

THE CENTENARY of 1917: Year of Two Revolutions in Russia



**One-Day Workshop @ Keele University,
Claus Moser building, Room: CMO.12
24th October 2017**

**This workshop is organised and funded jointly by Keele University and
EMAR (Easdale Foundation for Labour Research)**

2017 is the centennial anniversary of 1917 Russian Revolution(s). 1917 Revolution will be remembered as a wave of events which changed not only Russia, but the political and social landscape of the whole world. Triggered by hungry and angry women workers on 23 February Women's Day Festival in St Petersburg, February Revolution toppled the Tsarist monarchy in Russia and brought to power a Provisional Government of coalition of liberals. The chaotic months under this government ended when thousands of workers and soldiers organised in soviets under the leadership of the Bolsheviks assaulted the Winter Palace and established workers' power in the country. Millions wanted "Peace, Land and Bread"! Their revolution under Lenin's leadership gave the world Soviet Russia, what the Marxist movement then named as the first socialist state in the world! Soviet Russia, later Soviet Union has, as a world power, changed and dominated the political, social and economic geography of the world until its collapse in 1991.

How did the workers take political power into their hands in 1917? How did this unimaginable transformation take place? What is the moral justification for seizing power, if necessary by violent force?

How had a backward agricultural country with a fledgling industrial economy been transformed to a world power in such a short span of time? At what cost?

What is the legacy of October Revolution? What was the significance of the Soviets before, during and after the Revolution?

What was the impact of the Soviet Revolution in Russia on the workers, oppressed peoples, and the bourgeoisie all over the world?

Why and how did the Soviet Union come to collapse almost overnight? How does one overcome the burden of history? Does or can capitalism seed its own destruction too?

On the centenary of the 1917 Russian Revolution(s), we aim to explore the stories and the voices that shaped the seismic events of 1917 – the year that turned the world upside down.

The workshop will examine how the revolutionary ideals of 1917 map best onto our contemporary situation, and discuss how, a hundred years on, the **Soviet** Revolution still continues to raise important questions around political representation and the popular institutions necessary to challenge inequality, poverty and exploitation of capitalist system today.

Programme

9:30 /Coffee

Welcome /9:45

Professor Shane O'Neill, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Advancement & Global Engagement, Keele University

Session One (10:00-11:00) WHAT KIND OF SOCIALISM?

Nick Rogers (Socialist writer/ activist), 'A comparative assessment of Trotsky and Bukharin's programmes for the Soviet Union in the 1920s'

Bulent Gokay (Keele), 'Rosa Luxemburg's critical solidarity with the Russian Bolsheviks'

Session Two (11:10-12:20) IMPACT OF RUSSIAN REVOLUTION IN EUROPE

Jonathan Davis (Anglia Ruskin), 'A new star of hope has risen over Europe': the Labour Party and the Russian Revolutions'

Norman LaPorte (South Wales), 'Communism as Mass Movement in Weimar Germany: The Impact and Inspiration of 1917'

12:30-13:30 Lunch

Session Three (13:30-14:40) REVOLUTION AS A 'TRADITION OF MODERNITY'

Robert Emerton (Keele), 'The Mass-Line: 1917 and 1989. Chinese experience'

Kyril Drezov (Keele), 'Project 1917: The Russian Revolution in the age of Facebook'

Session Four (14:40- 15.50) REVOLUTION IN THE SOUTH

Shalini Sharma (Keele), 'The Revolution Goes South: 1917 in the Indian political imagination'

Francisco Dominguez (Middlesex), 'The sui generis impact of the Russian Revolution in Latin America'

Session Five (15:50- 17.00) RUSSIAN REVOLUTION IN THE NEAR ABROAD

Vassilis Fouskas (East London) and **Bulent Gokay** (Keele), 'the impact of Russian Revolution in the Balkans'

M.Yasacan (Keele), 'The impact of the Russian Revolution on Turkish Left through the experiences of three leading communists'

17.00-17:15 coffee/ tea

Session Six (17:15 -18:15)

Panel Discussion chaired by **Ismail Buyukakan** (EMAR)



This workshop is organised and funded jointly by Keele University and EMAR (Easdale Foundation for Labour Research) .
Directions: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/findus/>

Admission is free but please reserve a place in advance by emailing **Bulent Gokay** at b.gokay@keele.ac.uk