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THE GREAT LEGACY
OF MARXISM-LENINISM

MARX
ENGELS
LENIN

ON SOCIALIST
REVOLUTION

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REVOLUTION

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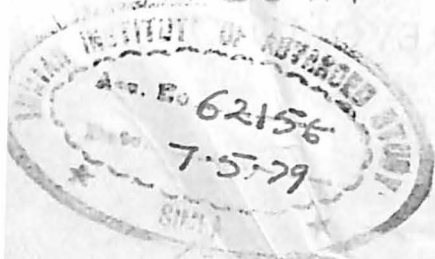


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Foreword

On November 7, 1917, the world's first socialist revolution took place in Russia.

The main achievement of the past sixty years is the new society built by the Soviet people, a society which has embodied mankind's age-old dreams, which has done away with the exploitation of working people, which has abolished national and social inequality and which has created the basis for the realisation of the ideals of freedom, justice and social progress.

Everything connected with the socialist revolution and the building and evolution of socialist society arouses, quite naturally, great interest among people the world over.

The theory of the proletarian, socialist revolution was worked out by the great teachers of the international working class, Karl Marx (1818-83) and Frederick Engels (1820-95). Analysing the evolution of capitalism, the international working-class and the revolutionary and national-liberation movements in the 19th century, they scientifically substantiated the historical inevitability of the socialist revolution, des-

cribed its driving forces and defined the main conditions for the victory of the working class.

In studying the laws governing material production and the dialectics of the productive forces and the relations of production, the founders of Marxism proved that class struggle is the source of development, the motive force of all societies where there are antagonistic classes.

At a definite stage of society's development a discrepancy between its productive forces and the existing relations of production grows into a contradiction between them, which creates a material basis for a social revolution. "The epoch of a social revolution sets in when the relations of production which hitherto served as forms of development of the productive forces turn into the fetters for these forces." The relations of production under capitalism are the last antagonistic form of social production and the productive forces developing in a capitalist society create material conditions for solving this antagonism.

The irreconcilable contradiction between the main productive force of society, the working class, and the capitalists, who appropriate the surplus value created by the labour of wage workers, constitutes the social, class basis of the socialist revolution.

A fundamental socio-economic substantiation of the thesis on the inevitable downfall of capitalism and the victory of a more advanced social system, communism, was given by Marx in his main work, *Capital* (1867). Having evolved a truly scientific theory of surplus value, Marx disclosed the economic basis of the antagonism between the working class and the capitalists.

Noting the historical inevitability of the socialist revolution, Marx and Engels showed what makes the proletarian revolution fundamentally different from

the bourgeois revolution. The difference being that the latter merely changes the form of exploitation, while the former abolishes all exploitation, eliminates private ownership and establishes public ownership of the means of production. The proletarian revolution by introducing socialist relations of production brings them into conformity with the attained level of development of the productive forces, and this makes possible the further socio-economic progress of society.

Marx and Engels not only proved the necessity of the socialist revolution, but indicated the social force capable of overthrowing capitalism. This force is the proletariat, the working class, which is born of capitalism and grows, develops and organises in the course of capitalist development.

The founders of Marxism showed that the working class is not alone in its struggle for socialism, for the revolutionary transformation of society. The peasantry, the urban middle classes and the working intelligentsia are its natural allies, for the working class fights not only for its own emancipation; its interests coincide with those of the broadest sections of working people subjected to exploitation.

Marx and Engels came to the conclusion that the proletariat can win in the revolution only if it is led by its own political party which is the revolutionary vanguard, organiser and the leader of the proletariat. The revolutionary party introduces into the working-class movement socialist awareness, educates and organises the masses, works out the strategy and tactics of class struggle, and directs the socialist revolution. "For the proletariat to be strong enough to win on a decisive day it must—and Marx and I have advocated this ever since 1847—form a separate party distinct from all others and opposed to them,

a conscious class party," Engels wrote after Marx's death.

Capitalism's entry, at the beginning of the 20th century, into a new, imperialist stage, and the emergence of conditions for the immediate overthrow of capitalism called for a further elaboration of Marxist theory. A tremendous contribution to this process was made by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870-1924).

In all his theoretical and practical work Lenin was a consistent Marxist. He noted in one of his works: "We take our stand entirely on the Marxist theoretical position." Regarding Marxism as a guide to action and not a code of rigid dogmas, Lenin combated all attempts to distort revolutionary theory, to strip Marxism of its revolutionary content on the plea of "renovating" it.

In studying capitalism in its highest stage, i.e. imperialism, Lenin showed in his works *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), *The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution* (1916), *The State and Revolution* (1917), *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It* (1917), and others, that capitalism's contradictions sharpen, that it becomes parasitic, decaying, and moribund, and that capitalism is the immediate predecessor of socialism, and concluded that it is possible for socialist revolution to succeed in one single country. These precepts of Lenin became the theoretical basis for the struggle of the international proletariat and the world communist movement to win political power for the working class and its allies. Lenin's conclusions on imperialism are also valid in present-day conditions when this system is experiencing great economic and social upheavals.

Basing himself on the principal ideas of Marx and Engels, Lenin in *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* (1905), *On the*

Question of a Nation-Wide Revolution (1907), *Differences in the European Labour Movement* (1910), *The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (1919), *Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International* (1920), and other works gave a profound substantiation of the leading role of the proletariat in the liberation struggle and showed that "the strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is far greater than the proportion it represents of the total population."

The teaching on the hegemony of the proletariat and the policy of social alliances that stems from it, became the basis of the strategy and tactics of the world communist movement. In our day as well the working class is the standard-bearer of revolutionary, national-liberation and democratic movements.

Lenin made an immense contribution to the development of the ideas of Marx and Engels on the party. In *What Is to Be Done?* (1902), *The Collapse of the Second International* (1915), *"Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder* (1920), and other works Lenin formulated the theoretical and organisational principles of the party of a new type, the strategy and tactics of Bolshevism, the standards of party life and the principles of party leadership. He showed that in conditions of imperialism the role and importance of the proletarian party grow immeasurably and that only under the guidance of a militant, revolutionary and determined party "the proletariat is capable of displaying the full force of its revolutionary onslaught." Lenin emphasised that the role of a front-rank fighter can only be played by a party equipped with an advanced theory. A scientifically sound policy is indispensable if a party is to influence social processes in the interests of

the working class and all working people; it is an essential condition for organising the masses, forming the political army of the revolution, ensuring victory in the struggle for democracy, establishing the power of the working class, and building a socialist society.

Lenin, however, not only theoretically substantiated the principles of a revolutionary proletarian party, but also created such a party which translated Marxian theory into practice and led the proletariat and the masses of working people of Russia in a victorious struggle against the tsarist autocracy, the capitalists and landlords.

The Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 in Russia radically changed the political, social and economic make-up of the whole world. It inaugurated a new epoch in world history, the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism.

The victory of socialist revolutions in a number of European and Asian countries in the late 1940's and the emergence of the world socialist system ushered in a new stage of the world revolutionary process. Profound qualitative changes took place in the correlation of forces in the world. The international working class came to play a role of still greater importance in the social revolution of our time.

In the capitalist countries, declared the participants in the 1976 Berlin Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe, "the struggle of the working class—the main force in social development which represents the interests of the mass of working people, the interests of social progress and over-all national interests—is developing at a rapid pace."

Outstanding victories have also been scored by the national-liberation movement of the oppressed peoples. The colonial system of imperialism has collapsed. Dozens of countries have won political indepen-

dence. An expansion of the anti-imperialist movement in these countries and their struggle for economic independence have become an important factor in the world revolutionary process.

The Central Committee's report to the 25th CPSU Congress (February 24, 1976) said: "In their struggle, Communists proceed from the general laws governing the development of the revolution and the building of socialism and communism. Reflected in the theory of Marxism-Leninism and confirmed in practice, these laws were collectively and comprehensively formulated at international conferences of fraternal parties. A deep understanding of these laws, and reliance on them, in combination with a creative approach and with consideration for the concrete conditions in each separate country, have been and remain the inalienable and distinctive feature of a Marxist-Leninist."

* * *

This collection includes the basic works of classics of Marxist-Leninist literature in which the general laws governing the socialist revolution and the building of socialism and communism are formulated.

**The Objective Necessity
of Socialist Revolution.
Its Economic and Socio-Political
Prerequisites**

K. MARX
F. ENGELS

From: "MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST
PARTY"

Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put on its trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of

over-production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. . .

The essential condition for the existence, and for the sway of the bourgeois class, is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labour. Wage-labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

Written in December 1847-January 1848

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Works*,
Vol. 1, pp. 113-4, 119

From: "PREFACE TO 'A CONTRIBUTION TO
THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY'"

...At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution...

...No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation. In broad outlines Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society. The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production—antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of one arising from the social conditions of life of the individuals; at the same time the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the material con-

ditions for the solution of that antagonism. This social formation brings, therefore, the prehistory of human society to a close.

January 1859

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Works*,
Vol. I, pp. 503-4

K. MARX

From: "CAPITAL"

...Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. Thus integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

The capitalist mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the

labour of the proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of Nature, its own negation. It is the negation of negation. This does not re-establish private property for the producer, but gives him individual property based on the acquisitions of the capitalist era: *i.e.*, on co-operation and the possession in common of the land and of the means of production.

The transformation of scattered private property, arising from individual labour, into capitalist private property is, naturally, a process, incomparably more protracted, violent, and difficult, than the transformation of capitalistic private property, already practically resting on socialised production, into socialised property. In the former case, we had the expropriation of the mass of the people by a few usurpers; in the latter, we have the expropriation of a few usurpers by the mass of the people.

Finished in 1867

K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1,
Moscow, 1974, p. 715

F. ENGELS

From: "SOCIALISM: UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC"

...In the trusts, freedom of competition changes into its very opposite—into monopoly; and the production without any definite plan of capitalistic society capitulates to the production upon a definite plan of the invading socialistic society. Certainly this

is so far still to the benefit and advantage of the capitalists. But in this case the exploitation is so palpable that it must break down. . .

In any case, with trusts or without, the official representative of capitalist society—the state—will ultimately have to undertake the direction of production. This necessity for conversion into state property is felt first in the great institutions for communication—the post office, the telegraphs, the railways.

If the crises demonstrate the incapacity of the bourgeoisie for managing any longer modern productive forces, the transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution into joint-stock companies, trusts and state property shows how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. All the social functions of the capitalist are now performed by salaried employees. The capitalist has no further social function than that of pocketing dividends, tearing off coupons, and gambling on the Stock Exchange, where the different capitalists despoil one another of their capital. At first the capitalistic mode of production forces out the workers. Now it forces out the capitalists, and reduces them, just as it reduced the workers, to the ranks of the surplus population, although not immediately into those of the industrial reserve army.

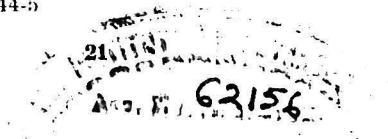
But the transformation, either into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies and trusts this is obvious. And the modern state, again, is only the organisation that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments as well of the workers as of individual capitalists. The modern state, no matter what its

form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers—proletarians. The capitalist relationship is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head. But, brought to a head, it topples over. State ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution.

This solution can only consist in the practical recognition of the social nature of the modern forces of production, and therefore in the harmonising of the modes of production, appropriation, and exchange with the socialised character of the means of production. And this can only come about by society openly and directly taking possession of the productive forces which have outgrown all control except that of society as a whole. The social character of the means of production and of the products today reacts against the producers, periodically disrupts all production and exchange, acts only like a law of Nature working blindly, forcibly, destructively. But with the taking over by society of the productive forces, the social character of the means of production and of the products will be utilised by the producers with a perfect understanding of its nature, and instead of being a source of disturbance and periodical collapse, will become the most powerful lever of production itself.

Written in January-early March 1880

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Works*,
Vol. 3, M., 1973, pp. 144-5



F. ENGELS

From: "DIALECTICS OF NATURE"

...Under the capitalist mode of production, production reaches such a high level that society can no longer consume the means of life, enjoyment and development that have been produced, because for the great mass of producers access to these means is artificially and forcibly barred; and therefore every ten years a crisis restores the equilibrium by destroying not only the means of life, enjoyment and development that have been produced, but also a great part of the productive forces themselves. Hence the so-called struggle for existence assumes the form: to *protect* the products and productive forces produced by bourgeois capitalist society against the destructive, ravaging effect of this capitalist social order, by taking control of social production and distribution out of the hands of the ruling capitalist class, which has become incapable of this function, and transferring it to the producing masses—and that is the socialist revolution.

Written in 1873-83

F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*,
Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964,
pp. 313-14

V. I. LENIN

From: "IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM"

...In its economic essence imperialism is monopoly capitalism. This in itself determines its place in history, for monopoly that grows out of the soil

of free competition, and precisely out of free competition, is the transition from the capitalist system to a higher socio-economic order. We must take special note of the four principal types of monopoly, or principal manifestations of monopoly capitalism, which are characteristic of the epoch we are examining.

Firstly, monopoly arose out of the concentration of production at a very high stage. This refers to the monopolist capitalist associations, cartels, syndicates and trusts. We have seen the important part these play in present-day economic life. At the beginning of the twentieth century, monopolies had acquired complete supremacy in the advanced countries, and although the first steps towards the formation of the cartels were taken by countries enjoying the protection of high tariffs (Germany, America), Great Britain, with her system of free trade, revealed the same basic phenomenon, only a little later, namely, the birth of monopoly out of the concentration of production.

Secondly, monopolies have stimulated the seizure of the most important sources of raw materials, especially for the basic and most highly cartelised industries in capitalist society: the coal and iron industries. The monopoly of the most important sources of raw materials has enormously increased the power of big capital, and has sharpened the antagonism between cartelised and non-cartelised industry.

Thirdly, monopoly has sprung from the banks. The banks have developed from modest middleman enterprises into the monopolists of finance capital. Some three to five of the biggest banks in each of the foremost capitalist countries have achieved the "personal link-up" between industrial and bank capital, and have concentrated in their hands the control of thousands upon thousands of millions

which form the greater part of the capital and income of entire countries. A financial oligarchy, which throws a close network of dependence relationships over all the economic and political institutions of present-day bourgeois society without exception—such is the most striking manifestation of this monopoly.

Fourthly, monopoly has grown out of colonial policy. To the numerous "old" motives of colonial policy, finance capital has added the struggle for the sources of raw materials, for the export of capital, for spheres of influence, i.e., for spheres for profitable deals, concessions, monopoly profits and so on, economic territory in general. When the colonies of the European powers, for instance, comprised only one-tenth of the territory of Africa (as was the case in 1876), colonial policy was able to develop by methods other than those of monopoly—by the "free grabbing" of territories, so to speak. But when nine-tenths of Africa had been seized (by 1900), when the whole world had been divided up, there was inevitably ushered in the era of monopoly possession of colonies and, consequently, of particularly intense struggle for the division and the redivision of the world.

The extent to which monopolist capital has intensified all the contradictions of capitalism is generally known. It is sufficient to mention the high cost of living and the tyranny of the cartels. This intensification of contradictions constitutes the most powerful driving force of the transitional period of history, which began from the time of the final victory of world finance capital.

Monopolies, oligarchy, the striving for domination and not for freedom, the exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations by a handful of the richest or most powerful nations—all

these have given birth to those distinctive characteristics of imperialism which compel us to define it as parasitic or decaying capitalism. More and more prominently there emerges, as one of the tendencies of imperialism, the creation of the "rentier state", the usurer state, in which the bourgeoisie to an ever-increasing degree lives on the proceeds of capital exports and by "clipping coupons". It would be a mistake to believe that this tendency to decay precludes the rapid growth of capitalism. It does not. In the epoch of imperialism, certain branches of industry, certain strata of the bourgeoisie and certain countries betray, to a greater or lesser degree, now one and now another of these tendencies. On the whole, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before; but this growth is not only becoming more and more uneven in general, its unevenness also manifests itself, in particular, in the decay of the countries which are richest in capital (Britain)....

The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists in one of the numerous branches of industry, in one of the numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to bribe certain sections of the workers, and for a time a fairly considerable minority of them, and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie of a given industry or given nation against all the others. The intensification of antagonisms between imperialist nations for the division of the world increases this urge. And so there is created that bond between imperialism and opportunism,⁴ which revealed itself first and most clearly in Great Britain, owing to the fact that certain features of imperialist development were observable there much earlier than in other countries. Some writers, L. Martov⁵, for example, are prone to wave aside the connection between imperialism and opportunism in the working-class movement—a particularly glar-

ing fact at the present time—by resorting to “official optimism” (*à la* Kautsky⁶ and Huysmans⁷) like the following: the cause of the opponents of capitalism would be hopeless if it were progressive capitalism that led to the increase of opportunism, or, if it were the best-paid workers who were inclined towards opportunism, etc. We must have no illusions about “optimism” of this kind. It is optimism in respect of opportunism; it is optimism which serves to conceal opportunism. As a matter of fact the extraordinary rapidity and the particularly revolting character of the development of opportunism is by no means a guarantee that its victory will be durable: the rapid growth of a painful abscess on a healthy body can only cause it to burst more quickly and thus relieve the body of it. The most dangerous of all in this respect are those who do not wish to understand that the fight against imperialism is a sham and humbug unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism.

From all that has been said in this book on the economic essence of imperialism, it follows that we must define it as capitalism in transition, or, more precisely, as moribund capitalism. It is very instructive in this respect to note that bourgeois economists, in describing modern capitalism, frequently employ catchwords and phrases like “interlocking”, “absence of isolation”, etc. ; . . .

. . . When a big enterprise assumes gigantic proportions, and, on the basis of an exact computation of mass data, organises according to plan the supply of primary raw materials to the extent of two-thirds, or three-fourths, of all that is necessary for tens of millions of people; when the raw materials are transported in a systematic and organised manner to the most suitable places of production, sometimes situated hundreds or thousands of miles from

each other; when a single centre directs all the consecutive stages of processing the material right up to the manufacture of numerous varieties of finished articles; when these products are distributed according to a single plan among tens and hundreds of millions of consumers (the marketing of oil in America and Germany by the American oil trust)—then it becomes evident that we have socialisation of production, and not mere “interlocking”; that private economic and private property relations constitute a shell which no longer fits its contents, a shell which must inevitably decay if its removal is artificially delayed, a shell which may remain in a state of decay for a fairly long period (if, at the worst, the cure of the opportunist abscess is protracted), but which will inevitably be removed.

Written in January-June 1916

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 22,
pp. 298-300, 301-3

V. I. LENIN

From: “THE STATE AND REVOLUTION”

...the erroneous bourgeois reformist assertion that monopoly capitalism or state-monopoly capitalism is *no longer* capitalism, but can now be called “state socialism” and so on, is very common. The trusts, of course, never provided, do not now provide, and cannot provide complete planning. But however much they do plan, however much the capitalist magnates calculate in advance the volume of production on a national and even on an international scale, and however much they systematically regulate

it, we still remain under *capitalism*—at its new stage, it is true, but still capitalism, without a doubt. The “proximity” of *such* capitalism to socialism should serve genuine representatives of the proletariat as an argument proving the proximity, facility, feasibility and urgency of the socialist revolution, and not at all as an argument for tolerating the repudiation of such a revolution and the efforts to make capitalism look more attractive, something which all reformists⁸ are trying to do.

Written in August-September 1917

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 25,
pp. 447-8

V. I. LENIN

From: “THE IMPENDING CATASTROPHE AND HOW TO COMBAT IT”

...state-monopoly capitalism is a complete *material* preparation for socialism, the *threshold* of socialism, a rung on the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism *there are no intermediate rungs*.

Written in September 1917

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 25, p. 363

**The World-Historic Mission
of the Proletariat. The Working Class
as the Hegemonic Force
in the Revolution.**

Allies of the Working Class

K. MARX
F. ENGELS

From: "MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST
PARTY"

... In proportion as the bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, 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. These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market. . .

... But with the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalised, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the

wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The unceasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (Trades' Unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there the contest breaks out into riots.

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletarians, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

This organisation of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself. . .

Altogether collisions between the classes of the

old society further, in many ways, the course of development of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy; later on, with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself, whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry; at all times, with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for its help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie. . .

Written in December 1847-January 1848

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Works*,
Vol. I., M., 1969, pp. 114-17

K. MARX

From "THE CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE 1848 TO 1850"

...Their (peasants'—*Ed.*) exploitation differs only in *form* from the exploitation of the industrial proletariat. The exploiter is the same: *capital*. The individual capitalists exploit the individual peasants through *mortgages* and *usury*; the capitalist class exploits the peasant class through the *state taxes*. The peasant's title to property is the talisman by which capital held him hitherto under its spell, the

pretext under which it set him against the industrial proletariat. Only the fall of capital can raise the peasant; only an anti-capitalist, a proletarian government can break his economic misery, his social degradation. The *constitutional republic* is the dictatorship of his united exploiters; the *social-democratic*, the *Red republic*, is the dictatorship of his allies. . . .

Written in January-November 1, 1850

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Works*,
Vol. 1, p. 277

V. I. LENIN

From: "MAY DAY ACTION BY REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAT"

. . . The working class draws into revolutionary action the masses of the working and exploited people, who are deprived of basic rights and driven to despair. The working class teaches them revolutionary struggle, trains them for revolutionary action, and explains to them where to find the way out and how to attain salvation. The working class teaches them, not merely by words, but by deeds, by example, and the example is provided not by the adventures of solitary heroes but by *mass* revolutionary action combining political and economic demands.

June 15 (28), 1913

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 19, p. 223

From: "THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY⁹
ELECTIONS AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE
PROLETARIAT"

... 8. The strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is far greater than the proportion it represents of the total population. That is because the proletariat economically dominates the centre and nerve of the entire economic system of capitalism, and also because the proletariat expresses economically and politically the real interests of the overwhelming majority of the working people under capitalism.

Therefore, the proletariat, even when it constitutes a minority of the population (or when the class-conscious and really revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat constitutes a minority of the population), is capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and, after that, of winning to its side numerous allies from a mass of semi-proletarians and petty bourgeoisie who never declare in advance in favour of the rule of the proletariat, who do not understand the conditions and aims of that rule, and only by their subsequent experience become convinced that the proletarian dictatorship is inevitable, proper and legitimate.

9. Finally, in every capitalist country there are always very broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie which inevitably vacillate between capital and labour. To achieve victory, the proletariat must, first, choose the right moment for its decisive assault on the bourgeoisie, taking into account, among other things, the disunity between the bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois allies, or the instability of their al-

liance, and so forth. Secondly, the proletariat must, after its victory, utilise this vacillation of the petty bourgeoisie in such a way as to neutralise them, prevent their siding with the exploiters; it must be able to hold on for some time *in spite of this vacillation*, and so on, and so forth.

10. One of the necessary conditions for preparing the proletariat for its victory is a long, stubborn and ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism,¹⁰ and similar bourgeois influences and trends, which are inevitable, since the proletariat is operating in a capitalist environment. If there is no such struggle, if opportunism in the working-class movement is not utterly defeated beforehand, there can be no dictatorship of the proletariat. Bolshevism would not have defeated the bourgeoisie in 1917-19 if before that, in 1903-17, it had not learned to defeat the Mensheviks,¹¹ i.e., the opportunists, reformists, social-chauvinists, and ruthlessly expel them from the party of the proletarian vanguard.

December 16, 1919

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 30, pp. 274-5

V. I. LENIN

From: "THESES ON THE FUNDAMENTAL TASKS OF THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL"

... The proletariat becomes revolutionary only insofar as it does not restrict itself to the narrow framework of craft interests, only when in all mat-

ters and spheres of public life, it acts as the leader of all the toiling and exploited masses; it cannot achieve its dictatorship unless it is prepared and able to make the greatest sacrifices for the sake of victory over the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the experience of Russia is significant both in principle and in practice. The proletariat could not have achieved its dictatorship there, or won the universally acknowledged respect and confidence of all the toiling masses, had it not made the most sacrifices, or starved more than any other section of those masses at the most crucial moments of the onslaught, war and blockade effected by the world bourgeoisie.

Written in June-July 1920

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 31, p. 194

**The Communist Party—the Vanguard
of the Proletariat**

K. MARX
F. ENGELS

From: "MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST
PARTY"

... Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

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 . . .

. . . Modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products, that is based on class antagonisms, on the exploitation of the many by the few.

In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.

. . . The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement

. . . The Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.

In all these movements they bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time.

Finally, they labour everywhere for the union and agreement of the democratic parties of all countries.

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 !

Written in December 1847-January 1848

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Works*,
Vol. 1, pp. 120, 136-7

K. MARX

**From: "INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF THE
WORKING MEN'S INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION"**

**Established September 28, 1864, at a Public
Meeting Held at St. Martin's Hall, Long Acre,
London**

... One element of success they possess—numbers; but numbers weigh only in the balance, if united by combination and led by knowledge. Past experience has shown how disregard of that bond of brotherhood which ought to exist between the workmen of different countries, and incite them to stand firmly by each other in all their struggle for emancipation, will be chastised by the common discomfiture of their incoherent efforts.

Written in October 1864

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Works*,
Vol. 2, p. 17

K. MARX

**From: "THE FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF
THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S
ASSOCIATION"**

... Even under the most favourable political conditions all serious success of the proletariat depends upon an organisation that unites and concentrates

its forces; and even its national organisation is still exposed to split on the disorganisation of the working classes in other countries, which one and all compete in the market of the world, acting and reacting the one upon the other. Nothing but an international bond of the working classes can ever ensure their definitive triumph. . . .

September 1, 1868

*The General Council of the First
International. 1866-1868 M., 1974,
p. 329*

**K. MARX
F. ENGELS**

**From: "POLITICAL ACTION OF THE WORKING
CLASS"**

**A Resolution of the Conference of Delegates of
the International Working Men's Association,
Assembled at London from 17th to 23rd September,
1871¹²**

. . . Considering, that against this collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes;

That this constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the Social Revolution and its ultimate end—the abolition of classes;

That the combination of forces which the working class has already effected by its economical struggles

ought at the same time to serve as a lever for its struggles against the political power of landlords and capitalists—

The Conference recalls to the members of the *International*:

That in the militant state of the working class, its economical movement and its political action are indissolubly united.

Written and edited to publish
in September-October 1871

*The General Council of the First
International. 1870-71. Minutes.*
Moscow, 1967, p. 445

F. ENGELS

From: "ENGELS TO GERSON TRIER ¹³ IN COPENHAGEN" (Draft)

London, December 18, 1889

... I shall start with a point on which I do *not* agree with you.

You reject on principle any and every collaboration, even the most transient, with other parties. I am enough of a revolutionary not to renounce even this means if in the given circumstances it is more advantageous or at least less harmful.

We are agreed on this: that the proletariat cannot conquer political power, the only door to the new society, without a revolution involving the use of force. For the proletariat to be strong enough to win on the decisive day it must—and Marx and I have advocated this ever since 1847—form a separate party

distinct from all others and opposed to them, a party conscious of its class basis.

But that does not mean that this party cannot at certain moments use other parties for its purposes. Nor does this mean that it cannot temporarily support the measures of other parties if these measures either are directly advantageous to the proletariat or progressive as regards economic development or political freedom.

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Correspondence*,
M., 1975, pp. 386-7

V. I. LENIN

From: "OUR PROGRAMME"

... We take our stand entirely on the Marxist theoretical position: Marxism was the first to transform socialism from a utopia into a science, to lay a firm foundation for this science, and to indicate the path that must be followed in further developing and elaborating it in all its parts.... It made clear the real task of a revolutionary socialist party: not to draw up plans for refashioning society, not to preach to the capitalists and their hangers-on about improving the lot of the workers, not to hatch conspiracies, *but to organise the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle, the ultimate aim of which is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the organisation of a socialist society.*

Written not earlier than
October 1899

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 4,
pp. 210-11

V. I. LENIN

From: "WHAT IS TO BE DONE?"

... the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory.

Written between the autumn of 1901
and February 1902

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 5, p. 370

V. I. LENIN

From: "THESES ON COMINTERN
FUNDAMENTAL TASKS"

... 4. Victory over capitalism calls for proper relations between the leading (Communist) party, the revolutionary class (the proletariat) and the masses, i.e., the entire body of the toilers and the exploited. Only the Communist Party, if it is really the vanguard of the revolutionary class, if it really comprises all the finest representatives of that class, if it consists of fully conscious and staunch Communists who have been educated and steeled by the experience of a persistent revolutionary struggle, and if it has succeeded in linking itself inseparably with the whole life of its class and, through it, with the whole mass of the exploited, and in completely winning the confidence of this class and this mass—only such a party is capable of leading the proletariat in a final, most ruthless and decisive struggle against all the forces of capitalism. On the other hand,

it is only under the leadership of such a party that the proletariat is capable of displaying the full might of its revolutionary onslaught, and of overcoming the inevitable apathy and occasional resistance of that small minority, the labour aristocracy, who have been corrupted by capitalism, the old trade union and co-operative leaders, etc.—only then will it be capable of displaying its full might, which, because of the very economic structure of capitalist society, is infinitely greater than its proportion of the population.

Written in June-July 1920

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 31,
pp. 187-8

**The Struggle for Democracy
as a Component of the Struggle
for Socialism**

F. ENGELS

From: A LETTER TO AUGUST BEBEL ¹⁴ IN
LEIPZIG

London, June 6, 1884

... We are still, as we were in 1848, the opposition of the future and it is therefore necessary that the most extreme of the present parties shall be at the helm before we can become a present opposition in relation to it. Political stagnation, i.e., aimless and purposeless struggle among the official parties, as now, cannot be of service to us in the long run. But a progressive struggle of these parties with a gradual shifting of the centre of gravity to the left can be so. . . At each shift leftward concessions come the way of the workers. . . and, what is more important, the field is being swept clean with increasing energy for the decisive battle and the position of the parties is becoming clearer and more distinct. I consider this slow but incessant development of the French Republic to its necessary outcome—antithesis between radical, sham-socialist bourgeois and really revolutionary workers—one of

the most important events and hope it will not be interrupted. . . .

K. Marx, F. Engels. *Sel. Correspondence*.
M., 1975, p. 353

F. ENGELS

From: "A CRITIQUE OF THE DRAFT SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PROGRAMME OF 1891"¹⁵

. . . Fearing a renewal of the Anti-Socialist Law¹⁶, or recalling all manner of over-hasty pronouncements made during the reign of that law, they now want the Party to find the present legal order in Germany adequate for putting through all Party demands by peaceful means. These are attempts to convince oneself and the Party that "present-day society is developing towards socialism" without asking oneself whether it does not thereby just as necessarily outgrow the old social order and whether it will not have to burst this old shell by force, as a crab breaks its shell, and also whether in Germany, in addition, it will not have to smash the fetters of the still semi-absolutist, and moreover indescribably confused political order. One can conceive that the old society may develop peacefully into the new one in countries where the representatives of the people concentrate all power in their hands, where, if one has the support of the majority of the people, one can do as one sees fit in a constitutional way: in democratic republics such as France and the U.S.A., in monarchies such as Britain. . . . But in Germany where the government is almost omnipotent and the Reichstag

and all other representative bodies have no real power, to advocate such a thing in Germany, when, moreover, there is no need to do so, means removing the fig-leaf from absolutism and becoming oneself a screen for its nakedness.

In the long run such a policy can only lead one's own Party astray. They push general, abstract political questions into the foreground, thereby concealing the immediate concrete questions, which at the moment of the first great events, the first political crisis automatically pose themselves. What can result from this except that at the decisive moment the Party suddenly proves helpless and that uncertainty and discord on the most decisive issues reign in it because these issues have never been discussed?... This forgetting of the great, the principal considerations for the momentary interests of the day, this struggling and striving for the success of the moment regardless of later consequences, this sacrifice of the future of the movement for its present, may be "honestly" meant, but it is and remains opportunism, and "honest" opportunism is perhaps the most dangerous of all!

Written in June 1891

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Works*,
Vol. 3, pp. 434-5

F. ENGELS

From: A LETTER TO PAUL LAFARGUE ¹⁷

London, March 6, 1894

... With respect to the proletariat the republic differs from the monarchy only in that it is the

ready-for-use political form for the future rule of the proletariat. You are at an advantage compared with us in already having it; we for our part shall have to spend twenty-four hours to make it. But a republic, like every other form of government, is determined by its content; so long as it is a form of *bourgeois* rule it is as hostile to us as any monarchy (except that the *forms* of this hostility are different). It is therefore a wholly baseless illusion to regard it as essentially socialist in form or to entrust socialist tasks to it while it is dominated by the bourgeoisie. We shall be able to wrest concessions from it but never to put in its charge the execution of what is our own concern, even if we should be able to control it by a minority strong enough to change into the majority overnight. . . .

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Correspondence*.
M., 1975, p. 447

V. I. LENIN

From: "THE TASKS OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS"

... The proletariat alone can be—and because of its class position must be—a consistently democratic, determined enemy of absolutism, incapable of making any concessions or compromises. The proletariat alone can be the *vanguard fighter* for political liberty and for democratic institutions. Firstly, this is because political tyranny bears most heavily upon the proletariat whose position gives it no opportunity to secure a modification of that tyranny—it has no access to the higher authorities, not even to the

officials and it has no influence on public opinion. Secondly, the proletariat alone is capable of bringing about the *complete* democratisation of the political and social system, since this would place the system in the hands of the workers. That is why the *merging* of the democratic activities of the working class with the democratic aspirations of other classes and groups would *weaken* the democratic movement, would *weaken* the political struggle, would make it less determined, less consistent, more likely to compromise. On the other hand, if the working class *stands out* as the vanguard fighter for democratic institutions, this will *strengthen* the democratic movement, will *strengthen* the struggle for political liberty, because the working class will *spur on* all the other democratic and political opposition elements, will push the liberals towards the political radicals, will push the radicals towards an irrevocable rupture with the whole of the political and social structure of present society.

Written at the end of 1897

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 2, p. 336

V. I. LENIN

From: "WHAT IS TO BE DONE?"

... He is no Social-Democrat who forgets in practice that "the Communists support every revolutionary movement", ¹⁸ that we are obliged for that reason to expound and emphasise *general democratic tasks*

before the whole people, without for a moment concealing our socialist convictions. He is no Social-Democrat who forgets in practice his obligation to be ahead of all in raising, accentuating, and solving every general democratic question.

Written between the autumn 1901-
February 1902

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 5, p. 425

V. I. LENIN

From: "TWO TACTICS OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION"

... Whoever wants to reach socialism by any other path than that of political democracy, will inevitably arrive at conclusions that are absurd and reactionary both in the economic and the political sense.

... To avoid finding itself with its hands tied in the struggle against the inconsistent bourgeois democracy the proletariat must be class-conscious and strong enough to rouse the peasantry to revolutionary consciousness, guide its assault, and thereby independently pursue the line of consistent proletarian democratism.

Written in June-July 1905

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 9, pp. 29, 60

V. I. LENIN

From: "THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AND THE RIGHT OF NATIONS TO SELF- DETERMINATION"

... The socialist revolution is not a single act, it is not one battle on one front, but a whole epoch of acute class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e., on all questions of economics and politics, battles that can only end in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution or of hiding, overshadowing it, etc. On the contrary, in the same way as there can be no victorious socialism that does not practise full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy...

Written in January-February 1916

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 22, p. 144

V. I. LENIN

From: A LETTER TO INESSA ARMAND ¹⁹

December 25, 1916

... One should know how to *combine* the struggle for democracy and the struggle for the socialist revolution, *subordinating* the first to the second. In this lies the whole difficulty; in this is the whole essence.

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 35, p. 267

**Forms of Struggle and Methods
of Winning Political Power by
the Working Class**



K. MARX

**From: "SPEECH ON POLITICAL ACTION OF
THE WORKING CLASS"**

**At the London Conference of the International
Working Men's Association on September 21, 1871**

We must declare to the governments: We know that you are an armed force directed against the proletariat. We shall act against you by peaceful means wherever this proves possible for us, and with arms whenever this becomes necessary.

K. Marx and F. Engels,
Coll. Works, Vol. 17, p. 649 (in Russian)

K. MARX

**From: "THE REICHSTAG DEBATE ON THE LAW
AGAINST SOCIALISTS"**

(a draft of the article)

Historical development can remain "peaceful" only until the moment when those in power in the given society resort to violence to obstruct this development. For instance, if in England or the United States the working class should gain a majority in Parliament or Congress, it could remove the laws and institutions standing in its way by legal means, and do so only to the extent called for by social development. But the "peaceful" movement would become "violent" if it comes up against the *resistance*

of those interested in preserving the old order, and if the latter, finding themselves vanquished by force. . . rebel against the "legitimate" power.

But what Eulenburg²⁰ preaches is *violent reaction* on the part of the wielders of power against *development* which is *passing through* a "peaceful stage", and the purpose of this reaction is to prevent "violent" conflicts in the future: it is the war cry of violent counter-revolution against "peaceful" development. In reality the government is out to suppress *by force* development which is disagreeable to it but which is invulnerable from the standpoint of the *law*. Such is the necessary introduction to the revolution involving the use of force. "'Tis an old, a very old story, it has always happened that way.'" *

Written in late September 1878

K. Marx and F. Engels,
Coll. Works, Vol. 45, pp. 142-43 (in Russian)

K. MARX

From: AN INTERVIEW TO A CORRESPONDENT OF THE "CHICAGO TRIBUNE"

December 1878

"...the revolutions will be made by majorities. No revolution can be made by a party, but only by the people. . ."

K. Marx and F. Engels, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 45, p. 475 (in Russian)

* From H. Heine's poem *A Young Man Loves a Maiden*.

F. ENGELS

From: A LETTER TO AUGUST BEBEL

London, October 28, 1882

... I read the second article rather hurriedly, with two or three people interrupting me with their talk all the time. Otherwise the way he conceives the French Revolution would have led me to detect the French influence and with it our Vollmar too, no doubt. You have grasped this side quite correctly. This at last is the dreamed-of realisation of the phrase "one reactionary mass". All the official parties united in one lump *here*, and we Socialists in one column *there*—great decisive battle; victory all along the line at one blow. In real life things do not happen so simply. In real life, as you also remark, the revolution begins the other way round, by the great majority of the people and also the majority of the official parties rallying *against* the government, which is thereby isolated, and overthrowing it; and it is only after those of the official parties which still remained have mutually, jointly, and successively brought about one another's destruction that Vollmar's great division takes place, bringing with it the chance of our rule. If, like Vollmar, we wanted to start straight off with the *final act* of the revolution we should be in a terribly bad way...

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Correspondence*,
M., 1975, p. 333

F. ENGELS

**From: A LETTER TO VERA IVANOVNA
ZASULICH ²¹**

London, April 23, 1885

... To me the historical theory of Marx is the fundamental condition of all *coherent* and *consistent* revolutionary tactics; to discover these tactics one has only to apply the theory to the economic and political conditions of the country in question.

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Correspondence*,
M., 1975, pp. 361-2

F. ENGELS

From: A LETTER TO PAUL LAFARGUE

London, November 12, 1892

... Do you realise now what a splendid weapon you in France have had in your hands for forty years in universal suffrage; if only people had known how to use it! It's slower and more boring than the call to revolution, but it's ten times more sure, and what is even better, it indicates with the most perfect accuracy the day when a call to armed revolution has to be made; it's even ten to one that universal suffrage, intelligently used by the workers, will drive the rulers to overthrow legality, that

is, to put us in the most favourable position to make the revolution. . . .

F. Engels, *Paul and Laura Lafargue*,
Correspondence, Vol. 3, p. 211

F. ENGELS

From: INTRODUCTION TO "THE CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE, 1848 TO 1850"²² BY KARL MARX

. . . If universal suffrage had offered no other advantage than that it allowed us to count our numbers every three years; that by the regularly established, unexpectedly rapid rise in the number of our votes it increased in equal measure the workers' certainty of victory and the dismay of their opponents, and so became our best means of propaganda; that it accurately informed us concerning our own strength and that of all hostile parties, and thereby provided us with a measure of proportion for our actions second to none, safeguarding us from untimely timidity as much as from untimely foolhardiness—if this had been the only advantage we gained from the suffrage, it would still have been much more than enough. But it did more than this by far. In election agitation it provided us with a means, second to none, of getting in touch with the mass of the people where they still stand aloof from us; of forcing all parties to defend their views and actions against our attacks before all the people; and, further, it provided our representatives in the Reichstag with a platform from which they could speak to their opponents in parliament, and to the

masses without, with quite other authority and freedom than in the press or at meetings. Of what avail was their Anti-Socialist Law to the government and the bourgeoisie when election campaigning and socialist speeches in the Reichstag continually broke through it?

With this successful utilisation of universal suffrage, however, an entirely new method of proletarian struggle came into operation, and this method quickly developed further. It was found that the state institutions, in which the rule of the bourgeoisie is organised, offer the working class still further opportunities to fight these very state institutions. The workers took part in elections to particular Diets, to municipal councils and to trades courts; they contested with the bourgeoisie every post in the occupation of which a sufficient part of the proletariat had a say. And so it happened that the bourgeoisie and the government came to be much more afraid of the legal than of the illegal action of the workers' party, of the results of elections than of those of rebellion. . .

. . . The time of surprise attacks, of revolutions carried through by small conscious minorities at the head of unconscious masses, is past. Where it is a question of a complete transformation of the social organisation, the masses themselves must also be in it, must themselves already have grasped what is at stake, what they are going in for, body and soul. The history of the last fifty years has taught us that. But in order that the masses may understand what is to be done, long, persistent work is required, and it is just this work that we are now pursuing, and with a success which drives the enemy to despair. . . .

. . . The German Social-Democracy occupies a special position and therewith, at least in the im-

mediate future, has a special task. The two million voters whom it sends to the ballot box, together with the young men and women who stand behind them as non-voters, form the most numerous, most compact mass, the decisive "shock force" of the international proletarian army. This mass already supplies over a fourth of the votes cast; and as the by-elections to the Reichstag, the Diet elections in individual states, the municipal council and trades court elections demonstrate, it increases incessantly. Its growth proceeds as spontaneously, as steadily, as irresistibly, and at the same time as tranquilly as a natural process. All government intervention has proved powerless against it. We can count even today on two and a quarter million voters. If it continues in this fashion, by the end of the century we shall conquer the greater part of the middle strata of society, petty bourgeois and small peasants, and grow into the decisive power in the land, before which all other powers will have to bow, whether they like it or not. To keep this growth going without interruption until it of itself gets beyond the control of the prevailing governmental system, not to fritter away this daily increasing shock force in vanguard skirmishes, but to keep it intact until the decisive day, that is our main task. And there is only one means by which the steady rise of the socialist fighting forces in Germany could be temporarily halted, and even thrown back for some time: a clash on a big scale with the military, a blood-letting like that of 1871 in Paris. In the long run that would also be overcome. To shoot a party which numbers millions out of existence is too much even for all the magazine rifles of Europe and America. But the normal development would be impeded, the shock force would, perhaps, not be available at the critical moment, the decisive combat

would be delayed, protracted and attended by heavier sacrifices.

The irony of world history turns everything upside down. We, the "revolutionists", the "overthrowers"—we are thriving far better on legal methods than on illegal methods and overthrow. The parties of Order, as they call themselves, are perishing under the legal conditions created by themselves. They cry despairingly with Odilon Barrot: *la légalité nous tue*, legality is the death of us; whereas we, under this legality, get firm muscles and rosy cheeks and look like life eternal. And if *we* are not so crazy as to let ourselves be driven to street fighting in order to please them, then in the end there is nothing left for them to do but themselves break through this fatal legality. . . .

March 6, 1895

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Works*,
Vol. 1, M., 1969, pp. 195-6,
199-200, 201-2, 203

F. ENGELS

FROM: "REVOLUTION AND COUNTER- REVOLUTION IN GERMANY"

. . . in revolution, as in war, it is always necessary to show a strong front, and he who attacks is in the advantage; and in revolution, as in war, it is of the highest necessity to stake everything on the decisive moment, whatever the odds may be. There is not a single successful revolution in history that does not prove the truth of these axioms. . . . A well-contested defeat is a fact of as much revolutionary importance as an easily-won victory. The defeats of Paris, in June, 1848,²³ and of Vienna, in

October,²⁴ certainly did far more in revolutionizing the minds of the people of these two cities than the victories of February and March. The Assembly and the people of Berlin would, probably, have shared the fate of the two towns above-named; but they would have fallen gloriously, and would have left behind themselves, in the minds of the survivors, a wish of revenge, which in revolutionary times is one of the highest incentives to energetic and passionate action. It is a matter of course that, in every struggle, he who takes up the gauntlet risks being beaten, but is that a reason why he should confess himself beaten, and submit to the yoke without drawing the sword?

In a revolution, he who commands a decisive position and surrenders it, instead of forcing the enemy to try his hands at an assault, invariably deserves to be treated as a traitor.

... Insurrection is an art quite as much as war or any other, and subject to certain rules of proceeding, which, when neglected, will produce the ruin of the party neglecting them. Those rules, logical deductions from the nature of the parties and the circumstances one has to deal with in such a case, are so plain and simple that the short experience of 1848 had made the Germans pretty well acquainted with them. Firstly, never play with insurrection unless you are fully prepared to face the consequences of your play. Insurrection is a calculus with very indefinite magnitudes, the value of which may change every day; the forces opposed to you have all the advantage of organisation, discipline and habitual authority; unless you bring strong odds against them, you are defeated and ruined. Secondly, the insurrectionary career once entered upon, act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising; it is lost

before it measures itself with its enemies. Surprise your antagonists while their forces are scattering, prepare new successes, however small but daily; keep up the moral ascendant which the first successful rising has given to you; rally thus those vacillating elements to your side which always follow the strongest impulse, and which always look out for the safer side; force your enemies to a retreat before they can collect their strength against you; in the words of Danton,²⁵ the greatest master of revolutionary policy yet known: *de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace!*

Written in August 1851-September 1852

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Works*,
Vol. 1, pp. 361-2, 377

**From: AN INTERVIEW WITH KARL MARX BY
A CORRESPONDENT OF "THE WORLD"**

London, July 3, 1871

...R. - It would seem that in this country the hoped for solution, whatever it may be, will be attained without the violent means of revolution. The English system of agitating by platform and press until minorities become converted into majorities is a hopeful sign.

Dr. M. - I am not so sanguine on that point as you. The English middle class has always shown itself willing enough to accept the verdict of the majority so long as it enjoyed the monopoly of the voting power. But mark me, as soon as it finds itself outvoted on what it considers vital questions we shall see here a new slaveowners' war. . .

Labour Monthly, June 1972,
pp. 269-70

V. I. LENIN

From: "DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY" ²⁶

... VII. The emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself. All the other classes of present-day society stand for the preservation of the foundations of the existing economic system. The real emancipation of the working class requires a social revolution—which is being prepared by the entire development of capitalism—i.e., the abolition of private ownership of the means of production, their conversion into public property, and the replacement of capitalist production of commodities by the socialist organisation of the production of articles by society as a whole, with the object of ensuring full well-being and free, all-round development for all its members.

VIII. This proletarian revolution will completely abolish the division of society into classes and, consequently, all social and political inequality arising from that division.

IX. To effect this social revolution the proletariat must win political power, which will make it master of the situation and enable it to remove all obstacles along the road to its great goal. In this sense the dictatorship of the proletariat is an essential political condition of the social revolution.

Written in February 1902

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 6, pp. 28-9

V. I. LENIN

From: "GUERRILLA WARFARE"

... What are the fundamental demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of forms of struggle? In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognises the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not "concoct" them, but only generalises, organises, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the *mass* struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class-consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and attack. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only, recognising as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, *inevitably* arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism *learns*, if we may so express it, from mass practice, and makes no claim whatever to *teach* the masses forms of struggle invented by "systematisers" in the seclusion of their studies. . . .

In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely *historical* examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from

the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national-cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn. To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position. . . .

It is said that guerrilla warfare brings the class-conscious proletarians into close association with degraded, drunken riff-raff. That is true. But it only means that the party of the proletariat can never regard guerrilla warfare as the only, or even as the chief, method of struggle; it means that this method must be subordinated to other methods, that it must be commensurate with the chief methods of warfare, and must be ennobled by the enlightening and organising influence of socialism. And without this *latter* condition, *all*, positively *all*, methods of struggle in bourgeois society bring the proletariat into close association with the various non-proletarian strata above and below it and, if left to the spontaneous course of events, become frayed, corrupted and prostituted. Strikes, if left to the spontaneous course of events, become corrupted into "alliances"—agreements between the workers and the masters *against* the consumers. Parliament becomes corrupted into a brothel, where a gang of bourgeois politicians barter wholesale and retail "national freedom", "liberalism", "democracy", republicanism, anti-clericalism, socialism and all other wares in demand. A

newspaper becomes corrupted into a public pimp, into a means of corrupting the masses, of pandering to the low instincts of the mob, and so on and so forth. Social-Democracy knows of no universal methods of struggle, such as would shut off the proletariat by a Chinese wall from the strata standing slightly above or slightly below it. At different periods Social-Democracy applies different methods, *always* qualifying the choice of them by *strictly* defined ideological and organisational conditions. . . .

September 30, 1906

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 11,
pp. 213-14, 221-2

V. I. LENIN

From "ON THE QUESTION OF A NATION-WIDE REVOLUTION"

In a certain sense of the word, it is only a nation-wide revolution that can be victorious. This is true in the sense that the unity of the overwhelming majority of the population in the struggle for the demands of that revolution is essential for victory to be won. This overwhelming majority must consist either entirely of one class, or of different classes that have certain aims in common. . . .

. . . The concept of a "nation-wide revolution" should tell the Marxist of the need for a precise analysis of those varied interests of *different* classes that coincide in certain definite, limited common aims. Under no circumstances must this concept serve to *conceal* or overshadow the study of the class struggle in the course of any revolution. Such use

of the concept of "nation-wide revolution" amounts to a complete rejection of Marxist and a return to the vulgar phraseology of the petty-bourgeois democrats or petty-bourgeois socialists.

This truth is frequently forgotten by our Social-Democratic Right wing. Still more frequently do they forget that *class relations in a revolution change with the progress of that revolution*. All real revolutionary progress means drawing broader masses into the movement; consequently—a greater consciousness of class interests; consequently—more clearly-defined political, party groupings and more precise outlines of the class physiognomy of the various parties; consequently—greater replacement of general, abstract, unclear political and economic demands that are vague in their abstractness, by the *varying* concrete, clearly-defined demands of the different classes.

For instance, the Russian bourgeois revolution, like any other bourgeois revolution, inevitably begins under the common slogans of "political liberty" and "popular interests"; only in the course of the struggle, the concrete meaning of those slogans becomes clear to the masses and to the different classes, only to the extent that a practical attempt is made to implement that "liberty", to give a *definite* content even to such a hollow-sounding word as "democracy". Prior to the bourgeois revolution, and at its onset, all speak in the name of democracy—the proletariat and the peasantry together with urban petty-bourgeois elements, and the liberal bourgeoisie together with the liberal landlords. It is only in the course of the class struggle, only in the course of a more or less lengthy historical development of the revolution, that the different understanding of this "democracy" by the different classes is revealed. And what is more, the deep gulf between the interests of

the different classes is revealed in their demands for *different* economic and political measures, in the name of one and the same "democracy".

Only in the course of the struggle, only as the revolution develops, is it revealed that one "democratic" class or stratum does not want to go, or cannot go, as far as another, that while "common" (allegedly common) objectives are being achieved, fierce skirmishes develop around the *method* by which they are to be achieved, for example, on the degree, extent or consistency of freedom and power of the people, or the manner in which land is to be transferred to the peasantry, etc.

May 2, 1907

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 12, pp. 404-5

V. I. LENIN

From: "MARXISM AND REVISIONISM"

... In the sphere of politics, revisionism did really try to revise the foundation of Marxism, namely, the doctrine of the class struggle. Political freedom, democracy and universal suffrage remove the ground for the class struggle—we were told—and render untrue the old proposition of the *Communist Manifesto* that the working men have no country. For, they said, since the "will of the majority" prevails in a democracy, one must neither regard the state as an organ of class rule, nor reject alliances with the progressive, social-reform bourgeoisie against the reactionaries.

It cannot be disputed that these arguments of the revisionists amounted to a fairly well-balanced system of views, namely, the old and well-known liberal-bourgeois views. The liberals have always said that bourgeois parliamentarism destroys classes and class divisions, since the right to vote and the right to participate in the government of the country are shared by all citizens without distinction. The whole history of Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the whole history of the Russian revolution in the early twentieth, clearly show how absurd such views are. Economic distinctions are not mitigated but aggravated and intensified under the freedom of "democratic" capitalism. Parliamentarism does not eliminate, but lays bare the innate character even of the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression. By helping to enlighten and to organise immeasurably wider masses of the population than those which previously took an active part in political events, parliamentarism does not make for the elimination of crises and political revolutions, but for the maximum intensification of civil war during such revolutions. The events in Paris in the spring of 1871 and the events in Russia in the winter of 1905 showed as clearly as could be how inevitably this intensification comes about. The French bourgeoisie without a moment's hesitation made a deal with the enemy of the whole nation, with the foreign army which had ruined its country, in order to crush the proletarian movement. Whoever does not understand the inevitable inner dialectics of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy—which leads to an even sharper decision of the argument by mass violence than formerly—will never be able on the basis of this parliamentarism to conduct propaganda and agitation consistent in principle, really preparing the

working-class masses for victorious participation in such "arguments". . . .

. . . Capitalism arose and is constantly arising out of small production. A number of new "middle strata" are inevitably brought into existence again and again by capitalism (appendages to the factory, work at home, small workshops scattered all over the country to meet the requirements of big industries, such as the bicycle and automobile industries, etc.). These new small producers are just as inevitably being cast again into the ranks of the proletariat. It is quite natural that the petty-bourgeois world outlook should again and again crop up in the ranks of the broad workers' parties. It is quite natural that this should be so and always will be so, right up to the changes of fortune that will take place in the proletarian revolution. For it would be a profound mistake to think that the "complete" proletarianisation of the majority of the population is essential for bringing about such a revolution. What we now frequently experience only in the domain of ideology, namely, disputes over theoretical amendments to Marx; what now crops up in practice only over individual side issues of the labour movement, as tactical differences with the revisionists and splits on this basis—is bound to be experienced by the working class on an incomparably larger scale when the proletarian revolution will sharpen all disputed issues, will focus all differences on points which are of the most immediate importance in determining the conduct of the masses, and will make it necessary in the heat of the fight to distinguish enemies from friends, and to cast out bad allies in order to deal decisive blows at the enemy.

The ideological struggle waged by revolutionary Marxism against revisionism at the end of the nineteenth century is but the prelude to the great revo-

lutionary battles of the proletariat, which is marching forward to the complete victory of its cause despite all the waverings and weaknesses of the petty bourgeoisie.

Written in March-April 1908

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 15,
pp. 36-7, 39

V. I. LENIN

From: "DIFFERENCES IN THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MOVEMENT"

... One of the most profound causes that periodically give rise to differences over tactics is the very growth of the labour movement. If this movement is not measured by the criterion of some fantastic ideal, but is regarded as the practical movement of ordinary people, it will be clear that the enlistment of larger and larger numbers of new "recruits", the attraction of new sections of the working people must inevitably be accompanied by waverings in the sphere of theory and tactics, by repetitions of old mistakes, by a temporary reversion to antiquated views and antiquated methods, and so forth. The labour movement of every country periodically spends a varying amount of energy, attention and time on the "training" of recruits.

Furthermore, the rate at which capitalism develops varies in different countries and in different spheres of the national economy. Marxism is most easily, rapidly, completely and lastingly assimilated by the working class and its ideologists where large-scale industry is most developed. Economic relations

which are backward, or which lag in their development, constantly lead to the appearance of supporters of the labour movement who assimilate only certain aspects of Marxism, only certain parts of the new world outlook, or individual slogans and demands, being unable to make a determined break with all the traditions of the bourgeois world outlook in general and the bourgeois-democratic world outlook in particular.

Again, a constant source of differences is the dialectical nature of social development, which proceeds in contradictions and through contradictions. Capitalism is progressive because it destroys the old methods of production and develops productive forces, yet at the same time, at a certain stage of development, it retards the growth of productive forces. It develops, organises, and disciplines the workers—and it crushes, oppresses, leads to degeneration, poverty, etc. Capitalism creates its own gravedigger, itself creates the elements of a new system, yet, at the same time, without a "leap" these individual elements change nothing in the general state of affairs and do not affect the rule of capital. It is Marxism, the theory of dialectical materialism, that is able to encompass these contradictions of living reality, of the living history of capitalism and the working-class movement. But, needless to say, the masses learn from life and not from books, and therefore certain individuals or groups constantly exaggerate, elevate to a one-sided theory, to a one-sided system of tactics, now one and now another feature of capitalist development, now one and now another "lesson" of this development.

Bourgeois ideologists, liberals and democrats, not understanding Marxism, and not understanding the modern labour movement, are constantly jumping

from one futile extreme to another. At one time they explain the whole matter by asserting that evil-minded persons "incite" class against class—at another they console themselves with the idea that the workers' party is "a peaceful party of reform". Both anarcho-syndicalism and reformism must be regarded as a direct product of this bourgeois world outlook and its influence. They seize upon *one* aspect of the labour movement, elevate one-sidedness to a theory, and declare mutually exclusive those tendencies or features of this movement that are a specific peculiarity of a given period, of given conditions of working-class activity. But real life, real history, *includes* these different tendencies, just as life and development in nature include both slow evolution and rapid leaps, breaks in continuity.

The revisionists regard as phrase-mongering all arguments about "leaps" and about the working-class movement being antagonistic in principle to the whole of the old society. They regard reforms as a partial realisation of socialism. The anarcho-syndicalists reject "petty work", especially the utilisation of the parliamentary platform. In practice, the latter tactics amount to waiting for "great days" along with an inability to muster the forces which create great events. Both of them hinder the thing that is most important and most urgent, namely, to unite the workers in big, powerful and properly functioning organisations, capable of functioning well under *all* circumstances, permeated with the spirit of the class struggle, clearly realising their aims and trained in the true Marxist world outlook. . . .

Finally, an extremely important cause of differences among those taking part in the labour movement lies in changes in the tactics of the ruling clas-

ses in general and of the bourgeoisie in particular. If the tactics of the bourgeoisie were always uniform, or at least of the same kind, the working class would rapidly learn to reply to them by tactics just as uniform or of the same kind. But, as a matter of fact, in every country the bourgeoisie inevitably devises two systems of rule, two methods of fighting for its interests and of maintaining its domination, and these methods at times succeed each other and at times are interwoven in various combinations. The first of these is the method of force, the method which rejects all concessions to the labour movement, the method of supporting all the old and obsolete institutions, the method of irreconcilably rejecting reforms. Such is the nature of the conservative policy which in Western Europe is becoming less and less a policy of the landowning classes and more and more one of the varieties of bourgeois policy in general. The second is the method of "liberalism", of steps towards the development of political rights, towards reforms, concessions, and so forth.

The bourgeoisie passes from one method to the other not because of the malicious intent of individuals, and not accidentally, but owing to the fundamentally contradictory nature of its own position. Normal capitalist society cannot develop successfully without a firmly established representative system and without certain political rights for the population, which is bound to be distinguished by its relatively high "cultural" demands. These demands for a certain minimum of culture are created by the conditions of the capitalist mode of production itself, with its high technique, complexity, flexibility, mobility, rapid development of world competition, and so forth. In consequence, vacillations in the tactics of the bourgeoisie, transitions from the system of force to the system of apparent concessions have

been characteristic of the history of all European countries. . .

December 16, 1910

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 16,
pp. 347-50

V. I. LENIN

From: "THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL" ²⁷

To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the "upper classes", a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for "the lower classes not to want" to live in the old way; it is also necessary that "the upper classes should be unable" to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in "peace time", but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstan-

ces of the crisis *and by the "upper classes" themselves* into independent historical action.

Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible. The totality of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation.

. . . It is not every revolutionary situation that gives rise to a revolution; revolution arises only out of a situation in which the above-mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary *class* to take revolutionary mass action *strong* enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, "falls", if it is not toppled over.

Such are the Marxist views on revolution. . .

Written in May-June 1915

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 21, pp. 213-14

V. I. LENIN

From: "ON COMPROMISES"

The term compromise in politics implies the surrender of certain demands, the renunciation of part of one's demands, by agreement with another party.

The usual idea the man in the street has about the Bolsheviks, an idea encouraged by a press which slanders them, is that the Bolsheviks will never agree to a compromise with anybody.

The idea is flattering to us as the party of the revolutionary proletariat, for it proves that even our enemies are compelled to admit our loyalty to the fundamental principles of socialism and revolution. Nevertheless, we must say that this idea is wrong. Engels was right when, in his criticism of the Manifesto of the Blanquist Communists (1873), he ridiculed their declaration: "No compromises!"²⁸ This, he said, was an empty phrase, for compromises are often unavoidably forced upon a fighting party by circumstances, and it is absurd to refuse once and for all to accept "payments on account".²⁹ The task of a truly revolutionary party is not to declare that it is impossible to renounce all compromises, but to be able, *through all compromises*, when they are unavoidable, to remain true to its principles, to its class, to its revolutionary purpose, to its task of paving the way for revolution and educating the mass of the people for victory in the revolution.

Written in September 1917

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 25, p. 305

V. I. LENIN

From: "THE TASKS OF THE REVOLUTION"

...By seizing full power, the Soviets could still today—and this is probably their last chance—ensure the peaceful development of the revolution, peaceful elections of deputies by the people, and a peaceful struggle of parties inside the Soviets; they could test the programmes of the various parties in practice

and power could pass peacefully from one party to another.

The entire course of development of the revolution... shows that there is bound to be the bitterest civil war between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat if this opportunity is missed. Inevitable catastrophe will bring this war nearer. It must end, as all data and considerations accessible to human reason go to prove, in the full victory of the working class, in that class, supported by the poor peasantry, carrying out the above programme; it may, however, prove very difficult and bloody, and may cost the lives of tens of thousands of landowners, capitalists, and officers who sympathise with them. The proletariat will not hesitate to make every sacrifice to save the revolution, which is possible only by implementing the programme set forth above. On the other hand, the proletariat would support the Soviets in every way if they were to make use of their last chance to secure a peaceful development of the revolution.

Written in the first part
of September 1917

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 26, pp. 67-8

V. I. LENIN

From: "MARXISM AND INSURRECTION"

One of the most vicious and probably most widespread distortions of Marxism resorted to by the dominant "socialist" parties is the opportunist lie that preparation for insurrection, and generally the treatment of insurrection as an art, is "Blanquism".

Bernstein,³⁰ the leader of opportunism, has already earned himself unfortunate fame by accusing Marxism of Blanquism, and when our present-day opportunists cry Blanquism they do not improve on or "enrich" the meagre "ideas" of Bernstein one little bit.

Marxists are accused of Blanquism for treating insurrection as an art! Can there be a more flagrant perversion of the truth, when not a single Marxist will deny that it was Marx who expressed himself on this score in the most definite, precise and categorical manner, referring to insurrection specifically as an *art*, saying that it must be treated as an art, that you must *win* the first success and then proceed from success to success, never ceasing the *offensive* against the enemy, taking advantage of his confusion, etc., etc.?

To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a *revolutionary upsurge of the people*. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon that *turning-point* in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the *vacillations* in the ranks of the enemy and *in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution* are strongest. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish *Marxism from Blanquism*.

Once these conditions exist, however, to refuse to treat insurrection as an *art* is a betrayal of Marxism and a betrayal of the revolution.

Written in September 1917

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 26, pp. 22-3

V. I. LENIN

From: "ADVICE OF AN ONLOOKER"

...Armed uprising is a *special* form of political struggle, one subject to special laws to which attentive thought must be given. Karl Marx expressed this truth with remarkable clarity when he wrote that "*insurrection is an art quite as much as war*".

Of the principal rules of this art, Marx noted the following:

(1) *Never play* with insurrection, but when beginning it realise firmly that you must *go all the way*.

(2) Concentrate a *great superiority of forces* at the decisive point and at the decisive moment, otherwise the enemy, who has the advantage of better preparation and organisation, will destroy the insurgents.

(3) Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest *determination*, and by all means, without fail, take the *offensive*. "The defensive is the death of every armed rising."

(4) You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered.

(5) You must strive for *daily* successes, however small (one might say hourly, if it is the case of one town), and at all costs retain "*moral superiority*".

Marx summed up the lessons of all revolutions in respect to armed uprising in the words of "Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary policy yet known: *de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace*".³¹

Applied to Russia and to October 1917, this means: a simultaneous offensive on Petrograd, as sudden and as rapid as possible, which must without fail be carried out from within and from without,

from the working-class quarters and from Finland, from Revel and from Kronstadt, an offensive of the *entire* navy, the concentration of a *gigantic superiority* of forces over the 15,000 or 20,000 (perhaps more) of our "bourgeois guard" (the officers' schools), our "Vendée troops" (part of the Cossacks), etc.

Our *three* main forces—the fleet, the workers, and the army units—must be so combined as to occupy without fail and to hold *at any cost*: (a) the telephone exchange; (b) the telegraph office; (c) the railway stations; (d) and above all, the bridges.

The *most determined* elements (our "shock forces" and *young workers*, as well as the best of the sailors) must be formed into small detachments to occupy all the more important points and to *take part* everywhere in all important operations, for example:

to encircle and cut off Petrograd; to seize it by a combined attack of the sailors, the workers, and the troops—a task which requires *art and triple audacity*;

to form detachments from the best workers, armed with rifles and bombs, for the purpose of attacking and surrounding the enemy's "centres" (the officers' schools, the telegraph office, the telephone exchange, etc.). Their watchword must be: "*Better die to a man than let the enemy pass!*"

Let us hope that if action is decided on, the leaders will successfully apply the great precepts of Danton and Marx.

The success of both the Russian and the world revolution depends on two or three days' fighting.

Written on October 8 (21), 1917

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 26, pp. 179-81

V. I. LENIN

From: "THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND THE RENEGADE KAUTSKY"

...Not a single great revolution has ever taken place, or ever can take place, without the "disorganisation" of the army. For the army is the most ossified instrument for supporting the old regime, the most hardened bulwark of bourgeois discipline, buttressing up the rule of capital, and preserving and fostering among the working people the servile spirit of submission and subjection to capital. Counter-revolution has never tolerated, and never could tolerate, armed workers side by side with the army. In France, Engels wrote, the workers emerged armed from every revolution: "therefore, the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeoisie, who were at the helm of the state."³² The armed workers were the embryo of a *new* army, the organised nucleus of a *new* social order. The first commandment of the bourgeoisie was to crush this nucleus and prevent it from growing. The first commandment of every victorious revolution, as Marx and Engels repeatedly emphasised, was to smash the old army, dissolve it and replace it by a new one.³³ A new social class, when rising to power, never could, and cannot now, attain power and consolidate it except by completely disintegrating the old army ("Disorganisation!" the reactionary or just cowardly philistines howl on this score), except by passing through a most difficult and painful period without any army (the great French Revolution also passed through such a painful period), and by

gradually building up, in the midst of hard civil war, a new army, a new discipline, a new military organisation of the new class. . .

Written in October-November 1918

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 28, p. 284

V. I. LENIN

From: "GREETINGS TO ITALIAN, FRENCH AND GERMAN COMMUNISTS"

...The proletarian revolution is impossible without the sympathy and support of the overwhelming majority of the working people for their vanguard—the proletariat. But this sympathy and this support are not forthcoming immediately and are not decided by elections. They are *won* in the course of long, arduous and stern class struggle. The class struggle waged by the proletariat *for* the sympathy and support of the majority of the working people does not end with the conquest of political power by the proletariat. *After* the conquest of power this struggle *continues*, but in *other* forms. In the Russian revolution the circumstances were exceptionally favourable for the proletariat (in its struggle for its dictatorship), since the proletarian revolution took place at a time when all the people were under arms and when the peasantry as a whole, disgusted by the "Kautskyite" policy of the social-traitors, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, wanted the overthrow of the rule of the landowners.

But even in Russia, where things were exceptionally favourable at the moment of the proletarian

revolution, where a most remarkable unity of the entire proletariat, the entire army and the entire peasantry was achieved at once—even in Russia, the proletariat, exercising its dictatorship, had to struggle for months and years to win the sympathy and support of the majority of the working people.

Written on October 10, 1919

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 30, p. 60

V. I. LENIN

From: "‘LEFT-WING’ COMMUNISM—AN INFANTILE DISORDER"

... We now possess quite considerable international experience, which shows very definitely that certain fundamental features of our revolution have a significance that is not local, or peculiarly national, or Russian alone, but international. I am not speaking here of international significance in the broad sense of the term: not merely several but all the primary features of our revolution, and many of its secondary features, are of international significance in the meaning of its effect on all countries. I am speaking of it in the narrowest sense of the word, taking international significance to mean the international validity or the historical inevitability of a repetition, on an international scale, of what has taken place in our country. It must be admitted that certain fundamental features of our revolution do possess that significance. . .

... If you want to help the "masses" and win the sympathy and support of the "masses", you should

not fear difficulties, or pinpricks, chicanery, insults and persecution from the "leaders" (who, being opportunists and social-chauvinists, are in most cases directly or indirectly connected with the bourgeoisie and the police), but must absolutely *work wherever the masses are to be found*. You must be capable of any sacrifice, of overcoming the greatest obstacles, in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically, perseveringly, persistently and patiently in those institutions, societies and associations—even the most reactionary—in which proletarian or semi-proletarian masses are to be found. . .

. . . We took part in the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the Russian bourgeois parliament, in September-November 1917. Were our tactics correct or not? If not, then this should be clearly stated and proved, for it is necessary in evolving the correct tactics for international communism. If they were correct, then certain conclusions must be drawn. . .

The conclusion which follows from this is absolutely incontrovertible: it has been proved that, far from causing harm to the revolutionary proletariat, participation in a bourgeois-democratic parliament, even a few weeks before the victory of a Soviet republic and even *after* such a victory, actually helps that proletariat to *prove* to the backward masses why such parliaments deserve to be done away with; it *facilitates* their successful dissolution, and *helps* to make bourgeois parliamentarianism "politically obsolete". To ignore this experience, while at the same time claiming affiliation to the Communist *International*, which must work out its tactics internationally (not as narrow or exclusively national tactics, but as international tactics), means committing a gross error and actually abandoning internationalism in deed, while recognising it in word. . .

. . . without a revolutionary mood among the mas-

ses, and without conditions facilitating the growth of this mood, revolutionary tactics will never develop into action. In Russia, however, lengthy, painful and sanguinary experience has taught us the truth that revolutionary tactics cannot be built on a revolutionary mood alone. Tactics must be based on a sober and strictly objective appraisal of *all* the class forces in a particular state (and of the states that surround it, and of all states the world over) as well as of the experience of revolutionary movements. . .

. . . Criticism—the most keen, ruthless and uncompromising criticism—should be directed, not against parliamentarianism or parliamentary activities, but against those leaders who are unable—and still more against those who are *unwilling*—to utilise parliamentary elections and the parliamentary rostrum in a revolutionary and communist manner. Only such criticism—combined, of course, with the dismissal of incapable leaders and their replacement by capable ones—will constitute useful and fruitful revolutionary work that will simultaneously train the “leaders” to be worthy of the working class and of all working people, and train the masses to be able properly to understand the political situation and the often very complicated and intricate tasks that spring from that situation. . .

. . . The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and by the most thorough, careful, attentive, skilful and *obligatory* use of any, even the smallest, rift between the enemies, any conflict of interests among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, and also by taking advantage of any, even the smallest, opportunity of winning a mass ally, even though this ally is temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who do not

understand this reveal a failure to understand even the smallest grain of Marxism, of modern scientific socialism in *general*. Those who have not proved in *practice*, over a fairly considerable period of time and in fairly varied political situations, their ability to apply this truth in practice have not yet learned to help the revolutionary class in its struggle to emancipate all toiling humanity from the exploiters. And this applies equally to the period *before* and *after* the proletariat has won political power.

Our theory is not a dogma, but a *guide to action*, said Marx and Engels.³⁴ The greatest blunder, the greatest crime, committed by such "out-and-out" Marxists as Karl Kautsky, Otto Bauer,³⁵ etc., is that they have not understood this and have been unable to apply it at crucial moments of the proletarian revolution. . .

Capitalism would not be capitalism if the proletariat *pur sang* were not surrounded by a large number of exceedingly motley types intermediate between the proletarian and the semi-proletarian (who earns his livelihood in part by the sale of his labour-power), between the semi-proletarian and the small peasant (and petty artisan, handicraft worker and small master in general), between the small peasant and the middle peasant, and so on, and if the proletariat itself were not divided into more developed and less developed strata, if it were not divided according to territorial origin, trade, sometimes according to religion, and so on. From all this follows the necessity, the absolute necessity, for the Communist Party, the vanguard of the proletariat, its class-conscious section, to resort to changes of tack, to conciliation and compromises with the various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and small masters. It is entirely a matter of *knowing how* to apply these tactics in order to *raise*—not

lower—the *general* level of proletarian class-consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and win. Incidentally, it should be noted that the Bolsheviks' victory over the Mensheviks called for the application of tactics of changes of tack, conciliation and compromises, not only before *but also after* the October Revolution of 1917, but the changes of tack and compromises were, of course, such as assisted, boosted and consolidated the Bolsheviks at the expense of the Mensheviks. The petty-bourgeois democrats (including the Mensheviks) inevitably vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between bourgeois democracy and the Soviet system, between reformism and revolutionism, between love for the workers and fear of the proletarian dictatorship, etc. The Communists' proper tactics should consist in *utilising* these vacillations, not ignoring them; utilising them calls for concessions to elements that are turning towards the proletariat—whenever and in the measure that they turn towards the proletariat—in addition to fighting those who turn towards the bourgeoisie. . .

The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions and especially by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follows: for a revolution to take place it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realise the impossibility of living in the old way, and demand changes; for a revolution to take place it is essential that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. It is only when the "*lower classes*" *do not want* to live in the old way and the "*upper classes*" *cannot carry on in the old way* that the revolution can triumph. This truth can be expressed in other words: revolution is impossible without a nation-wide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters). It follows that, for a

revolution to take place, it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class-conscious, thinking, and politically active workers) should fully realise that revolution is necessary, and that they should be prepared to die for it; second, that the ruling classes should be going through a governmental crisis, which draws even the most backward masses into politics (symptomatic of any genuine revolution is a rapid, tenfold and even hundredfold increase in the size of the working and oppressed masses—hitherto apathetic—who are capable of waging the political struggle), weakens the government, and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to rapidly overthrow it. . . .

History as a whole, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more multiform, more lively and ingenious than is imagined by even the best parties, the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes. This can readily be understood, because even the finest of vanguards express the class-consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of thousands, whereas at moments of great upsurge and the exertion of all human capacities, revolutions are made by the class-consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of millions, spurred on by a most acute struggle of classes. Two very important practical conclusions follow from this: first, that in order to accomplish its task the revolutionary class must be able to master *all* forms or aspects of social activity without exception (completing after the capture of political power—sometimes at great risk and with very great danger—what it did not complete before the capture of power); second, that the revolutionary class must be prepared for the most rapid and brusque replacement of one form by another.

One will readily agree that any army which does not train to use all the weapons, all the means and methods of warfare that the enemy possesses, or may possess, is behaving in an unwise or even criminal manner. This applies to politics even more than it does to the art of war. In politics it is even harder to know in advance which methods of struggle will be applicable and to our advantage in certain future conditions. Unless we learn to apply all the methods of struggle, we may suffer grave and sometimes even decisive defeat, if changes beyond our control in the position of the other classes bring to the forefront a form of activity in which we are especially weak. If, however, we learn to use all the methods of struggle, victory will be certain, because we represent the interests of the really foremost and really revolutionary class, even if circumstances do not permit us to make use of weapons that are most dangerous to the enemy, weapons that deal the swiftest mortal blows.

Written in April-May 1920

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 31,
pp. 21, 53, 59-60, 65, 70-1,
74-5, 84-5, 95-6

Forms of Political Power of the Working Class

K. MARX
F. ENGELS

From: "MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST
PARTY"

...The first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hand of the State, *i.e.*, of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible...

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away

the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all...

Written in December 1847-
January 1848

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Works*,
Vol. I, pp. 126-7

K. MARX

From: A LETTER TO JOSEPH WEYDEMAYER ³⁶

London, March 5, 1852

...As to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering either the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to demonstrate: (1) that the *existence of classes* is merely linked to *particular historical phases in the development of production*, (2) that class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*...

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Correspondence*,
M., 1975, p. 64

K. MARX

From: SPEECH ON THE SEVENTH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL

(Reporter's Record of the speech delivered at the
celebration meeting in London, September 25,
1871)

...The last movement was the Commune, the greatest that had yet been made, and there could not be two opinions about it—the Commune was the conquest of the political power of the working classes. There was much misunderstanding about the Commune. The Commune could not found a new form of class government. In destroying the existing conditions of oppression by transferring all the means of labour to the productive labourer, and thereby compelling every able-bodied individual to work for a living, the only base for class rule and oppression would be removed. But before such a change could be effected a proletarian *dictature* would become necessary, and the first condition of that was a proletarian army. The working classes would have to conquer the right to emancipate themselves on the battlefield. The task of the International was to organise and combine the forces of labour for the coming struggle.

K. Marx, F. Engels, *On the Paris Commune*,
M., Progress Publishers, 1971, p. 266

K. MARX

**From: COMMENTS ON BAKUNIN'S³⁷ BOOK
"STATE AND ANARCHY"**

The *class domination* of the workers over the strata of the old world that resist it must continue until the economic foundations of the existence of classes are destroyed.

Written in 1874-early 1875

K. Marx and F. Engels, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 18, pp. 617-18 (in Russian)

F. ENGELS

From: ON THE DEATH OF KARL MARX

Ever since 1845 Marx and I have held the view that the coming proletarian revolution will have as *one* of its end results the gradual withering away of the political organisation called the *state*. The chief aim of this organisation has always been to ensure by force of arms the economic oppression of the toiling majority by a specially privileged minority. With the disappearance of this specially privileged minority the need for an armed force of oppression, for state power, will also disappear. At the same time, we have always held the view that in order to achieve this and other, much more important aims of the coming social revolution, the working class must first of all take hold of the organised political power of the state and suppress

with its help the resistance of the capitalist class and organise society along new lines. . .

The anarchists put everything on its head. They declare that the proletarian revolution must *begin* with abolishing the political organisation of the state. But the only organisation the proletariat finds ready-made after its victory is precisely the state. True, this state needs to be modified very considerably before it can begin to perform its new functions. But to destroy it at this moment would be to destroy the only weapon with the help of which the victorious proletariat can use the power it has just won, suppress its capitalist adversaries, and accomplish the economic revolution of society without which the whole victory would end in a new defeat and slaughter of workers, as happened after the Paris Commune.

Dated May 12, 1883

K. Marx and F. Engels, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 19, pp. 359-60 (in Russian)

V. I. LENIN

From: "A CARICATURE OF MARXISM AND IMPERIALIST ECONOMISM"

...Dictatorship of the proletariat, the only consistently revolutionary class, is necessary to overthrow the bourgeoisie and repel its attempts at counter-revolution. The question of proletarian dictatorship is of such overriding importance that he who denies the need for such dictatorship, or recognises it only in words, cannot be a member of the Social-Democratic Party. However, it cannot be

denied that in individual cases, by way of exception, for instance, in some small country, after the social revolution has been accomplished in a neighbouring big country, peaceful surrender of power by the bourgeoisie is *possible*, if it is convinced that resistance is hopeless and if it prefers to save its skin. It is much more likely, of course, that even in small states socialism will *not* be achieved without civil war, and for that reason the *only* programme of international Social-Democracy must be recognition of civil war, though violence is, of course, alien to our ideals. . .

Written in August-October 1916

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 23, p. 69

V. I. LENIN

From: "THE STATE AND REVOLUTION"

...The essence of Marx's theory of the state has been mastered only by those who realise that the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire *historical period* which separates capitalism from "classless society", from communism. Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will in-

vitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*...

...Democracy is *not* identical with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democracy is a *state* which recognises the subordination of the minority to the majority, i.e., an organisation for the systematic use of *force* by one class against another, by one section of the population against another.

We set ourselves the ultimate aim of abolishing the state, i.e., all organised and systematic violence, all use of violence against people in general. We do not expect the advent of a system of society in which the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed. In striving for socialism, however, we are convinced that it will develop into communism and, therefore, that the need for violence against people in general, for the *subordination* of one man to another, and of one section of the population to another, will vanish altogether since people will *become accustomed* to observing the elementary conditions of social life *without violence* and *without subordination*...

Written in August-September 1917

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 25, pp. 418, 461

V. I. LENIN

From: "LETTER TO AMERICAN WORKERS"

...No revolution can be successful unless *the resistance of the exploiters is crushed*. When we, the workers and toiling peasants, captured state

power, it became our duty to crush the resistance of the exploiters. We are proud we have been doing this. We regret we are not doing it with sufficient firmness and determination.

We know that fierce resistance to the socialist revolution on the part of the bourgeoisie is inevitable in all countries, and that this resistance will *grow* with the growth of this revolution. The proletariat will crush this resistance; during the struggle against the resisting bourgeoisie it will finally mature for victory and for power.

Written on August 20, 1918

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 28, p. 71

V. I. LENIN

From: "THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND THE RENEGADE KAUTSKY"

...But, after all, the title of Kautsky's pamphlet is *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. Everybody knows that this is the very *essence* of Marx's doctrine; and after a lot of irrelevant twaddle Kautsky *was obliged* to quote Marx's words on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But the *way* in which he the "Marxist" did it was simply farcical! Listen to this:

"This view" (which Kautsky dubs "contempt for democracy") "rests upon a single word of Karl Marx's". This is what Kautsky literally says on page 20. And on page 60 the same thing is repeated even in the form that they (the Bolsheviks) "opportunistly recalled the little word" (that is li-

terally what he says—*des Wörtchens!!*) “about the dictatorship of the proletariat which Marx once used in 1875 in a letter”.

Here is Marx’s “little word”:

“Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.”

First of all, to call this classical reasoning of Marx’s, which sums up the whole of his revolutionary teaching, “a single word” and even “a little word”, is an insult to and complete renunciation of Marxism. It must not be forgotten that Kautsky knows Marx almost by heart, and, judging by all he has written, he has in his desk, or in his head, a number of pigeon-holes in which all that was ever written by Marx is most carefully filed so as to be ready at hand for quotation. Kautsky *must know* that both Marx and Engels, in their letters as well as in their published works, *repeatedly* spoke about the dictatorship of the proletariat, before and especially after the Paris Commune. Kautsky must know that the formula “dictatorship of the proletariat” is merely a more historically concrete and scientifically exact formulation of the proletariat’s task of “smashing” the bourgeois state machine, about which both Marx and Engels, in summing up the experience of the Revolution of 1848, and, still more so, of 1871, spoke *for forty years*, between 1852 and 1891...

Dictatorship is rule based directly upon force and unrestricted by any laws.

The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is rule won and maintained by the use of force

by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, rule that is unrestricted by any laws. . .

We are governed (and our state is "knocked into shape") by bourgeois bureaucrats, by bourgeois members of parliament, by bourgeois judges—such is the simple, obvious and indisputable truth which tens and hundreds of millions of people belonging to the oppressed classes in all bourgeois countries, including the most democratic, know from their own experience, feel and realise every day.

In Russia, however, the bureaucratic machine has been completely smashed, razed to the ground; the old judges have all been sent packing, the bourgeois parliament has been dispersed—and *far more accessible* representation has been given to the workers and peasants; *their* Soviets have replaced the bureaucrats, or *their* Soviets have been put in control of the bureaucrats, and *their* Soviets have been authorised to elect the judges. This fact alone is enough for all the oppressed classes to recognise that Soviet power, i.e., the present form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic.

Kautsky does not understand this truth, which is so clear and obvious to every worker, because he has "forgotten", "unlearned" to put the question: democracy *for which class*? He argues from the point of view of "pure" (i.e., non-class? or above-class?) democracy. . .

Kautsky is as far removed from Marx and Engels as heaven is from earth, as a liberal from a proletarian revolutionary. The pure democracy and simple "democracy" that Kautsky talks about is merely a paraphrase of the "free people's state", i.e., *sheer nonsense*. Kautsky, with the learned air of a most learned armchair fool, or with the innocent

air of a ten-year-old schoolgirl, asks: Why do we need a dictatorship when we have a majority? And Marx and Engels explain:

- to break down the resistance of the bourgeoisie;
- to inspire the reactionaries with fear;
- to maintain the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie;
- that the proletariat may forcibly hold down its adversaries.

Kautsky does not understand these explanations. Infatuated with the "purity" of democracy, blind to its bourgeois character, he "consistently" urges that the majority, since it is the majority, need not "break down the resistance" of the minority, nor "forcibly hold it down"—it is sufficient to suppress *cases* of infringement of democracy. Infatuated with the "purity" of democracy, Kautsky *inadvertently* commits the same little error that all bourgeois democrats always commit, namely, he takes formal equality (which is nothing but a fraud and hypocrisy under capitalism) for actual equality! Quite a trifle!

The exploiter and the exploited cannot be equal.

This truth, however unpleasant it may be to Kautsky, nevertheless forms the essence of socialism.

Another truth: there can be no real, actual equality until all possibility of the exploitation of one class by another has been totally destroyed.

The exploiters can be defeated at one stroke in the event of a successful uprising at the centre, or of a revolt in the army. But except in very rare and special cases, the exploiters cannot be destroyed at one stroke. It is impossible to expropriate all the landowners and capitalists of any big country

at one stroke. Furthermore, expropriation alone, as a legal or political act, does not settle the matter by a long chalk, because it is necessary to *depose* the landowners and capitalists in actual fact, to *replace* their management of the factories and estates by a different management, workers' management, in actual fact. There can be no equality between the exploiters—who for many generations have been better off because of their education, conditions of wealthy life, and habits—and the exploited, the majority of whom even in the most advanced and most democratic bourgeois republics are downtrodden, backward, ignorant, intimidated and disunited. For a long time after the revolution the exploiters inevitably continue to retain a number of great practical advantages: they still have money (since it is impossible to abolish money all at once); some movable property—often fairly considerable; they still have various connections, habits of organisation and management; knowledge of all the "secrets" (customs, methods, means and possibilities) of management; superior education; close connections with the higher technical personnel (who live and think like the bourgeoisie); incomparably greater experience in the art of war (this is very important), and so on and so forth.

If the exploiters are defeated in one country only—and this, of course, is typical, since a simultaneous revolution in a number of countries is a rare exception—they *still* remain *stronger* than the exploited, for the international connections of the exploiters are enormous. That a section of the exploited from the least advanced middle-peasant, artisan and similar groups of the population may, and indeed does, follow the exploiters has been proved by *all* revolutions, including the Commune (for there were also proletarians among the Ver-

sailles troops, which the most learned Kautsky has "forgotten").

...This historical truth is that in every profound revolution, the *prolonged, stubborn and desperate* resistance of the exploiters, who for a number of years retain important practical advantages over the exploited, is the *rule*. Never—except in the sentimental fantasies of the sentimental fool Kautsky—will the exploiters submit to the decision of the exploited majority without trying to make use of their advantages in a last desperate battle, or series of battles.

The transition from capitalism to communism takes an entire historical epoch. Until this epoch is over, the exploiters inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this *hope* turns into *attempts* at restoration. After their first serious defeat, the overthrown exploiters—who had not expected their overthrow, never believed it possible, never conceded the thought of it—throw themselves with energy grown tenfold, with furious passion and hatred grown a hundredfold, into the battle for the recovery of the "paradise", of which they were deprived, on behalf of their families, who had been leading such a sweet and easy life and whom now the "common herd" is condemning to ruin and destitution (or to "common" labour...). In the train of the capitalist exploiters follow the wide sections of the petty bourgeoisie, with regard to whom decades of historical experience of all countries testify that they vacillate and hesitate, one day marching behind the proletariat and the next day taking fright at the difficulties of the revolution; that they become panic-stricken at the first defeat or semi-defeat of the workers, grow nervous, run about aimlessly, snivel, and rush from one camp into the

other—just like our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries.³⁸

In these circumstances, in an epoch of desperately acute war, when history presents the question of whether age-old and thousand-year-old privileges are to be or not to be—at such a time to talk about majority and minority, about pure democracy, about dictatorship being unnecessary and about equality between the exploiter and the exploited! . . .

Written in October-November 1918

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 28,
pp. 233, 236, 249, 252-4

V. I. LENIN

From: "GREETINGS TO THE HUNGARIAN WORKERS"³⁹

...But the essence of proletarian dictatorship is not in force alone, or even mainly in force. Its chief feature is the organisation and discipline of the advanced contingent of the working people, of their vanguard; of their sole leader, the proletariat, whose object is to build socialism, abolish the division of society into classes, make all members of society working people, and remove the basis for all exploitation of man by man. This object cannot be achieved at one stroke. It requires a fairly long period of transition from capitalism to socialism, because the reorganisation of production is a difficult matter, because radical changes in all spheres of life need time, and because the enormous force

of habit of running things in a petty-bourgeois and bourgeois way can only be overcome by a long and stubborn struggle. That is why Marx spoke of an entire period of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the period of transition from capitalism to socialism.

Throughout the whole of this transition period, resistance to the revolution will be offered both by the capitalists and by their numerous myrmidons among the bourgeois intellectuals, who will resist consciously, and by the vast mass of the working people, including the peasants, who are shackled very much by petty-bourgeois habits and traditions, and who all too often will resist unconsciously. Vacillations among these groups are inevitable. As a working man the peasant gravitates towards socialism, and prefers the dictatorship of the workers to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. As a seller of grain, the peasant gravitates towards the bourgeoisie, towards freedom of trade, i.e., back to the "habitual", old, "time-hallowed" capitalism.

What is needed to enable the proletariat *to lead* the peasants and the petty-bourgeois groups in general is the dictatorship of the proletariat, the rule of one class, its strength of organisation and discipline, its centralised power based on all the achievements of the culture, science and technology of capitalism, its proletarian affinity to the mentality of every working man, its prestige with the disunited, less developed working people in the countryside or in petty industry, who are less firm in politics. Here phrase-mongering about "democracy" in general, about "unity" or the "unity of labour democracy", about the "equality" of all "men of labour", and so on and so forth—the phrase-mongering for which the now petty-bourgeois social-chauvinists and Kautskyites have such a predilec-

tion—is of no use whatever. Phrase-mongering only throws dust in the eyes, blinds the mind and strengthens the old stupidity, conservatism, and routine of capitalism, the parliamentary system and bourgeois democracy.

The abolition of classes requires a long, difficult and stubborn *class struggle*, which, *after* the overthrow of capitalist rule, *after* the destruction of the bourgeois state, *after* the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, *does not disappear* (as the vulgar representatives of the old socialism and the old Social-Democracy imagine), but merely changes its forms and in many respects becomes fiercer.

The proletariat, by means of a class struggle against the resistance of the bourgeoisie, against the conservatism, routine, irresolution and vacillation of the petty bourgeoisie, must uphold its power, strengthen its organising influence, “neutralise” those groups which fear to leave the bourgeoisie and which follow the proletariat too hesitantly, and consolidate the new discipline, the comradely discipline of the working people, their firm bond with the proletariat, their unity with the proletariat—that new discipline, that new basis of social ties in place of the serf discipline of the Middle Ages and the discipline of starvation, the discipline of “free” wage-slavery under capitalism.

In order to abolish classes a period of the dictatorship of one class is needed, the dictatorship of precisely that oppressed class which is capable not only of overthrowing the exploiters, not only of ruthlessly crushing their resistance, but also of breaking ideologically with the entire bourgeois-democratic outlook, with all the philistine phrase-mongering about liberty and equality in general (in reality, this phrase-mongering implies, as Marx de-

monstrated long ago, the "liberty and equality" of *commodity owners*, the "liberty and equality" of *the capitalist and the worker*).

Written on May 27, 1919

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 29, pp. 388-90

V. I. LENIN

FROM: "THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY
ELECTIONS AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE
PROLETARIAT"

...The three conditions which determined the victory of Bolshevism: (1) an overwhelming majority among the proletariat; (2) almost half of the armed forces; (3) an overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive moment at the decisive points, namely: in Petrograd and Moscow and on the war fronts near the centre.

But these conditions could have ensured only a very short-lived and unstable victory had the Bolsheviks been unable to win to their side the majority of the *non-proletarian* working masses, to win them from the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the other petty-bourgeois parties.

That is the main thing.

And the chief reason why the "socialists" (read: petty-bourgeois democrats) of the Second International fail to understand the dictatorship of the proletariat is that they fail to understand that

state power in the hands of one class, the proletariat, can and must become an instrument for winning to the side of the proletariat the non-proletarian working

masses, an instrument for winning those masses from the bourgeoisie and from the petty-bourgeois parties.

Filled with petty-bourgeois prejudices, forgetting the most important thing in the teachings of Marx about the state, the "socialists" of the Second International regard *state power* as something holy, as an idol, or as the result of formal voting, the absolute of "consistent democracy" (or whatever else they call this nonsense). They fail to see that state power is simply an *instrument* which *different* classes can and must use (and know how to use) *for their class aims*.

The bourgeoisie has used state power as an instrument of the capitalist class against the proletariat, against all the working people. That has been the case in the most democratic bourgeois republics. Only the betrayers of Marxism have "forgotten" this.

The proletariat must (after mustering sufficiently strong political and military "striking forces") overthrow the bourgeoisie, take state power from it in order to use that *instrument* for *its* class aims.

What are the class aims of the proletariat?

Suppress the resistance of the bourgeoisie;

Neutralise the peasantry and, if possible, win them over—at any rate the majority of the labouring, non-exploiting section—to the side of the proletariat;

Organise large-scale machine production, using factories, and means of production in general, expropriated from the bourgeoisie;

Organise socialism on the ruins of capitalism.

December 16, 1919

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 30, pp. 262-6

V. I. LENIN.

From: "THESES ON THE FUNDAMENTAL TASKS OF THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL"

The Essence of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and of Soviet Power

...(2) The victory of socialism (as the first stage of communism) over capitalism requires that the proletariat, as the only really revolutionary class, shall accomplish the following three tasks. First—overthrow the exploiters, and first and foremost the bourgeoisie, as their principal economic and political representative; utterly rout them; crush their resistance; absolutely preclude any attempt on their part to restore the yoke of capital and wage-slavery. Second—win over and bring under the leadership of the Communist Party, the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, not only the entire proletariat, or its vast majority, but all who labour and are exploited by capital; educate, organise, train and discipline them in the actual course of a supremely bold and ruthlessly firm struggle against the exploiters; wrest this vast majority of the population in all the capitalist countries from dependence on the bourgeoisie; imbue it, through its own practical experience, with confidence in the leading role of the proletariat and of its revolutionary vanguard. Third—neutralise, or render harmless, the inevitable vacillation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between bourgeois democracy and Soviet power, to be seen in the class of petty proprietors in agriculture, industry and commerce—

a class which is still fairly numerous in nearly all advanced countries, although comprising only a minority of the population—as well as in the stratum of intellectuals, salary earners, etc., which corresponds to this class.

The first and second tasks are independent ones, each requiring its own special methods of action with regard to the exploiters and to the exploited respectively. The third task follows from the first two, and merely requires a skilful, timely and flexible combination of methods of the first and second type, depending on the specific circumstances in each separate instance of vacillation. . .

(6) The proletariat's conquest of political power does not put a stop to its class struggle against the bourgeoisie; on the contrary, it renders that struggle most widespread, intense and ruthless. Owing to the extreme intensification of the struggle all groups, parties and leaders in the working-class movement who have fully or partly adopted the stand of reformism, of the "Centre", etc., inevitably side with the bourgeoisie or join the waverers, or else (what is the most dangerous of all) land in the ranks of the unreliable friends of the victorious proletariat. Hence, preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat calls, not only for an intensification of the struggle against reformist and "Centrist" tendencies, but also for a change in the character of that struggle. The struggle cannot be restricted to explaining the erroneousness of these tendencies; it must unswervingly and ruthlessly expose any leader of the working-class movement who reveals such tendencies, for otherwise the proletariat cannot know who it will march with into the decisive struggle against the bourgeoisie. This struggle is such that at any moment it may—and actually does, as experience has shown—substitute

criticism with weapons for the weapon of criticism. Any inconsistency or weakness in exposing those who show themselves to be reformists or "Centrists" means directly increasing the danger of the power of the proletariat being overthrown by the bourgeoisie, which tomorrow will utilise for the counter-revolution that which short-sighted people today see merely as "theoretical difference". . . .

Written in June-July 1920

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 31, pp. 185-7, 189-90

**The Universal Character
of Socialist Revolution**

K. MARX
F. ENGELS

**From: "MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST
PARTY"**

... National differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world-market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.

The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster. United action, of the leading civilised countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.

Written in December 1847-January 1848

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Works*,
Vol. I, pp. 124-5

K. MARX
F. ENGELS

**From: ADDRESS OF THE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE TO THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE ⁴⁰**

... While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as

possible, . . . it is . . . our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, until the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians of these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians. For us the issue cannot be the alteration of private property but only its annihilation, not the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes, not the improvement of existing society but the foundation of a new one. . .

March 1850

K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sel. Works*,
Vol. I, pp. 178-9

K. MARX

From: "PROVISIONAL RULES OF THE
ASSOCIATION"

Considering,

That the emancipation of the working classes must be accomplished by the working classes themselves; that the struggle for the emancipation of the working classes means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies, but for equal rights and duties, and the abolition of all class rule;

That the economical subjection of the man of

labour to the monopoliser of the means of labour, that is, the sources of life, lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms, of all social misery, mental degradation, and political dependence;

That the economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means;

That all efforts aiming at that great end have hitherto failed from the want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labour in each country, and from the absence of a fraternal bond of union between the working classes of different countries;

That the emancipation of labour is neither a local nor a national, but a social problem, embracing all countries in which modern society exists, and depending for its solution on the concurrence, practical and theoretical, of the most advanced countries;

That the present revival of the working classes in the most industrious countries of Europe, while it raises a new hope, gives solemn warning against a relapse into the old errors and calls for the immediate combination of the still disconnected movements;

For these reasons—

The undersigned members of the committee, holding its powers by resolution of the public meeting held on September 28, 1864, at St. Martin's Hall, London, have taken the steps necessary for founding the Working Men's International Association.

Written in October 1864

The General Council of the First International. 1864-1866. M., 1974, pp. 288-9

V. I. LENIN

From: "ON THE SLOGAN FOR A UNITED STATES OF EUROPE"

...Political changes of a truly democratic nature, and especially political revolutions, can under no circumstances whatsoever either obscure or weaken the slogan of a socialist revolution. On the contrary, they always bring it closer, extend its basis, and draw new sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the semi-proletarian masses into the socialist struggle. On the other hand, political revolutions are inevitable in the course of the socialist revolution, which should not be regarded as a single act, but as a period of turbulent political and economic upheavals, the most intense class struggle, civil war, revolutions, and counter-revolutions. . .

Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone. . .

August 23, 1915

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 21, pp. 339-40, 342

V. I. LENIN

From: "THE DISCUSSION ON SELF- DETERMINATION SUMMED UP"

...To imagine that social revolution is *conceivable* without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts

by a section of the petty bourgeoisie *with all its prejudices*, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc.—to imagine all this is to *repudiate social revolution*. So one army lines up in one place and says, "We are for socialism", and another, somewhere else and says, "We are for imperialism", and that will be a social revolution! Only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic view could vilify the Irish rebellion by calling it a "putsch".⁴¹

Whoever expects a "pure" social revolution will *never* live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.

Written in July 1916

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 22, pp. 355-6

V. I. LENIN

From: "A CARICATURE OF MARXISM AND IMPERIALIST ECONOMISM"

... The social revolution can come only in the form of an epoch in which are combined civil war by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries and a *whole series* of democratic and revolutionary movements, including the national liberation movement, in the undeveloped, backward and oppressed nations.

Why? Because capitalism develops unevenly, and objective reality gives us highly developed capital-

ist nations side by side with a number of economically slightly developed, or totally undeveloped, nations.

Written in August-October 1916

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 23, p. 60

V. I. LENIN

From: "THE MILITARY PROGRAMME OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION"

...Theoretically, it would be absolutely wrong to forget that every war is but the continuation of policy by other means. The present imperialist war is the continuation of the imperialist policies of two groups of Great Powers, and these policies were engendered and fostered by the sum total of the relationships of the imperialist era. But this very era must also necessarily engender and foster policies of struggle against national oppression and of proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie and, consequently, also the possibility and inevitability, first, of revolutionary national rebellions and wars; second, of proletarian wars and rebellions *against* the bourgeoisie; and, third, of a combination of both kinds of revolutionary war, etc.

Written in September 1916

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 23, p. 80

V. I. LENIN

From: "ADDRESS TO THE SECOND
ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF COMMUNIST
ORGANISATIONS OF THE PEOPLES OF THE
EAST, NOVEMBER 22, 1919"⁴²

...It is becoming quite clear that the socialist revolution which is impending for the whole world will not be merely the victory of the proletariat of each country over its own bourgeoisie. That would be possible if revolutions came easily and swiftly. We know that the imperialists will not allow this, that all countries are armed against their domestic Bolshevism and that their one thought is how to defeat Bolshevism at home. That is why in every country a civil war is brewing in which the old socialist compromisers are enlisted on the side of the bourgeoisie. Hence, the socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie—no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism....

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 30, p. 159

V. I. LENIN

From: "‘LEFT-WING’ COMMUNISM—AN
INFANTILE DISORDER"

...As long as national and state distinctions exist among peoples and countries—and these will continue to exist for a very long time to come, even

after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a world-wide scale—the unity of the international tactics of the communist working-class movement in all countries demands, not the elimination of variety or the suppression of national distinctions (which is a pipe dream at present), but the application of the *fundamental* principles of communism (Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat), which will *correctly modify* these principles in certain *particulars*, correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state distinctions. To seek out, investigate, predict, and grasp that which is nationally specific and nationally distinctive, in the *concrete manner* in which each country should tackle a *single* international task: victory over opportunism and Left doctrinairism within the working-class movement; the overthrow of the bourgeoisie; the establishment of a Soviet republic and a proletarian dictatorship—such is the basic task in the historical period that all the advanced countries (and not they alone) are going through. The chief thing—though, of course, far from everything—the chief thing has already been achieved: the vanguard of the working class has been won over, has ranged itself on the side of Soviet government and against parliamentarianism, on the side of the dictatorship of the proletariat and against bourgeois democracy. All efforts and all attention should now be concentrated on the *next* step, which may seem—and from a certain viewpoint actually is—less fundamental, but, on the other hand, is actually closer to a practical accomplishment of the task. That step is: the search after forms of the *transition* or the *approach* to the proletarian revolution.

The proletarian vanguard has been won over ideologically. That is the main thing. Without this, not even the first step towards victory can be made. But

that is still quite a long way from victory. Victory cannot be won with a vanguard alone. To throw only the vanguard into the decisive battle, before the entire class, the broad masses, have taken up a position either of direct support for the vanguard, or at least of sympathetic neutrality towards it and of precluded support for the enemy, would be, not merely foolish but criminal. Propaganda and agitation alone are not enough for an entire class, the broad masses of the working people, those oppressed by capital, to take up such a stand. For that, the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, which has been confirmed with compelling force and vividness, not only in Russia but in Germany as well. To turn resolutely towards communism, it was necessary, not only for the ignorant and often illiterate masses of Russia, but also for the literate and well-educated masses of Germany, to realise from their own bitter experience the absolute impotence and spinelessness, the absolute helplessness and servility to the bourgeoisie, and the utter vileness of the government of the paladins of the Second International; they had to realise that a dictatorship of the extreme reactionaries (Kornilov⁴³ in Russia; Kapp⁴⁴ and Co. in Germany) is inevitably the only alternative to a dictatorship of the proletariat.

The immediate objective of the class-conscious vanguard of the international working-class movement, i.e., the Communist parties, groups and trends, is to be able to *lead* the broad masses (who are still, for the most part, apathetic, inert, dormant and convention-ridden) to their new position, or, rather, to be able to lead, *not only* their own party but also these masses in their advance and transition to the new position. While the first historical

objective (that of winning over the class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat to the side of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the working class) could not have been reached without a complete ideological and political victory over opportunism and social-chauvinism, the second and immediate objective, which consists in being able to lead the *masses* to a new position ensuring the victory of the vanguard in the revolution, cannot be reached without the liquidation of Left doctrinairism, and without a full elimination of its errors.

As long as it was (and inasmuch as it still is) a question of winning the proletariat's vanguard over to the side of communism, priority went and still goes to propaganda work; even propaganda circles, with all their parochial limitations, are useful under these conditions, and produce good results. But when it is a question of practical action by the masses, of the disposition, if one may so put it, of vast armies, of the alignment of *all* the class forces in a given society *for the final and decisive battle*, then propagandist methods alone, the mere repetition of the truths of "pure" communism, are of no avail. In these circumstances, one must not count in thousands, like the propagandist belonging to a small group that has not yet given leadership to the masses; in these circumstances one must count in millions and tens of millions. In these circumstances, we must ask ourselves, not only whether we have convinced the vanguard of the revolutionary class, but also whether the historically effective forces of *all* classes—positively of all the classes in a given society, without exception—are arrayed in such a way that the decisive battle is at hand—in such a way that: (1) all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, are sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have

sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength; (2) all the vacillating and unstable, intermediate elements—the petty bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats, as distinct from the bourgeoisie—have sufficiently exposed themselves in the eyes of the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy, and (3) among the proletariat, a mass sentiment favouring the most determined, bold and dedicated revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has emerged and begun to grow vigorously. Then revolution is indeed ripe; then, indeed, if we have correctly gauged all the conditions indicated and summarised above, and if we have chosen the right moment, our victory is assured. . .

Written in April-May 1920

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 31, pp. 92-4

V. I. LENIN

**From: "REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE
NATIONAL AND THE COLONIAL QUESTIONS,
ON JULY 26, 1920, AT THE SECOND CONGRESS
OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL"**

...It is unquestionable that the proletariat of the advanced countries can and should give help to the working masses of the backward countries, and that the backward countries can emerge from their present stage of development when the victorious proletariat of the Soviet Republics extends a helping

hand to these masses and is in a position to give them support. . . .

. . . Are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the Soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal—in that event it will be mistaken to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development. . . .

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 31, pp. 243-4

V. I. LENIN

From: REPORT ON THE TACTICS OF THE R.C.P. AT THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

July 5, 1921

. . . millions and hundreds of millions, in fact the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe, are now coming forward as independent, active and revolutionary factors. It is perfectly clear that in the impending decisive battles in the world revolution, the movement of the majority of the population of the globe, initially directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and will, perhaps, play a much more revolutionary part than we expect. It is important

to emphasise the fact that, for the first time in our International, we have taken up the question of preparing for this struggle. Of course, there are many more difficulties in this enormous sphere than in any other, but at all events the movement is advancing. And in spite of the fact that the masses of toilers—the peasants in the colonial countries—are still backward, they will play a very important revolutionary part in the coming phases of the world revolution.

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 32, pp. 481-2

V. I. LENIN

From: SPEECH IN CLOSING THE TENTH ALL-RUSSIA CONFERENCE OF R.C.P.(B.) May 28, 1921

... The disintegration of the capitalist world is steadily progressing, unity is steadily diminishing, while the onslaught of the forces of the oppressed colonies, which have a population of over a thousand million, is increasing from year to year, month to month, and even week to week. But we can make no conjectures on this score. We are now exercising our main influence on the international revolution through our economic policy. The working people of all countries without exception and without exaggeration are looking to the Soviet Russian Republic. This much has been achieved. The capitalists cannot hush up or conceal anything. That is why they so eagerly catch at our every economic mistake and weakness. The struggle in this field

has now become global. Once we solve this problem, we shall have certainly and finally won on an international scale. That is why for us questions of economic development become of absolutely exceptional importance. On this front, we must achieve victory by a steady rise and progress which must be gradual and necessarily slow.

V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*,
Vol. 32, pp. 436-7

Notes

1 The Communist International (The Third International)—an international revolutionary organisation of the proletariat founded under the guidance of Lenin; it existed from 1919 to 1943 and united the Communist parties of different countries.

The First Congress of the Communist International was held on March 2-6, 1919, in Moscow. The Congress approved the Comintern's political platform the main principles of which were as follows: (1) the capitalist social system will be inevitably replaced by a communist system; (2) proletariat's revolutionary struggle is essential to overthrow bourgeois governments; (3) the bourgeois state will be abolished and replaced by a state of a new type, i.e. the state of the proletariat of the Soviet type, which will ensure the transition to a communist society.

The Second Congress of the Communist International (July 19-August 7, 1920), held in Moscow and Petrograd, defined the basic policy and tactical and organisational principles of the Communist International. The Congress decisions were founded on the Marxist-Leninist principles of proletarian internationalism.

The Third Congress of the Communist International was held from June 22 to July 12, 1921, in Moscow. In the history of the world communist movement it is known as a congress which worked out the basic tactics of the Communist parties and set the task of winning the masses over to the side of the proletariat and of implementing united front tactics in the struggle against imperialism.

2 **The Bolsheviks**—representatives of the revolutionary Marxist trend in Russian Social-Democracy. Bolshevism emerged at the Second Congress of the RSDLP in 1903, when Lenin's supporters made up the majority and became known as the Bolsheviks, from the Russian word *bol'shinstvo*, majority.

3 On September 28, 1864, a mass international workers' meeting was held in St. Martin's Hall, London. It founded the **Working Men's International Association** (the First International). Karl Marx was elected to the committee responsible for drawing up the Association's policy documents. In the Inaugural Address of the Working Men's Association and the Provisional Rules of the Association Marx advanced the idea of the proletariat's emancipation through the winning of political power.

The First International, whose leader and inspirer was Marx, played a decisive role in organising the political and economic struggle of the international working class and in promoting international solidarity. During the period of the existence of the First International (1864-76) a major step forward was made in uniting the mass working-class movement with Marxism.

4 **Opportunism**—in the working-class movement terminology a theory and practice running counter to the genuine interests of the working class and pushing the workers' movement onto a road acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Opportunism adapts and subordinates the workers' movement to the interests of its class opponents.

Right opportunism—a sum total of reformist theories and conciliatory tactics aimed at direct subordination of the interests of the workers' movement to those of the bourgeoisie.

Left opportunism—an unstable mixture of ultra-revolutionary theories and adventurist tactics leading the revolutionary workers' movement onto the road of unwarranted actions, senseless sacrifices and defeats.

5 **Martov, L. (Tsederbaum, Yu. O.)** (1873-1923)—a leader of Menshevism (see Note 11). In the period of reaction and a new revolutionary upsurge in Russia (1907-14) he insisted on liquidating the Bolshevik Party as an underground organisation. In the years of the First World War (1914-18) Martov took a centrist stand. After the October Socialist Revolution he opposed Soviet power. In 1920, he emigrated

to Germany and edited a counter-revolutionary Menshevik journal published in Berlin.

6 Kautsky, Karl (1854-1938)—a leader of German Social-Democracy and the Second International. At first a Marxist, later a renegade, he was an ideologist of Centrism (Kautskianism), the most dangerous and harmful variety of opportunism, and the author of the reactionary theory of ultra-imperialism. After the October Socialist Revolution he openly opposed the proletarian revolution, the dictatorship of the working class, the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet State.

7 Huysmans, Camille (1871-1968)—a veteran of the Belgian workers' movement. From 1904 to 1919 he was Secretary of the International Socialist Bureau of the Second International and took a centrist stand.

8 Reformism—a political trend within the workers' movement. It denies the necessity of class struggle, the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, calls for class collaboration and hopes by a series of minor reforms, which do not affect the foundations of the exploiter society, to transform capitalism into a "welfare society".

9 The Provisional Government, formed as a result of the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, announced the convocation of the **Constituent Assembly** in its declaration of March 2 (15), 1917. The Government had repeatedly postponed the elections to the Constituent Assembly, which were actually held after the October Socialist Revolution, on November 12 (25), 1917. But the lists of candidates were drawn up before the Revolution, in accordance with a Provisional Government ordinance. Therefore during the elections no account was taken of the split in the Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries (see Note 38), and also of the fact that the peasants were beginning to turn towards the Party of Lenin. On the other hand, the bulk of the people at the time had not yet understood the full implications of the socialist revolution. As a result, the official returns of the elections hardly reflected the actual correlation of classes and parties in Russia. The majority of the Constituent Assembly, convened by the Soviet government on January 5, 1918, being counter-revolutionary, rejected the Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited People which was placed before it and refused to recognise Soviet power. Then by the will of the

revolutionary majority of the working class, the bourgeois Constituent Assembly was dissolved on January 6 (19), 1918.

10 Social-chauvinism—an opportunist trend in the working-class movement which emerged in the period of the First World War (1914-18) and which demonstrated in practice that the opportunists had completely sided with the imperialist bourgeoisie and betrayed the cause of proletarian internationalism.

11 The Mensheviks—representatives of an opportunist trend in Russian Social-Democracy who by their actions became accomplices of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement in pre-revolutionary Russia. After the 1917 October Revolution they became a counter-revolutionary party of petty bourgeoisie. Menshevism took shape at the Second RSDLP Congress (1903) as a trend which united the opponents of the Leninist plan of creating a Marxist revolutionary working-class party. The Mensheviks denied the role of the party as the main instrument of the working class in the struggle for power, the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution, and the necessity of an alliance between the workers and peasants as the main requisite for winning the political power. Lenin pointed out that the Bolsheviks had never ceased to wage an ideological and political struggle against the Mensheviks (whose positions were practically shared by the Trotskyites) as proponents of bourgeois influence on the proletariat. In 1912 the Mensheviks were expelled from the Party.

12 The London Conference of the International Working Men's Association, held from September 17 to 23, 1871, was an important event in Marx's and Engels' efforts to set up a revolutionary proletarian party. The main task of the Conference, as seen by Marx and Engels, was to sum up the experience and lessons of the Paris Commune in the directive documents of the International Working Men's Association. The resolution, Political Action of the Working Class, clearly defined the necessity of organising the working class into an independent political party as an indispensable condition for the triumph of the socialist revolution and its ultimate end—a classless society.

13 Trier, Gerson (1851-1918)—Danish Social Democrat, one of the leaders of the Left wing of the Social-Democratic Party of Denmark.

14 Bebel, August (1840-1913)—a prominent figure in the German and international working-class movement, a member of the First International, a founder and leader of German Social-Democracy. He was a friend and close associate of Marx and Engels, and a leading figure in the Second International. In the 1890s and in the early 1900s he held a firm position against reformism and revisionism; towards the end of his political activity he displayed centrist leanings.

15 Engels' work *A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891* provides an example of irreconcilable struggle against opportunism, and for a genuinely revolutionary programme of a proletarian party (the German Social-Democratic Party).

The leadership of the German Social Democrats did not want to publish this work for a long time, and it appeared only in 1901.

16 The Anti-Socialist Law was introduced in Germany on October 21, 1878. It banned all Social-Democratic organisations and other mass working-class associations as well as the working-class press, and provided for the confiscation of socialist literature. Social Democrats were subjected to persecution. On October 1, 1890, the Anti-Socialist Law was repealed as a result of mass pressure and the mounting working-class movement.

17 Lafargue, Paul (1842-1911)—a prominent figure in the French and international working-class movement, an outstanding propagandist of Marxism and political writer; one of the founders of the French Workers' Party (1879); a disciple and close associate of Marx and Engels.

18 See K. Marx, F. Engels. *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1969, Vol. 1, p. 137.

19 Armand, Inessa (1874-1920)—a member of the Bolshevik Party since 1904, a dedicated revolutionary, and a prominent figure in the international women's, workers' and communist movement.

20 Eulenburg, Botho, zu (1831-1912)—Minister of the Interior in the German Reich.

21 **Zasulich, Vera** (1851-1919)—a prominent figure in the Narodnik and then social-democratic movement in Russia; later a Menshevik.

22 Engels' **Introduction to "The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850"** by Karl Marx was written for a separate edition of the work published in 1895.

In his introduction Engels pointed out that it was necessary for the party to make wide use of both legal and illegal means for preparing a socialist revolution, and to carry out systematically educational work among the people and the army. Engels substantiated the fundamental Marxist principle that it was essential to use tactical methods and forms of struggle appropriate to concrete historical conditions, and to replace, timely and skilfully, peaceful forms of revolutionary struggle, which the proletariat preferred, by non-peaceful forms in cases where the ruling classes resorted to violence.

23 **The June rising**—a heroic insurrection of the proletarians of Paris on June 23-26, 1848, which was most ruthlessly suppressed by the French ruling bourgeoisie. The Paris rising was history's first instance of open civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

24 The reference is to the defeat of the popular insurrection in Vienna in October 1849. As a result of the insurrection Austrian Emperor Ferdinand I fled Vienna, and for more than three weeks power was in the hands of the petty-bourgeois democrats who were supported by armed workers and students.

25 **Danton, Georges Jacques** (1759-94)—a prominent figure in the French bourgeois revolution at the end of the 18th century; leader of the Right wing of Jacobins.

26 This draft programme of the RSDLP drawn up by Lenin was adopted with minor changes by the Party's Second Congress (1903) which laid the foundations of Bolshevism as a political trend and a political party.

27 **The Second International**—an international association of workers' parties founded in Paris, in 1889.

By the end of the 19th century, after Engels' death, a sharp struggle developed between two trends in the inter-

national working-class movement—revolutionary and opportunist. Within the opportunist trend revisionism became dominant. One of the proponents of revisionism was Eduard Bernstein. Revisionism (characterised by rejecting the Marxist theory of class struggle, revising Marx's teaching on the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, advocating class peace and peaceful parliamentary struggle for partial reforms and restricting the role of the working-class party to striving for social reforms) was engendered by the monopoly stage of development of capitalism, and reflected an opportunistic degeneration of the leaders of the West European parties in the Second International.

Still more dangerous for the working-class movement was centrism which sought to mask its opportunism with Marxist phraseology. The views of centrists (K. Kautsky, O. Bauer) were characterised by a separation of theory from practice, a dogmatic approach to the Marxist theory, and a renunciation of the Marxist teaching on the dictatorship of the proletariat and on its allies in the revolution. The Bolsheviks led by Lenin and also representatives of the Left wing in the international workers' and socialist movement, including A. Bebel, F. Mehring and K. Liebknecht, waged a resolute struggle against opportunism and centrism.

The opportunist tactics advocated by the Right-wing leaders of the Second International logically led them to adopt social-chauvinist positions during the First World War, support the idea of "defence of the fatherland" in the imperialist war, betray the cause of the European working class, and refuse to utilise the war-engendered crisis in the interests of the proletarian revolution. In his works (*The Collapse of the Second International* and others) Lenin denounced the treachery of the opportunists who were responsible for the disintegration and actual disbandment of the Second International; Lenin advanced the idea of establishing a truly revolutionary Communist International which was in fact created under his leadership in 1919.

28 See K. Marx, F. Engels. *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 380-6.

29 See K. Marx, F. Engels. *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1975, p. 470.

30 Bernstein, Eduard (1850-1932)—leader of the extreme opportunist wing of German Social-Democracy and the Second International, theoretician of revisionism and reformism. Bernstein declared the striving for reforms to improve the economic position of the working class within the framework of capitalism as the chief aim of the working-class movement. Hence his opportunist formula: "The end... is nothing, movement is everything." During the world imperialist war of 1914-18 he took a centrist stand covering his social-chauvinism with the talk of internationalism. In subsequent years he continued to support the policy of the imperialist bourgeoisie, and came out against the 1917 October Socialist Revolution in Russia and the Soviet state.

31 See K. Marx, F. Engels. *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 377.

32 See K. Marx, F. Engels. *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 220.

33 See K. Marx, F. Engels. *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 337.

34 See K. Marx, F. Engels. *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1975, p. 373.

35 Bauer, Otto (1882-1938)—one of the leaders of the Right wing of Social-Democracy in Austria and the Second International. His attitude towards the October Socialist Revolution of 1917 in Russia was hostile. In 1919, 1927 and 1934 he actively helped to suppress the revolutionary movement of the working class in Austria. His anti-communist statements were close to those of the ideologists of fascism.

36 Weydemeyer, Joseph (1818-66)—a prominent figure in the German and American workers' movement, the first exponent of Marxism in the United States, and a friend and close associate of Marx and Engels.

37 Bakunin, Mikhail Aleksandrovich (1814-76)—one of the ideologists of anarchism. He was active in the First International after 1864 and organised a secret anarchist group within it. Bakunin called for the abolition of the state in which, but not in capitalism, he saw the main evil of bourgeois society. He denied the proletariat its world historic role, openly opposing the establishment of an independent

political party of the working class, and advocating the idea of the working class' abstention from political activity. For his splintering activity in the International Bakunin was expelled from it in 1872.

38 Socialist-Revolutionaries (S.R.s)—a petty-bourgeois party in Russia which emerged at the end of 1901 and the beginning of 1902. The views of the S.R.s were an eclectic mixture of the ideas of Narodism (rejection of the proletariat's leading role in the revolution, reliance on the peasantry, negation of the necessity, of setting up a working-class revolutionary party, etc.) and revisionism. During the First World War most of the S.R.s took a social-chauvinist position. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia the S.R.s and the Mensheviks were the mainstay of the counter-revolutionary bourgeois-landlord Provisional Government. In late November 1917, the Left wing within the Socialist-Revolutionary Party formed an independent party of Left S.R.s which formally recognised Soviet power, but soon began to struggle against it. In the years of foreign military intervention, the Civil War (1918-20) and in the post-war period the S.R.s carried on counter-revolutionary subversive activity both within Soviet Russia and as White Guard émigrés abroad.

39 Soviet rule in Hungary was established on March 21, 1919. The socialist revolution in the country was of a relatively peaceful nature. The revolutionary government composed of Communists and Social Democrats initiated some measures for the benefit of the working people. But the economic blockade by the Entente imperialists, armed intervention, the treachery of the Right-wing Social Democrats who entered into an alliance with international imperialism, and the unfavourable international situation which prevented Soviet Russia, encircled by enemies, from helping the Hungarian Soviet Republic—resulted in the overthrow of Soviet power in Hungary on August 1, 1919 by joint actions of counter-revolution, home and foreign.

40 Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League was a document which summed up the experience of the German revolution of 1848-49. Marx and Engels showed in it that the theoretical propositions set forth in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* had been fully confirmed in the course of the revolution. At the same time the Address played an important part in working out the stra-

tegy and tactics of the class struggle of the proletariat. Emphasis was laid on the need for setting up an independent proletarian party and for enhancing its leading role in the revolutionary movement. The Address developed the idea of revolution in permanence.

The Communist League—the first international communist organisation of the proletariat founded by Marx and Engels. It existed from 1847 to 1852. The programme of this organisation was set forth in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* written by the founders of Marxism.

41 The Irish rebellion of 1916 was one of the national liberation uprisings that flared up as a result of the imperialist war of 1914-18. Lenin resolutely opposed the tendency in international Social-Democracy, which took shape at the time, to belittle the role and importance of the national liberation movement and to deny its direct connection with the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat in the metropolies.

42 The Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East was held in Moscow from November 22 to December 3, 1919, on the initiative of the Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East of the RCP(B) Central Committee. The Congress outlined the tasks of the Party and the government in the East, and elected a new Central Bureau of the organisations.

43 This refers to the counter-revolutionary mutiny organised in August 1917 by the bourgeoisie and the landowners under the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, the tsarist general Kornilov. The plotters hoped to seize Petrograd, smash the Bolshevik Party, break up the Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies, establish a military dictatorship in the country, and prepare for the restoration of the tsarist monarchy. Kornilov's mutiny was crushed by the workers and peasants led by the Bolshevik Party.

44. The reference is to the military-monarchist coup d'état, the so-called Kapp putsch, organised by the German militarists in March 1920. The conspirators prepared the coup with the connivance of the Social-Democratic government. On March 13, 1920, the mutinous generals moved troops against Berlin and, meeting with no resistance from

the government, proclaimed a military dictatorship. The German workers replied with a general strike. Under pressure from the proletariat, the Kapp government was overthrown on March 17, and the Social Democrats again took power.

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К Маркс, Ф. Энгельс, В. И. Ленин
О СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКОЙ РЕВОЛЮЦИИ
на английском языке
Цена 20 коп.