been many, trumpeted out by the bourgeois press everywhere, as though they denote the death of socialism, rather than the growing pains of its still early development. Even as the battle against the blemishes and faults goes on, trying, as Lenin said, first one way, then another — the overall advance proceeds.

The building of socialism is not a simple mechanical task which will proceed as programmed, as long as fuel is added to the motor. It is a breathtaking human endeavour to create a world in accordance with human desires; in the end it depends on the will, expertise, wisdom and daring of the people who undertake it.

Builders of socialism, like people in every age and country, inherit not only their material world but also attitudes, beliefs and impulses from their past. That inheritance they carry with them, as mountain climbers carry their back-packs. Those back-packs are stocked with implements which assist in scaling the heights; but they also serve as a dead-load on the shoulders, slowing down the ascent, threatening to pull the climber back.

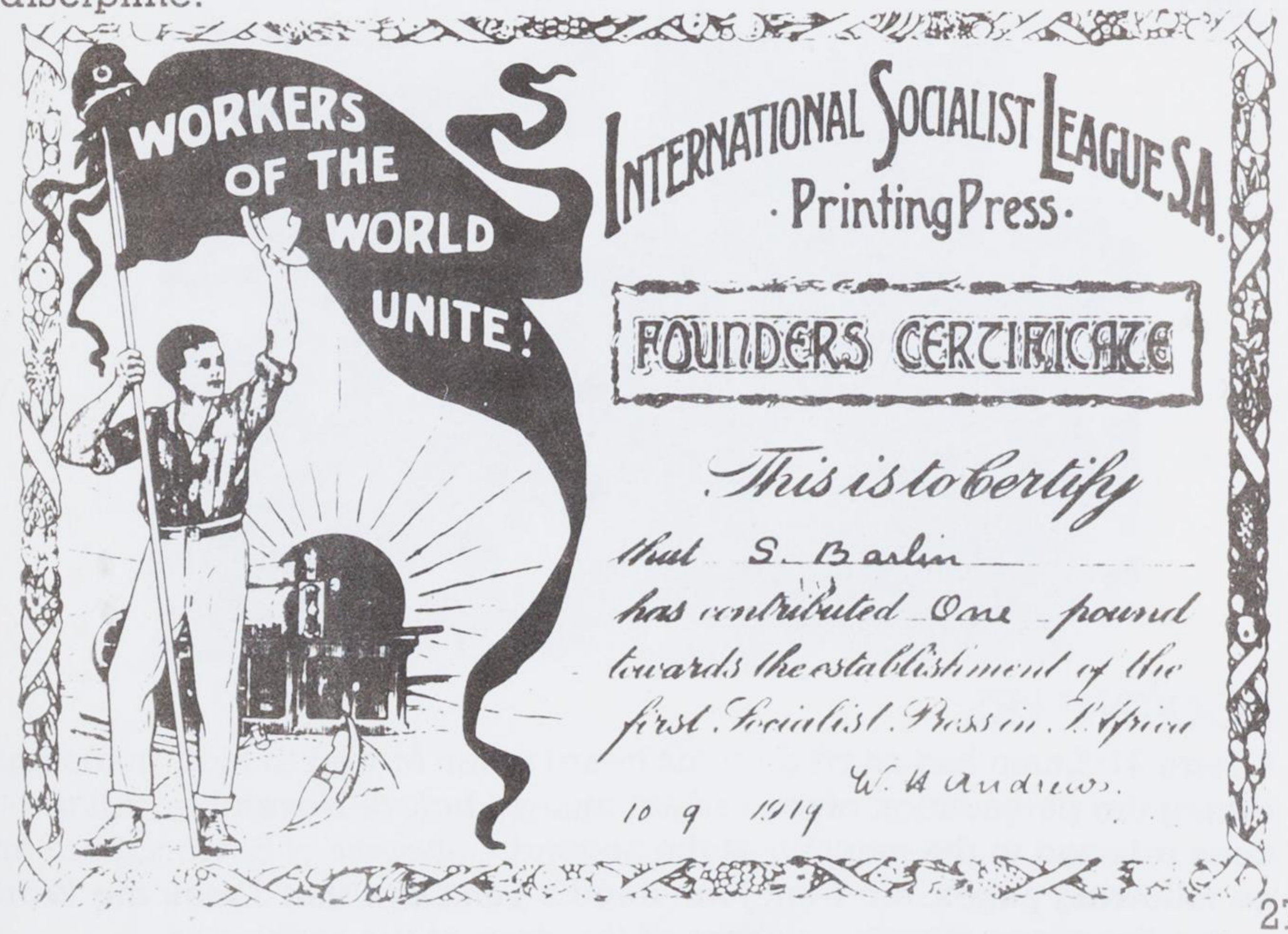
Dreamers of the socialist dream may have imagined that socialism would, by some mystic process, instantaneously rid the builders of their unwanted mental and behavioural hangovers from an outmoded past, and would produce an 'instant' new generation unburdened with any restraining back-pack. Experience, which has taught the socialist movement so much else, teaches us that such a dream is indeed fantasy, out of accord with what happens in the real world.

The working-class past has endowed the Soviet people with abundant revolutionary confidence, determination and passion, which helps them propel the Soviet Union forward to the building of a society which conforms closely to their ideals. But it has left them also with remnants of a hampering inheritance from the past — the remains of bureaucracy and authoritarianism, the remains of racism and sexism, the remains of selfishness, carelessness, indifference.

These dead-loads on the shoulders of the Soviet people grow less with time. They are separated from the backward past by only a few generations; many citizens and leaders are still alive today who grew up in that backward past. Only now, seventy years on, two wars on, is a new generation, totally separated from that past, coming to the forefront of Soviet life.

It requries time, as Lenin said, to see right from wrong when engaged in something new. It requires also determination and will to change from right to wrong, when what is wrong is proved so; it is always easier, less demanding to persist with past ways when the alternative is a step into an unknown, unmapped future.

Yet it is precisely such a step off into unmapped territory — where socialism pioneers a path for mankind — upon which the Soviet state and people are now once again embarking. Once again, they break new ground towards the future, guided only by experience, by Marxist understanding, and an equipment of Communist dedication and discipline.



Now, seventy years on from that first great revolutionary leap of November 7th, they are striking boldly forward again, under the new watch-words of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika', and the leading rein of the Communist Party and the Soviets. The people who made the great break-through to socialism for the first time are once again on a world-shaking exercise to blaze a path for all mankind, and make the passage to socialism easier, less hazardous, for all of us who will — in our own moment of history — follow.

A conscious, all-out assault is under way against the negative hang-overs from the past. New ways of tackling problems of socialist development are being devised and put in place to replace those which were, perhaps, adequate for the early age of socialism, but which can no longer serve the socialist society of today — a society well-educated, stable, prosperous, industrialised, and standing at the frontiers of high technology.

While we outside remember and celebrate the birth of the socialist dream, they are already setting out on another great venture towards the completion of the socialist reality, its gold age.

Seventy years on:
Hail to the Soviet pioneers of socialism!
Hail to the people and Party of the USSR!

Toussaint
1987

FOOTNOTES:

* Page 21: Lenin had shaved off his beard when forced to hide in disguise during the persecution of the revolutionaries before November. All quotations referred to the meeting of the Second Congress of Soviets, here and on following pages, are from John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World* — the finest eye-witness account of the days of the revolution.

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