

Speech of Kemal Okuyan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP)

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War, Revolution, and Rebellion

Comrades,

Today we gather to discuss one of the most decisive turning points in human history—perhaps the most decisive of all.

The October Revolution was the dawn of a new epoch. We maintain that this epoch has not ended; it was merely disrupted—temporarily—by the collective counteroffensive of the capitalist class.

In this sense, the October Revolution is not simply a phenomenon of the 20th century. Nor, as some claim, are there country-specific or era-specific “versions” of socialism. Every socialist construction process is shaped by its concrete conditions and bears their traces, yet the principles of socialism—the pathway to communism—are universal and unambiguous. In this respect, the October Revolution and the difficult founding years that followed remain a living, breathing experience. Marxism-Leninism possesses the theoretical depth to distinguish between the lasting features of this experience, its weaknesses, and those aspects unique to Russia.

However, there is another aspect of the October Revolution that deserves just as much emphasis as its socialist essence.

The Great October Socialist Revolution is humanity’s rebellion. Let us remember: it erupted at a moment when millions were slaughtering one another, driven to the frontlines by the greed of imperialist monopolies during a world war. The war had long been foreseen; decades earlier, with Engels’s unmatched insight, it was clear that the coming conflict would be unprecedented in its destruction—and that, as Engels wrote, it would give rise to revolutionary conditions. Yet the First World War produced a level of barbarism and darkness that no theoretical framework could have fully predicted. And imperialist wars are always followed by imperialist peace. Imperialist peace, however, is no less ruthless and oppressive than imperialist war. The clearest proof lies in the Versailles and Sèvres treaties imposed by the victorious imperialist bloc on the defeated after the First World War.

The October Revolution was a rising not only against the war, but also against the imperialist peace. The workers’ government’s first act was the proclamation of the Decree on Peace. Moreover, Soviet Russia—and later the USSR—became the leading force resisting the new world system that the victorious British-led imperialist camp sought to impose.

The two world wars of the last century provide definitive evidence that multipolarity does not make the imperialist system more peaceful; on the contrary, it intensifies rivalry and deepens conflicts. Both wars also demonstrated that no “good” or “preferable” imperialism exists. In the First World War, the bloc led by Britain and the bloc led by Germany rivaled one another in cruelty and

destruction. Weapons of mass destruction were used extensively for the first time. In the Second World War, although temporarily allied with the USSR, the US-British side proved itself capable of the same ruthlessness as the fascists through the use of nuclear weapons and the bombing of civilian populations.

The antithesis of imperialist war is not imperialist peace—it is revolution and socialism.

Viewed through this lens, the October Revolution stands as the complete vindication of Lenin's writings from 1914, and especially 1915, on the relationship between war and revolution. Those who describe the October Revolution as a coincidence or historical accident should read what Lenin wrote after the war began.

At this point, we must also remember that the October Revolution cannot be reduced to the mechanical application of a pre-written theoretical template. The Bolshevik Party, which adopted the correct and revolutionary position in 1914, later—especially throughout 1917—successfully navigated challenges that were perhaps even more complex and difficult. Shifting priorities and alternating tactics did not mean abandoning theory; rather, they showed how theory must be applied creatively.

Without understanding the dialectical unity and historical context of Lenin's writings and speeches from early 1917 to 1923, any attempt to grasp the Soviet Revolution through isolated quotations restricted to particular moments will be fruitless. If, throughout this period, the Bolsheviks were able to adjust their course dramatically—despite maintaining consistent principles—it was because they rejected rigid schemas and treated Marxist theory as a genuine guide.

Under Lenin's leadership, the Bolsheviks rapidly updated their positions—without sacrificing their principles—on fundamental questions such as the nature of the revolution, the peace question, soviet power, working class patriotism, world revolution, land reform, and the national question. Stalin, often accused by many of interpreting Marxism mechanically, likewise demonstrated remarkable creativity and flexibility after Lenin's death—especially up to 1945—preventing Trotsky and others, with their aestheticized dogmatism, from suffocating the Soviet Revolution.

Much more can be said about the October Revolution. In a brief address, one can only touch upon a fraction of what deserves to be discussed. And now we arrive at the final—and most important—point.

To those who made the October Revolution—the proletariat of Petrograd, the revolutionary sailors of the Baltic Sea, the poor peasants who rebelled under arms shouting “long live Soviet power,” the militants and leaders of the Bolshevik Party, and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, who delivered to Marxism the revolutionary spark it needed—we extend our respect and our communist salute.