

# Introduction

The main theme of this issue, published in the year following the centenary of October 1917, is “After Revolution.” It is based on the proceedings and results of the international conference “1917/2017. Revolutions, Communist Legacies and Specters of the Future,” held last fall at the European University at St. Petersburg.

First of all, we talk about the *intellectual heritage of the 1917 revolution in Russia* and, more broadly, the philosophical and political meaning of revolution today. The Russian Revolution was an event of tectonic scale for world history. However, it was relatively undertheorized in its aftermath: the victory of Stalin’s faction and the growing cleavage between Russian academia and the West transformed most of the conceptual literature on the revolution into a hagiography of the “Great October Socialist Revolution” or into “white-guard” reflections on the inner religiosity of the Bolsheviks (from Nikolay Berdyaev to Yury Slezkine). Gal Kirn, in the current issue, returns to this “political theology” argument from the inverse, leftist viewpoint and traces the metaphor of resurrecting Lazarus, from Bolshevik writings to more recent revolutionary revisionism. The metaphor suggests a political turn that views the revolutionary class in populist terms, as a multitude of the sick and the abnormal.

Mostly, reflections on the revolution by independently minded Soviet intellectuals did not reach an international public. What do we have in the international literature, as a retrospective understanding of the October revolution?

There is, first, Lukacs, with his future-oriented theory of the proletarian subject. This is the line of thought that Ketí Chukhrov continues in this issue. She bitterly criticizes today’s cognitive class and its revolutionary attempts, which she finds to be too self-centered. True revolution, as the one that founded the Soviet Union, she thinks, is an anticipatory founding of ideal institutions, the education of a class that is not yet there. It is born only through a process of a gradual growing-into these institutions.

There is, secondly, Gramsci, an influential Leninist intellectual whose work is fully devoted to the aftermath of 1917 in Russia and in Europe. Lorenzo Chiesa, in his article for this issue, explores Gramsci’s treatment of the Italian Southern question and shows that Gramsci attempts to reinterpret Marxism, in the footsteps of Lenin’s turn in 1917, leaving the way open for the peasants’ revolutionary participation.

In the Soviet Union, in spite of the tyranny of *istmat*, there were a number of original philosophical minds who were genuinely sympathetic to the revolution and concerned with the preservation of its destiny.

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Some of these authors were the subject of a thematic issue of *Stasis* devoted to Soviet Marxism (issue №2, from 2017). In the current issue, this discussion continues. Among the most original Soviet thinkers were Andrey Platonov and Boris Porshnev, who both come to the fore here. Jodi Dean uses Platonov's literary oeuvre to speak of her present concerns — the notion of the “comrade” as a distinct type of social bond characteristic of the emancipatory movement. With this, she passes from Platonov's legacy to the U.S. communist party: no direct connection, but the logic of comradeship is comparable. Vladimir Ryzhkovsky, for his part, continues the discussion (previously begun in the aforementioned issue of *Stasis* from 2017) of Boris Porshnev's multifaceted legacy. He gives a detailed account of Porshnev's intellectual career and particularly focuses on his understanding of *world history* in the framework of the 1917 revolution, whose global and messianic character gave Porshnev a unique synoptic perspective.

Aside from the articles, we publish the proceedings of a roundtable that took place at the European University at St. Petersburg in the aftermath of the centenary of 1917. The topic of this roundtable — the universal, philosophical, and cosmic implications of the 1917 revolution — may seem exotic to some, but it very much corresponds to the spirit of early post-revolutionary Soviet culture. At a moment when the immediate political results of the revolution have “revolved” back, we can focus on a broad universal program, directed toward the future.