

**IN  
COMMON  
THEY  
FOUGHT**

# IN COMMON THEY FOUGHT

FACTS, DOCUMENTS AND ESSAYS  
A COLLECTION



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ДЕЛО ТРУДЯЩИХСЯ  
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**1917-1957**



## INTRODUCTION

This is a book about our friends, about the fraternal solidarity of the international proletariat with the Soviet people, about the selfless support given by the working people of all countries, by the progressive intellectuals of the world, to the cause of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

Soviet society won millions of ardent supporters and true friends abroad as soon as the news of the proletarian revolution, which had brought power to Russia's workers and peasants led by Lenin, first swept the globe. Their numbers grew as the truth about the life and aspirations of the Soviet people made its way to other peoples, breaking through a barrage of anti-Soviet lies and slander.

The rulers of the capitalist world, filled with a fierce hatred for the October Revolution and the Soviet state born of it, used every means of deception and misinformation combined with police reprisals in an effort to combat the masses' sympathy for new Russia and set them against her. It was all in vain—the working people of the capitalist countries, including those in uniform, resolutely ranged themselves on the side of the Soviets in the undeclared predatory war of world imperialism against the young republic.

Speaking at the Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets in December 1919, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the great founder of the Soviet state, said: "We declared from the very beginning of the revolution that we were a party of the international proletariat, and that, no matter how great the difficulties of the revolution were, a time would come



when at the most critical moment the sympathy and the solidarity of the workers oppressed by international imperialism would make themselves felt. For this we are accused of utopianism. But experience has shown that if we cannot always rely on action being taken by the proletariat, and if we cannot always rely on all the actions it takes, it may nevertheless be said that these two years of world history have proved that we were a thousand times right."

This holds true for all the subsequent years. The working people of our country have invariably enjoyed the sympathy and support of the working class and all forward-looking people of the world throughout their heroic advance from backwardness to the summits of progress, from ruin to might, from poverty to prosperity -- in short, from defeated capitalism to socialist society. It has been real friendship, indestructible and effective; it has been not merely disinterested help, but help that at times required sacrifices from those who gave it.

Once Marx and Engels said of the proletarians: "Human brotherhood is not a mere phrase with them but truth, and human nobility shines upon us from their work-hardened faces." That nobility and that brotherhood were vividly embodied in the attitude of the broad masses of the working people all over the world towards the Soviet Union.

The history of mankind had never registered anything of the kind before the rise of the Soviet state. Such solidarity of millions of people of various countries with a remote foreign land is only possible in the case of a socialist country, that is, a country pursuing lofty aims that are near and dear to all honest people.

The oneness of the basic interests of the working people of all countries and continents underlies the fraternal friendship between the Soviet people and other peoples. This oneness, springing from the entire course of social progress, is best expressed in the fact that all working people alike seek to free themselves from exploitation and war, to build a life of plenty and cultural advance-

ment, a life worthy of human beings, that is, to provide themselves with such conditions of living as ordinary workers can only have under socialism.

Today anyone on earth who is not absolutely ignorant realizes that the October Revolution was not only a Russian phenomenon, that it was due to the same immutable laws of human progress as operate everywhere, that it ushered in a new era in world history, the era of the downfall of capitalism and the establishment of socialist society. To the working people of other countries the October Revolution was an inspiration, a prototype for their own coming emancipation from the yoke of exploiters. It is therefore only natural that from the outset they should have supported the cause of the revolution with might and main.

As time wore on the masses of the people became increasingly aware that the cause for which the workers and peasants of the Soviet land fought with the greatest bravery, for which they shed their blood and courageously faced the severest hardships, was the common cause of all working people, a cause on whose success depended the happiness and future not only of the miners of the Donets coal-field or the stevedores of Vladivostok, but also of the miners of Wales, the dockers of Brest, the workers of China and Czechoslovakia, of Germany and India—indeed, of all countries. For their part the Soviet people were inspired by the awareness that they were paving for mankind the way to a bright future free from war and want, from exploitation and humiliation of man by man.

The Soviet people regard the socialist achievements of their country not only as their own achievements, but also as those of the working people of all countries, of the entire socialist camp.

The facts and documents given in this book show international proletarian solidarity with the Soviet people in action at various stages of the life and struggle of our society—from 1917 to 1945.

It is impossible, of course, to narrate in one book the wealth of events and, in fact, immortal feats associated

with the participation of our foreign friends in the struggle and victories of the Soviet people over decades. *In Common They Fought* lays no claim to a full description of this remarkable social phenomenon of our times; its purpose is to reveal to the reader a few unforgettable chapters of past history that relate the exploits and glory of our foreign friends—some of the finest people of their day.

A substantial part of the materials in this collection, including documents and reminiscences, has never been published before. For lack of space the Editors had to abridge the texts of some materials or give summaries of them, duly marking the changes made.

In addition to literary texts, newspaper reports and a number of specially written articles, published previously, the collection includes documents of the Central Party Archives of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., the Central Archives Department, the Central Lenin Museum, the Revolution Museum of the U.S.S.R., the Central Soviet Army Museum and the Central State Cinematographic and Photographic Archives.

The collection also contains a number of historical documents made available through the courtesy of the Yugoslav Commission for the Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution and the Society of German-Soviet Friendship.

The second chapter of the collection is compiled by A. Dunayevsky and G. Novogrudsky.

*Chapter One*  
**IN THE DAYS  
OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION**

**O**n October 25 (November 7), 1917, the workers and soldiers of Petrograd overthrew by revolutionary assault the last bourgeois government of Russia, called Provisional as it were by the irony of fate. On the same day the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets representing a majority of the population proclaimed the transfer of all state power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. The congress formed a Soviet Government with Lenin at its head.

It was not just a reshaping of the political system of Russia; it was the birth of a new world that had matured inside the old society to take its place.

"We have a right to be and are proud of the fact," wrote Lenin afterwards, commenting on the significance of the October Revolution, "that to us has fallen the good fortune to *begin* the erection of a Soviet state, and thereby to *usher in* a new era in world history, the era of the rule of a *new* class, a class which is oppressed in every capitalist country, but which everywhere is marching forward towards a new life, towards victory over the bourgeoisie, towards the dictatorship of the proletariat—and towards the emancipation of mankind from the yoke of capital and from imperialist wars."

What made millions of ordinary people rise in arms in the October days and what led them on was the will to free themselves from poverty and ignorance, and from

national oppression that were concomitants of the old regime; it was the desire for a free and bright life worthy of man, the dream of a future in which everyone on earth would have "enough bread and roses." The masses of the working people had become conscious makers of history. There were few Communists at that time, but the Communist Party embodied the intelligence, honour and conscience of all working people and their inexhaustible energy. Giving proper expression to what the masses were conscious of, the Communist Party inspired and organized them in the revolutionary struggle. Having begun in the capital, the October Revolution soon triumphed all over Russia. Its early months were one continuous succession of victories. Before everyone abroad realized what had actually happened, before the panes of the Winter Palace, damaged during the October assault, were replaced, radical measures were being adopted in the industries, taken over by the workers, to increase output; the peasants were making plans for the spring sowing as they divided the landowners' lands among themselves; the printing works had begun printing, on orders from the authorities, books by classics in unprecedentedly large editions and at unprecedentedly low prices. The people were eager to give themselves up to peaceful creative work. Very soon after it was formed the Soviet Government set about laying vast reconstruction plans.

Meanwhile the exploiters overthrown by the Revolution were preparing in all haste to fight the Soviets with help from without, from the reactionaries of the whole world. On December 7, 1917, Robert Francis, the U.S. Ambassador to Russia, wrote to U.S. Secretary of State Lansing that he did not think the Soviet Government could last long. The *Daily Telegraph*, a mouthpiece of the British Conservative Party, prophesied on January 5, 1918, that the Soviet Government "may be swept out of existence at any hour, and no sane man would give them as much as a month to live." The imperialists not only predicted the "speedy" and "imminent" collapse of Soviet power, but also supported their predictions with

conspiracies, sabotage and anti-Soviet rebellions immediately after the Revolution.

In fighting to overthrow the capitalist regime and establish Soviet power, Russia's working people from the outset had the fraternal solidarity of the proletariat of other countries and the warm sympathy of progressive intellectuals, of the finest people of the time. Many foreigners who in 1917 found themselves in Russia took part in the October Revolution, and some of them, whose glory will never die, fell fighting for the Revolution, for socialism.

### THE BROADSIDE OF THE *AURORA*

The historic broadside of the cruiser *Aurora*, which in the evening of October 25 (November 7), 1917, announced the beginning of the assault of the Winter Palace, the last seat of Russia's last bourgeois government, echoed throughout the world.

"The salvos of the October Revolution brought Marxism-Leninism to us," wrote Mao Tse-tung in his work *On the Dictatorship of People's Democracy*. "The October Revolution helped the progressive elements of the world and of China to apply the proletarian world outlook in shaping the destinies of their countries and revising their own problems. The conclusion drawn was to follow the Russian path."

"What was the October Revolution?" wrote Palmiro Togliatti, Secretary-General, Central Committee of the Communist Party of Italy, in his pamphlet *The Only Correct Way for Mankind* published in 1951. "Many of us still remember those days. The revolution took place in a historical situation that was one of the darkest moments in the recent history of mankind, and the news of the revolution had the effect of something incredible, indeed, of something incomprehensible in all its magnitude, I believe, to most of those whom it reached. What was clear to all was the fact that there had happened something really new, something never yet seen. Authority was actu-

ally passing to that party, to those people, whom the whole reactionary press had described, and still describes, as apostates of society, as the enemies of mankind, as agents of a foreign power—today they would have been called 'fifth columnists.' Consternation was general, especially when it became obvious that this time the transfer of power was permanent and not temporary, that the rule which the revolution had overthrown in Russia was actually the last of the rule of the old governing classes.

"The body which brought the new power into being was known as the Congress of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and was also attended by representatives of the progressive sections of the peasantry.

"People who made up a majority of society but who had been fated to obey those in authority and the rich, to be exploited and oppressed—those people, having taken power into their hands, began to build a new state of their own in order to use it as an instrument for the construction of a new society in which their expectations and hopes would materialize and their dreams come true.

"When the initial surprise was over, mankind broke up into two camps. The working people, the exploited and poor, the peoples oppressed and crushed by all kinds of injustice, people with glorious ideas and exalted hearts began to look upon the new power and the new state, which at that time was called the Soviet Republic, as the beginning of a thorough transformation of the whole society. Then their conviction grew stronger and expanded, it was borne out by facts and became the starting-point of and basis for a fundamental renovation of the whole progressive movement of the working people and nations.

"On the other hand there began a reckless and brazen campaign of preposterous accusations, lies and slander, and then came an armed intervention, blockade, economic sabotage and wars of extermination against the Soviet land—a campaign that has been going on for 34 years,\* nor is there any indication that it will ever end."

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\* We may now say "for 40 years" with just as good reason.—*Ed.*

Maurice Thorez, who was eighteen when the October Revolution came, says:

"My enthusiasm for the Russian Revolution urged me to militant action. I eagerly tried to learn what was going on over there, I devoured newspapers, magazines and pamphlets, but alas! I could not find in them what I wanted, for the government, the bourgeoisie and the press were doing their utmost to combat the rising system with lies and slander.

"However, those campaigns of lies and slander did not have the intended effect on the workers. In a vague way even the most unenlightened among them realized that what was being built in Russia was their republic, that the cause for which the Russian Communists fought so gallantly and fell was their cause—the cause of the workers of all countries. And above the enemy trenches, the burned and devastated towns, the regions blasted by shells and turned into deserts where the only living were those who had been given a respite, there rang Marx's great call, a call taken up by the Russian Revolution:

"Workers of all countries, unite!"

Although Russia's postal and telegraphic communication with other countries was extremely handicapped in those days, the Soviet people could hear the voices of numerous friends who sincerely welcomed the rising workers' and peasants' state.

When the telegraph brought to the United States the news of the October armed uprising in Petrograd, of the beginning of a socialist revolution in Russia, workers and farmers expressed, at rallies and meetings and in numerous letters, their joy at the historic events unfolding in Russia and voiced their faith in the Soviets.

One of the resolutions adopted at a workers' meeting in Seattle, Washington, was delivered to Soviet Russia by American seamen and published in *Izvestia*, the newspaper of the Vladivostok Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, in January 1918. It ran as follows:

"We are delighted to greet the glorious Russian proletariat who is the first to have defeated capital, the first to have set up the dictatorship of the proletariat, the



first to have introduced and put into practice control over industry by the proletariat.

"It is our firm hope that the Russian proletariat will effect socializat; on of all production, that it will consolidate and extend its victories over capital.

"We assure the Russian champions of freedom that they have our warm sympathy, that we are ready to help, and we beg them to believe us when we say that the day is not far off when we will prove our proletarian solidarity by deeds."

The proletariat of all Europe hailed the October Revolution with enthusiasm. By early 1918 Soviets of workers' deputies had been set up in most Polish towns, and in many districts of Poland Soviets of farm-labourers' deputies had come into being.

The British proletariat took a deeply sympathetic attitude towards the new Soviet state. The British workers' sentiments found striking expression in the frank ill will with which they met Kerensky, head of the Provisional Government, who had fled from Russia in an American car, disguised as a woman. The workers refused to hear a man expelled by the people, a half-baked dictator who struck Napoleonic attitudes and had made futile attempts to drown the Revolution in blood, though the reactionary press all but fitted him out with an angel's pinions.

A message of greetings, received from Denmark at the end of 1917, is typical of that period. It read:

"The Secretariat, which represents the United Danish Revolutionary-Syndicalist Workers' Movement, gathered in assembly after receiving the joyous tidings that a social revolution actually took place in Russia on October 25, 1917, has unanimously resolved to send you, our Russian brothers, cordial and enthusiastic greetings....

"Our joy is boundless. Your example lights the way for the proletariat of the whole world like a guiding star, lending us renewed faith, energy and strength to continue and intensify our struggle, and to put into practice your slogans on Denmark's soil as well, through the Danish working class.