

Workers of All Countries, Unite!

K. Marx, F. Engels,
V. I. Lenin

On Scientific Communism



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TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN AND GERMAN

Publishers' note

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Chapter One

PREDECESSORS OF SCIENTIFIC COMMUNISM. UTOPIAN SOCIALISM

And although, upon the whole, the bourgeoisie, *in their struggle with the nobility*, could claim to represent at the same time the interests of the different working classes of that period, yet in every great bourgeois movement there were independent outbursts of that class which was the forerunner, more or less developed, of the modern proletariat. For example, at the time of the German Reformation and the Peasants' War, the Anabaptists¹ and Thomas Münzer; in the great English Revolution, the Levellers²; in the great French Revolution, Babeuf.

There were theoretical enunciations corresponding with these revolutionary uprisings of a class not yet developed; in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Utopian pictures of ideal social conditions³; in the eighteenth, actual communistic theories (Morelly and Mably). The demand for equality was no longer limited to political rights; it was extended also to the social conditions of individuals. It was not simply class privileges that were to be abolished, but class distinctions themselves. A communism, ascetic, denouncing all the pleasures of life, Spartan, was the first form of the new teaching. Then came the three great Utopians: Saint-Simon, to whom the middle-class movement, side by side with the proletarian, still had a certain significance; Fourier, and Owen, who in the country where capitalist production was most developed, and under the influence of the antagonisms begotten of this, worked out his

proposals for the removal of class distinction systematically and in direct relation to French materialism.

One thing is common to all three. Not one of them appears as a representative of the interests of that proletariat which historical development had, in the meantime, produced. Like the French philosophers, they do not claim to emancipate a particular class to begin with, but all humanity at once. Like them, they wish to bring in the kingdom of reason and eternal justice, but this kingdom, as they see it, is as far as heaven from earth, from that of the French philosophers.

For, to our three social reformers, the bourgeois world, based upon the principles of these philosophers, is quite as irrational and unjust, and, therefore, finds its way to the dust-hole quite as readily as feudalism and all the earlier stages of society. If pure reason and justice have not, hitherto, ruled the world, this has been the case only because men have not rightly understood them. What was wanted was the individual man of genius, who has now arisen and who understands the truth. That he has now arisen, that the truth has now been clearly understood, is not an inevitable event, following of necessity in the chain of historical development, but a mere happy accident. He might just as well have been born 500 years earlier, and might then have spared humanity 500 years of error, strife, and suffering.

We saw how the French philosophers of the eighteenth century, the forerunners of the Revolution, appealed to reason as the sole judge of all that is. A rational government, rational society, were to be founded; everything that ran counter to eternal reason was to be remorselessly done away with. We saw also that this eternal reason was in reality nothing but the idealised understanding of the eighteenth century citizen, just then evolving into the bourgeois. The French Revolution had realised this rational society and government.

But the new order of things, rational enough as compared with earlier conditions, turned out to be by no means abso-

lutely rational. The state based upon reason completely collapsed. Rousseau's Contrat Social had found its realisation in the Reign of Terror,⁴ from which the bourgeoisie, who had lost confidence in their own political capacity, had taken refuge first in the corruption of the Directorate,⁵ and, finally, under the wing of the Napoleonic despotism. The promised eternal peace was turned into an endless war of conquest. The society based upon reason had fared no better. The antagonism between rich and poor, instead of dissolving into general prosperity, had become intensified by the removal of the guild and other privileges, which had to some extent bridged it over, and by the removal of the charitable institutions of the Church. The "freedom of property" from feudal fetters, now veritably accomplished, turned out to be, for the small capitalists and small proprietors, the freedom to sell their small property, crushed under the overmastering competition of the large capitalists and landlords, to these great lords, and thus, as far as the small capitalists and peasant proprietors were concerned, became "freedom *from* property". The development of industry upon a capitalistic basis made poverty and misery of the working masses conditions of existence of society. Cash payment became more and more, in Carlyle's phrase, the sole nexus between man and man. The number of crimes increased from year to year. Formerly, the feudal vices had openly stalked about in broad daylight; though not eradicated, they were now at any rate thrust into the background. In their stead, the bourgeois vices, hitherto practised in secret, began to blossom all the more luxuriantly. Trade became to a greater and greater extent cheating. The "fraternity" of the revolutionary motto⁶ was realised in the chicanery and rivalries of the battle of competition. Oppression by force was replaced by corruption; the sword, as the first social lever, by gold. The right of the first night was transferred from the feudal lords to the bourgeois manufacturers. Prostitution increased to an extent never heard of. Marriage itself remained, as before, the legally recognised form, the official cloak of prostitution,

and, moreover, was supplemented by rich crops of adultery.

In a word, compared with the splendid promises of the philosophers, the social and political institutions born of the "triumph of reason" were bitterly disappointing caricatures. All that was wanting was the men to formulate this disappointment, and they came with the turn of the century. In 1802 Saint-Simon's Geneva letters appeared; in 1808 appeared Fourier's first work, although the groundwork of his theory dated from 1799; on January 1, 1800, Robert Owen undertook the direction of New Lanark.⁷

At this time, however, the capitalist mode of production, and with it the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, was still very incompletely developed. Modern industry, which had just arisen in England, was still unknown in France. But modern industry develops, on the one hand, the conflicts which make absolutely necessary a revolution in the mode of production, and the doing away with its capitalistic character—conflicts not only between the classes begotten of it, but also between the very productive forces and the forms of exchange created by it. And, on the other hand, it develops, in these very gigantic productive forces, the means of ending these conflicts. If, therefore, about the year 1800, the conflicts arising from the new social order were only just beginning to take shape, this holds still more fully as to the means of ending them. The "have-nothing" masses of Paris, during the Reign of Terror, were able for a moment to gain the mastery, and thus to lead the bourgeois revolution to victory *in spite of* the bourgeoisie themselves. But, in doing so, they only proved how impossible it was for their domination to last under the conditions then obtaining. The proletariat, which then for the first time evolved itself from these "have-nothing" masses as the nucleus of a new class, as yet quite incapable of independent political action, appeared as an oppressed, suffering order, to whom, in its incapacity to help itself, help could, at best, be brought in from without or down from above.

This historical situation also dominated the founders of socialism. To the crude conditions of capitalistic production and the crude class conditions corresponded crude theories. The solution of the social problems, which as yet lay hidden in undeveloped economic conditions, the Utopians attempted to evolve out of the human brain. Society presented nothing but wrongs; to remove these was the task of reason. It was necessary, then, to discover a new and more perfect system of social order and to impose this upon society from without by propaganda, and, wherever it was possible, by the example of model experiments. These new social systems were foredoomed as Utopian; the more completely they were worked out in detail, the more they could not avoid drifting off into pure phantasies.

These facts once established, we need not dwell a moment longer upon this side of the question, now wholly belonging to the past. We can leave it to the literary small fry to solemnly quibble over these phantasies, which today only make us smile, and to crow over the superiority of their own bald reasoning, as compared with such "insanity". For ourselves, we delight in the stupendously grand thoughts and germs of thought that everywhere break out through their phantastic covering, and to which these Philistines are blind.

Saint-Simon was a son of the great French Revolution, at the outbreak of which he was not yet thirty. The Revolution was the victory of the third estate, i.e., of the great masses of the nation, *working* in production and in trade, over the privileged *idle* classes, the nobles and the priests. But the victory of the third estate soon revealed itself as exclusively the victory of a small part of this "estate", as the conquest of political power by the socially privileged section of it, i.e., the propertied bourgeoisie. And the bourgeoisie had certainly developed rapidly during the Revolution, partly by speculation in the lands of the nobility and of the Church, confiscated and afterwards *put up for sale*, and partly by frauds upon the nation by means of army contracts. It was the domination of these swindlers that,

under the Directorate, brought France to the verge of ruin, and thus gave Napoleon the pretext for his *coup d'état*.

Hence, to Saint-Simon the antagonism between the third estate and the privileged classes took the form of an antagonism between "workers" and "idlers". The idlers were not merely the old privileged classes, but also all who, without taking any part in production or distribution, lived on their incomes. And the "workers" were not only the wage-workers, but also the manufacturers, the merchants, the bankers. That the idlers had lost the capacity for intellectual leadership and political supremacy had been proved, and was by the Revolution finally settled. That the non-possessing classes had not this capacity seemed to Saint-Simon proved by the experiences of the Reign of Terror. Then, who was to lead and command? According to Saint-Simon, science and industry, both united by a new religious bond, destined to restore that unity of religious ideas which had been lost since the time of the Reformation—a necessarily mystic and rigidly hierarchic "new Christianity". But science, that was the scholars; and industry, that was, in the first place, the working bourgeois, manufacturers, merchants, bankers. These bourgeois were, certainly, intended by Saint-Simon to transform themselves into a kind of public officials, of social trustees; but they were still to hold, *vis à vis* of the workers, a commanding and economically privileged position. The bankers especially were to be called upon to direct the whole of social production by the regulation of credit. This conception was in exact keeping with a time in which modern industry in France and, with it, the chasm between bourgeoisie and proletariat was only just coming into existence. But what Saint-Simon especially lays stress upon is this: what interests him first, and above all other things, is the lot of the class that is the most numerous and the most poor ("*la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre*"). . . . But to recognise the French Revolution as a class war, and not simply one between nobility and bourgeoisie, but between nobility, bourgeoisie, and the *non-possessors*, was, in the year 1802, a most pregnant discovery.

In 1816, he declares that politics is the science of production, and foretells the complete absorption of politics by economics. The knowledge that economic conditions are the basis of political institutions appears here only in embryo. Yet what is here already very plainly expressed is the idea of the future conversion of political rule over men into an administration of things and a direction of processes of production—that is to say, the “abolition of the state”, about which recently there has been so much noise.

Saint-Simon shows the same superiority over his contemporaries, when in 1814, immediately after the entry of the allies into Paris, and again in 1815, during the Hundred Days' War,⁸ he proclaims the alliance of France with England, and then of both these countries with Germany, as the only guarantee for the prosperous development and peace of Europe. To preach to the French in 1815 an alliance with the victors of Waterloo⁹ required as much courage as historical foresight.

If in Saint-Simon we find a comprehensive breadth of view, by virtue of which almost all the ideas of later Socialists that are not strictly economic are found in him in embryo, we find in Fourier a criticism of the existing conditions of society, genuinely French and witty, but not upon that account any the less thorough. Fourier takes the bourgeoisie, their inspired prophets before the Revolution, and their interested eulogists after it, at their own word. He lays bare remorselessly the material and moral misery of the bourgeois world. He confronts it with the earlier philosophers' dazzling promises of a society in which reason alone should reign, of a civilisation in which happiness should be universal, of an illimitable human perfectibility, and with the rose-coloured phraseology of the bourgeois ideologists of his time. He points out how everywhere the most pitiful reality corresponds with the most high-sounding phrases, and he overwhelms this hopeless fiasco of phrases with his mordant sarcasm.

Fourier is not only a critic; his imperturbably serene nature makes him a satirist, and assuredly one of the greatest

satirists of all time. He depicts, with equal power and charm, the swindling speculations that blossomed out upon the downfall of the Revolution, and the shopkeeping spirit prevalent in, and characteristic of, French commerce at that time. Still more masterly is his criticism of the bourgeois form of the relations between the sexes, and the position of woman in bourgeois society. He was the first to declare that in any given society the degree of woman's emancipation is the natural measure of the general emancipation.

But Fourier is at his greatest in his conception of the history of society. He divides its whole course, thus far, into four stages of evolution—savagery, barbarism, the patriarchate, civilisation. This last is identical with the so-called civil, or bourgeois, society of today—i.e., with the social order that came in with the sixteenth century. He proves

“that the civilised stage raises every vice practised by barbarism in a simple fashion into a form of existence, complex, ambiguous, equivocal, hypocritical”

—that civilisation moves in “a vicious circle”, in contradictions which it constantly reproduces without being able to solve them; hence it constantly arrives at the very opposite to that which it wants to attain, or pretends to want to attain, so that, e.g.,

“under civilisation *poverty is born of super-abundance itself*”.

Fourier, as we see, uses the dialectic method in the same masterly way as his contemporary, Hegel. Using these same dialectics, he argues against the talk about illimitable human perfectibility, that every historical phase has its period of ascent and also its period of descent, and he applies this observation to the future of the whole human race. As Kant introduced into natural science the idea of the ultimate destruction of the earth, Fourier introduced into historical science that of the ultimate destruction of the human race.

Whilst in France the hurricane of the Revolution swept over the land, in England a quieter, but not on that account less tremendous, revolution was going on. Steam and the new tool-making machinery were transforming manufacture

into modern industry, and thus revolutionising the whole foundation of bourgeois society. The sluggish march of development of the manufacturing period changed into a veritable storm and stress period of production. With constantly increasing swiftness the splitting-up of society into large capitalists and non-possessing proletarians went on. Between these, instead of the former stable middle class, an unstable mass of artisans and small shopkeepers, the most fluctuating portion of the population, now led a precarious existence.

The new mode of production was, as yet, only at the beginning of its period of ascent; as yet it was the normal, regular method of production—the only one possible under existing conditions. Nevertheless, even then it was producing crying social abuses—the herding together of a homeless population in the worst quarters of the large towns; the loosening of all traditional moral bonds, of patriarchal subordination, of family relations; overwork, especially of women and children, to a frightful extent; complete demoralisation of the working class, suddenly flung into altogether new conditions, from the country into the town, from agriculture into modern industry, from stable conditions of existence into insecure ones that changed from day to day.

At this juncture there came forward as a reformer a manufacturer 29 years old—a man of almost sublime, child-like simplicity of character, and at the same time one of the few born leaders of men. Robert Owen had adopted the teaching of the materialistic philosophers: that man's character is the product, on the one hand, of heredity; on the other, of the environment of the individual during his lifetime, and especially during his period of development. In the industrial revolution most of his class saw only chaos and confusion, and the opportunity of fishing in these troubled waters and making large fortunes quickly. He saw in it the opportunity of putting into practice his favourite theory, and so of bringing order out of chaos. He had already tried it with success, as superintendent of more than

five hundred men in a Manchester factory. From 1800 to 1829, he directed the great cotton mill at New Lanark, in Scotland, as managing partner, along the same lines, but with greater freedom of action and with a success that made him a European reputation. A population, originally consisting of the most diverse and, for the most part, very demoralised elements, a population that gradually grew to 2,500, he turned into a model colony, in which drunkenness, police, magistrates, lawsuits, poor laws, charity, were unknown. And all this simply by placing the people in conditions worthy of human beings, and especially by carefully bringing up the rising generation. He was the founder of infant schools, and introduced them first at New Lanark. At the age of two the children came to school, where they enjoyed themselves so much that they could scarcely be got home again.

F. Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 117-25

His advance in the direction of communism was the turning-point in Owen's life. As long as he was simply a philanthropist, he was rewarded with nothing but wealth, applause, honour, and glory. He was the most popular man in Europe. Not only men of his own class, but statesmen and princes listened to him approvingly. But when he came out with his communist theories that was quite another thing. Three great obstacles seemed to him especially to block the path to social reform: private property, religion, the present form of marriage. He knew what confronted him if he attacked these—outlawry, excommunication from official society, the loss of his whole social position. But nothing of this prevented him from attacking them without fear of consequences, and what he had foreseen happened. Banished from official society, with a conspiracy of silence against him in the press, ruined by his unsuccessful communist experiments in America, in which he sacrificed all his

fortune, he turned directly to the working class and continued working in their midst for thirty years.

F. Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, p. 127

Since social relations were not yet developed enough at the time for the working class to constitute itself as a political party, the first Socialists (Fourier, Owen, Saint-Simon, etc.) had had to confine themselves to dreams of a future *model society* and to censure all such attempts as strikes, coalitions and political actions undertaken by the workers to somewhat improve their situation. Though we have no more right to disavow these patriarchs of socialism than the modern chemists have to disavow their forerunners, the alchemists, we must beware of making the same mistakes as they, for it would be unforgivable on our part.

K. Marx, Der politische Indifferentismus. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 18, S. 301

In his last work, *Le Nouveau Christianisme*, Saint-Simon speaks directly for the working class and declares their emancipation to be the goal of his efforts. All his former writings are, indeed, mere encomiums of modern bourgeois society in contrast to the feudal order, or of industrialists and bankers in contrast to marshals and juristic law-manufacturers of the Napoleonic era. What a difference compared with the contemporaneous writings of Owen!*

K. Marx, Capital, Vol. III, Moscow, 1962, pp. 591-92

* "...Marx spoke only with admiration of the genius and encyclopaedic mind of Saint-Simon. When in his earlier works the latter ignores the antithesis between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat which was just then coming into existence in France, when he includes among the *travailleurs* that part of the bourgeoisie which was active in production, this corresponds to Fourier's conception of attempting to

From the Factory system budded, as Robert Owen has shown us in detail, the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings.

*K. Marx, Capital, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1965, pp. 483-84*

The Socialist and Communist systems properly so called, those of Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen and others, spring into existence in the early undeveloped period of the struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie. . . .

The founders of these systems see, indeed, the class antagonisms, as well as the action of the decomposing elements, in the prevailing form of society. But the proletariat, as yet in its infancy, offers to them the spectacle of a class without any historical initiative or any independent political movement.

Since the development of class antagonism keeps even pace with the development of industry, the economic situation, as they find it, does not as yet offer to them the material conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat. They therefore search after a new social science, after new social laws, that are to create these conditions.

Historical action is to yield to their personal inventive action, historically created conditions of emancipation to fantastic ones, and the gradual, spontaneous class-organisation of the proletariat to an organisation of society specially contrived by these inventors. Future history resolves itself, in their eyes, into the propaganda and the practical carrying out of their social plans.

reconcile capital and labour, and is explained by the economic and political situation of France in those days. The fact that Owen was more far-sighted in this respect is due to his different environment, for he lived in a period of industrial revolution and of acutely sharpening class antagonisms."—*F.E.*

In the formation of their plans they are conscious of caring chiefly for the interests of the working class, as being the most suffering class. Only from the point of view of being the most suffering class does the proletariat exist for them.

The undeveloped state of the class struggle, as well as their own surroundings, causes Socialists of this kind to consider themselves far superior to all class antagonisms. They want to improve the condition of every member of society, even that of the most favoured. Hence, they habitually appeal to society at large, without distinction of class; nay, by preference, to the ruling class. For how can people, when once they understand their system, fail to see in it the best possible plan of the best possible state of society?

Hence, they reject all political, and especially all revolutionary, action; they wish to attain their ends by peaceful means, and endeavour, by small experiments, necessarily doomed to failure, and by the force of example, to pave the way for the new social Gospel. . . .

But these Socialist and Communist publications contain also a critical element. They attack every principle of existing society. Hence they are full of the most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class. The practical measures proposed in them—such as the abolition of the distinction between town and country, of the family, of the carrying on of industries for the account of private individuals, and of the wage system, the proclamation of social harmony, the conversion of the functions of the State into a mere superintendence of production, all these proposals point solely to the disappearance of class antagonisms which were, at that time, only just cropping up, and which, in these publications, are recognised in their earliest, indistinct and undefined forms only. These proposals, therefore, are of a purely Utopian character.

The significance of Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism bears an inverse relation to historical development. In proportion as the modern class struggle develops and takes definite shape, this fantastic standing apart from the

contest, these fantastic attacks on it, lose all practical value and all theoretical justification.

*Marx and Engels, Manifesto
of the Communist Party.
Selected Works, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1962, pp. 61-63*

All communist and socialist writers proceeded from the observation that, on the one hand, even the most favourable brilliant deeds seemed to remain without brilliant results, to end in trivialities, and, on the other, *all progress of the spirit* had so far been *progress against the mass of mankind*, driving it to an ever more *dehumanised* predicament. They therefore declare "*progress*" (see *Fourier*) to be an inadequate abstract *phrase*; they assumed (see *Owen* among others) a fundamental flaw in the civilised world; that is why they submitted the *real* bases of contemporary society to incisive *criticism*. To this communist criticism corresponded immediately in practice the movement of the *great mass* against which history had so far developed. One must be acquainted with the studiousness, the craving for knowledge, the moral energy and the unceasing urge for development of the French and English workers to be able to form an idea of the *human* nobleness of that movement.

*Marx and Engels, The Holy Family
or Critique of Critical Critique,
Moscow, 1956, p. 113*

Fourier proceeds immediately from the teaching of the French materialists. The *Babeuvists*¹⁰ were coarse, uncivilised materialists, but mature communism too comes *directly* from *French materialism*. The latter returned to its mother-country, *England*, in the form *Helvetius* gave it. *Bentham* based his system of *correctly understood interest* on *Helvetius's* moral, and *Owen* proceeded from *Bentham's* system to found English communism. Exiled to England, the Frenchman *Cabet* came under the influence of communist ideas there and on his return to France became the

most popular, although the most superficial, representative of communism. Like Owen, the more scientific French communists, *Dezamy*, *Gay* and others, developed the teaching of *materialism* as the teaching of *real humanism* and the *logical basis of communism*.

*Marx and Engels, The Holy Family
or Critique of Critical Critique,
Moscow, 1956, pp. 176-77*

All the socialist founders of sects belong to a time when the working class was not yet sufficiently schooled and organised by the development of capitalist society to step on the world stage as a maker of history and the material conditions in the Old World had not yet ripened sufficiently for the workers' emancipation. The misery of the workers was there, but not yet the conditions for their own movement. The Utopian founders of sects, who clearly defined in their critiques of contemporary society the goal of the social movement as removal of the system of wage-labour with all its economic appurtenances of class domination—did not find in society the material conditions for its reorganisation, nor in the working class the organised strength and consciousness for a movement. They endeavoured to make up for the lack of historical conditions by drawing fantastic pictures and plans of a new society, in whose propaganda they saw the true road to salvation. The moment the working-class movement became a reality, the fantastic Utopias disappeared; not because the working class gave up the goal that fired the Utopians, but because the workers found the true means of realising that goal and because the fantastic Utopias gave place to a true comprehension of the historical conditions of the movement and the forces for a militant working-class organisation had begun to assemble on a growing scale.

*K. Marx, Erster Entwurf zum
"Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich"
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 17,
S. 557*

The Utopians, we saw, were Utopians because they could be nothing else at a time when capitalist production was as yet so little developed. They necessarily had to construct the elements of a new society out of their own heads, because within the old society the elements of the new were not as yet generally apparent; for the basic plan of the new edifice they could only appeal to reason, just because they could not as yet appeal to contemporary history.

*F. Engels, Anti-Dühring,
Moscow, 1959, pp. 364-65*

Just as the *economists* are the scientific representatives of the bourgeois class, so the *Socialists* and the *Communists* are the theoreticians of the proletarian class. So long as the proletariat is not yet sufficiently developed to constitute itself as a class, and consequently so long as the struggle itself of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie has not yet assumed a political character, and the productive forces are not yet sufficiently developed in the bosom of the bourgeoisie itself to enable us to catch a glimpse of the material conditions necessary for the emancipation of the proletariat and for the formation of a new society, these theoreticians are merely Utopians who, to meet the wants of the oppressed classes, improvise systems and go in search of a regenerating science. But in the measure that history moves forward, and with it the struggle of the proletariat assumes clearer outlines, they no longer need to seek science in their minds; they have only to take note of what is happening before their eyes and to become its mouthpiece.

*K. Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy,
Moscow, 1962, p. 120*

The Utopians' mode of thought has for a long time governed the socialist ideas of the nineteenth century, and still governs some of them. Until very recently all French and English Socialists did homage to it. The earlier German communism, including that of Weitling, was of the same

school. To all these Socialism is the expression of absolute truth, reason and justice, and has only to be discovered to conquer all the world by virtue of its own power. And as absolute truth is independent of time, space, and of the historical development of man, it is a mere accident when and where it is discovered. With all this, absolute truth, reason, and justice are different with the founder of each different school. And as each one's special kind of absolute truth, reason, and justice is again conditioned by his subjective understanding, his conditions of existence, the measure of his knowledge and his intellectual training, there is no other ending possible in this conflict of absolute truths than that they shall be mutually exclusive one of the other. Hence, from this nothing could come but a kind of eclectic, average Socialism, which, as a matter of fact, has up to the present time dominated the minds of most of the socialist workers in France and England. Hence, a mish-mash of allowing of the most manifold shades of opinion; a mish-mash of such critical statements, economic theories, pictures of future society by the founders of different sects, as excite a minimum of opposition; a mish-mash which is the more easily brewed the more the definite sharp edges of the individual constituents are rubbed down in the stream of debate, like rounded pebbles in a brook.

To make a science of socialism, it had first to be placed upon a real basis.

F. Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 127-28

By Socialists, in 1847, were understood, on the one hand, the adherents of the various Utopian systems: Owenites in England, Fourierists in France, both of them already reduced to the position of mere sects, and gradually dying out; on the other hand, the most multifarious social quacks, who, by all manners of tinkering, professed to redress, without any danger to capital and profit, all sorts of social

grievances, in both cases men outside the working-class movement, and looking rather to the "educated" classes for support. Whatever portion of the working class had become convinced of the insufficiency of mere political revolutions, and had proclaimed the necessity of a total social change, that portion then called itself Communist. It was a crude, rough-hewn, purely instinctive sort of Communism: still, it touched the cardinal point and was powerful enough amongst the working class to produce the Utopian Communism, in France, of Cabet, and in Germany, of Weitling. Thus, Socialism was, in 1847, a middle-class movement, Communism a working-class movement.

F. Engels, Preface to the English Edition (1888) of the Manifesto of the Communist Party. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 27-28

Everybody knows that *Capital*, for instance--the chief and basic work in which scientific socialism is expounded--restricts itself to the most general allusions to the future and merely traces those already existing elements from which the future system grows. Everybody knows that as far as prospects for the future are concerned incomparably more was contributed by the earlier socialists, who described future society in every detail, desiring to inspire mankind with a picture of a system under which people get along without conflict and under which their social relations are based not on exploitation but on true principles of progress that conform to the conditions of human nature. Nevertheless, despite the whole phalanx of very talented people who expounded these ideas, and despite the most firmly convinced socialists, their theories stood aloof from life and their programmes were not connected with the political movements of the people until large-scale machine industry drew the mass of proletarian workers into the vortex of political life, and until the true slogan of their struggle was found. This slogan was found by Marx . . . and

it was certainly not found by means of prospects, but by a scientific analysis of the present bourgeois regime, by an elucidation of the *necessity* of exploitation under this regime, by an investigation of the laws of its development.

V. I. Lenin, *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats. Collected Works, Vol. 1, p. 185*

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There were many dreamers, some of them geniuses, who thought that it was only necessary to convince the rulers and the governing classes of the injustice of the contemporary social order, and it would then be easy to establish peace and general well-being on earth. They dreamt of a socialism without struggle. Lastly, nearly all the socialists of that time and the friends of the working class generally regarded the proletariat only as an *ulcer*, and observed with horror how it grew with the growth of industry. They all, therefore, sought for a means to stop the development of industry and of the proletariat, to stop the "wheel of history". Marx and Engels did not share the general fear of the development of the proletariat; on the contrary, they placed all their hopes on its continued growth. The more proletarians there are, the greater is their strength as a revolutionary class, and the nearer and more possible does socialism become. The services rendered by Marx and Engels to the working class may be expressed in a few words thus: they taught the working class to know itself and be conscious of itself, and they substituted science for dreams.

V. I. Lenin, *Frederick Engels. Collected Works, Vol. 2, p. 20*

Prior to the rise of the working-class movement, theories of "socialism" were prevalent in all countries that merely reflected in fact the hopes of petty-bourgeois theoreticians that the class struggle could be avoided, dispensed with. In all countries, as in Russia, the class-conscious working-class movement had to wage a persistent

struggle against these petty-bourgeois doctrines of "socialism" which were in keeping with the status and point of view of the petty proprietors.

The working-class movement cannot exist or develop successfully until this theory of the benevolent petty proprietors regarding the possibility of "avoiding" capitalism is refuted. By covering up the fundamental mistake of the Mikhailovsky group, Mr. Rakitnikov is bringing confusion into the theory of the *class struggle*. Nevertheless it is this theory alone that has shown the workers the way out of their present conditions, shown how the workers themselves can and should endeavour to achieve their emancipation.

V. I. Lenin, Narodism and the Class of Wage-Workers. Collected Works, Vol. 20, p. 106

Why were the plans of the old co-operators, from Robert Owen onwards, fantastic? Because they dreamed of peacefully remodelling contemporary society into socialism without taking account of such fundamental questions as the class struggle, the capture of political power by the working class, the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class. That is why we are right in regarding as entirely fantastic this "co-operative" socialism, and as romantic, and even banal, the dream of transforming class enemies into class collaborators and class war into class peace (so-called class truce) by merely organising the population in co-operative societies.

V. I. Lenin, On Co-operation. Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 473

The revolution of 1848 struck a deadly blow at all these vociferous, motley and ostentatious forms of *pre-Marxian* socialism. In all countries, the revolution revealed the various classes of society *in action*. The shooting of the workers by the republican bourgeoisie in Paris in the June days of 1848 finally revealed that the proletariat *alone* was social-

ist by nature. The liberal bourgeoisie dreaded the independence of this class a hundred times more than it did any kind of reaction. The craven liberals grovelled before reaction. The peasantry were content with the abolition of the survivals of feudalism and joined the supporters of order, wavering but occasionally between *workers' democracy and bourgeois liberalism*. All doctrines of *non-class socialism and non-class politics* proved to be sheer nonsense. . . .

Towards the end of the first period (1848-71), a period of storms and revolutions, pre-Marxian socialism was *dead*. Independent *proletarian* parties came into being: The First International (1864-72) and the German Social-Democratic Party.

V. I. Lenin, *Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx*.
Collected Works, Vol. 18,
pp. 582-83

Chernyshevsky was a Utopian socialist, who dreamed of a transition to socialism through the old, semi-feudal peasant village commune. He did not see, nor could he see in the sixties of the past century, that only the development of capitalism and of the proletariat could create the material conditions and the social force for the achievement of socialism.

V. I. Lenin, "The Peasant Reform"
and the Proletarian-Peasant
Revolution. *Collected Works*,
Vol. 17, p. 123

Herzen came right up to dialectical materialism, and halted—before historical materialism.

It was this "halt" that caused Herzen's spiritual shipwreck after the defeat of the revolution of 1848. Herzen had left Russia, and observed this revolution at close range. He was at that time a democrat, a revolutionary, a socialist. But his "socialism" was one of the countless forms and varieties of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois socialism of the

period of 1848, which were dealt their death-blow in the June days of that year. In point of fact, it was not socialism at all, but so many sentimental phrases, benevolent visions, which were the expression *at that time* of the revolutionary character of the bourgeois democrats, as well as of the proletariat, which had not yet freed itself from the influence of those democrats.

Herzen's spiritual shipwreck, his deep scepticism and pessimism after 1848, was a shipwreck of the *bourgeois illusions* of socialism. Herzen's spiritual drama was a product and reflection of that epoch in world history when the revolutionary character of the bourgeois democrats was *already* passing away (in Europe), while the revolutionary character of the socialist proletariat had *not yet* matured.

V. I. Lenin, *In Memory of Herzen*.
Collected Works, Vol. 18, p. 26

We should remember Engels's notable dictum:

"What formally may be economically incorrect, may all the same be correct from the point of view of world history."¹¹

Engels advanced this profound thesis in connection with utopian socialism: that socialism was "fallacious" in the formal economic sense. That socialism was "fallacious" when it declared surplus value an *injustice* from the point of view of the laws of exchange. The theoreticians of bourgeois political economy were right, in objecting to *that* socialism, in the formal economic sense, for surplus value results from the laws of exchange quite "naturally", quite "justly".

But utopian socialism was *right* from the point of view of world history, for it was a symptom, an expression, a harbinger of the class which, born of capitalism, has by now, in the beginning of the twentieth century, become a mass force which can put an end to capitalism and is irresistibly advancing to this goal.

Engels's profound thesis must be borne in mind when appraising the present-day Narodnik or Trudovik utopia¹²

in Russia (perhaps not only in Russia but in a number of Asiatic countries going through bourgeois revolutions in the twentieth century).

Narodnik *democracy*, while fallacious from the formal economic point of view, is correct from the *historical* point of view; *this* democracy, while fallacious as a socialist utopia, is *correct* in terms of the peculiar, historically conditioned democratic struggle of the peasant masses which is an inseparable element of the bourgeois transformation and a condition for its complete victory.

V. I. Lenin, *Two Utopias*.
Collected Works, Vol. 18,
pp. 357-58

Chapter Two

THE ORIGIN OF SCIENTIFIC COMMUNISM

Scientific Communism and Utopian Socialism

German theoretical socialism will never forget that it rests on the shoulders of Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen—three men who, in spite of all their fantastic notions and all their utopianism, stand among the most eminent thinkers of all time, and whose genius anticipated innumerable things the correctness of which is now being scientifically proved by us. . . .

*F. Engels, The Peasant War
in Germany, Moscow, 1965,
p. 22*

Scientific Communism and German Philosophy

Without German philosophy, particularly that of Hegel, German scientific socialism—the only scientific socialism that has ever existed—would never have come into being. Without the workers' sense of theory this scientific socialism would never have entered their flesh and blood as much as is the case. What an incalculable advantage this is may be seen, on the one hand, from the indifference to theory which is one of the main reasons why the English working-class movement crawls along so slowly in spite of the splendid organisation of the individual trades, and on the other hand, from the mischief and confusion wrought by Proudhonism¹³ in its original form among the

French and Belgians, and in the form further caricatured by Bakunin among the Spaniards and Italians.

*F. Engels, The Peasant War
in Germany, Moscow, 1965,
pp. 21-22*

German Socialism and Communism have proceeded, more than any other, from theoretical premises; we German theoreticians still knew much too little of the real world to be driven directly by the real relations to reforms of this "bad reality". At any rate almost none of the avowed champions of such reforms arrived at Communism otherwise than by way of the Feuerbachian dissolution of Hegelian speculation. The real conditions of life of the proletariat are so little known among us that even the well-meaning "societies for the uplift of the working classes", in which our bourgeoisie is now mistreating the social question, constantly start out from the most ridiculous and preposterous judgements concerning the condition of the workers. We Germans more than anybody else stand in need of a knowledge of the facts concerning this question.

*F. Engels, The Condition of
the Working Class in England.
Marx and Engels, On Britain,
Moscow, 1962, p. 4*

German socialism dates back to long before 1848. At first, it consisted of two independent trends. There was a purely workers' movement, a ramification of the French workers' communism, on the one hand, giving rise to Weitling's utopian communism as one of its stages of development. There was also a theoretical movement, which originated from the break-up of the Hegelian philosophy; this trend was highlighted from the very beginning by the name of Marx. The *Communist Manifesto* of January 1848 marks the fusion of the two trends, a fusion consummated and sealed in the crucible of revolution, in which all of them,

workers and ex-philosophers alike, acquitted themselves as real men.

F. Engels, Der Sozialismus in Deutschland. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 22, S. 248

Scientific Communism and Idealist Political Economy

To clear the path for critical and materialist socialism, which wanted to elucidate the true historical development of social production, a decisive break had to be made with the economic ideology of which Proudhon had unwittingly become the latest personification.

K. Marx, Über "Misère de la Philosophie". Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 19, S. 229

Scientific Communism and the Materialist Conception of History

The class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie came to the front in the history of the most advanced countries in Europe, in proportion to the development, upon the one hand, of modern industry, upon the other, of the newly acquired political supremacy of the bourgeoisie. Facts more and more strenuously gave the lie to the teachings of bourgeois economy as to the identity of the interests of capital and labour, as to the universal harmony and universal prosperity that would be the consequence of unbridled competition. All these things could no longer be ignored, any more than the French and English socialism, which was their theoretical, though very imperfect, expression. But the old idealist conception of history, which was not yet dislodged, knew nothing of class struggles based upon economic interests, knew nothing of economic interests; production and all economic relations appeared in it only as incidental, subordinate elements in the "history of civilisation".

The new facts made imperative a new examination of all

past history. Then it was seen that *all* past history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class struggles; that these warring classes of society are always the products of the modes of production and of exchange—in a word, of the *economic* conditions of their time; that the economic structure of society always furnishes the real basis, starting from which we can alone work out the ultimate explanation of the whole superstructure of juridical and political institutions as well as of the religious, philosophical, and other ideas of a given historical period. Hegel had freed history from metaphysics—he had made it dialectic; but his conception of history was essentially idealistic. But now idealism was driven from its last refuge, the philosophy of history; now a materialistic treatment of history was propounded, and a method found of explaining man's "knowing" by his "being", instead of, as heretofore, his "being" by his "knowing"

From that time forward socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to examine the historico-economic succession of events from which these classes, and their antagonism had of necessity sprung, and to discover in the economic conditions thus created the means of ending the conflict. But the socialism of earlier days was as incompatible with this materialistic conception as the conception of Nature of the French materialists was with dialectics and modern natural science. The socialism of earlier days certainly criticised the existing capitalist mode of production and its consequences. But it could not explain them, and, therefore, could not get the mastery of them. It could only simply reject them as bad. The more strongly this earlier socialism denounced the exploitation of the working class, inevitable under capitalism, the less able was it clearly to show in what this exploitation consisted and how it arose. But for this it was necessary—(1) to present the capitalistic

method of production in its historical connection and its inevitableness during a particular historical period, and therefore, also, to present its inevitable downfall; and (2) to lay bare its essential character, which was still a secret. This was done by the discovery of *surplus-value*. It was shown that the appropriation of unpaid labour is the basis of the capitalist mode of production and of the exploitation of the worker that occurs under it; that even if the capitalist buys the labour power of his labourer at its full value as a commodity on the market, he yet extracts more value from it than he paid for; and that in the ultimate analysis this surplus-value forms those sums of value from which are heaped up the constantly increasing masses of capital in the hands of the possessing classes. The genesis of capitalist production and the production of capital were both explained.

These two great discoveries, the materialistic conception of history and the revelation of the secret of capitalistic production through surplus-value, we owe to *Marx*. With these discoveries socialism became a science. The next thing was to work out all its details and relations.

F. Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 134-36

The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production [of the means to support human life] and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes or orders is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in man's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought, not in the *philosophy*, but in the *economics*

of each particular epoch. The growing perception that existing social institutions are unreasonable and unjust, that "reason has become unreason, and right wrong,"* is only proof that in the modes of production and exchange changes have silently taken place with which the social order, adapted to earlier economic conditions, is no longer in keeping. From this it also follows that the means of getting rid of the incongruities that have been brought to light must also be present, in a more or less developed condition, within the changed modes of production themselves. These means are not to be *invented*, spun out of the head, but *discovered* with the aid of the head in the existing material facts of production.

What is, then, the position of modern socialism in this connection?

The present structure of society—this is now pretty generally conceded—is the creation of the ruling class of today, of the bourgeoisie. The mode of production peculiar to the bourgeoisie, known, since Marx, as the capitalist mode of production, was incompatible with the local privileges and the privileges of estate as well as with the reciprocal personal ties of the feudal system. The bourgeoisie broke up the feudal system and built upon its ruins the capitalist order of society, the kingdom of free competition, of personal liberty, of the equality, before the law, of all commodity owners, of all the rest of the capitalist blessings. Thenceforward the capitalist mode of production could develop in freedom. Since steam, machinery, and the making of machines by machinery transformed the older manufacture into modern industry, the productive forces evolved under the guidance of the bourgeoisie developed with rapidity and in a degree unheard-of before. But just as the older manufacture, in its time, and handicraft, becoming more developed under its influence, had come into collision with the feudal trammels of the guilds, so now modern industry, in its more complete development, comes into collision with the bounds within which the capitalistic mode of production holds it

* Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust*.—Ed.

confined. The new productive forces have already outgrown the capitalist mode of using them. And this conflict between productive forces and modes of production is not a conflict engendered in the mind of man, like that between original sin and divine justice. It exists, in fact, objectively, outside us, independently of the will and actions even of the men that have brought it on. Modern socialism is nothing but the reflex, in thought, of this conflict in fact; its ideal reflection in the minds, first, of the class directly suffering under it, the working class.

*F. Engels, Anti-Dühring,
Moscow, 1959, pp. 367-69*

Scientific Communism and the Class Struggle of the Proletariat

Communism is not a doctrine, but a *movement*; it is based not on principles, but on the *facts*. The Communists took as their point of departure all past history, especially the actual contemporary results in the civilised countries, and not this or that philosophy. Communism stems from big industry and its consequences, from the emergence of the world market and the resultant unrestricted competition, from the ever more violent and universal commercial crises that have already developed into world market crises, from the inception of the proletariat and the concentration of capital, and from the resultant class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. As a theory, communism is the expression of the position of the proletariat in this struggle and the summation of the conditions necessary for the emancipation of the proletariat.

*F. Engels, Die Kommunisten und
Karl Heinzen. Marx/Engels, Werke,
Bd. 4, S. 321-22*

Modern socialism is, in its essence, the direct product of the recognition, on the one hand, of the class antagonisms existing in the society of today between proprietors and

non-proprietary, between capitalists and wage-workers; on the other hand, of the anarchy existing in production. But, in its theoretical form, modern socialism originally appears ostensibly as a more logical extension of the principles laid down by the great French philosophers of the eighteenth century. Like every new theory, modern socialism had, at first, to connect itself with the intellectual stock-in-trade ready to its hand, however deeply its roots lay in material economic facts.

F. Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, p. 116

The condition of the working class is the real basis and point of departure of all social movements of the present because it is the highest and most unconcealed pinnacle of the social misery existing in our day. French and German working-class Communism are its direct, Fourierism and English Socialism, as well as the Communism of the German educated bourgeoisie, are its indirect products. A knowledge of proletarian conditions is absolutely necessary to be able to provide solid ground for socialist theories, on the one hand, and for judgements about their right to exist, on the other; and to put an end to all sentimental dreams and fancies pro and con.

F. Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England. Marx and Engels, On Britain, Moscow, 1962, p. 3

Socialist dreams turned into the socialist struggle of the millions only when Marx's scientific socialism had linked up the urge for change with the struggle of a definite class. Outside the class struggle, socialism is either a hollow phrase or a naïve dream.

V. I. Lenin, Petty-Bourgeois and Proletarian Socialism. Collected Works, Vol. 9, p. 443

The separation of the working-class movement and socialism gave rise to weakness and underdevelopment in each: the theories of the socialists, unfused with the workers' struggle, remained nothing more than utopias, good wishes that had no effect on real life; the working-class movement remained petty, fragmented, and did not acquire political significance, was not enlightened by the advanced science of its time. For this reason we see in all European countries a constantly growing urge to *fuse* socialism with the working-class movement in a single *Social-Democratic* movement. When this fusion takes place the class struggle of the workers becomes *the conscious struggle of the proletariat* to emancipate itself from exploitation by the propertied classes, it is evolved into a higher form of the socialist workers' movement—*the independent working-class Social-Democratic party*. By directing socialism towards a fusion with the working-class movement, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels did their greatest service: they created a revolutionary theory that explained the necessity for this fusion and gave socialists the task of organising the class struggle of the proletariat.

*V. I. Lenin, A Retrograde Trend
in Russian Social-Democracy.
Collected Works, Vol. 4, pp. 257-58*

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels— Founders of Scientific Communism

While I was in Manchester, it was tangibly brought home to me that the economic facts, which have so far played no role or only a contemptible one in the writing of history, are, at least in the modern world, a decisive historical force; that they form the basis of the origination of the present-day class antagonisms; that these class antagonisms, in the countries where they have become fully developed, thanks to large-scale industry, hence especially in England, are in their turn the basis of the formation of political parties and of party struggles, and thus

of all political history. Marx had not only arrived at the same view, but had already, in the *German-French Annals* (1844), generalised it to the effect that, speaking generally, it is not the state which conditions and regulates civil society, but civil society which conditions and regulates the state, and, consequently, that policy and its history are to be explained from the economic relations and their development, and not vice versa. . . .

This discovery, which revolutionised the science of history and, as we have seen, is essentially the work of Marx—a discovery in which I can claim for myself only a very insignificant share—was, however, of immediate importance for the contemporary workers' movement. Communism among the French and Germans, Chartism among the English, now no longer appeared as something accidental which could just as well not have occurred. These movements now presented themselves as a movement of the modern oppressed class, the proletariat, as the more or less developed forms of its historically necessary struggle against the ruling class, the bourgeoisie; as forms of the class struggle, but distinguished from all earlier class struggles by this one thing, that the present-day oppressed class, the proletariat, cannot achieve its emancipation without at the same time emancipating society as a whole from division into classes and, therefore, from class struggles. And communism now no longer meant the concoction, by means of the imagination, of an ideal society as perfect as possible, but insight into the nature, the conditions and the consequent general aims of the struggle waged by the proletariat.

Now, we were by no means of the opinion that the new scientific results should be confided in large tomes exclusively to the "learned" world. Quite the contrary. We were both of us already deeply involved in the political movement, and possessed a certain following in the educated world, especially of Western Germany, and abundant contact with the organised proletariat. It was our duty to provide a scientific foundation for our view, but it was

equally important for us to win over the European and in the first place the German proletariat to our conviction. As soon as we had become clear in our own minds, we set about the task.

F. Engels, On the History of the Communist League. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 344-45

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 the science, and to indicate the path that must be followed in further developing and elaborating it in all its parts. It disclosed the nature of modern capitalist economy by explaining how the hire of the labourer, the purchase of labour-power, conceals the enslavement of millions of propertyless people by a handful of capitalists, the owners of the land, factories, mines, and so forth. It showed that all modern capitalist development displays the tendency of large-scale production to eliminate petty production and creates conditions that make a socialist system of society possible and necessary. It taught us how to discern, beneath the pall of rooted customs, political intrigues, abstruse laws, and intricate doctrines—the *class struggle*, the struggle between the propertied classes in all their variety and the propertyless mass, the *proletariat*, which is at the head of all the propertyless. 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.*

V. I. Lenin, Our Programme. Collected Works, Vol. 4, pp. 210-11

In their scientific works, Marx and Engels were the first to explain that socialism is not the invention of dreamers, but the final aim and necessary result of the development of the productive forces in modern society.

*V. I. Lenin, Frederick Engels.
Collected Works, Vol. 2. p. 19*

The Elaboration of the Theory of Scientific Communism in the Early Works of Marx and Engels

In communist society, where the interests of individuals are not opposed but identical, competition ceases. It stands to reason that there will no longer be any question of the ruin of individual classes, and of classes generally, such as the rich and poor of today. Private appropriation, the goal of the individual to enrich himself, will disappear in the production and distribution of the necessities of life, and so will trade crises disappear by themselves. In communist society it will be easy to know production and consumption. Since it is known how much an average individual needs, it will easily be estimated how much a certain number of individuals need, and since production will no longer be controlled by private owners, but by the community and its administration, it will be easy to *regulate production in accordance with the requirements.*

*F. Engels, Zwei Reden in Elberfeld.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 2, S. 539*

Already in present-day society, which is in a state of war, the progress of civilisation mitigates the violent outbreaks of passion. How much more will this be the case in the peaceful communist society! Property crimes will be no more where each receives what he needs to satisfy his natural and spiritual requirements and where social barriers and differences fall away. Criminal courts will dissolve and civil justice, which deals almost entirely with property relations or at least with relations impelled by

the state of social war, will also become redundant; conflicts will be rare exceptions and will be easily settled by arbitrators, whereas they are now the natural consequence of wholesale hostility. Today, government officials have a source of occupation in the continuous state of war, for the police and the rest of the administration are entirely occupied with keeping the war concealed and indirect, and with preventing it from breaking out into violence and crime. It is incalculably easier to maintain peace than to keep a war within bounds, and likewise incalculably easier to govern a communist than a competitive community.

Civilisation has already taught people to seek their interest in the maintenance of public order, public security and the public interest, and thus makes the police, the government and the courts redundant; this will be doubly true of a society in which the common interest is elevated to the basic principle and no longer differs from the interest of the individual! What already exists *despite* the social pattern, will be far more evident after it is no longer obstructed, but rather supported, by the social pattern....

One of the costliest establishments that present-day society cannot do without is the standing army, which deprives the nation of the strongest and most useful part of the population, thus rendered unproductive, and compels society to feed it. We know from our own state budget how much a standing army costs: twenty-four million annually and the withdrawal from production of twice a hundred thousand of the strongest pairs of hands. It would never occur to anyone in communist society to maintain a standing army. What would it be for? To maintain internal peace in the land? But, as we noted above, it would never occur to anyone to disturb this internal peace. Dread of revolution is, after all, only a consequence of opposed interests; once the interests of all coincide, there can be no question of it. To wage an aggressive war? Communist society would never think of undertaking an aggressive war, for it knows perfectly well it would lose people and capital in a war, and would gain no more than a

couple of reluctant provinces, which would disturb social peace and order. To fight a defensive war? A standing army is not necessary for this purpose, because it will be easy, in addition to his usual occupation, to train every capable member of society in the real use of arms, not just for parading, to the extent necessary to defend the country. Please note, gentlemen, that a member of such a society would be defending his *true* motherland, his *true* hearth, in the event of a war, which could *only* occur *against anti-communist* nations, and that he would therefore fight with inspiration, with a stamina and bravery that would make the trained robot-like modern army fall to pieces. . . .

A still more deplorable waste of manpower occurs in the existing society by reason of the manner in which the rich exploit their social standing. I will say nothing of the needless and absurd luxury prompted by the mere wish to distinguish oneself, which involves so much labour. Gentlemen, go to the home, the sanctum sanctorum, of a rich man, and tell me if it is not a mad waste of manpower to have a lot of people serve one man and spend their time in idleness or, at best, in doing work that stems from the isolation of every man within his four walls? What does this prodigious number of maids, cooks, lackeys, coachmen, porters, gardeners and whatever else they are, really do? How *few are the moments* of the day that they are occupied to make the life of their master *truly* pleasant and to make it easier for him to develop and exercise his human nature and his innate forces, and *how many hours* in the day are they busy doing work induced by the poor arrangement of our social relations—standing at the back of a coach, gratifying the whims and follies of their masters, ministering to their lap-dogs and doing other absurdities. In a sensibly organised society, where everyone has an opportunity to live without indulging the follies of the rich or resorting to such follies himself, the manpower thus wasted on luxury could naturally also be employed to everybody's and its own benefit.

A further waste of manpower occurs in present-day society quite directly due to the effects of competition, whereby a large number of destitute workers are created who would *like nothing better* than working, but who *cannot* obtain work. Since society is not so arranged as to devote itself to the beneficial use of manpower and since the individual has to fend for himself in looking for a source of livelihood, it is only natural that a large number of workers are left empty-handed in the distribution of truly or seemingly useful jobs. This is doubly true, since the competitive struggle has been impelling everyone to strain his strength to the utmost and to employ all possible means to substitute cheap for more expensive labour, for which our rising civilisation daily offers fresh opportunities. In other words, everyone has to strain himself to leave others destitute and to oust the labour of others in one way or another. This is why large numbers of unemployed who would like to work but cannot find a job exist in every civilised society, and their numbers are bigger than is commonly thought. We find these people *prostituting* themselves in one way or another: begging, sweeping streets, loitering at street corners, keeping body and soul together miserably by occasional odd jobs, peddling every imaginable kind of ware from door to door—or, as we saw a couple of poor girls do tonight—wandering from place to place with a guitar and playing and dancing for money. They are compelled to suffer every possible indignity and every insulting presumption in order to earn a few pennies. Last but not least, how many there are who fall victim to *outright* prostitution! Gentlemen, the number of these unfortunates who have no other choice but to prostitute themselves in one way or another is very great, as our institutions for the poor could testify. Do not forget that despite their redundancy, society feeds these people all the same. Therefore, since society has to bear the cost of their maintenance, it should also see to it that these unemployed earn their living *honourably*. Yet this is something present-day competitive society is *unable* to do.

If you bear all this in mind, gentlemen—and I could mention many more examples of how present-day society wastes its manpower—you will find that human society possesses a surfeit of productive forces that await sensible organisation and regulated distribution to apply themselves to some kind of work to the best advantage of all. You will then be able to judge, gentlemen, how little cause there is for the fear that, given fair distribution of social activity, the individual will be burdened with so much labour that it will be impossible for him to engage in anything else. On the contrary, we may assume that, given proper organisation, the usual labour time of the individual will be reduced by half through the employment of the manpower now either unemployed or inappropriately applied.

However, the advantages offered by the communist order through *the use of wasted manpower* are *not the most important*. The greatest saving of manpower lies in the *unification of individual forces* into a social collective force and in the arrangement implicit in this concentration of forces that have so far been opposed to each other.

*F. Engels, Zwei Reden in Elberfeld.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 2, S. 541-45*

Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all natural premises as the creatures of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of the united individuals. Its organisation is, therefore, essentially economic, the material production of the conditions of this unity; it turns existing conditions into conditions of unity. The reality, which communism is creating, is precisely the true basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals, insofar as reality is only a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals themselves.

*Marx and Engels, The German
Ideology, Moscow, 1962, pp. 86-87*

Large-scale industry, and the expansion of production to infinity which it makes possible, is paving the way for a society in which so much of all the necessities of life will be produced that every member of society will have an opportunity to develop and employ all his strength and ability in the utmost freedom. Thus, the capacity of large-scale industry, which is causing so much misery and all the trade crises of present-day society, will, given a different social organisation, destroy this misery and all these unfortunate fluctuations.

*F. Engels, Grundsätze des
Kommunismus. Marx/Engels,
Werke, Bd. 4, S. 370*

Chapter Three

SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

Progress Towards Socialism—the Content of the Modern Era

The abolition of capitalism and its vestiges, and the establishment of the fundamentals of the communist order comprise the content of the new era of world history that has set in. It is inevitable that the slogans of our era are and must be: the abolition of classes; the dictatorship of the proletariat for the purpose of achieving that aim. . . .

*V. I. Lenin, On the Struggle
Within the Italian Socialist
Party. Collected Works,
Vol. 31, p. 392*

At the present time, the *objective* situation in the biggest advanced states of Europe is different. Progress, if we leave out for the moment the possibility of temporary steps backward, can be made only in the direction of *socialist* society, only in the direction of the *socialist revolution*.

*V. I. Lenin, The Junius Pamphlet.
Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 316*

Historical Inevitability of the Socialist Revolution

Since steam, machinery, and the making of machines by machinery transformed the older manufacture into modern industry, the productive forces evolved under the guidance

of the bourgeoisie developed with a rapidity and in a degree unheard-of before. But just as the older manufacture, in its time, and handicraft, becoming more developed under its influence, had come into collision with the feudal trammels of the guilds, so now modern industry, in its more complete development, comes into collision with the bounds within which the capitalistic mode of production holds it confined....

Now, in what does this conflict consist?

Before capitalistic production, i.e., in the Middle Ages, the system of petty industry obtained generally, based upon the private property of the labourers in their means of production; in the country, the agriculture of the small peasant, freeman or serf; in the towns, the handicrafts organised in guilds. The instruments of labour—land, agricultural implements, the workshop, the tool—were the instruments of labour of single individuals, adapted for the use of one worker, and, therefore, of necessity, small, dwarfish, circumscribed. But, for this very reason they belonged, as a rule, to the producer himself. To concentrate these scattered, limited means of production, to enlarge them, to turn them into the powerful levers of production of the present day—this was precisely the historic role of capitalist production and of its upholder, the bourgeoisie. In the fourth section of *Capital* Marx has explained in detail, how since the fifteenth century this has been historically worked out through the three phases of simple co-operation, manufacture and modern industry. But the bourgeoisie, as is also shown there, could not transform these puny means of production into mighty productive forces without transforming them, at the same time, from means of production of the individual into *social* means of production only *workable by a collectivity of men*. The spinning-wheel, the hand-loom, the blacksmith's hammer, were replaced by the spinning-machine, the power-loom, the steam-hammer; the individual workshop, by the factory implying the co-operation of hundreds and thousands of workmen. In like manner, production itself changed from a series of individual into a series of social acts, and the products from individual to social products.

The yarn, the cloth, the metal articles that now came out of the factory, were the joint product of many workers, through whose hands they had successively to pass before they were ready. No one person could say of them: "I made that; this is *my* product."

But where, in a given society, the fundamental form of production is that spontaneous division of labour which creeps in gradually and not upon any preconceived plan, there the products take on the form of *commodities*, whose mutual exchange, buying and selling, enable the individual producers to satisfy their manifold wants. And this was the case in the Middle Ages. The peasant, e.g., sold to the artisan agricultural products and bought from him the products of handicraft. Into this society of individual producers, of commodity producers, the new mode of production thrust itself. In the midst of the old division of labour, grown up spontaneously and upon *no definite plan*, which had governed the whole of society, now arose division of labour upon a *definite plan*, as organised in the factory; side by side with *individual* production appeared *social* production. The products of both were sold in the same market, and, therefore, at prices at least approximately equal. But organisation upon a definite plan was stronger than spontaneous division of labour. The factories working with the combined social forces of a collectivity of individuals produced their commodities far more cheaply than the individual small producers. Individual production succumbed in one department after another. Socialised production revolutionised all the old methods of production. But its revolutionary character was, at the same time, so little recognised that it was, on the contrary, introduced as a means of increasing and developing the production of commodities. When it arose, it found ready-made, and made liberal use of, certain machinery for the production and exchange of commodities: merchants' capital, handicraft, wage-labour. Socialised production thus introducing itself as a new form of the production of commodities, it was a matter of course that under it the old forms of

appropriation remained in full swing, and were applied to its products as well.

In the medieval stage of evolution of the production of commodities, the question as to the owner of the product of labour could not arise. The individual producer, as a rule, had, from raw material belonging to himself, and generally his own handiwork, produced it with his own tools, by the labour of his own hands or of his family. There was no need for him to appropriate the new product. It belonged wholly to him, as a matter of course. His property in the product was, therefore, based *upon his own labour*. Even where external help was used, this was, as a rule, of little importance, and very generally was compensated by something other than wages. The apprentices and journeymen of the guilds worked less for board and wages than for education, in order that they might become master craftsmen themselves.

Then came the concentration of the means of production and of the producers in large workshops and manufactories, their transformation into actual socialised means of production and socialised producers. But the socialised producers and means of production and their products were still treated, after this change, just as they had been before, i.e., as the means of production and the products of individuals. Hitherto, the owner of the instruments of labour had himself appropriated the product, because, as a rule, it was his own product and the assistance of others was the exception. Now the owner of the instruments of labour always appropriated to himself the product, although it was no longer *his* product but exclusively the product of the *labour of others*. Thus, the products now produced socially were not appropriated by those who had actually set in motion the means of production and actually produced the commodities, but by the *capitalists*. The means of production, and production itself, had become in essence socialised. But they were subjected to a form of appropriation which presupposes the private production of individuals, under which, therefore, everyone owns his

own product and brings it to market. The mode of production is subjected to this form of appropriation, although it abolishes the conditions upon which the latter rests....

This contradiction, which gives to the new mode of production its capitalistic character, *contains the germ of the whole of the social antagonisms of today*. The greater the mastery obtained by the new mode of production over all important fields of production and in all manufacturing countries, the more it reduced individual production to an insignificant residuum, *the more clearly was brought out the incompatibility of socialised production with capitalistic appropriation*.

The first capitalists found, as we have said, alongside of other forms of labour, wage-labour ready-made for them on the market. But it was exceptional, complementary, accessory, transitory wage-labour. The agricultural labourer, though, upon occasion, he hired himself out by the day, had a few acres of his own land on which he could at all events live at a pinch. The guilds were so organised that the journeyman of today became the master of tomorrow. But all this changed, as soon as the means of production became socialised and concentrated in the hands of capitalists. The means of production, as well as the product, of the individual producer became more and more worthless; there was nothing left for him but to turn wage-worker under the capitalist. Wage-labour, aforetime the exception and accessory, now became the rule and basis of all production; aforetime complementary, it now became the sole remaining function of the worker. The wage-worker for a time became a wage-worker for life. The number of these permanent wage-workers was further enormously increased by the breaking-up of the feudal system that occurred at the same time, by the disbanding of the retainers of the feudal lords, the eviction of the peasants from their homesteads, etc. The separation was made complete between the means of production concentrated in the hands of the capitalists, on the one side, and the producers, possessing nothing but their labour-power, on the other.

The contradiction between socialised production and capitalistic appropriation manifested itself as the antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie.

We have seen that the capitalistic mode of production thrust its way into a society of commodity-producers, of individual producers, whose social bond was the exchange of their products. But every society based upon the production of commodities has this peculiarity: that the producers have lost control over their own social interrelations. Each man produces for himself with such means of production as he may happen to have, and for such exchange as he may require to satisfy his remaining wants. No one knows how much of his particular article is coming on the market, nor how much of it will be wanted. No one knows whether his individual product will meet an actual demand, whether he will be able to make good his costs of production or even to sell his commodity at all. Anarchy reigns in socialised production.

But the production of commodities, like every other form of production, has its peculiar, inherent laws inseparable from it; and these laws work, despite anarchy, in and through anarchy. They reveal themselves in the only persistent form of social interrelations, i.e., in exchange, and here they affect the individual producers as compulsory laws of competition. They are, at first, unknown to these producers themselves, and have to be discovered by them gradually and as the result of experience. They work themselves out, therefore, independently of the producers, and in antagonism to them, as inexorable natural laws of their particular form of production. The product governs the producers. . . .

With the extension of the production of commodities, and especially with the introduction of the capitalist mode of production, the laws of commodity production, hitherto latent, came into action more openly and with greater force. The old bonds were loosened, the old exclusive limits broken through, the producers were more and more turned into independent, isolated producers of commodities. It

became apparent that the production of society at large was ruled by absence of plan, by accident, by anarchy; and this anarchy grew to greater and greater height. But the chief means by aid of which the capitalist mode of production intensified this anarchy of socialised production was the exact opposite of anarchy. It was the increasing organisation of production, upon a social basis, in every individual productive establishment. By this, the old, peaceful, stable condition of things was ended. Wherever this organisation of production was introduced into a branch of industry, it brooked no other method of production by its side. The field of labour became a battle-ground. The great geographical discoveries, and the colonisation following upon them, multiplied markets and quickened the transformation of handicraft into manufacture. The war did not simply break out between the individual producers of particular localities. The local struggles begot in their turn national conflicts, the commercial wars of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.

Finally, modern industry and the opening of the world market made the struggle universal, and at the same time gave it an unheard-of virulence. Advantages in natural or artificial conditions of production now decide the existence or non-existence of individual capitalists, as well as of whole industries and countries. He that falls is remorselessly cast aside. It is the Darwinian struggle of the individual for existence transferred from Nature to society with intensified violence. The conditions of existence natural to the animal appear as the final term of human development. The contradiction between socialised production and capitalistic appropriation now presents itself as *an antagonism between the organisation of production in the individual workshop and the anarchy of production in society generally.*

The capitalistic mode of production moves in these two forms of the antagonism imminent to it from its very origin. It is never able to get out of that "vicious circle" which Fourier had already discovered. What Fourier could

not, indeed, see in his time is that this circle is gradually narrowing; that the movement becomes more and more a spiral, and must come to an end, like the movement of the planets, by collision with the centre. It is the compelling force of anarchy in the production of society at large that more and more completely turns the great majority of men into proletarians; and it is the masses of the proletariat again who will finally put an end to anarchy in production. It is the compelling force of anarchy in social production that turns the limitless perfectibility of machinery under modern industry into a compulsory law by which every individual industrial capitalist must perfect his machinery more and more, under penalty of ruin.

But the perfecting of machinery is making human labour superfluous. If the introduction and increase of machinery means the displacement of millions of manual by a few machine-workers, improvement in machinery means the displacement of more and more of the machine-workers themselves. It means, in the last instance, the production of a number of available wage-workers in excess of the average needs of capital, the formation of a complete industrial reserve army, as I called it in 1845... , available at the times when industry is working at high pressure, to be cast out upon the street when the inevitable crash comes, a constant dead weight upon the limbs of the working class in its struggle for existence with capital, a regulator for the keeping of wages down to the low level that suits the interests of capital. Thus it comes about, to quote Marx, that machinery becomes the most powerful weapon in the war of capital against the working class; that the instruments of labour constantly tear the means of subsistence out of the hands of the labourer; that the very product of the worker is turned into an instrument for his subjugation. Thus it comes about that the economising of the instruments of labour becomes at the same time, from the outset, the most reckless waste of labour-power, and robbery based upon the normal conditions under which labour functions; that machinery, "the most power-

ful instrument for shortening labour time, becomes the most unfailing means for placing every moment of the labourer's time and that of his family at the disposal of the capitalist for the purpose of expanding the value of his capital." (*Capital*, English edition, p. 406.) Thus it comes about that the overwork of some becomes the preliminary condition for the idleness of others, and that modern industry, which hunts after new consumers over the whole world, forces the consumption of the masses at home down to a starvation minimum, and in doing thus destroys its own home market. "The law that always equilibrates the relative surplus population, or industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, this law rivets the labourer to capital more firmly than the wedges of Vulcan did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time, accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces *its own product in the form of capital*." (Marx's *Capital* [Sonnen-schein & Co.], p. 661.) And to expect any other division of the products from the capitalistic mode of production is the same as expecting the electrodes of a battery not to decompose acidulated water, not to liberate oxygen at the positive, hydrogen at the negative pole, so long as they are connected with the battery.

We have seen that the ever-increasing perfectibility of modern machinery is, by the anarchy of social production, turned into a compulsory law that forces the individual industrial capitalist always to improve his machinery, always to increase its productive force. The bare possibility of extending the field of production is transformed for him into a similar compulsory law. The enormous expansive force of modern industry, compared with which that of gases is mere child's play, appears to us now as a *necessity* for expansion, both qualitative and quantitative, that laughs at all resistance. Such resistance is offered by con-

sumption, by sales, by the markets for the products of modern industry. But the capacity for extension, extensive and intensive, of the markets is primarily governed by quite different laws that work much less energetically. The extension of the markets cannot keep pace with the extension of production. The collision becomes inevitable, and as this cannot produce any real solution so long as it does not break in pieces the capitalist mode of production, the collisions become periodic. Capitalist production has begotten another "vicious circle".

As a matter of fact, since 1825, when the first general crisis broke out, the whole industrial and commercial world, production and exchange among all civilised peoples and their more or less barbaric hangers-on, are thrown out of joint about once every ten years. Commerce is at a standstill, the markets are glutted, products accumulate, as multitudinous as they are unsaleable, hard cash disappears, credit vanishes, factories are closed, the mass of the workers are in want of the means of subsistence, because they have produced too much of the means of subsistence; bankruptcy follows upon bankruptcy, execution upon execution. The stagnation lasts for years; productive forces and products are wasted and destroyed wholesale, until the accumulated mass of commodities finally filters off, more or less depreciated in value, until production and exchange gradually begin to move again. Little by little the pace quickens. It becomes a trot. The industrial trot breaks into a canter, the canter in turn grows into the headlong gallop of a perfect steeplechase of industry, commercial credit, and speculation which finally, after breakneck leaps, ends where it began—in the ditch of a crisis. And so over and over again. We have now, since the year 1825, gone through this five times, and at the present moment (1877) we are going through it for the sixth time. And the character of these crises is so clearly defined that Fourier hit all of them off when he described the first as "*crise pléthorique*", a crisis from plethora.

In these crises, the contradiction between socialised

production and capitalist appropriation ends in a violent explosion. The circulation of commodities is, for the time being, stopped. Money, the means of circulation, becomes a hindrance to circulation. All the laws of production and circulation of commodities are turned upside down. The economic collision has reached its apogee. *The mode of production is in rebellion against the mode of exchange.*

The fact that the socialised organisation of production within the factory has developed so far that it has become incompatible with the anarchy of production in society, which exists side by side with and dominates it, is brought home to the capitalists themselves by the violent concentration of capital that occurs during crises, through the ruin of many large, and a still greater number of small, capitalists. The whole mechanism of the capitalist mode of production breaks down under the pressure of the productive forces, its own creations. It is no longer able to turn all this mass of means of production into capital. They lie fallow, and for that very reason the industrial reserve army must also lie fallow. Means of production, means of subsistence, available labourers, all the elements of production and of general wealth, are present in abundance. But "abundance becomes the source of distress and want" (Fourier), because it is the very thing that prevents the transformation of the means of production and subsistence into capital. For in capitalistic society the means of production can only function when they have undergone a preliminary transformation into capital, into the means of exploiting human labour-power. The necessity of this transformation into capital of the means of production and subsistence stands like a ghost between these and the workers. It alone prevents the coming together of the material and personal levers of production; it alone forbids the means of production to function, the workers to work and live. On the one hand, therefore, the capitalistic mode of production stands convicted of its own incapacity to further direct these productive forces. On the other, these productive forces themselves, with increasing energy, press

forward to the removal of the existing contradiction, to the abolition of their quality as capital, to the *practical recognition of their character as social productive forces*.

This rebellion of the productive forces, as they grow more and more powerful, against their quality as capital, this stronger and stronger command that their social character shall be recognised, forces the capitalist class itself to treat them more and more as social productive forces, so far as this is possible under capitalist conditions. The period of industrial high pressure, with its unbounded inflation of credit, not less than the crash itself, by the collapse of great capitalist establishments, tends to bring about that form of the socialisation of great masses of means of production which we meet with in the different kinds of joint-stock companies. Many of these means of production and of distribution are, from the outset, so colossal that, like the railways, they exclude all other forms of capitalistic exploitation. At a further stage of evolution this form also becomes insufficient. The producers on a large scale in a particular branch of industry in a particular country unite in a trust, a union for the purpose of regulating production. They determine the total amount to be produced, parcel it out among themselves, and thus enforce the selling price fixed beforehand. But trusts of this kind, as soon as business becomes bad, are generally liable to break up, and on this very account compel a yet greater concentration of association. The whole of the particular industry is turned into one gigantic joint-stock company; internal competition gives place to the internal monopoly of this one company. This has happened in 1890 with the English alkali production, which is now, after the fusion of 48 large works, in the hands of one company, conducted upon a single plan, and with a capital of £6,000,000.

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. No nation will put up with production conducted by trusts, with so barefaced an exploitation of the community by a small band of dividend-mongers.

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 intercourse and 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

* I say "have to". For only when the means of production and distribution have *actually* outgrown the form of management by joint-stock companies, and when, therefore, the taking them over by the state has become *economically* inevitable, only then—even if it is the state of today that effects this—is there an economic advance, the attainment of another step preliminary to the taking over of all productive forces by society itself. But of late, since Bismarck went in for state ownership of industrial establishments, a kind of spurious socialism has arisen, degenerating, now and again, into something of flunkeyism, that without more ado declares *all* state ownership, even of the Bismarckian sort, to be socialistic. Certainly, if the taking over by the state of the tobacco industry is socialistic, then Napoleon and Metternich must be numbered among the founders of socialism. If the Belgian state, for quite ordinary political and financial reasons, itself constructed its chief railway lines; if Bismarck, not under any economic compulsion, took over for the state the chief Prussian lines, simply to be the better able to have them in hand in case of war, to bring up the railway employees as voting cattle for the government, and especially to create for himself a new source of income independent of parliamentary votes—this was, in no sense, a socialistic measure, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously. Otherwise, the Royal Maritime Company,¹⁴ the Royal porcelain manufacture, and even the regimental tailor shops of the Army would also be socialistic institutions, or even, as was seriously proposed by a sly dog in Frederick-William III's reign, the taking over by the state of the brothels. [Note by Engels.]

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 relation 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.

Active social forces work exactly like natural forces: blindly, forcibly, destructively, so long as we do not understand, and reckon with, them. But when once we understand them, when once we grasp their action, their direction, their effects, it depends only upon ourselves to subject them more and more to our own will, and by means of them to reach our own ends. And this holds quite especially of the mighty productive forces of today. As long as we obstinately refuse to understand the nature and the character of these social means of action—and this understanding goes against the grain of the capitalist mode of production and its defenders—so long these forces are at work in spite of us, in opposition to us, so long they master us, as we have shown above in detail.

But when once their nature is understood, they can, in the hands of the producers working together, be transformed from master demons into willing servants. The difference is as that between the destructive force of electricity in the lightning of the storm, and electricity under command in the telegraph and the voltaic arc; the difference between a conflagration, and fire working in the service of man. With this recognition, at last, of the real nature of the productive forces of today, the social anarchy of production gives place to a social regulation of production upon a definite plan, according to the needs of the community and of each individual. Then the capitalist mode of appropriation, in which the product enslaves first the producer and then the appropriator, is replaced by the mode of appropriation of the products that is based upon the nature of the modern means of production; upon the

one hand, direct social appropriation, as means to the maintenance and extension of production—on the other, direct individual appropriation, as means of subsistence and of enjoyment.

Whilst the capitalist mode of production more and more completely transforms the great majority of the population into proletarians, it creates the power which, under penalty of its own destruction, is forced to accomplish this revolution. Whilst it forces on more and more the transformation of the vast means of production, already socialised, into state property, it shows itself the way to accomplishing this revolution. *The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into state property.*

F. Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 137-50

If for the impending overthrow of the present mode of distribution of the products of labour, with its crying contrasts of want and luxury, starvation and surfeit, we had no better guarantee than the consciousness that this mode of distribution is unjust, and that justice must eventually triumph, we should be in a pretty bad way, and we might have a long time to wait. The mystics of the Middle Ages who dreamed of the coming millennium were already conscious of the injustice of class antagonisms. On the threshold of modern history, three hundred and fifty years ago, Thomas Münzer proclaimed it to the world. In the English and the French bourgeois revolutions the same call resounded—and died away. And if today the same call for the abolition of class antagonisms and class distinctions, which up to 1830 had left the working and suffering classes cold, if today this call is re-echoed a millionfold, if it takes hold of one country after another in the same order and in the same degree of intensity that modern industry develops in each country, if in one generation it has gained a strength that enables it to defy all the forces

combined against it and to be confident of victory in the near future—what is the reason for this? The reason is that modern large-scale industry has called into being on the one hand a proletariat, a class which for the first time in history can demand the abolition, not of this or that particular class organisation, or of this or that particular class privilege, but of classes themselves, and which is in such a position that it must carry through this demand on pain of sinking to the level of the Chinese coolie. On the other hand this same large-scale industry has brought into being, in the bourgeoisie, a class which has the monopoly of all the instruments of production and means of subsistence, but which in each speculative boom period and in each crash that follows it proves that it has become incapable of any longer controlling the productive forces, which have grown beyond its power; a class under whose leadership society is racing to ruin like a locomotive whose jammed safety-valve the driver is too weak to open. In other words, the reason is that both the productive forces created by the modern capitalist mode of production and the system of distribution of goods established by it have come into crying contradiction with that mode of production itself, and in fact to such a degree that, if the whole of modern society is not to perish, a revolution in the mode of production and distribution must take place, a revolution which will put an end to all class distinctions. On this tangible, material fact, which is impressing itself in a more or less clear form, but with insuperable necessity, on the minds of the exploited proletarians—on this fact, and not on the conceptions of justice and injustice held by any armchair philosopher, is modern socialism's confidence in victory founded.

*F. Engels, Anti-Dühring,
Moscow, 1959, pp. 216-18*

To begin with, the decay of communal landownership in Western Europe is separated from the emergence of capitalist production by an immense span of time, embrac-

ing a succession of economic revolutions and evolutions, of which capitalist production is only the latest. On the one hand, it has eminently developed the productive forces of society; on the other hand, however, it has demonstrated its own incompatibility with the forces that it has itself brought into existence. Its history is a history of antagonisms, crises, conflicts and disasters. Finally, it has revealed its purely transitional character to the whole world, save those who are blinded by their private interest. The peoples in Europe and America, among whom it has developed to the greatest extent, are eager to cast off their chains and to substitute production in common for capitalist production and a *higher form* of the archaic type of property, that is, communist property, for capitalist property.

*K. Marx, Entwürfe einer Antwort
auf den Brief von V. I. Zassulich
[Zweiter Entwurf]. Marx/Engels,
Werke, Bd. 19, S. 397-98*

On the one hand are immeasurable riches and a superfluity of products which the purchasers cannot cope with; on the other hand, the great mass of society proletarianised, turned into wage-workers, and precisely for that reason made incapable of appropriating for themselves this superfluity of products. The division of society into a small, excessively rich class and a large, propertyless class of wage-workers results in a society suffocating from its own superfluity, while the great majority of its members is scarcely, or even not at all, protected from extreme want. This state of affairs becomes daily more absurd and—more unnecessary. It *must* be abolished, it *can* be abolished.

*F. Engels, Introduction to K. Marx's work
"Wage Labour and Capital".
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 78*

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.

*Marx and Engels, Manifesto
of the Communist Party.
Selected Works, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1962, pp. 39-40*

There is one great fact, characteristic of this our nineteenth century, a fact which no party dares deny. On the one hand, there have started into life industrial and scientific forces, which no epoch of the former human history

had ever suspected. On the other hand, there exist symptoms of decay, far surpassing the horrors recorded of the latter times of the Roman Empire.

In our days everything seems pregnant with its contrary. Machinery, gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labour, we behold starving and overworking it. The new-fangled sources of wealth, by some strange weird spell, are turned into sources of want. The victories of art seem bought by the loss of character. At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy. Even the pure light of science seems unable to shine but on the dark background of ignorance. All our invention and progress seem to result in endowing material forces with intellectual life, and in stultifying human life into a material force. This antagonism between modern industry and science on the one hand, modern misery and dissolution on the other hand; this antagonism between the productive powers and the social relations of our epoch is a fact, palpable, overwhelming, and not to be controverted. Some parties may wail over it; others may wish to get rid of modern arts, in order to get rid of modern conflicts. Or they may imagine that so signal a progress in industry wants to be completed by as signal a regress in politics. On our part, we do not mistake the shape of the shrewd spirit that continues to mark all these contradictions. We know that to work well the new-fangled forces of society, they only want to be mastered by new-fangled men—and such are the working men. They are as much the invention of modern time as machinery itself. In the signs that bewilder the middle class, the aristocracy and the poor prophets of regression, we do recognise our brave friend, Robin Goodfellow, the old mole that can work in the earth so fast, that worthy pioneer—the Revolution. The English working men are the first born sons of modern industry. They will then, certainly, not be the last in aiding the social revolution produced by that industry, a revolution, which means the emancipation of their own

class all over the world, which is as universal as capital-rule and wages-slavery. I know the heroic struggles the English working class have gone through since the middle of the last century—struggles less glorious, because they are shrouded in obscurity, and burked by the middle class historian. To revenge the misdeeds of the ruling class, there existed in the Middle Ages, in Germany, a secret tribunal, called the “*Vehmgericht*”.* If a red cross was seen marked on a house, people knew that its owner was doomed by the “*Vehm*”. All the houses of Europe are now marked with the mysterious red cross. History is the judge—its executioner, the proletarian.

K. Marx, Speech at the Anniversary of the “People’s Paper”. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 359-60

Self-earned private property, that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent labouring-individual with the conditions of his labour, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labour of others, i.e., on wage-labour.

As soon as this process of transformation has sufficiently decomposed the old society from top to bottom, as soon as the labourers are turned into proletarians, their means of labour into capital, as soon as the capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet, then the further socialisation of labour and further transformation of the land and other means of production into socially exploited and, therefore, common means of production, as well as the further expropriation of private proprietors, takes a new form. That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production

* Vehm’s court.—Ed.

itself, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever-extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour-process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialised labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world-market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic régime. 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.

*K. Marx, Capital, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1965, pp. 762-63*

This is another manifestation of the specific barrier of capitalist production, showing also that capitalist production is by no means an absolute form for the development of the productive forces and for the creation of wealth, but rather that at a certain point it comes into collision with this development. This collision appears partly in periodic crises, which arise from the circumstance that now this and now that portion of the labouring population

becomes redundant under its old mode of employment. The limit of capitalist production is the excess time of the labourers. The absolute spare time gained by society does not concern it. The development of productivity concerns it only in so far as it increases the surplus labour-time of the working class, not because it decreases the labour-time for material production in general. It moves thus in a contradiction.

We have seen that the growing accumulation of capital implies its growing concentration. Thus grows the power of capital, the alienation of the conditions of social production personified in the capitalist from the real producers. Capital comes more and more to the fore as a social power, whose agent is the capitalist. This social power no longer stands in any possible relation to that which the labour of a single individual can create. It becomes an alienated, independent, social power, which stands opposed to society as an object, and as an object that is the capitalist's source of power. The contradiction between the general social power into which capital develops, on the one hand, and the private power of the individual capitalists over these social conditions of production, on the other, becomes ever more irreconcilable, and yet contains the solution of the problem, because it implies at the same time the transformation of the conditions of production into general, common, social, conditions. This transformation stems from the development of the productive forces under capitalist production, and from the ways and means by which this development takes place.

*K. Marx, Capital, Vol. III,
Moscow, 1962, pp. 258-59*

Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a *revolution*; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the *ruling* class cannot be

overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew.

Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, Moscow, 1962, p. 86

All that we knew, all that the best experts on capitalist society, the greatest minds who foresaw its development, exactly indicated to us was that transformation was historically inevitable and must proceed along a certain main line, that private ownership of the means of production was doomed by history, that it would burst, that the exploiters would inevitably be expropriated. This was established with scientific precision.

V. I. Lenin, Speech at the First Congress of Economic Councils. Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 410

World capitalism has at the present time, i.e., about the beginning of the twentieth century, reached the stage of imperialism. Imperialism, or the epoch of finance capital, is a high stage of development of the capitalist economic system, one in which monopolist associations of capitalists—syndicates, cartels, and trusts—have assumed decisive importance; in which enormously concentrated banking capital has fused with industrial capital; in which the export of capital to foreign countries has assumed vast dimensions; in which the whole world has been divided up territorially among the richer countries, and the economic carve-up of the world among international trusts has begun.

Imperialist wars, i.e., wars for world domination, for markets for banking capital and for the subjugation of small and weaker nations, are inevitable under such a state of affairs. The first great imperialist war, the war of 1914-17, is precisely such a war.

The extremely high level of development which world capitalism in general has attained, the replacement of free competition by monopoly capitalism, the fact that the banks and the capitalist associations have prepared the machinery for the social regulation of the process of production and distribution of products, the rise in the cost of living and increased oppression of the working class by the syndicates due to the growth of capitalist monopolies, the tremendous obstacles standing in the way of the proletariat's economic and political struggle, the horrors, misery, ruin, and brutalisation caused by the imperialist war—all these factors transform the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian socialist revolution.

That era has dawned.

Only a proletarian socialist revolution can lead humanity out of the impasse which imperialism and imperialist wars have created. Whatever difficulties the revolution may have to encounter, whatever possible temporary setbacks or waves of counter-revolution it may have to contend with, the final victory of the proletariat is inevitable.

Objective conditions make it the urgent task of the day to prepare the proletariat in every way for the conquest of political power in order to carry out the economic and political measures which are the sum and substance of the socialist revolution.

*V. I. Lenin, Materials Relating
to the Revision of the Party
Programme. Collected Works,
Vol. 24, pp. 469-70*

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 grave-digger, 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.

*V. I. Lenin, Differences in the
European Labour Movement.
Collected Works, Vol. 16,
p. 348*

Material Prerequisites for the Socialist Revolution

The *material conditions* essential for the emancipation of the proletariat are engendered spontaneously in the process of the development of capitalist production.

*K. Marx's Letter to C. Caftero,
July 29, 1879*

Large-scale industry “ripens the contradictions and antagonisms of the capitalist form of the production process and, therefore, also the elements for the formation of a new and the overthrow of the old society”. Further, ... the abolition of the capitalist form of production “restores individual property, but on the basis of the achievements of the capitalist era, the co-operation of free workers and their common ownership of land and of the means of production produced by their labour”.

*F. Engels, Rezension des Ersten
Bandes “Das Kapital” für die
“Düsseldorfer Zeitung”.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 16,
S. 216-17*

In stock companies the function is divorced from capital ownership, hence also labour is entirely divorced from ownership of means of production and surplus-labour. This result of the ultimate development of capitalist production is a necessary transitional phase towards the reconversion of capital into the property of producers, although no longer as the private property of the individual producers, but rather as the property of associated producers, as outright social property. On the other hand, the stock company is a transition toward the conversion of all functions in the reproduction process which still remain linked with capitalist property, into mere functions of associated producers, into social functions.

*K. Marx, Capital, Vol. III,
Moscow, 1962, p. 428*

And it is precisely this industrial revolution which has raised the productive power of human labour to such a high level that—for the first time in the history of mankind—the possibility exists, given a rational division of labour among all, of producing not only enough for the plentiful consumption of all members of society and for an abundant reserve fund, but also of leaving each individual sufficient leisure so that what is really worth preserving in historically-inherited culture—science, art, forms of intercourse—may not only be preserved but converted from a monopoly of the ruling class into the common property of the whole of society, and may be further developed. And here is the decisive point: as soon as the productive power of human labour has risen to this height, every excuse disappears for the existence of ruling class. After all, the ultimate basis on which class differences were defended was always: there must be a class which need not plague itself with the production of its daily subsistence, in order that it may have time to look after the intellectual work of society. This talk, which up to now had its great historical justification, has been cut off at the root once and for all by the industrial revolution of the last hundred years. The

existence of a ruling class is becoming daily more and more a hindrance to the development of industrial productive power, and equally so to that of science, art and especially of forms of cultural intercourse.

*F. Engels, The Housing Question.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 564-65*

We describe . . . economic relationships as they are and as they are developing, and we provide the proof, strictly economically, that their development is at the same time the development of the elements of a social revolution: the development, on the one hand, of a class whose conditions of life necessarily drive it to social revolution, the proletariat, and, on the other hand, of productive forces which, having grown beyond the framework of capitalist society, must necessarily burst that framework, and which at the same time offer the means of abolishing class distinctions once and for all in the interest of social progress itself.

*F. Engels, The Housing Question.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 620*

The revolution which modern socialism strives to achieve is, briefly, the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, and the establishment of a new organisation of society by the destruction of all class distinctions. This requires not only a proletariat that carries out this revolution, but also a bourgeoisie in whose hands the productive forces of society have developed so far that they allow of the final destruction of class distinctions. Among savages and semi-savages there likewise often exist no class distinctions, and every people has passed through such a state. It could not occur to us to re-establish this state, for the simple reason that class distinctions necessarily emerge out of it as the productive forces of society develop. Only at a certain level of development of the productive forces of society, an even very high level for our modern conditions, does it become

possible to raise production to such an extent that the abolition of class distinctions can be a real progress, can be lasting without bringing about stagnation or even decline in the mode of social production. But the productive forces have reached this level of development only in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie, therefore, in this respect also is just as necessary a precondition of the socialist revolution as the proletariat itself.

F. Engels, On Social Relations in Russia. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 49-50

The bourgeois period of history has to create the material basis of the new world—on the one hand the universal intercourse founded upon the mutual dependency of mankind, and the means of that intercourse; on the other hand the development of the productive powers of man and the transformation of material production into a scientific domination of natural agencies. Bourgeois industry and commerce create these material conditions of a new world in the same way as geological revolutions have created the surface of the earth. When a great social revolution shall have mastered the results of the bourgeois epoch, the market of the world and the modern powers of production, and subjected them to the common control of the most advanced peoples, then only will human progress cease to resemble that hideous pagan idol, who would not drink the nectar but from the skulls of the slain.

K. Marx, The Future Results of British Rule in India. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 358

Just as sharply as Marx stresses the bad sides of capitalist production, does he also clearly prove that this social form was necessary to develop the productive forces of society to a level which will make possible an equal development, worthy of human beings, for *all* members of society. All earlier forms of society were too poor for this.

Capitalist production for the first time creates the wealth and the productive forces necessary for this, but at the same time it also creates in the mass of oppressed workers the social class which is more and more compelled to claim the utilisation of this wealth and these productive forces for the whole of society—instead of as today for a monopolist class.

*F. Engels, On Marx's "Capital",
Moscow, 1965, p. 20*

From the foregoing it is evident that Marx deduces the inevitability of the transformation of capitalist society into socialist society wholly and exclusively from the economic law of the development of contemporary society. The socialisation of labour, which is advancing ever more rapidly in thousands of forms and has manifested itself very strikingly, during the half-century since the death of Marx, in the growth of large-scale production, capitalist cartels, syndicates and trusts, as well as in the gigantic increase in the dimensions and power of finance capital, provides the principal material foundation for the inevitable advent of socialism.

*V. I. Lenin, Karl Marx.
Collected Works, Vol. 21, p. 71*

By concentrating the means of production and exchange and socialising the process of labour in capitalist enterprises, the improvement in technology more and more rapidly creates the material possibility of capitalist production relations being superseded by communist relations, i.e., the possibility of bringing about the social revolution, which is the ultimate aim of all the activities of the international communist party as the conscious exponent of the class movement of the proletariat.

*V. I. Lenin, Draft Programme
of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works,
Vol. 29, p. 121*

The rule of capitalism is being undermined not because somebody is out to seize power. "Seizure" of power would be senseless. It would be impossible to put an end to the rule of capitalism if the whole course of economic development in the capitalist countries did not lead up to it. The war has speeded up this process, and this has made capitalism impossible. No power could destroy capitalism if it were not sapped and undermined by history.

*V. I. Lenin, War and Revolution.
Collected Works, Vol. 24,
p. 417*

Marx merely shows from history, and here states in a summarised form, that just as formerly petty industry by its very development, necessarily created the conditions of its own annihilation... so now the capitalist mode of production has likewise itself created the material conditions from which it must perish.

*V. I. Lenin, What the "Friends
of the People" Are and How They Fight
the Social-Democrats. Collected Works,
Vol. 1, p. 173*

Imperialist war is the eve of socialist revolution. And this not only because the horrors of the war give rise to proletarian revolt—no revolt can bring about socialism unless the economic conditions for socialism are ripe—but because 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*.

*V. I. Lenin, The Impending
Catastrophe and How to Combat
It. Collected Works, Vol. 25,
p. 359*

The Difference Between the Socialist Revolution and the Previous Social Revolutions

In all revolutions up till now the mode of activity always remained unscathed and it was only a question of a different distribution of this activity, a new distribution of labour to other persons, whilst the communist revolution is directed against the preceding *mode* of activity, does away with *labour*, and abolishes the rule of all classes with the classes themselves, because it is carried through by the class which no longer counts as a class in society, is not recognised as a class, and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities, etc., within present society.

Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, Moscow, 1962, pp. 85-86

Only the proletarians of the present day, who are completely shut off from all self-activity, are in a position to achieve a complete and no longer restricted self-activity, which consists in the appropriation of a totality of productive forces and in the thus postulated development of a totality of capacities. All earlier revolutionary appropriations were restricted; individuals, whose self-activity was restricted by a crude instrument of production and a limited intercourse, appropriated this crude instrument of production, and hence merely achieved a new state of limitation. Their instrument of production became their property, but they themselves remained subordinate to the division of labour and their own instrument of production. In all expropriations up to now, a mass of individuals remained subservient to a single instrument of production; in the appropriation by the proletarians, a mass of instruments of production must be made subject to each individ-

ual, and property to all. Modern universal intercourse can be controlled by individuals, therefore, only when controlled by all.

*Marx and Engels, The German
Ideology, Moscow, 1962,
pp. 83-84*

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air

*Marx and Engels, Manifesto
of the Communist Party.
Selected Works, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1962, p. 44*

The fact that the revolution is made in the *name of*, and especially *for*, the popular masses, that is, for the producing masses, is a feature it has in common with all its forerunners. Its new feature is that the people do not lay down their arms after the first rising, do not abandon power to the republican mountebanks from the governing classes, assume direct leadership over their revolution through the establishment of the *Commune* and, at the same time, find the means to retain power themselves if successful by

substituting their own machinery of state for the state machinery, the government machinery, of the ruling classes.

*K. Marx, Erster Entwurf zum
"Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich"
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 17,
S. 556*

Bourgeois revolutions, like those of the eighteenth century, storm swiftly from success to success; their dramatic effects outdo each other; men and things seem set in sparkling brilliants; ecstasy is the everyday spirit; but they are short-lived; soon they have attained their zenith, and a long crapulent depression lays hold of society before it learns soberly to assimilate the results of its storm-and-stress period. On the other hand, proletarian revolutions, like those of the nineteenth century, criticise themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltrinesses of their first attempts, seem to throw down their adversary only in order that he may draw new strength from the earth and rise again, more gigantic, before them, recoil ever and anon from the indefinite prodigiousness of their own aims, until a situation has been created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves cry out:

Hic Rhodus, hic salta!

*K. Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire
of Louis Bonaparte. Marx and
Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1962, pp. 250-51*

The past bourgeois revolutions required the universities to produce lawyers as the best raw material for politicians; the emancipation of the working class also calls for physicians, engineers, chemists, agronomists and other specialists, because the working class assumes leadership not only over the political machinery, but also over all

social production, and solid knowledge is essential for this instead of high-sounding talk.

*F. Engels, An den Internationalen
Kongress sozialistischer Studenten.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 22, S. 415*

All revolutions up to the present day have resulted in the displacement of one definite class rule by another; but all ruling classes up to now have been only small minorities in relation to the ruled mass of the people. One ruling minority was thus overthrown; another minority seized the helm of state in its stead and refashioned the state institutions to suit its own interests. This was on every occasion the minority group qualified and called to rule by the given degree of economic development: and just for that reason, and only for that reason, it happened that the ruled majority either participated in the revolution for the benefit of the former or else calmly acquiesced in it. But if we disregard the concrete content in each case, the common form of all these revolutions was that they were minority revolutions. Even when the majority took part, it did so—whether wittingly or not—only in the service of a minority; but because of this, or even simply because of the passive, unresisting attitude of the majority, this minority acquired the appearance of being the representative of the whole people.

As a rule, after the first great success, the victorious minority divided; one half was satisfied with what had been gained, the other wanted to go still further, and put forward new demands, which, partly at least, were also in the real or apparent interest of the great mass of the people. In individual cases these more radical demands were actually forced through, but often only for the moment; the more moderate party would regain the upper hand, and what had last been won would wholly or partly be lost again; the vanquished would then shriek of treachery or ascribe their defeat to accident. In reality, however, the truth of the matter was largely this: the achievements

of the first victory were only safeguarded by the second victory of the more radical party; this having been attained, and, with it, what was necessary for the moment, the radicals and their achievements vanished once more from the stage. . . .

The proletarian masses themselves, even in Paris, after the victory, were still absolutely in the dark as to the path to be taken. And yet the movement was there, instinctive, spontaneous, irrepressible. Was not this just the situation in which a revolution had to succeed, led, true, by a minority, but this time not in the interest of the minority, but in the veriest interest of the majority? If, in all the longer revolutionary periods, it was so easy to win the great masses of the people by the merely plausible false representations of the forward-thrusting minorities, why should they be less susceptible to ideas which were the truest reflection of their economic condition, which were nothing but the clear, rational expression of their needs, of needs not yet understood but merely vaguely felt by them? To be sure, this revolutionary mood of the masses had almost always, and usually very speedily, given way to lassitude or even to a revulsion of feeling as soon as illusion evaporated and disappointment set in. But here it was not a question of false representations, but of giving effect to the highest special interests of the great majority itself, interests which, true, were at that time by no means clear to this great majority, but which soon enough had to become clear to it, in the course of giving practical effect to them, by their convincing obviousness.

*F. Engels, Introduction to K. Marx's work
"The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850".
Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1962, pp. 123-24*

One of the fundamental differences between bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution is that for the bourgeois revolution, which arises out of feudalism, the new economic

organisations are gradually created in the womb of the old order, gradually changing all the aspects of feudal society. The bourgeois revolution faced only one task—to sweep away, to cast aside, to destroy all the fetters of the preceding social order. By fulfilling this task every bourgeois revolution fulfils all that is required of it; it accelerates the growth of capitalism.

The socialist revolution is in an altogether different position. The more backward the country which, owing to the zigzags of history, has proved to be the one to start the socialist revolution, the more difficult is it for that country to pass from the old capitalist relations to socialist relations. New incredibly difficult tasks, organisational tasks, are added to the tasks of destruction.

*V. I. Lenin, Extraordinary Seventh
Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 89*

In bourgeois revolutions, the principal task of the mass of working people was to fulfil the negative or destructive work of abolishing feudalism, monarchy and medievalism. The positive or constructive work of organising the new society was carried out by the property-owning bourgeois minority of the population. And the latter carried out this task with relative ease, despite the resistance of the workers and the poor peasants, not only because the resistance of the people exploited by capital was then extremely weak, since they were scattered and uneducated, but also because the chief organising force of anarchically built capitalist society is the spontaneously growing and expanding national and international market.

In every socialist revolution, however—and consequently in the socialist revolution in Russia which we began on October 25, 1917—the principal task of the proletariat, and of the poor peasants which it leads, is the positive or constructive work of setting up an extremely intricate and delicate system of new organisational relationships

extending to the planned production and distribution of the goods required for the existence of tens of millions of people.

*V. I. Lenin, The Immediate Tasks
of the Soviet Government.
Collected Works,
Vol. 27, pp. 238-41*

The misfortune of previous revolutions was that the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people, which sustained them in their state of tension and gave them the strength to suppress ruthlessly the elements of disintegration, did not last long. The social, i.e., the class, reason for this instability of the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people was the weakness of the proletariat, which *alone* is able (if it is sufficiently numerous, class-conscious and disciplined) to win over to its side *the majority* of the working and exploited people (the majority of the poor, to speak more simply and popularly) and retain power sufficiently long to suppress completely all the exploiters as well as all the elements of disintegration.

*V. I. Lenin, The Immediate Tasks
of the Soviet Government. Collected Works,
Vol. 27, pp. 264-65*

Take the old society of the feudal nobility. There revolutions were absurdly easy, as long as it was only a matter of taking power from one handful of nobles or feudal lords and turning it over to another. Take bourgeois society, which boasts of its universal suffrage. In actual fact, as we know, this universal suffrage, this whole machine, becomes a fraud, for even in the most advanced, cultured and democratic countries the overwhelming majority of the working people are downtrodden and crushed—crushed by the hell of capitalism, so that actually they do not and cannot take any part in politics.

Now for the first time in history a revolution has begun which can lead to the complete victory of socialism—

provided only that new and large masses of people set about the work of governing independently.

V. I. Lenin, Report at the Second All-Russia Trade Union Congress. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 419

Even if we committed 10,000 mistakes for every 100 correct actions we performed, even in that case our revolution would be great and invincible, and *so it will be in the eyes of world history*, because, *for the first time*, not the minority, not the rich alone, not the educated alone, but the real people, the vast majority of the working people, are *themselves* building a new life, are *by their own experience* solving the most difficult problems of socialist organisation.

V. I. Lenin, Letter to American Workers. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 72

To defeat capitalism in general, it is necessary, in the first place, to defeat the exploiters and to uphold the power of the exploited, namely, to accomplish the task of overthrowing the exploiters by revolutionary forces; in the second place, to accomplish the constructive task, that of establishing new economic relations, of setting an example of how this should be done. These two aspects of the task of accomplishing a socialist revolution are indissolubly connected, and distinguish our revolution from all previous ones, which never went beyond the destructive aspect.

V. I. Lenin, Our Foreign and Domestic Position and the Tasks of the Party. Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 417

CLASSES IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY, THEIR ROLE AND PLACE IN THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

The owners merely of labour-power, owners of capital, and landowners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit and ground-rent, in other words, wage-labour-

ers, capitalists and landowners, constitute then three big classes of modern society based upon the capitalist mode of production.

*K. Marx, Capital, Vol. III,
Moscow, 1962, p. 862*

The modern worker, the proletarian, is a product of the big industrial revolution which has over the last hundred years totally refashioned the mode of production, first in industry and then also in agriculture, in all the civilised countries. As a result, only two classes are involved in production—that of the capitalists, who are in possession of the tools of labour, the raw materials and necessities of life, and that of the workers, who possess neither the tools of labour and the raw materials nor the necessities of life, and are compelled to buy the latter from the capitalists in return for their labour. Therefore, the modern proletarian deals directly only with one social class, a hostile class, which exploits him: the class of capitalists, the bourgeoisie. . . .

Apart from the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, modern large-scale industry also produces a kind of intermediate class, the petty bourgeoisie. This class consists partly of survivors of the old semi-medieval burgherdom and partly of workers who have risen somewhat above the rest. It is less involved in production than in the distribution of commodities. Retail trading is its chief occupation. The old burgherdom was the most stable of classes, while the modern petty bourgeoisie is the most changeable. For the petty bourgeoisie bankruptcy has become an institution. It adjoins the bourgeoisie in its way of life by virtue of its capital, small though it is, and the proletariat by virtue of its insecurity. Its political position is just as conflicting as its social existence; however, by and large, "pure democracy" is the most accurate definition of its aspirations. Its political calling is to goad the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the survivals of the old society, notably against its own weakness and cowardice, and to help win the freedoms—

freedom of the press, assembly and association, suffrage and local autonomy—which a timid bourgeoisie could do without despite their bourgeois nature, but without which the workers can never win emancipation.

In the course of the struggle between the survivors of the old antiquated society and the bourgeoisie a time is bound to arrive everywhere when the two belligerents solicit the support of the proletariat. This usually coincides with the time when the working class itself begins to stir. The feudal and bureaucratic elements of the moribund society call on the workers to strike jointly against the exploiters, the capitalists, the sole enemies of the workers; the bourgeoisie points out to the working class that both of them represent the new social epoch and therefore possess identical interests in the confrontation with the moribund *old* social form. At this time, the working class gradually becomes conscious that it is a class in its own right, with its own interests and with its own independent future.

*F. Engels, Die preussische Militärfrage
und die deutsche Arbeiterpartei.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 16,
S. 66-68*

In capitalist and semi-capitalist society we know of only three classes: the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie (which consists mainly of the peasantry), and the proletariat.

*V. I. Lenin, Can the Bolsheviks Retain
State Power? Collected Works,
Vol. 26, p. 96*

It may be said that the whole of Marx's *Capital* is devoted to explaining the truth that *the basic forces of capitalist society are, and must be, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat*—bourgeoisie, as the builder of this capitalist society, as its leader, as its motive force, and the proletariat, as its gravedigger and as the only force capable of replacing it.

*V. I. Lenin, Eighth Congress
of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works,
Vol. 29, p. 199*

The bourgeoisie and the landowners, the proletariat, and the petty bourgeoisie, the small proprietors, primarily the peasants—these are the three main “forces” into which Russia, like *every* capitalist country, is divided. These are the three main “forces” that have long been revealed in every capitalist country (including Russia) not only by scientific economic analysis, but also by the *political experience* of the modern history of *all* countries, by the experience of *all* European revolutions since the eighteenth century, by the experience of the *two* Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

V. I. Lenin, *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power? Collected Works*,
Vol. 26, p. 124

It is a truth long known to every Marxist that in every capitalist society the only *decisive* forces are the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, while all social elements occupying a position between these classes and coming within the economic category of the petty bourgeoisie *inevitably* vacillate between these decisive forces. But there is an enormous gulf between academic recognition of this truth and the ability to draw the conclusions that follow from it in the complex conditions of practical reality.

V. I. Lenin, *The Valuable Admissions of Pitirim Sorokin. Collected Works*,
Vol. 28, p. 186

The Socialist Revolution and the Bourgeoisie

It is a peculiarity of the bourgeoisie, in contrast to all former ruling classes, that there is a turning point in its development after which every further expansion of its agencies of power, hence primarily of its capital, only tends to make it more and more unfit for political rule. “*Behind the big bourgeois stand the proletarians.*” As the bourgeoisie develops its industry, commerce and means of communication, it produces the proletariat. At a certain point—

which need not be reached everywhere at the same time or at the same stage of development—it begins to notice that its proletarian double is outgrowing it. From that moment on, it loses the strength required for exclusive political rule; it looks around for allies, with whom to share its rule, or to whom to cede the whole of its rule, as circumstances may require.

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*F. Engels, The Peasant War in Germany,
Moscow, 1965, pp. 12-13*

Now the economical function of the capitalist middle class has been, indeed, to create the modern system of steam manufactures and steam communications, and to crush every economical and political obstacle which delayed or hindered the development of that system. No doubt, as long as the capitalist middle class performed this function it was, under the circumstances, a necessary class. But is it still so? Does it continue to fulfil its essential function as the manager and expander of social production for the benefit of society at large? Let us see.

To begin with the means of communication, we find the telegraphs in the hands of the Government. The railways and a large part of the sea-going steamships are owned, not by individual capitalists who manage their own business, but by joint-stock companies whose business is managed for them by *paid employees*, by servants whose position is to all intents and purposes that of superior, better paid workpeople. As to the directors and shareholders, they both know that the less the former interfere with the management, and the latter with the supervision, the better for the concern. A lax and mostly perfunctory supervision is, indeed, the only function left to the owners of the business. Thus we see that in reality the capitalist owners of these immense establishments have no other action left with regard to them, but to cash the half-yearly dividend warrants. The social function of the capitalist here has been transferred to servants paid by wages; but

he continues to pocket, in his dividends, the pay for those functions though he has ceased to perform them.

*F. Engels, Articles from
"The Labour Standard" (1881),
Moscow, 1965, pp. 46-47*

Marx and Engels were the first to show that the working class and its demands are a necessary outcome of the present economic system, which together with the bourgeoisie inevitably creates and organises the proletariat. They showed that it is not the well-meaning efforts of noble-minded individuals, but the class struggle of the organised proletariat that will deliver humanity from the evils which now oppress it.

*V. I. Lenin, Frederick Engels.
Collected Works, Vol. 2, p. 19*

The bourgeoisie is here conceived as a revolutionary class—as the bearer of large-scale industry—relatively to the feudal lords and the lower middle class, who desire to maintain all social positions that are the creation of obsolete modes of production. Thus they do not form *together* with the *bourgeoisie* only one reactionary mass.

On the other hand, the proletariat is revolutionary relatively to the bourgeoisie because, having itself grown up on the basis of large-scale industry, it strives to strip off from production the capitalist character that the bourgeoisie seeks to perpetuate.

*K. Marx, Critique of the Gotha
Programme. Marx and Engels,
Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow,
1962, p. 26*

The Distinctive Features of the Petty Bourgeoisie as a Class

The bulk of the nation, which belonged neither to the aristocracy nor to the bourgeoisie, consisted in the towns of the class of petty bourgeois and the workers, and in the countryside of the peasants.

The class of artisans and petty traders is inordinately numerous in Germany, because the development of big capitalists and industrialists as a class was hemmed in. In the bigger towns it comprised almost the majority of the population, and in the smaller ones it preponderated completely in the absence of richer competitors to contest its influence. This petty bourgeoisie, of the utmost importance in all modern states and in all modern revolutions, is doubly important in Germany, where it played the crucial role in the latest struggles. Its intermediate position between the class of bigger capitalists, merchants and industrialists, the actual bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the proletariat, or working class, on the other, has left a decisive imprint on its character. It aspires to the status of the bourgeoisie, but the least misfortune flings its members into the ranks of the proletariat. . . . The petty-bourgeois is eternally torn between the hope of rising into the well-to-do class and the fear of descending among the proletarians, even the paupers; he is eternally torn between the hope of advancing his interest by gaining a say in the conduct of the affairs of state and the fear of his injudicious opposition exciting the wrath of the government, on which his existence depends because it can rob him of his best customers. The modesty of his possessions, whose insecurity grows in reverse proportion to their size, makes him, the petty-bourgeois, unstable to the extreme in his views. Timid and obsequiously submissive under a strong feudal or monarchist government, he espouses liberalism when the bourgeoisie begins to rise. As soon as the bourgeoisie makes its rule secure, it is overcome by a powerful craving for democracy, but becomes wretchedly fearful and hesitant when the class under it, the proletariat, embarks upon an independent movement.

*F. Engels, Revolution und
Konterrevolution in Deutschland.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 8, S. 9-10*

If it could, the petty bourgeoisie would hardly abandon the ground of legal, peaceful and virtuous struggle and pick up muskets and paving stones instead of the so-called spiritual weapons. In Germany, as in France and Britain, the history of all the political movements since 1830 reveals that it is invariably boastful, highly eloquent and sometimes even extreme in its expressions so long as there is no danger; fearful, retiring and evasive as soon as the least danger appears, and dumbfounded, apprehensive and hesitant as soon as the movement it has begun is taken up in earnest by other classes. It is apt to betray the whole movement for the sake of its petty-bourgeois existence as soon as matters come to the point of armed struggle and is eventually cheated and mishandled as a result of its lack of determination when the reactionary party wins.

F. Engels, Die deutsche Reichsverfassungskampagne. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 7, S. 112

A small producer, operating under a system of commodity economy—these are the two features of the concept “petty bourgeois”, Kleinbürger, or what is the same thing, the Russian *meshchanin*. It thus includes both the peasant and the handicraftsman, whom the Narodniks always placed on the same footing—and quite rightly, for they are both producers, they both work for the market, and differ only in the degree of development of commodity economy.

V. I. Lenin, The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book. Collected Works, Vol. 1, p. 396

Being hostile to capitalism, the small producers constitute a transitory class that is closely connected with the bourgeoisie and for that reason is incapable of understanding that the large-scale capitalism it dislikes is not fortuitous, but is a direct product of the entire contemporary economic (and social, and political, and juridical) system arising out

of the struggle of mutually opposite social forces. Only inability to understand this can lead to such absolute stupidity as that of appealing to the "state" as though the political system is not rooted in the economic, does not express it, does not serve it.

V. I. Lenin, *The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book. Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 354-55

The scattered small producers, the peasants, are economically and politically united either by the bourgeoisie (this has always been—and will always be—the case under capitalism in all countries, in all modern revolutions), or by the proletariat (that was the case in a rudimentary form for a very short period at the peak of some of the greatest revolutions in modern history; that has been the case in Russia in a more developed form in 1917-21). Only the Narcissuses will talk and dream about a "third" path, and a "third force".

V. I. Lenin, *The Tax in Kind. Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 360

But the distinctive and basic feature of the petty bourgeois is to battle against bourgeoisdom with the instruments of bourgeois society itself.

V. I. Lenin, *The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book. Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 348

Actually, the small producer, whom the romanticists and the Narodniks place on a pedestal, is therefore a petty bourgeois who exists in the same antagonistic relations as every other member of capitalist society, and who also defends his interests by means of a struggle which, on the one hand, is constantly creating a small minority of big bourgeois, and, on the other, pushes the majority into the

ranks of the proletariat. Actually, as everybody sees and knows, there are no small producers who do not stand *between* these two opposite classes, and this middle position necessarily determines the specific character of the petty bourgeoisie, its dual character, its two-facedness, its gravitation towards the minority which has emerged from the struggle successfully, its hostility towards the "failures", i.e., the majority. The more commodity economy develops, the more strongly and sharply do these qualities stand out, and the more evident does it become that the idealisation of small production merely expresses a reactionary, *petty-bourgeois* point of view.

V. I. Lenin, A Characterisation of Economic Romanticism. Collected Works, Vol. 2, pp. 220-21

The Distinctive Features of the Peasantry

The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. The isolation is increased by France's bad means of communication and by the poverty of the peasants. Their field of production, the small holding, admits of no division of labour in its cultivation, no application of science and, therefore, no diversity of development, no variety of talent, no wealth of social relationships. Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society.... In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants,

and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organisation among them, they do not form a class. They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interests in their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, as an unlimited governmental power that protects them against the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore, finds its final expression in the executive power subordinating society to itself.

K. Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 334

It is just as clear, however, and confirmed equally by the history of all the modern countries, that the rural population is never able to build up a successful movement of its own, because it is spread too thinly over a large area, and because it is hard to achieve understanding among at least a substantial part of it. The impetus has to come from the more conscious and alert population concentrated in the towns.

F. Engels, Revolution und Konterrevolution in Deutschland. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 8, S. 12

By small peasant we mean here the owner or tenant—particularly the former—of a patch of land no bigger, as a rule, than he and his family can till, and no smaller than can sustain the family. This small peasant, just like the small handicraftsman, is therefore a toiler who differs from the modern proletarian in that he still possesses his instruments of labour; hence a survival of a past mode of production. . . . The family, and still more the village, was self-sufficient, produced almost everything it needed. It

was natural economy almost unalloyed; almost no money was necessary. Capitalist production put an end to this by its money economy and large-scale industry. But if the Mark emoluments represented one of the basic conditions of his existence, his industrial side line was another. And thus the peasant sinks ever lower. Taxes, crop failures, divisions of inheritance and litigations drive one peasant after another into the arms of the usurer; the indebtedness becomes more and more general and steadily increases in amount in each case—in brief, our small peasant, like every other survival of a past mode of production, is hopelessly doomed. He is a future proletarian.

As such he ought to lend a ready ear to socialist propaganda. But he is prevented from doing so for the time being by his deep-rooted sense of property.

F. Engels, The Peasant Question in France and Germany. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 422-23

As opposed to serf-ownership, to the feudal-minded landlords, and the state that serves them, the peasantry still stands as a *class*, a class not of capitalist but of self-owning society, i.e., as an estate-class.* Inasmuch as this class antagonism between the “peasantry” and the privileged landowners, so characteristic of serf-owning society, still survives in our countryside, *insomuch* a working-class party must undoubtedly be on the side of the “peasantry”, support its struggle and *urge it on to fight* against all remnants of serf-ownership.

* We know that in slave and feudal societies, class divisions were also expressed in the division of the population into social-*estates*, each class with specific *legal* status in the state. That is why classes in a society based on slavery and feudalism (and on serf-ownership) were also separate social-estates. On the other hand, in capitalist, bourgeois society, all citizens are equal in law, division into social-estates has been abolished (at least in principle), and that is why classes have ceased to be social-estates. The division of society into classes is a common feature to slave, feudal, and bourgeois societies, but in the two former estate-classes existed, whereas in the latter the classes are not estates.

We put the word "peasantry" in quotation marks in order to emphasise the existence in this case of an absolutely indubitable contradiction: in present-day society the peasantry of course no longer constitutes an integral class. But whoever is perplexed by this contradiction forgets that this is not a contradiction in exposition, in a doctrine, but a contradiction in life itself. This is not an invented, but a living and dialectical contradiction. *Inasmuch as* in our countryside serf-owning society is being eliminated by "present-day" (bourgeois) society, *insomuch* the peasantry ceases to be a class and becomes divided into the rural proletariat and the rural bourgeoisie (big, middle, petty, and very small). *Inasmuch as* serf-owning relationships still exist, *insomuch* the "peasantry" still continues to be a class, i.e., we repeat, a class of serf-owning society rather than of bourgeois society. This "inasmuch—insomuch" exists in real life in the form of an *extremely complex* web of serf-owning and bourgeois relationships in the Russian countryside today.

V. I. Lenin, *The Agrarian Programme of Russian Social-Democracy*.
Collected Works, Vol. 6, pp. 115-16

In the peasant mass..., however, one must distinguish three main groups: the bottom group—the proletarian and semi-proletarian strata of the population; the middle group—the poor small peasant farmers; and the top group—the well-to-do small peasant farmers. We have analysed above the main economic features of these groups as distinct *class* elements. The bottom group is the propertyless population, which earns its livelihood mainly, or half of it, by the *sale of labour-power*. The middle group comprises the poor small peasant farmers, for the middle peasant in the best of years just barely manages to make ends meet, but the *principal* means of livelihood of this group is "independent" (supposedly independent, of course) *small-scale farming*. Finally, the top group consists of the well-to-do small peasant farmers, who exploit more or less

considerable numbers of allotment-holding farm labourers and day-labourers and all sorts of wage-labourers in general.

V. I. Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia. Collected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 503-04

The peasants are economically disunited. They are partly property-owners and partly labourers. Property drags them towards capitalism: "The more profitably I sell, the better. If they're starving, I'll sell at a higher price." But, as a working man, the peasant knows that he suffered oppression at the hands of the landowner, from which he was liberated by the worker. Here we have a conflict of two souls, resulting from the economic status of the peasantry. These two souls must be separated one from the other. And we shall win only when we pursue a firm policy. All working people will always be working people to us; but as for the peasant proprietors, we have to fight them.

V. I. Lenin, *Speech Delivered at the Third All-Russia Trade Union Congress, April 7, 1920. Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 510-11

How can our labouring peasant change this relation if he himself is half-rooted in what has to be changed? How can he understand that isolation and commodity economy are no good to him if he himself is isolated and works at his own risk and responsibility for the market? If these conditions of life evoke in him "thoughts and feelings" that are peculiar to one who works on his own for the market? If he is isolated by the very material conditions, by the size and character of his farm, and if by virtue of this his contradiction to capital is still so little developed that he cannot understand that he is faced by *capital* and not merely by "tricksters" and shrewd people?

Is it not obvious that one should turn to where *this same* (N. B.) social relation is *fully* developed, where those in-

volved in this social relation, the immediate producers, are themselves fully "differentiated" and "excommunicated" from the bourgeois order, where the contradiction is already so far developed as to be self-evident, and where it is impossible to raise the problem like a dreamer, in half-hearted fashion? And when the immediate producers in these advanced conditions are "differentiated from life" of bourgeois society not only *in fact* but also *in their minds*—then the labouring peasantry, who are in backward and worse conditions, will see "how it is done", and will join with their fellow-workers "for others".

V. I. Lenin, *The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book. Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 373

The Peasant Question in Russia

The peasant question in Russia differs substantially from the peasant question in the West, the *sole* difference being that in the West the question is almost exclusively one of a peasant in a capitalist, bourgeois society, whereas in Russia it is one of a peasant who suffers no less (if not more) from *pre-capitalist* institutions and relations, from the *survivals of serfdom*. The role of the peasantry as a class that provides fighters against the autocracy and against the survivals of serfdom is by now played out in the West, but not yet in Russia. In the West the industrial proletariat has long since become completely alienated from the countryside; this alienation has been made final by relevant legal institutions. In Russia "the industrial proletariat, both by its composition and by the conditions of its existence, is to a very great extent still connected with the countryside" (P. B. Axelrod, *op cit.*,* p. 11). True enough, the differentiation of the peasantry into a petty bourgeoisie and into wage-workers is proceeding with great

* *Present Tasks and Tactics of the Russian Social-Democrats*, Geneva, 1898.—Ed.

power and astounding rapidity in Russia, but it is a process that has not yet come to an end, and—what is most important—this process is still evolving within the framework of the old institutions of serfdom that fetter all the peasants with the heavy chains of collective liability and the tax-assessed community. The Russian Social-Democrat, therefore, even if he (like the writer of these lines) belongs to the determined opponents of the protection or support of small proprietorship or small agricultural economy in capitalist society, i.e., even if, on the agrarian question, he (like the writer of these lines) is on the side of those Marxists whom the bourgeois and opportunists of all stripes love to deride as “dogmatists” and “orthodox”—the Russian Social-Democrat can and must, without betraying his convictions in the slightest, but, rather, because of those convictions, insist that the working-class party should inscribe on its banner *support for the peasantry (not by any means as a class of small proprietors or small farmers), insofar as the peasantry is capable of a revolutionary struggle against the survivals of serfdom in general and against the autocracy in particular*. Do not all of us Social-Democrats declare that we are ready to support even the big bourgeoisie *insofar as it is capable of a revolutionary struggle against the above manifestations*—how then can we refuse to support the petty-bourgeois class, many millions strong, that is gradually, step by step, merging with the proletariat? If support for the liberal demands of the big bourgeoisie does not mean support of the big bourgeoisie, then support for the democratic demands of the petty bourgeoisie certainly does not mean support of the petty bourgeoisie; on the contrary, it is precisely this development which political liberty will make possible in Russia that will, with particular force, lead to the destruction of small economy under the blows of capital. I do not think there will be any arguments among the Social-Democrats on this point. The question, therefore, is: 1) how to elaborate demands in such a way that they *do not degenerate* into support of small property-owners in a capitalist

society? and 2) is our peasantry capable, at least in part, of a *revolutionary* struggle against the remnants of serfdom and against absolutism?

V. I. Lenin, *The Agrarian Programme of Our Party. Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 241-43

The small peasantry can free itself from the yoke of capital only by associating itself with the working-class movement, by helping the workers in their struggle for the socialist system, for transforming the land, as well as the other means of production (factories, works, machines, etc.), into social property. Trying to save the peasantry by protecting small-scale farming and small holdings from the onslaught of capitalism would be a useless retarding of social development; it would mean deceiving the peasantry with illusions of the possibility of prosperity even under capitalism, it would mean disuniting the labouring classes and creating a privileged position for the minority at the expense of the majority.

V. I. Lenin, *The Workers' Party and the Peasantry. Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 422-23

We make the legitimacy of "peasant demands" in a Social-Democratic programme dependent, firstly, on the condition that they lead to the eradication of remnants of the serf-owning system, and, secondly, that they facilitate the free development of the class struggle in the countryside.

V. I. Lenin, *The Agrarian Programme of Russian Social-Democracy. Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 114

The party of the proletariat must not only support but must also urge on the peasantry in its struggle against all the remnants of the serf-owning system. To urge the peasantry on, it must not confine itself to wishful thinking; it

must lay down a definite revolutionary directive, and be able to *help in finding the bearings* in the maze of agrarian relationships.

*V. I. Lenin, The Agrarian Programme
of Russian Social-Democracy.
Collected Works, Vol. 6, p. 116*

We are pursuing two qualitatively different aims in the countryside: firstly, we want to achieve freedom for bourgeois relations; secondly, we want to conduct the proletarian struggle. Despite the Socialist-Revolutionaries' prejudices, it is our task to show the peasants where the revolutionary proletarian task of the peasant proletariat begins.

*V. I. Lenin, Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.
Speeches in the Discussion on
the Agrarian Programme, August 1 (14).
Collected Works, Vol. 6, p. 497*

The Historic Role of the Proletariat In Carrying Out the Socialist Revolution

Finally, from the conception of history we have sketched we obtain these further conclusions: (1) In the development of productive forces there comes a stage when productive forces and means of intercourse are brought into being, which, under the existing relationships, only cause mischief, and are no longer productive but destructive forces (machinery and money); and connected with this a class is called forth, which has to bear all the burdens of society without enjoying its advantages, which, ousted from society, is forced into the most decided antagonism to all other classes; a class which forms the majority of all members of society, and from which emanates the consciousness of the necessity of a fundamental revolution, the communist consciousness, which may, of course, arise among the other classes too through the contemplation of the situation of this class.

*Marx and Engels, The German
Ideology, Moscow, 1962, p. 85*

Generally speaking, big industry created everywhere the same relations between the classes of society, and thus destroyed the peculiar individuality of the various nationalities. And finally, while the bourgeoisie of each nation still retained separate national interests, big industry created a class, which in all nations has the same interest and with which nationality is already dead; a class which is really rid of all the old world and at the same time stands pitted against it. Big industry makes for the worker not only the relation to the capitalist, but labour itself, unbearable.

*Marx and Engels, The German
Ideology, Moscow, 1962, p. 76*

While the refugee serfs only wished to be free to develop and assert those conditions of existence which were already there, and hence, in the end, only arrived at free labour, the proletarians, if they are to assert themselves as individuals, will have to abolish the very condition of their existence hitherto (which has, moreover, been that of all society up to the present), namely, labour. Thus they find themselves directly opposed to the form in which, hitherto, the individuals, of which society consists, have given themselves collective expression, that is, the State. In order, therefore, to assert themselves as individuals, they must overthrow the State.

*Marx and Engels, The German
Ideology, Moscow, 1962, p. 95*

Proletariat and wealth are opposites; as such they form a single whole. They are both forms of the world of private property. The question is what place each occupies in the antithesis. It is not sufficient to declare them two sides of a single whole.

Private property as private property, as wealth, is compelled to maintain *itself*, and thereby its opposite, the

proletariat, in *existence*. That is the *positive* side of the contradiction, self-satisfied private property.

The proletariat, on the other hand, is compelled as proletariat to abolish itself and thereby its opposite, the condition for its existence, what makes it the proletariat, i.e., private property. That is the *negative* side of the contradiction, its restlessness within its very self, dissolved and self-dissolving private property. . . .

Within this antithesis the private owner is therefore the *conservative* side, the proletarian, the *destructive* side. From the former arises the action of preserving the antithesis, from the latter, that of annihilating it.

Indeed private property, too, drives itself in its economic movement towards its own dissolution, only, however, through a development which does not depend on it, of which it is unconscious and which takes place against its will, through the very nature of things; only inasmuch as it produces the proletariat *as* proletariat, that misery conscious of its spiritual and physical misery, that dehumanisation conscious of its dehumanisation and therefore self-abolishing. The proletariat executes the sentence that private property pronounced on itself by begetting the proletariat, just as it carries out the sentence that wage-labour pronounced on itself by bringing forth wealth for others and misery for itself. When the proletariat is victorious, it by no means becomes the absolute side of society, for it is victorious only by abolishing itself and its opposite. Then the proletariat disappears as well as the opposite which determines it, private property.

When socialist writers ascribe this historic role to the proletariat, it is not, as Critical Criticism pretends to think, because they consider the proletarians as *gods*. Rather the contrary. Since the abstraction of all humanity, even of the *semblance* of humanity, is practically complete in the full-grown proletariat; since the conditions of life of the proletariat sum up all the conditions of life of society today in all their inhuman acuity; since man has lost himself in the proletariat, yet at the same time has not only gained

theoretical consciousness of that loss, but through urgent, no longer disguisable, absolutely imperative *need*—that practical expression of *necessity*—is driven directly to revolt against that inhumanity; it follows that the proletariat can and must free itself. But it cannot free itself without abolishing the conditions of its own life. It cannot abolish the conditions of its own life without abolishing *all* the inhuman conditions of life of society today which are summed up in its own situation. Not in vain does it go through the stern but steeling school of *labour*. The question is not what this or that proletarian, or even the whole of the proletariat at the moment *considers* as its aim. The question is *what the proletariat is*, and what, consequent on that *being*, it will be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is irrevocably and obviously demonstrated in its own life situation as well as in the whole organisation of bourgeois society today. There is no need to dwell here upon the fact that a large part of the English and French proletariat is already *conscious* of its historic task and is constantly working to develop that consciousness into complete clarity.

*Marx and Engels, The Holy Family
or Critique of Critical Critique,
Moscow, 1956, pp. 51-53*

If the centralisation of population stimulates and develops the property-holding class, it forces the development of the workers yet more rapidly. The workers begin to feel as a class, as a whole; they begin to perceive that, though feeble as individuals, they form a power united; their separation from the bourgeoisie, the development of views peculiar to the workers and corresponding to their position in life, is fostered, the consciousness of oppression awakens, and the workers attain social and political importance. The great cities are the birth-places of labour movements; in them the workers first began to reflect upon their own condition, and to struggle against it; in them the opposition between proletariat and bourgeoisie first made itself manifest; from them proceeded the Trades Unions, Chartism,

and Socialism. The great cities have transformed the disease of the social body, which appears in chronic form in the country, into an acute one, and so made manifest its real nature and the means of curing it. Without the great cities and their forcing influence upon the popular intelligence, the working class would be far less advanced than it is. Moreover, they have destroyed the last remnant of the patriarchal relation between working-men and employers, a result to which manufacture on a large scale has contributed by multiplying the employees dependent upon a single employer. . . . In the patriarchal relation that hypocritically concealed the slavery of the worker, the latter must have remained an intellectual zero, totally ignorant of his own interest, a mere private individual. Only when estranged from his employer, when convinced that the sole bond between employer and employee is the bond of pecuniary profit, when the sentimental bond between them, which stood not the slightest test, had wholly fallen away, then only did the worker begin to recognise his own interests and develop independently; then only did he cease to be the slave of the bourgeoisie in his thoughts, feelings, and the expression of his will. And to this end manufacture on a grand scale and in great cities has most largely contributed.

*F. Engels, The Condition
of the Working Class in England.
Marr and Engels, On Britain,
Moscow, 1962, pp. 155-56*

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.

The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revo-

lutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat, they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.

*Marx and Engels, Manifesto
of the Communist Party.
Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow,
1962, pp. 43-44*

The slave is sold once and for all; the proletarian has to sell himself daily and hourly. The individual slave, the property of *one* master, has a secure existence, no matter how wretched it may be, through the interest of this master. The individual proletarian, so to speak the property of the whole bourgeois *class*, which buys his labour only when someone requires it, has no secure existence. Existence is guaranteed only to the whole *class* of proletarians. The slave is not involved in competition; the proletarian is immersed in it and gets to feel all its fluctuations. The slave is considered a thing and not a member of society, while the proletarian is acknowledged to be a person and a member of society. The slave may, therefore, have a better existence than the proletarian, but the proletarian belongs to a higher stage of social development and is himself on a higher level than the slave. In liberating himself, the slave destroys none of the relations of private ownership but that of slavery, and thereby only becomes a proletarian; the only way the proletarian can liberate himself is by abolishing private property altogether.

*F. Engels, Grundsätze des Kommunismus.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 4, S. 366*

The serf has possession and use of a means of production, of a plot of land, for which he gives away a part of his income or does labour services. The proletarian works

with the means of production that belong to another for the benefit of this other in return for a part of the profit. The serf gives away, while the proletarian receives. The serf has a secure existence, while the proletarian has not. The serf is not involved in competition, while the proletarian is immersed in it. The serf liberates himself either by escaping to the towns and becoming an artisan there, or by giving money to his lord instead of work and products and thus becoming a free tenant, or else by driving out his feudal lord and becoming a landowner himself. In brief, he frees himself in one way or another and enters the propertied class and competition. The proletarian frees himself by abolishing competition, private property and all class differences.

*F. Engels, Grundsätze des Kommunismus.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 4, S. 366*

An oppressed class is the vital condition for every society founded on the antagonism of classes. The emancipation of the oppressed class thus implies necessarily the creation of a new society. For the oppressed class to be able to emancipate itself it is necessary that the productive powers already acquired and the existing social relations should no longer be capable of existing side by side. Of all the instruments of production, the greatest productive power is the revolutionary class itself. The organisation of revolutionary elements as a class supposes the existence of all the productive forces which could be engendered in the bosom of the old society.

Does this mean that after the fall of the old society there will be a new class domination culminating in a new political power? No.

The condition for the emancipation of the working class is the abolition of every class, just as the condition for the liberation of the third estate, of the bourgeois order, was the abolition of all estates and all orders. . . .

The working class, in the course of its development, will substitute for the old civil society an association which

will exclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power properly so called since political power is precisely the official expression of antagonism in civil society.

Meanwhile the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is a struggle of class against class, a struggle which carried to its highest expression is a total revolution. Indeed, is it at all surprising that a society founded on the opposition of classes should culminate in brutal *contradiction*, the shock of body against body, as its final *dénouement*?

K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*,
Moscow, 1962 pp. 167-68

So long as the bourgeoisie is *itself revolutionary* or progressive, the labouring classes are necessarily a tool in its hands. In this case, therefore, the separate movement of the labouring classes is only of secondary importance. But from the day the bourgeoisie gains complete political power, the day when all feudal and aristocratic interests are crushed by the power of *money*, the day the bourgeoisie ceases to be progressive and revolutionary and becomes stationary, from that day on the working-class movement takes over leadership and becomes a *national movement*.

F. Engels, *Deutsche Zustände*, Brief III.
Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 2, S. 580

Once the bourgeoisie gains power, the workers, too, prompted by the circumstances, achieve extremely important progress, for from then on they no longer act and rise against the existing system as single individuals or, at most, as several hundred or several thousand. They tackle their last and worst enemy, the bourgeoisie, according to a common plan and in concerted strength as *one* class with its specific interests and principles.

The outcome of this struggle has never been in doubt. The bourgeoisie shall be overthrown by the proletariat just

as surely as the aristocracy and autocratic monarchy were overthrown by the middle class.

Private property will collapse together with the bourgeoisie, and the victory of the working class will put an end for all time to class and caste domination.

F. Engels, Schutzzoll oder Freihandels-System. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 4, S. 60-61

For the ultimate triumph of the ideas set forth in the Manifesto Marx relied solely and exclusively upon the intellectual development of the working class, as it necessarily had to ensue from united action and discussion.

F. Engels, Preface to the German Edition (1890) of the Manifesto of the Communist Party. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 31

So long as the propertied classes feel no need for emancipation and, moreover, oppose the self-emancipation of the working class with all their strength, the working class is compelled to prepare and carry out the social reorganization by itself.

F. Engels, Vorwort zur zweiten deutschen Auflage (1892) der "Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England". Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 22, S. 321

By developing industry the capitalists produce not only surplus-value, but also proletarians; they destroy the petty-bourgeois and small-peasant middle strata and drive the class antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat to its peak. Yet he who creates proletarians, also creates Social-Democrats.

F. Engels, Rede auf einer sozialdemokratischen Versammlung in Berlin am 22. September 1893. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 22, S. 413

The stronger is capital, the stronger also is the class of wage-labourers, and the nearer is the end of capitalist rule.

*F. Engels, Über den Antisemitismus.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 22, S. 50*

As soon as the events push the proletariat into the foreground, restraint becomes an obvious absurdity and active interference by the working class becomes an insistent necessity.

*F. Engels, Die Bakunisten an der
Arbeit. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 18,
S. 478*

The development of the conditions for a numerous, strong, concentrated and intelligent proletariat goes hand in hand with the development of the conditions for a numerous, prosperous, concentrated and powerful bourgeoisie. The workers' movement is never independent; it is never exclusively proletarian in character, until all the various sections of the bourgeoisie, notably its most advanced section, the big industrialists, win political power and re-shape the state to suit their needs. Then comes the time when the inevitable conflict between industrialists and wage-labourers draws dangerously near and can no longer be averted; no longer will the working class let itself be diverted by illusive hopes and never-to-be-kept promises; the big problem of the nineteenth century, abolition of the proletariat, moves finally to the foreground unequivocally and in its true light.

*F. Engels, Revolution und
Konterrevolution in Deutschland.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 8,
S. 10-11*

The rural population, the most stationary and conservative element of modern society, disappears while the industrial proletariat, by the very working of modern production, finds itself gathered in mighty centres, around

the great productive forces, whose history of creation has hitherto been the martyrology of the labourers. Who will prevent them from going a step further, and appropriating these forces, to which they have been appropriated before? Where will be the power of resisting them? Nowhere! Then, it will be of no use to appeal to the "rights of property".

*K. Marx, Forced Emigration.
Marx and Engels, On Britain,
Moscow, 1962, p. 389*

While pointing to the solidarity of one or other of the various opposition groups with the workers, the Social-Democrats will always single out the workers from the rest, they will always point out that this solidarity is temporary and conditional, they will always emphasise the independent class identity of the proletariat, who tomorrow may find themselves in opposition to their allies of today. We shall be told that "such action will *weaken* all the fighters for political liberty at the present time". We shall reply that such action will *strengthen* all the fighters for political liberty. Only those fighters are strong who rely on the *consciously recognised* real interests of certain *classes*, and any attempt to obscure these class interests, which already play a predominant role in contemporary society, will only weaken the fighters. That is the first point. The second point is that, in the fight against the autocracy, the working class must single itself out, for it is the *only* thoroughly consistent and unreserved enemy of the autocracy, *only* between the working class and the autocracy is no compromise possible, *only* in the working class can democracy find a champion who makes no reservations, is not irresolute and does not look back. The hostility of all other classes, groups and strata of the population towards the autocracy is *not unqualified*; their democracy always looks back. The bourgeoisie cannot but realise that industrial and social development is being retarded by the autocracy, but it fears the

complete democratisation of the political and social system and can at any moment enter into alliance with the autocracy against the proletariat. The petty bourgeoisie is two-faced by its very nature, and while it gravitates, on the one hand, towards the proletariat and democracy, on the other, it gravitates towards the reactionary classes, tries to hold up the march of history, is apt to be seduced by the experiments and blandishments of the autocracy (for example, the "people's policy" of Alexander III), is capable of concluding an alliance with the ruling classes against the proletariat *for the sake of* strengthening its own *small-proprietor* position. Educated people, and the "intelligentsia" generally, cannot but revolt against the savage police tyranny of the autocracy, which hunts down thought and knowledge; but the material interests of this intelligentsia bind it to the autocracy and to the bourgeoisie, compel it to be inconsistent, to compromise, to sell its revolutionary and oppositional ardour for an official salary, or a share of profits or dividends. As for the democratic elements among the oppressed nationalities and the persecuted religions, everybody knows and sees that the class antagonisms within these categories of the population are much deeper-going and stronger than the solidarity binding all classes within any one category against the autocracy and in favour of democratic institutions. 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 demo-

cratic 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.

V. I. Lenin, *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats. Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 334-36

Engels was the *first* to say that the proletariat is *not only* a suffering class; that it is, in fact, the disgraceful economic condition of the proletariat that drives it irresistibly forward and compels it to fight for its ultimate emancipation. And the fighting proletariat *will help itself*. The political movement of the working class will inevitably lead the workers to realise that their only salvation lies in socialism. On the other hand, socialism will become a force only when it becomes the aim of the *political* struggle of the working class.

V. I. Lenin, *Frederick Engels. Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 22-23

The old society was based on the oppression of all the workers and peasants by the landowners and capitalists. We had to destroy all that, and overthrow them but to do that we had to create unity. That is something that God cannot create.

This unity could be provided only by the factories, only by a proletariat trained and roused from its long slumber.

Only when that class was formed did a mass movement arise which has led to what we have now—the victory of the proletarian revolution in one of the weakest of countries, which for three years has been repelling the onslaught of the bourgeoisie of the whole world. We can see how the proletarian revolution is developing all over the world. On the basis of experience, we now say that only the proletariat could have created the solid force which the disunited and scattered peasantry are following and which has withstood all onslaughts by the exploiters. Only this class can help the working masses unite, rally their ranks and conclusively defend, conclusively consolidate and conclusively build up a communist society.

V. I. Lenin, The Tasks of the Youth Leagues. Collected Works, Vol. 31, pp. 291-92

The development of the productive forces creates social relations based upon private property, but now we see that this same development of the productive forces deprives the majority of their property and concentrates it in the hands of an insignificant minority. It abolishes property, the basis of the modern social order, it itself strives towards the very aim which the socialists have set themselves. All the socialists have to do is to realise which social force, owing to its position in modern society, is interested in bringing socialism about, and to impart to this force the consciousness of its interests and of its historical task. This force is the proletariat.

V. I. Lenin, Frederick Engels. Collected Works, Vol. 2, p. 22

The movement of the lower classes raises a revolutionary force; it raises a mass of people, who, for one thing, are capable of tearing down the whole rotten structure, and, for another, are not attached to that structure by any special features of their position and would gladly tear it down.

What is more, even though they are not fully conscious of their aims, these masses are nonetheless able and prone to tear the structure down, because their position is desperate since constant oppression drives them to take the revolutionary way, and they have nothing to lose but their chains. This popular force, the proletariat, looms formidable before the lords of the rotten structure because there is something in the very position of the proletariat that is a menace to all exploiters. For that reason, any movement of the proletariat, however small, however modest it may be at the start, however slight its occasion, inevitably threatens to outgrow its immediate aims and to develop into a force irreconcilable to the *entire* old order and destructive of it.

V. I. Lenin, *Political Sophisms*,
Collected Works, Vol. 8,
p. 426

The worker cannot fail to see that he is oppressed by *capital*, that his struggle has to be waged against the bourgeois *class*. And this struggle, aimed at satisfying his immediate economic needs, at improving his material conditions, inevitably demands that the workers organise, and inevitably becomes a war not against individuals, but against a *class*, the class which oppresses and crushes the working people not only in the factories, but everywhere. That is why the factory worker is none other than the foremost representative of the entire exploited population. And in order that he may fulfil his function of representative in an organised, sustained struggle it is by no means necessary to enthuse him with "perspectives"; all that is needed is simply *to make him understand his position*, to make him understand the political and economic structure of the system that oppresses him, and the necessity and inevitability of class antagonisms under this system. This position of the factory worker in the general system of capitalist relations makes him the sole fighter for the emancipation of the working class, for only the higher stage of development of capitalism, large-scale machine industry, creates the ma-

terial conditions and the social forces necessary for this struggle. Everywhere else, where the forms of capitalist development are low, these material conditions are absent; production is scattered among thousands of tiny enterprises (and they do not cease to be scattered *enterprises* even under the most equalitarian forms of communal landownership), for the most part the exploited still possess tiny enterprises, and are thus tied to the very bourgeois system they should be fighting: this retards and hinders the development of the social forces capable of overthrowing capitalism. Scattered, individual, petty exploitation ties the working people to one locality, divides them, prevents them from becoming conscious of class solidarity, prevents them from uniting once they have understood that oppression is not caused by some particular individual, but by the whole economic system. Large-scale capitalism, on the contrary, inevitably severs all the workers' ties with the old society, with a particular locality and a particular exploiter; it unites them, compels them to think and places them in conditions which enable them to commence an organised struggle. Accordingly, it is on the working class that the Social-Democrats concentrate all their attention and all their activities. When its advanced representatives have mastered the ideas of scientific socialism, the idea of the historical role of the Russian worker, when these ideas become widespread, and when stable organisations are formed among the workers to transform the workers' present sporadic economic war into conscious class struggle—then the Russian WORKER, rising at the head of all the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism and lead the RUSSIAN PROLETARIAT (side by side with the proletariat of ALL COUNTRIES) *along the straight road of open political struggle to THE VICTORIOUS COMMUNIST REVOLUTION.*

V. I. Lenin, *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats. Collected Works, Vol. 1, pp. 299-300*

The very conditions of their lives make the workers capable of struggle and impel them to struggle. Capital collects the workers in great masses in big cities, uniting them, teaching them to act in unison. At every step the workers come face to face with their main enemy—the capitalist class. In combat with this enemy the worker becomes a *socialist*, comes to realise the necessity of a complete reconstruction of the whole of society, the complete abolition of all poverty and all oppression. Becoming socialists, the workers fight with self-abnegating courage against everything that stands in their path, first and foremost the tsarist regime and the feudal landlords.

*V. I. Lenin, The Lessons of the Revolution.
Collected Works, Vol. 16, pp. 301-02*

The Role of Alliance Between the Proletariat and the Non-Proletarian Masses in the Socialist Revolution

In the first place Lassalle's high-sounding but historically false phrase is accepted: in relation to the working class all other classes are only one reactionary mass. This proposition is true only in a few exceptional cases: for instance, in a revolution of the proletariat, like the Commune, or in a country where not only the bourgeoisie has moulded state and society in its own image but where in its wake the democratic petty bourgeoisie, too, has already carried out this remoulding down to its final consequences.

*F. Engels's Letter to A. Bebel,
March 18-28, 1875. Marx and
Engels, Selected Correspondence,
Moscow, 1965, p. 291*

The moment the social revolution starts all other parties appear to be a reactionary mass vis-à-vis us. Possibly they already *are* such, have lost all capacity for any progressive action whatsoever, although not necessarily so. But at the

present moment we cannot say so, at least not with the certainty with which we proclaim the other programmatic principles. Even in Germany conditions may arise under which the left parties, despite their miserableness, may be *forced* to sweep away part of the colossal anti-bourgeois, bureaucratic and feudal rubbish that is still lying there. And in that event they are simply no reactionary mass.

So long as we are not strong enough to seize the helm of state ourselves and realise our principles there can be no talk, strictly speaking, of *one* reactionary mass *vis-à-vis* us. Otherwise the whole nation would be divided into a reactionary majority and an impotent minority. . . .

In brief, we have no right to represent a tendency gradually becoming a reality as an already accomplished fact, and particularly not since in England for instance this tendency will *never* become an absolutely complete fact. When the overturn comes here the bourgeoisie will still be ever ready for every manner of reform in detail. Only there is no longer any sense in insisting on reforming in detail a system that is being overthrown.

F. Engels's Letter to K. Kautsky,
October 14, 1891. Marx and Engels,
Selected Correspondence,
Moscow, 1965, pp. 432-33

The real weakness of the second article (which, indeed, I noticed, but did not take seriously) is its childish notion about the next revolution, which is *to begin* by the whole world splitting, "Here the Welfs, Here the Weiblings",¹⁵ into two armies, with us here, and the "one reactionary mass" there.¹⁶ This implies that the revolution would begin with the *fifth act*, rather than the first, in which all the opposition parties join hands to defeat the government and its blunders, whereafter various parties from among the victors expend themselves and step off the stage, until, finally, the whole mass of the people gravitates to our side, after which the famous decisive Vollmar battle can be mounted.

F. Engels's Letter to E. Bernstein,
November 2-3, 1882

We . . . are decidedly on the side of the small peasant; we shall do everything at all permissible to make his lot more bearable, to facilitate his transition to the co-operative should he decide to do so, and even to make it possible for him to remain on his small holding for a protracted length of time to think the matter over, should he still be unable to bring himself to this decision. We do this not only because we consider the small peasant living by his own labour as virtually belonging to us, but also in the direct interest of the Party. The greater the number of peasants whom we can save from being actually hurled down into the proletariat, whom we can win to our side while they are still peasants, the more quickly and easily the social transformation will be accomplished. It will serve us nought to wait with this transformation until capitalist production has developed everywhere to its utmost consequences, until the last small handicraftsman and the last small peasant have fallen victim to capitalist large-scale production. The material sacrifice to be made for this purpose in the interest of the peasants and to be defrayed out of public funds can, from the point of view of capitalist economy, be viewed only as money thrown away, but it is nevertheless an excellent investment because it will effect a perhaps tenfold saving in the cost of the social reorganisation in general. In this sense we can, therefore, afford to deal very liberally with the peasants. This is not the place to go into details, to make concrete proposals to that end; here we can deal only with general principles.

*F. Engels, The Peasant Question
in France and Germany. Marx and Engels,
Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962,
pp. 435-36*

The conquest of political power by the Socialist Party has become a matter of the not too distant future. But in order to conquer political power this party must first go from the towns to the country, must become a power in the countryside. This party, which has an advantage over all others in that it possesses a clear insight into the inter-

connections between economic causes and political effects and long ago descried the wolf in the sheep's clothing of the big landowners, that importunate friend of the peasant—may this party calmly leave the doomed peasant in the hands of his false protectors until he has been transformed from a passive into an active opponent of the industrial workers?

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*F. Engels, The Peasant Question
in France and Germany.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, p. 421*

We now come to the bigger peasants. Here as a result of the divisions of inheritance as well as of indebtedness and forced sales of land we find a variegated pattern of intermediate stages, from small-holding peasant to big peasant proprietor, who has retained his old patrimony intact or even added to it. Where the middle peasant lives among small-holding peasants his interests and views will not differ greatly from theirs; he knows from his own experience how many of his kind have already sunk to the level of small peasants. But where middle and big peasants predominate and the operation of the farms requires, generally, the help of male and female servants it is quite a different matter. Of course a workers' party has to fight, in the first place, on behalf of the wage-workers, that is, for the male and female servantry and the day-labourers. It is unquestionably forbidden to make any promises to the peasants which include the continuance of the wage-slavery of the workers. But as long as the big and middle peasants continue to exist as such they cannot manage without wage-workers. If it would, therefore, be downright folly on our part to hold out prospects to the small-holding peasants of continuing permanently to be such, it would border on treason were we to promise the same to the big and middle peasants.

*F. Engels, The Peasant Question
in France and Germany.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 436-37*

The peasants find their natural ally and leader in the *urban proletariat*, whose task is the overthrow of the bourgeois order.

*K. Marx, Eighteenth Brumaire
of Louis Bonaparte. Marx and Engels,
Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 338*

The fight against feudal and bureaucratic reaction—for the two are now inseparable—is tantamount in Germany to a struggle for the spiritual and political emancipation of the rural proletariat. As long as the rural proletariat is not drawn into the movement, the urban proletariat in Germany cannot and will not achieve the least success and universal direct suffrage will be no weapon, but a *trap* for the proletariat.

*F. Engels, Die preussische
Militärfrage und die deutsche
Arbeiterpartei. Marx/Engels,
Werke, Bd. 16, S. 74*

The French workers could not take a step forward, could not touch a hair of the bourgeois order, until the course of the revolution had aroused the mass of the nation, peasants and petty bourgeois, standing between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, against this order, against the rule of capital, and had forced it to attach itself to the proletarians as their protagonists.

*K. Marx, The Class Struggles
in France, 1848 to 1850.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 149*

Radical social revolution is tied up with certain historical conditions of economic development; the latter are a precondition for it. It is therefore only possible where, alongside capitalist production, the industrial proletariat at least occupies a significant position among the mass of the

people. For it to have a chance of victory it must be able to do at least as much for the peasants *mutatis mutandis* as the French bourgeoisie did for the French peasants in its revolution.

K. Marx, *Konspekt von Bakunins*
Buch "Staatlichkeit und Anarchie".
Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 18, S. 633

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So far, every victory won by the working class in Paris was nullified a short time later by the reactionary spirit of the small peasants who constitute the bulk of the French population. The French peasantry has been Bonapartist in spirit since the beginning of the century. The Second Republic, established by the Paris workers in February 1848, was repealed by the six million peasant votes cast for Louis Napoleon the following December. But the Prussian invasion of 1870 undermined the peasants' faith in the empire and the latest election in November shows that the bulk of the rural population has turned republican. That is a change of the utmost importance. Not only does it mean that from now on monarchist restoration in France is impossible; it means also that the alliance of the town workers and the peasants has come closer to fruition.... At last, the French peasants have become sensible enough to search for the real reasons behind their chronic need and to look for the practical means of doing away with it. Once the peasants begin to think, they are sure to find that the only remedy for them lies in an alliance with the town workers, the only class that does not benefit from their present wretched condition.

F. Engels, *Die europäischen Arbeiter*
im Jahre 1877. Marx/Engels, *Werke*,
Bd. 19, S. 132

The socialist revolution in Europe *cannot be* anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements. Inevitably, sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward

workers will participate in it—without such participation, mass struggle is *impossible*, without it no revolution is possible—and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But *objectively* they will attack *capital*, and the class-conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a variegated and discordant, motley and outwardly fragmented, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, capture power, seize the banks, expropriate the trusts which all hate (though for different reasons!), and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism, which, however, will by no means immediately “purge” itself of petty-bourgeois slag.

V. I. Lenin, *The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up*.
Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 356

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.

V. I. Lenin, *Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists*.
Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 60

In any case, whichever way things turn out, our first, our principal and indispensable task is *to strengthen the alliance of the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians with the urban proletarians*. For this alliance we need at once, immediately, *complete political liberty for the people, complete equality of rights for the peasants and the abolition of serf bondage*. And when that alliance is established and strengthened, we shall easily expose all the deceit the bourgeoisie resorts to in order to attract the middle peasant;

we shall easily and quickly take the second, the third and the last step against the entire bourgeoisie, against all the government forces, and we shall unswervingly march to victory and rapidly achieve the *complete emancipation of all working people*.

V. I. Lenin, *To the Rural Poor*.
Collected Works, Vol. 6, p. 423

In every village, in every commune, there are many farm labourers, many impoverished peasants, and there are rich peasants who employ farm labourers and buy land "in perpetuity". These rich peasants are also members of the commune, and it is they who lord it in the commune because they are a force. But do we need a union to which the rich belong, and which is lorded over by the rich? Of course not. We need a union *to fight* the rich. . . . We need a very different kind of union, a voluntary union consisting only of labourers and poor peasants to fight all those who live on the labour of others.

V. I. Lenin, *To the Rural Poor*.
Collected Works, Vol. 6, p. 381

The Social-Democrats say they are fighting together with the entire peasantry against the landlords and officials, besides which they—the town and village proletarians together—are fighting against capital. The struggle for land and freedom is a democratic struggle. The struggle to abolish the rule of capital is a socialist struggle.

V. I. Lenin, *The Proletariat and the Peasantry*.
Collected Works, Vol. 10, p. 43

In 1852 Marx said that the peasants had judgement as well as prejudices. And now, when we point out to the poor peasants the cause of their poverty, we may count on success. We believe that, since the Social-Democrats have now taken up the struggle for the interests of the peasants, we shall in future be reckoning with the fact that the

peasant masses will get used to looking upon Social-Democracy as the defender of their interests.

*V. I. Lenin, Second Congress of R.S.D.L.P.,
Speech in the Discussion
on the Agrarian Programme.
Collected Works, Vol. 6, p. 497*

The class that can lead the mass of the population must triumph historically.

*V. I. Lenin, Eighth All-Russia
Conference of the R.C.P.(B.).
Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 177*

There is no salvation for the working masses of the countryside except in alliance with the communist proletariat, and unless they give the latter devoted support in its revolutionary struggle to throw off the yoke of the landowners (the big landed proprietors) and the bourgeoisie.

*V. I. Lenin, Preliminary Draft
Theses on the Agrarian Question.
Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 152*

A necessary condition for the victory of the socialist revolution, which alone can secure the lasting triumph and full implementation of the law on land, is the close alliance of the working and exploited peasantry with the working class—the proletariat—in all the advanced countries. In the Russian Republic the entire organisation and administration of the state from top to bottom must henceforth be based on such an alliance. Rejecting all and every attempt, direct and indirect, overt and covert, to return to a course that experience has rejected, to the course of conciliation with the bourgeoisie and the champions of bourgeois policy, this alliance alone can ensure the victory of socialism the world over.

*V. I. Lenin, The Extraordinary
All Russia Congress of Soviets
of Peasants' Deputies. Collected
Works, Vol. 26, p. 328*

The fate and the outcome of the Russian revolution—unless the incipient proletarian revolution in Europe exercises a direct and powerful influence on our country—will depend on whether the urban proletariat succeeds in rallying the rural proletariat together with the mass of rural semi-proletarians behind it, or whether this mass follows the lead of the peasant bourgeoisie, which is gravitating towards an alliance with Guchkov and Milyukov, with the capitalists and landowners, and towards the counter-revolution in general.

*V. I. Lenin, The Seventh (April)
All-Russia Conference of the
R.S.D.L.P.(B.). Collected Works,
Vol. 24, p. 291*

They must strain every nerve to strengthen and enlarge the alliance between the socialist proletariat and the revolutionary peasantry, in preparation for the inevitable climax of the present political crisis. This alliance is the only earnest that the question of "all the land" for the peasants, and of full freedom and complete power for the people, will be effectively settled.

*V. I. Lenin, The Land Question
in the Duma. Collected Works,
Vol. 10, p. 417*

If the revolution can triumph it will do so *only* as a result of an alliance between the proletariat and the really revolutionary, not the opportunist, peasantry.

*V. I. Lenin, Philistinism in Revolutionary
Circles. Collected Works, Vol. 11, p. 255*

Wherever a struggle begins between the rich and the poor, between the property-owners and the workers, the middle peasant remains in between, not knowing which side to take. The rich call him to their side: you, too, are a master, a man of property, they say to him, you have

nothing to do with the penniless workers. But the workers say: the rich will cheat and fleece you, and there is no other salvation for you but to help us in our fight against all the rich. This struggle for the middle peasant is going on everywhere, in all countries, wherever the Social-Democratic workers are fighting to emancipate the working people. In Russia the struggle is just beginning. That is why we must most carefully study the matter and understand clearly the deceits the rich resort to in order to win over the middle peasant; we must learn how to expose these deceits and help the middle peasant to find his real friends. If the Russian Social-Democratic workers at once take the right road, we shall establish a firm alliance between the rural workers and the urban workers more quickly than our comrades, the German workers, and we shall speedily achieve victory over all the enemies of the working people.

*V. I. Lenin, To the Rural Poor.
Collected Works, Vol. 6, p. 390*

The relentless war against the rural bourgeoisie and the kulaks gave prominence to the organisation of the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat. But by its next step the Party, which wants to lay the sound foundations of communist society, must take up the task of correctly defining our attitude towards the middle peasants. This is a problem of a higher order. We could not present it on an extensive scale until we had made secure the basis for the existence of the Soviet Republic. This problem is a more complicated one and it involves defining our attitude towards a numerous and strong section of the population. This attitude cannot be defined simply by the answer—struggle or support. As regards the bourgeoisie our task is defined by the words “struggle”, “suppression”, and as regards the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat our task is defined by the words “our support”, but this problem is undoubtedly more complicated. On this point, the socialists, the best representatives of socialism in the old days, when they still believed in the revolution and faithfully adhered to its theory and

ideals, talked about *neutralising the peasantry*, i.e., making the middle peasants a social stratum which, if it did not actively help the proletarian revolution, at least would not hinder it, that would remain neutral and not go over to the side of our enemies. This abstract, theoretical formulation of the problem is quite clear but is inadequate. We have reached the stage of socialist development when we must draw up definite and detailed rules and regulations which have been tested by practical experience in the rural districts to guide us in our efforts to place our relations with the middle peasants *on the basis of a firm alliance* and so preclude the possibility of a repetition of those mistakes and blunders we have repeatedly made in the past. These blunders estranged the middle peasants from us, although we of the Communist Party, the leading party, were the first who helped the Russian peasants to throw off the yoke of the landowners and establish real democracy, which gave us every ground for counting on their complete confidence. This is not the type of problem that calls for ruthless, swift suppression and attack, it is more complicated. But I shall allow myself to say confidently that after our twelve months of preliminary work we shall be able to cope with this problem.

V. I. Lenin, *Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 144-45

The class-conscious worker's programme is the closest alliance and complete unity with the poor peasants; concessions to and agreement with the middle peasants; ruthless suppression of the kulaks, those bloodsuckers, vampires, plunderers of the people and profiteers, who batten on famine. That is the policy of the working class.

V. I. Lenin, *Comrade Workers, Forward to the Last, Decisive Fight! Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 58

The middle peasant is not our enemy. He wavered, is wavering, and will continue to waver. The task of influencing the waverers *is not identical* with the task of overthrowing the exploiter and defeating the active enemy. The task at the present moment is to come to an agreement with the middle peasant—while not for a moment renouncing the struggle against the kulak and at the same time firmly relying solely on the poor peasant—for a turn in our direction on the part of the middle peasants is now inevitable owing to the causes enumerated above.

This applies also to the handicraftsman, the artisan, and the worker whose conditions are most petty-bourgeois or whose views are most petty-bourgeois, and to many office workers and army officers, and, in particular, to the intellectuals generally. It is an unquestionable fact that there often are instances in our Party of inability to make use of this change of front among them and that this inability can and must be overcome.

We already have the firm support of the vast majority of the proletarians organised in the trade unions. We must know how to win over the least proletarian and most petty-bourgeois sections of the *working people* who are turning towards us, to include them in the general organisation and to subject them to general proletarian discipline. The slogan of the moment here is not to fight these sections, but to win them over, to be able to influence them, to convince the waverers, to make use of those who are neutral, and, by mass proletarian influence, to educate those who are lagging behind or who have only very recently begun to free themselves from "Constituent Assembly" or "patriotic-democratic" illusions.

*V. I. Lenin, The Valuable Admissions
of Pitirim Sorokin. Collected Works,
Vol. 28, pp. 191-92*

The basic difference in our attitude towards the bourgeoisie and the middle peasants—complete expropriation of the bourgeoisie and an alliance with the middle peasant

who does not exploit others—this basic line is accepted by everybody in theory.

*V. I. Lenin, Eighth Congress
of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works,
Vol. 29, p. 205*

To confuse the middle peasants with the kulaks and to extend to them in one or another degree measures directed against the kulaks is to violate most flagrantly not only all the decrees of the Soviet government and its entire policy, but also all the basic principles of communism, according to which agreement between the proletariat and the middle peasants is one of the conditions for a painless transition to the abolition of all exploitation in the period of decisive struggle waged by the proletariat to overthrow the bourgeoisie.

*V. I. Lenin, Eighth Congress
of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works,
Vol. 29, p. 217*

We must know, remember and put into practice the rule that when communist workers go into rural districts they must try to establish comradely relations with the middle peasants; they must remember that working peasants who do not exploit the labour of others are the comrades of the urban workers and that we can and must establish with them a voluntary alliance inspired by sincerity and confidence. Every measure proposed by the communist government must be regarded merely as advice, as a suggestion to the middle peasants, as an invitation to them to accept the new order.

Only by co-operation in the work of testing these measures in practice, finding out in what way they are mistaken, eliminating possible errors and achieving agreement with the middle peasant—only by such co-operation can the alliance between the workers and the peasants be ensured. This alliance is the main strength and the bulwark of Soviet power; this alliance is a pledge that socialist

transformation will be successful, victory over capital will be achieved and exploitation in all its forms will be abolished.

V. I. Lenin, Speeches on Gramophone Records. Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 247

Of course, in our Soviet Republic, the social order is based on the collaboration of two classes: the workers and peasants, in which the "Nepmen",¹⁷ i.e., the bourgeoisie, are now permitted to participate on certain terms. If serious class disagreements arise between these classes, a split will be inevitable. But the grounds for such a split are not inevitable in our social system, and it is the principal task of our Central Committee and Central Control Commission, as well as of our Party as a whole, to watch very closely over such circumstances as may cause a split, and to forestall them, for in the final analysis the fate of our Republic will depend on whether the peasant masses will stand by the working class, loyal to their alliance, or whether they will permit the "Nepmen", i.e., the new bourgeoisie, to drive a wedge between them and the working class, to split them off from the working class. The more clearly we see this alternative, the more clearly all our workers and peasants understand it, the greater are the chances that we shall avoid a split, which would be fatal for the Soviet Republic.

V. I. Lenin, How We Should Reorganise the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. Collected Works, Vol. 33, pp. 485-86

This task which we are working on now, for the time being on our own, seems to be a purely Russian one, but in reality it is a task which all socialists will face. Capitalism is dying; in its death throes it can still condemn tens and hundreds of millions of people to unparalleled torment, but there is no power that can prevent its collapse. The new society, which will be based on the alliance of the workers and peasants, is inevitable. Sooner or later it will come—twenty years earlier or twenty years later—and

when we work on the implementation of our New Economic Policy, we are helping to work out for this society the forms of alliance between the workers and peasants. We shall get this done and we shall create an alliance of the workers and peasants that is so sound that no power on earth will break it.

*V. I. Lenin, Ninth All-Russia Congress
of Soviets. Collected Works,
Vol. 33, p. 177*

The Forms of the Class Struggle and Class Organisation of the Proletariat During the Preparation and Carrying Out of the Socialist Revolution

The Origin and Development of the Class Struggle of the Proletariat

The earliest, crudest, and least fruitful form of this rebellion was that of crime. The working-man lived in poverty and want, and saw that others were better off than he. It was not clear to his mind why he, who did more for society than the rich idler, should be the one to suffer under these conditions. Want conquered his inherited respect for the sacredness of property, and he stole. We have seen how crime increased with the extension of manufacture; how the yearly number of arrests bore a constant relation to the number of bales of cotton annually consumed.

The workers soon realised that crime did not help matters. The criminal could protest against the existing order of society only singly, as one individual; the whole might of society was brought to bear upon each criminal, and crushed him with its immense superiority. Besides, theft was the most primitive form of protest, and for this reason, if for no other, it never became the universal expression of the public opinion of the working-men, however much they might approve of it in silence. As a *class*, they first manifested opposition to the bourgeoisie when they resisted the introduction of machinery at the very beginning of the

industrial period. The first inventors, Arkwright and others, were persecuted in this way and their machines destroyed. Later, there took place a number of revolts against machinery, in which the occurrences were almost precisely the same as those of the printers' disturbances in Bohemia in 1844; factories were demolished and machinery destroyed.

This form of opposition also was isolated, restricted to certain localities, and directed against one feature only of our present social arrangements. When the momentary end was attained, the whole weight of social power fell upon the unprotected evil-doers and punished them to its heart's content, while the machinery was introduced nonetheless. A new form of opposition had to be found.

At this point help came in the shape of a law enacted by the old, unreformed, oligarchic-Tory parliament, a law which never could have passed the House of Commons later, when the Reform Bill had legally sanctioned the distinction between bourgeoisie and proletariat, and made the bourgeoisie the ruling class. This was enacted in 1824, and repealed all laws by which coalitions between working-men for labour purposes had hitherto been forbidden. The working-men obtained a right previously restricted to the aristocracy and bourgeoisie, the *right of free association*. Secret coalitions had, it is true, previously existed, but could never achieve great results. In Glasgow, as Symons* relates, a general strike of weavers had taken place in 1812, which was brought about by a secret association. It was repeated in 1822, and on this occasion vitriol was thrown into the faces of the two working-men who would not join the association, and were therefore regarded by the members as traitors to their class. Both the assaulted lost the use of their eyes in consequence of the injury. So, too, in 1818, the association of Scottish miners was powerful enough to carry on a general strike. These associations required their members to take an oath of fidelity and secrecy, had regular lists, treasurers, book-keepers, and local branches. But the

* *Arts and Artisans*, p. 137 *et seq.*

secrecy with which everything was conducted crippled their growth. When, on the other hand, the working-men received in 1824 the right of free association, these combinations were very soon spread over all England and attained great power. In all branches of industry Trades Unions were formed with the outspoken intention of protecting the single working-man against the tyranny and neglect of the bourgeoisie. Their objects were: to fix wages and to deal, *en masse* as a power, with the employers; to regulate the rate of wages according to the profit of the latter, to raise it when opportunity offered, and to keep it uniform in each trade throughout the country. Hence they tried to settle with the capitalists a scale of wages to be universally adhered to, and ordered out on strike the employees of such individuals as refused to accept the scale. They aimed further to keep up the demand for labour by limiting the number of apprentices, and so to keep wages high; to counteract, as far as possible, the indirect wages reductions which the manufacturers brought about by means of new tools and machinery; and finally, to assist unemployed working-men financially. This they do either directly or by means of a card to legitimate the bearer as a "society man", and with which the working-man wanders from place to place, supported by his fellow-workers, and instructed as to the best opportunity for finding employment. This is tramping, and the wanderer a tramp. To attain these ends, a President and Secretary are engaged at a salary (since it is to be expected that no manufacturer will employ such persons), and a committee collects the weekly contributions and watches over their expenditure for the purposes of the association. When it proved possible and advantageous, the various trades of single districts united in a federation and held delegate conventions at set times. The attempt has been made in single cases to unite the workers of one branch over all England in one great Union; and several times (in 1830 for the first time) to form one universal trades association for the whole United Kingdom, with a separate organisation for each trade. These associations, however, never held together long,

and were seldom realised even for the moment, since an exceptionally universal excitement is necessary to make such a federation possible and effective.

The means usually employed by these Unions for attaining their ends are the following: If one or more employers refuse to pay the wage specified by the Union, a deputation is sent or a petition forwarded (the working-men, you see, know how to recognise the absolute power of the lord of the factory in his little State); if this proves unavailing, the Union commands the employees to stop work, and all hands go home. This strike is either partial when one or several, or general when all employers in the trade refuse to regulate wages according to the proposals of the Union. So far go the lawful means of the Union, assuming the strike to take effect after the expiration of the legal notice, which is not always the case. But these lawful means are very weak when there are workers outside the Union, or when members separate from it for the sake of the momentary advantage offered by the bourgeoisie. Especially in the case of partial strikes can the manufacturer readily secure recruits from these black sheep (who are known as knobsticks), and render fruitless the efforts of the united workers. Knobsticks are usually threatened, insulted, beaten, or otherwise maltreated by the members of the Union; intimidated, in short, in every way. Prosecution follows, and as the law-abiding bourgeoisie has the power in its own hands, the force of the Union is broken almost every time by the first unlawful act, the first judicial procedure against its members.

The history of these Unions is a long series of defeats of the working-men, interrupted by a few isolated victories. All these efforts naturally cannot alter the economic law according to which wages are determined by the relation between supply and demand in the labour market. Hence the Unions remain powerless against all *great* forces which influence this relation. In a commercial crisis the Union itself must reduce wages or dissolve wholly; and in a time of considerable increase in the demand for labour, it cannot fix the rate of wages higher than would be reached

spontaneously by the competition of the capitalists among themselves. But in dealing with minor, single influences they are powerful. If the employer had no concentrated, collected opposition to expect, he would in his own interest gradually reduce wages to a lower and lower point; indeed, the battle of competition which he has to wage against his fellow-manufacturers would force him to do so, and wages would soon reach the minimum. But this competition of the manufacturers among themselves is, *under average conditions*, somewhat restricted by the opposition of the working-men.

Every manufacturer knows that the consequence of a reduction not justified by conditions to which his competitors also are subjected, would be a strike, which would most certainly injure him, because his capital would be idle as long as the strike lasted, and his machinery would be rusting, whereas it is very doubtful whether he could, in such a case, enforce his reduction. Then he has the certainty that if he should succeed, his competitors would follow him, reducing the price of the goods so produced, and thus depriving him of the benefit of his policy. Then, too, the Unions often bring about a more rapid increase of wages after a crisis than would otherwise follow. For the manufacturer's interest is to delay raising wages until forced by competition, but now the working-men demand an increased wage as soon as the market improves, and they can carry their point by reason of the smaller supply of workers at his command under such circumstances. But, for resistance to more considerable forces which influence the labour market, the Unions are powerless. In such cases hunger gradually drives the strikers to resume work on any terms, and when once a few have begun, the force of the Union is broken, because these few knobsticks, with the reserve supplies of goods in the market, enable the bourgeoisie to overcome the worst effects of the interruption of business. The funds of the Union are soon exhausted by the great numbers requiring relief, the credit which the shopkeepers give at high interest is withdrawn after a

time, and want compels the working-man to place himself once more under the yoke of the bourgeoisie. But strikes end disastrously for the workers mostly, because the manufacturers, in their own interest (which has, be it said, become their interest only through the resistance of the workers), are obliged to avoid all useless reductions, while the workers feel in every reduction imposed by the state of trade a deterioration of their condition, against which they must defend themselves as far as in them lies.

It will be asked, "Why, then, do the workers strike in such cases, when the uselessness of such measures is so evident?" Simply because they *must* protest against every reduction, even if dictated by necessity; because they feel bound to proclaim that they, as human beings, shall not be made to bow to social circumstances, but social conditions ought to yield to them as human beings; because silence on their part would be a recognition of these social conditions, an admission of the right of the bourgeoisie to exploit the workers in good times and let them starve in bad ones. Against this the working-men must rebel so long as they have not lost all human feeling, and that they protest in this way and no other, comes of their being practical English people, who express themselves in *action*, and do not, like German theorists, go to sleep as soon as their protest is properly registered and placed *ad acta*,* there to sleep as quietly as the protesters themselves. The active resistance of the English working-men has its effect in holding the money-greed of the bourgeoisie within certain limits, and keeping alive the opposition of the workers to the social and political omnipotence of the bourgeoisie, while it compels the admission that something more is needed than Trades Unions and strikes to break the power of the ruling class. But what gives these Unions and the strikes arising from them their real importance is this, that they are the first attempt of the workers to abolish competition. They imply the recognition of the fact that the supremacy

* Filed.—Ed.

of the bourgeoisie is based wholly upon the competition of the workers among themselves; *i.e.*, upon their want of cohesion. And precisely because the Unions direct themselves against the vital nerve of the present social order; however one-sidedly, in however narrow a way, are they so dangerous to this social order. The working-men cannot attack the bourgeoisie, and with it the whole existing order of society, at any sorer point than this. If the competition of the workers among themselves is destroyed, if all determine not to be further exploited by the bourgeoisie, the rule of property is at an end. Wages depend upon the relation of demand to supply, upon the accidental state of the labour market, simply because the workers have hitherto been content to be treated as chattels, to be bought and sold. The moment the workers resolve to be bought and sold no longer, when, in the determination of the value of labour, they take the part of men possessed of a will as well as of working-power, at that moment the whole Political Economy of today is at an end.

The laws determining the rate of wages would, indeed, come into force again in the long run, if the working-men did not go beyond this step of abolishing competition among themselves. But they must go beyond that unless they are prepared to recede again and to allow competition among themselves to reappear. Thus once advanced so far, necessity compels them to go farther; to abolish not only one kind of competition, but competition itself altogether, and that they will do.

The workers are coming to perceive more clearly with every day how competition affects them; they see far more clearly than the bourgeois that competition of the capitalists among themselves presses upon the workers too, by bringing on commercial crises, and that this kind of competition, too, must be abolished. They will soon learn *how* they have to go about it.

*F. Engels, The Condition of the Working Class
in England. Marx and Engels,
On Britain, Moscow, 1962, pp. 248-55*

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual labourers, then by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares that compete with their labour, they smash to pieces machinery, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.

At this stage the labourers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country, and broken up by their mutual competition. If anywhere they unite to form more compact bodies, this is not yet the consequence of their own active union, but of the union of the bourgeoisie, which class, in order to attain its own political ends, is compelled to set the whole proletariat in motion, and is moreover yet, for a time, able to do so. At this stage, therefore, the proletarians do not fight their enemies, but the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of absolute monarchy, the landowners, the non-industrial bourgeois, the petty bourgeoisie. Thus the whole historical movement is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeoisie.

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. . . . 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.

*Marx and Engels, Manifesto
of the Communist Party.
Selected Works, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1962, pp. 41-43*

If the first aim of resistance was merely the maintenance of wages, combinations, at first isolated, constitute themselves into groups as the capitalists in their turn unite for the purpose of repression, and in face of always united capital, the maintenance of the association becomes more necessary to them than that of wages. This is so true that English economists are amazed to see the workers sacrifice a good part of their wages in favour of associations, which, in the eyes of these economists, are established solely in favour of wages. In this struggle—a veritable civil war—all the elements necessary for a coming battle unite and develop. Once it has reached this point, association takes on a political character.

*K. Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy,
Moscow, 1962, p. 166*

With the accumulation of capital, the class struggle, and, therefore, the class-consciousness of the working-men, develop.

*K. Marx, Capital, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1965, p. 653*

The character of independence and estrangement which the capitalist mode of production as a whole gives to the instruments of labour and to the product, as against the

workman, is developed by means of machinery into a thorough antagonism. Therefore, it is with the advent of machinery, that the workman for the first time brutally revolts against the instruments of labour.

*K. Marx, Capital, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1965, p. 432*

The industrial revolution had created a class of large manufacturing capitalists, but also a class—and a far more numerous one—of manufacturing workpeople. This class gradually increased in numbers, in proportion as the industrial revolution seized upon one branch of manufacture after another, and in the same proportion it increased in power. This power it proved as early as 1824, by forcing a reluctant Parliament to repeal the acts forbidding combinations of workmen. During the Reform agitation, the working-men constituted the Radical wing of the Reform party; the Act of 1832 having excluded them from the suffrage, they formulated their demands in the People's Charter, and constituted themselves, in opposition to the great bourgeois Anti-Corn Law party, into an independent party, the Chartists, the first working-men's party of modern times.

Then came the Continental revolutions of February and March 1848, in which the working people played such a prominent part, and, at least in Paris, put forward demands which were certainly inadmissible from the point of view of capitalist society.

*F. Engels, Socialism: Utopian
and Scientific. Special Introduction
to the English Edition of 1892.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 109-10*

We showed that on his own the worker is helpless and defenceless against the capitalist who introduces machines. The worker has at all costs to seek means of resisting the capitalist, in order to defend himself. And he finds such

means in *organisation*. Helpless on his own, the worker becomes a force when organised with his comrades, and is enabled to fight the capitalist and resist his onslaught.

Organisation becomes a necessity for the worker, now faced by big capital. But is it possible to organise a motley mass of people who are strangers to one another, even if they work in one factory? The programme indicates the conditions that prepare the workers for unity and develop in them the capacity and ability to organise. These conditions are as follows: 1) the large factory, with machine production that requires regular work the whole year round, completely breaks the tie between the worker and the land and his own farm, turning him into an absolute proletarian. The fact of each farming for himself on a patch of land divided the workers and gave each one of them a certain specific interest, separate from that of his fellow-worker, and was thus an obstacle to organisation. The worker's break with the land destroys these obstacles. 2) Further, the joint work of hundreds and thousands of workers in itself accustoms the workers to discuss their needs jointly, to take joint action, and clearly shows them the identity of the position and interests of the entire mass of workers. 3) Finally, constant transfers of workers from factory to factory accustom them to compare the conditions and practices in the different factories and enable them to convince themselves of the identical nature of the exploitation in all factories, to acquire the experience of other workers in their clashes with the capitalist, and thus enhance the solidarity of the workers. Now it is because of these conditions, taken together, that the appearance of big factories has given rise to the organisation of the workers. Among the Russian workers unity is expressed mainly and most frequently in strikes (we shall deal further with the reason why organisation in the shape of unions or mutual benefit societies is beyond the reach of our workers). The more the big factories develop, the more frequent, powerful and stubborn become the workers' strikes; the greater the oppression of capitalism and the greater the need for joint

resistance by the workers. Strikes and isolated revolts of the workers, as the programme states, now constitute the most widespread phenomenon in Russian factories. But, with the further growth of capitalism and the increasing frequency of strikes, they prove inadequate. The employers take joint action against them: they conclude agreements among themselves, bring in workers from other areas, and turn for assistance to those who run the machinery of state, who help them crush the workers' resistance. Instead of being faced by the one individual owner of each separate factory, the workers are now faced by the *entire capitalist class* and the government that assists it. The *entire capitalist class* undertakes a struggle against the *entire working class*; it devises common measures against the strikes, presses the government to adopt anti-working-class legislation, transfers factories to more out-of-the-way localities, and resorts to the distribution of jobs among people working at home and to a thousand and one other ruses and devices against the workers. The organisation of the workers of a separate factory, even of a separate industry, proves inadequate for resisting the *entire capitalist class*, and joint action by the *entire working class* becomes absolutely necessary. Thus, out of the isolated revolts of the workers grows the struggle of the *entire working class*. The struggle of the workers against the employers turns into a *class struggle*. All the employers are united by the one interest of keeping the workers in a state of subordination and of paying them the minimum wages possible. And the employers see that the only way they can safeguard their interests is by joint action on the part of the *entire employing class*, by acquiring influence over the machinery of state. The workers are likewise bound together by a common interest, that of preventing themselves being crushed by capital, of upholding their right to life and to a human existence. And the workers likewise become convinced that they, too, need unity, joint action by the *entire class*, the *working class*, and that to that end they must secure influence over the machinery of state. . . .

We have explained how and why the struggle between the factory workers and the employers becomes a class struggle, a struggle of the working class—the proletarians—against the capitalist class—the bourgeoisie.

V. I. Lenin, *Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party. Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 102-04

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The Multiplicity of Forms of the Proletariat's Class Struggle

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. We know—said Kautsky, for instance, when examining the forms of social revolution—that the coming crisis will

introduce new forms of struggle that we are now unable to foresee.

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.

These are the two principal theoretical propositions by which we must be guided.

²¹ V. I. Lenin, *Guerilla Warfare*,
Collected Works, Vol. 11,
pp. 213-14

Forms of the struggle against capital change—at one time they acquire an open international character, at another they are centred in one country. The forms change, but the struggle goes on whether it be in the military, the economic, or some other sphere of the social system; and our revolution confirms the basic law of the class struggle. The greater the cohesion achieved by the proletariat in overthrowing the bourgeois classes, the more it learns. The revolution develops in the course of the struggle itself.

V. I. Lenin, *Speech Delivered
at the Third All-Russia Trade
Union Congress, April 7, 1920*.
Collected Works, Vol. 30,
p. 505

The Specific Features of the Economic Struggle of the Proletariat

For a number of years past (and at the present time) the English working-class movement has been hopelessly describing a narrow circle of strikes for higher wages and shorter hours, not, however, as an expedient or means of propaganda and organisation but as the ultimate aim. The Trade Unions even bar all political action on principle and in their charters, and thereby also ban participation in any general activity of the working class as a class. The workers are divided politically into Conservatives and Liberal Radicals, into supporters of the Disraeli (Beaconsfield) ministry and supporters of the Gladstone ministry. One can speak here of a labour movement (proper) only in so far as strikes take place here which, whether they are won or not, do not get the movement one step further. To inflate such strikes—which often enough have been brought about purposely during the last few years of bad business by the capitalists to have a pretext for closing down their factories and mills, strikes in which the working-class movement does not make the slightest headway—into struggles of world importance, as is done, for instance, in the London *Freiheit*, can, in my opinion, only do harm. No attempt should be made to conceal the fact that at present no real labour movement in the continental sense exists here, and I therefore believe you will not lose much if for the time being you do not receive any reports on the doings of the Trade Unions here.

*F. Engels's Letter, to E. Bernstein,
June 17, 1879. Marx and Engels,
On Britain, Moscow, 1962,
pp. 555-56*

The working class ought not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market.* They ought to understand that,

* The fight of the workers for the increasing of wages is meant here.
—Ed.

with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the *material conditions* and the *social forms* necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the *conservative* motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!" they ought to inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword, "Abolition of the wages system!"...

Trades Unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital. They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power.

*K. Marx, Wages, Price and Profit.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 446-47*

Some philanthropists, and even a section of the socialists, think that strikes injure the interests of the "workers themselves"; they make it their main purpose to find a way of securing stable average wages. Apart from the fact that the industrial cycle with its various phases rules out all such average wages, I am convinced that successively rising and falling wages, coupled with the resultant eternal conflicts between industrialists and workers, constitute the very means within the contemporary organisation of production that feed the fighting spirit of the workers, fuse them into a united powerful force against the encroachments of the governing class and prevent them from becoming pitiful, more or less well nourished, thoughtless instruments of production. In a social system resting on class antagonisms we have to struggle if we want to combat slavery not only by words, but also by deeds. In appraising strikes and coalitions we must not be misled by the seeming insignificance of their economic results, and, above all, we must not lose sight of their moral and political effects.

*K. Marx, Die russische Politik
gegenüber der Türkei. Die
Arbeiterbewegung in England.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 9,
S. 170-71*

The trade union struggle is one of the constant forms of the whole workers' movement, one always needed under capitalism and essential at all times.

V. I. Lenin's Letter to S. I. Gusev.
Collected Works, Vol. 34, p. 356

For the socialist, the economic struggle serves as a basis for the organisation of the workers into a revolutionary party, for the strengthening and development of their class struggle against the whole capitalist system. If the economic struggle is taken as something complete in itself there will be nothing socialist in it; the experience of all European countries shows us many examples, not only of socialist, but also of anti-socialist trade unions.

V. I. Lenin, Apropos of the "Profession de foi."
Collected Works, Vol. 4, pp. 293-94

The *only* choice is—either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for mankind has not created a "third" ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or an above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology *in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideology. There is much talk of spontaneity. But the *spontaneous* development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology, *to its development along the lines of the Credo¹⁸ programme*; for the spontaneous working-class movement is trade-unionism, is *Nur-Gewerkschafterei*, and trade-unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie. Hence, our task, the task of Social-Democracy, is *to combat spontaneity, to divert* the working-class movement from this spontaneous, trade-unionist striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social-Democracy.

V. I. Lenin, What Is To Be Done?
Collected Works, Vol. 5, pp. 384-85

The Role of the Proletariat's Political Struggle in the Preparation and Carrying Out of the Socialist Revolution

The political movement of the working class has as its ultimate object, of course, the conquest of political power for the working class, and for this it is naturally necessary that a previous organisation of the working class, arising from its economic struggles, should have been developed up to a certain point.

On the other hand, however, every movement in which the working class comes out as a *class* against the ruling classes and attempts to force them by pressure from without is a political movement. For instance, the attempt in a particular factory or even a particular trade to force a shorter working day out of the individual capitalists by strikes, etc., is a purely economic movement. On the other hand, the movement to force an eight-hour day, etc., *law* is a *political* movement. And in this way, out of the separate economic movements of the workers there grows up everywhere a *political* movement, that is to say, a movement of the *class*, with the object of achieving its interests in a general form, in a form possessing the virtue of being compulsory for society as a whole. If these movements presuppose a certain degree of previous organisation they are themselves in like measure a means for the development of this organisation.

Where the working class is not yet far enough advanced in its organisation to undertake a decisive campaign against the collective power, that is, the political power, of the ruling classes, it must at any rate be trained for this by continual agitation against the ruling classes and adopting an attitude hostile to their policy. Otherwise it will remain a plaything in their hands, as the September Revolution in France showed, and as is also proved up to a certain point by the game Messrs. Gladstone and Co. have been successfully engaged in England even up to the present time.

Marx's Letter to F. Bolte, November 23, 1871.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 466-67

The bulk of the workers are waking up more and more to the fact that their salvation depends less on wresting higher wages and shorter hours from individual industrialists, and much more on winning political rights and the Parliament by the working class organised into an independent party.

*F. Engels, Den deutschen Arbeitern
zum 1. Mai 1893. Marx/Engels, Werke,
Bd. 22, S. 400*

Experience has brought home to the working class that *no lasting improvement of its situation will be achieved for it by others and that it must work for it by itself, first and foremost, by winning political power.*

*F. Engels, Die Zehnstundenfrage.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 7, S. 230*

A struggle between two great classes of society necessarily becomes a political struggle. So did the long battle between the middle or capitalist class and the landed aristocracy; so also does the fight between the working class and these same capitalists. In every struggle of class against class, the next end fought for is political power; the ruling class defends its political supremacy, that is to say, its safe majority in the Legislature; the inferior class fights for, first a share, then the whole of that power, in order to become enabled to change existing laws in conformity with their own interests and requirements.... In a political struggle of class against class, organisation is the most important weapon.

*F. Engels, Trade Unions. Articles
from "The Labour Standard" (1881),
Moscow, 1965, pp. 15-16*

To conquer political power has therefore become the great duty of the working classes. They seem to have comprehended this, for in England, Germany, Italy, and

France there have taken place simultaneous revivals, and simultaneous efforts are being made at the political re-organisation of the working-men's party.

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 struggles for emancipation, will be chastised by the common discomfiture of their incoherent efforts.

*K. Marx, Inaugural Address of the
Working Men's International
Association. Marx and Engels,
Selected Works, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1962, p. 384*

And 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.

*F. Engels, Introduction to K. Marx's work
"The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850".
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 129-30*

Absolute abstention from political matters is impossible; all the abstaining newspapers engage in politics all the same. It is only a question of how they do it, and for what purpose. Besides, for us abstention is impossible. Workers' political parties exist in most countries by now. Far be it from us to ruin them by preaching abstention. The practice of living, the political oppression to which the existing governments expose the workers for political or social ends, are forcing the workers into politics whether they like it or not. Preaching abstention from politics to them is the same as driving them into the embrace of bourgeois politics. Political abstention is absolutely out of the question, and doubly so after the Paris Commune, which has put proletarian political action on the agenda.

We want the classes to be abolished. What are the means to this end? Political rule of the proletariat. Yet now that everybody sees eye to eye on this score, we are told we ought to stay out of politics! The abstentionists profess to be revolutionaries, even revolutionaries par excellence. However, revolution is a supreme political act and he who wants revolution must also want political action,

which paves the way for the revolution, trains the workers for the revolution, and without which the workers are sure to be cheated by the Favres and Pyats the very next day after the battle. But the politics in question must be proletarian politics. The workers' party must not play tail to any of the bourgeois parties; it must constitute itself as an independent party with its own goal and its own policy.

The political freedoms, such as the right of assembly and association, and freedom of the press—those are our weapons. Are we to sit back and abstain if anybody tries to rob us of them? Political action, they say, means recognition of the existing state of affairs. But so long as the existing order furnishes us with the means of protesting against the existing state of affairs, employment of these means is no recognition of it.

*F. Engels, Über die politische Aktion
der Arbeiterklasse. Marx/Engels,
Werke, Bd. 17, S. 416-17*

We are all agreed that our task is that of the organisation of the proletarian class struggle. But what is this class struggle? When the workers of a single factory or of a single branch of industry engage in struggle against their employer or employers, is this class struggle? No, this is only a weak embryo of it. The struggle of the workers becomes a class struggle only when all the foremost representatives of the entire working class of the whole country are conscious of themselves as a single working class and launch a struggle that is directed, not against individual employers, but against the *entire class* of capitalists and against the government that supports that class. Only when the individual worker realises that he is a member of the entire working class, only when he recognises the fact that his petty day-to-day struggle against individual employers and individual government officials is a struggle against the entire bourgeoisie and the entire government, does his struggle become a class struggle.

"Every class struggle is a political struggle"¹⁹—these famous words of Marx are not to be understood to mean that any struggle of workers against employers must *always be* a political struggle. They must be understood to mean that the struggle of the workers against the capitalists inevitably *becomes* a political struggle *insofar as* it becomes a class struggle. It is the task of the Social-Democrats, by organising the workers, by conducting propaganda and agitation among them, to *turn* their spontaneous struggle against their oppressors into the struggle of the whole class, into the struggle of a definite political *party* for definite political and socialist ideals. This is something that cannot be achieved by local activity alone.

V. I. Lenin, *Our Immediate Task*.
Collected Works, Vol. 4, pp. 215-16

It is often said and written that the main point in Marx's theory is the class struggle. But this is wrong. And this wrong notion very often results in an opportunist distortion of Marxism and its falsification in a spirit acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the theory of the class struggle was created *not* by Marx, *but* by the bourgeoisie *before* Marx, and, generally speaking, it is *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognise *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the bounds of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. This is what constitutes the most profound distinction between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 411-12

The question of the class struggle is one of the fundamental questions of Marxism. It is, therefore, worth while dealing with the *concept* of class struggle in greater detail.

Every class struggle is a political struggle. We know that the opportunists, slaves to the ideas of liberalism, understood these profound words of Marx incorrectly and tried to put a distorted interpretation on them. Among the opportunists there were, for instance, the Economists, the elder brothers of the liquidators.²⁰ The Economists believed that any clash between classes was a political struggle. The Economists therefore recognised as "class struggle" the struggle for a wage increase of five kopeks on the ruble, and refused to recognise a higher, more developed, nationwide *class* struggle, the struggle for *political aims*. The Economists, therefore, recognised the embryonic class struggle but did not recognise it in its developed form. The Economists recognised, in other words, only that part of the class struggle that was more tolerable to the liberal bourgeoisie, they refused to go farther than the liberals, they refused to recognise the higher form of class struggle that is unacceptable to the liberals. By so doing, the Economists became liberal workers' politicians. By so doing, the Economists rejected the Marxist, revolutionary conception of the class struggle.

To continue. It was not enough that the class struggle becomes real, consistent and developed only when it embraces the sphere of politics. In politics, too, it is possible to restrict oneself to minor matters, and it is possible to go deeper, to the very foundations. Marxism recognises a class struggle as fully developed, "nation-wide", *only* if it does not merely embrace politics but takes in the most significant thing in politics—the organisation of state power.

On the other hand, the liberals, when the working-class movement has grown a little stronger, dare not deny the class struggle but attempt to narrow down, to curtail and emasculate the concept of class struggle. Liberals are prepared to recognise the class struggle in the sphere of polit-

ics, too, but on one condition—that the organisation of state power should *not* enter into that sphere. It is not hard to understand which of the bourgeoisie's class interests give rise to the liberal distortion of the concept of class struggle.

V. I. Lenin, *Liberal and Marxist Conception of the Class Struggle*.
Collected Works, Vol. 19,
pp. 121-22

Every class struggle is a political struggle . . . the working-class movement only then grows out of its embryonic state, its infancy, and becomes a *class* movement when it makes the transition to the political struggle.

V. I. Lenin, *Apropos of the "Profession de foi"*
Collected Works, Vol. 4, p. 287

This struggle of the working class against the capitalist class is a struggle against all classes who live by the labour of others, and against all exploitation. It can only end in the passage of political power into the hands of the working class, the transfer of all the land, instruments, factories, machines, and mines to the whole of society for the organisation of socialist production, under which all that is produced by the workers and all improvements in production must benefit the working people themselves.

V. I. Lenin, *Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party*. *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 95-96

The fact that economic interests play a decisive role *does not in the least imply* that the economic (i.e., trade union) struggle is of prime importance; for the most essential, the "decisive" interests of classes can be satisfied *only* by radical *political* changes in general. In particular the fundamental economic interests of the proletariat can be

satisfied only by a political revolution that will replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by the dictatorship of the proletariat.

*V. I. Lenin, What Is To Be Done? .
Collected Works, Vol. 5, pp. 390-91*

The Social-Democratic Party, as the conscious exponent of the working-class movement, aims at the complete liberation of the toiling masses from every form of oppression and exploitation. The achievement of this objective—the abolition of private property in the means of production and the creation of the socialist society—calls for a very high development of the productive forces of capitalism and a high degree of organisation of the working class. The full development of the productive forces in modern bourgeois society, a broad, free, and open class struggle, and the political education, training, and rallying of the masses of the proletariat are inconceivable without political freedom. Therefore it has always been the aim of the class-conscious proletariat to wage a determined struggle for complete political freedom and the democratic revolution.

*V. I. Lenin, The Democratic Tasks
of the Revolutionary Proletariat.
Collected Works, Vol. 8, p. 511*

The Trade Unions and Their Role in the Class Struggle of the Proletariat Against the Bourgeoisie

The workers have discovered that the union is the only way for them to withstand the overpowering pressure of capital.

*K. Marx, Die Kriegsfrage—
Finanzangelegenheiten—Streike.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 9, S. 425*

Combinations and the trade unions growing out of them are of the utmost importance not only as a means of organising the working class for struggle against the bourgeoisie. This importance appears, for instance, in the fact

that even workers of the United States, despite their franchise and their republic, cannot do without them.

*K. Marx's Letter to F. Engels, February 18, 1865.
Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence,
Moscow, 1965, p. 165*

If the Trades Unions are required for the guerilla fights between capital and labour, they are still more important as *organised agencies for superseding the very system of wages-labour and capital rule. . . .*

Apart from their original purposes, they must now learn to act deliberately as organising centres of the working class in the broad interest of its *complete emancipation*. They must aid every social and political movement tending in that direction. Considering themselves and acting as the champions and representatives of the whole working class, they cannot fail to enlist the non-society men into their ranks. They must look carefully after the interests of the worst paid trades. . . . They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions.

*K. Marx, Instructions for the Delegates
of the Provisional General Council.
The General Council of the First International.
1864-1866, Moscow, pp. 348-49*

There is not a word about the organisation of the working class as a class by means of the trade unions. And that is a very essential point, for this is the real class organisation of the proletariat, in which it carries on its daily struggles with capital, in which it trains itself, and which nowadays even amid the worst reaction (as in Paris at present) can simply no longer be smashed. Considering the importance which this organisation has attained also in Germany, it would be absolutely necessary in our opinion to mention it in the programme and if possible to leave open a place for it in the Party organisation.

*F. Engels's Letter to A. Bebel, March 18 [-28], 1875.
Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence,
Moscow, 1965, p. 293*

**The Leading Role of the Proletariat's Political
Party in the Preparation and Carrying Out
of the Socialist Revolution**

The proletariat becomes a force the moment an independent workers' party is constituted, and force has to be reckoned with.

*F. Engels, Die preussische
Militärfrage und die deutsche
Arbeiterpartei. Marx/Engels,
Werke, Bd. 16, S. 68-69*

Everywhere, experience has shown that the best way to free the workers from the domination of the old parties is to found in every country a proletarian party with its own policy, differing clearly from that of other parties because expressing the conditions for the emancipation of the working class. The particulars of such a policy may vary to suit the specific conditions in the various countries, but since the basic labour-capital relations are the same everywhere, with the propertied classes everywhere exercising political power over the exploited classes, the basic points and goals of the proletarian policy are identical, at least in the case of all the Western countries.

*F. Engels, An den Spanischen
Föderalrat der Internationalen
Arbeiterassoziation. Marx/Engels,
Werke, Bd. 17, S. 288*

The unity of the working class already achieved in the economic struggle must serve as a lever in the struggle against the political power of its exploiters.

Since the owners of land and capital are continuously employing their political privileges to safeguard and perpetuate their economic monopoly and subjugate labour, conquest of political power is the supreme duty of the proletariat.

*Marx/Engels, Resolutionen des
allgemeinen Kongresses zu Haag
vom 2. bis 7. September 1872.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 18,
S. 149*

The only way the working class can act as a class against the concerted might of the propertied classes is to constitute itself into a separate political party as a counterweight to all the old parties of the propertied classes. . . .

The constitution of the working class as a political party is essential for the triumph of the social revolution and its ultimate goal, the abolition of classes.

*Marx/Engels, Beschlüsse der
Delegiertenkonferenz der
Internationalen Arbeiterassoziation.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 17, S. 422*

The existence of a Hungarian Social-Democratic workers' party is fresh proof that modern large-scale industry does not take root in any country without revolutionising the old pre-capitalist society and forging a proletariat, as well as a capitalist class, and thus bringing about a class struggle of the two and the emergence of a workers' party bent on overthrowing the bourgeois capitalist world order.

*F. Engels, An die Redaktionen der
"Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik" und der
"Népszava" in Budapest. Marx/Engels,
Werke, Bd. 22, S. 88*

No political party can exist without organisation. The liberal bourgeoisie and the democratic petty bourgeoisie were in a position to find a more or less effective substitute for such organisation by virtue of their social position, their favourable economic condition and the daily personal intercourse of their members, while the proletariat, which lacks such a social position and such financial means, had no other choice but clandestine association. Hence the numerous secret societies in France and Germany, which have been discovered one after the other by the police

since 1849 and prosecuted for secret plotting. Many of them were, indeed, conspiratorial in character and actually formed to overthrow the existing government—for in certain conditions only a coward would avoid conspiratorial methods, just as in other conditions only a fool would employ them. But there were also other societies, formed for a broader and higher purpose, who knew that overthrowing an existing government is no more than an episode in the great struggle ahead and set themselves the task of uniting and preparing the party, whose nucleus they were, for the last and decisive struggle in which, one day, the rule in Europe not only of “tyrants”, “despots” and “usurpers”, but of a far mightier and far more terrible power, that of capital over labour, will be destroyed for ever.

This is true in Germany of the Communist Party, the most advanced party of all. Acting upon the basic propositions of its *Manifesto* (published in 1848) and the series of articles in the *New-York Daily Tribune*, entitled *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, this party never assumed that it could make the revolution aimed at realising its ideas at any moment it pleased. It examined the causes that impelled the revolutionary movements of 1848 and the causes of their failure. Since it traced all the political struggles to social class contradictions, it applied itself to examining the conditions in which a social class can be entitled to, and must, represent the interests of the nation and thereby to dominate it politically.

*F. Engels, Der Kommunisten-Prozess
zu Köln. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 8,
S. 398-99*

When the revolutionary party in a revolutionary development allows affairs to take decisive turns without any say of its own or, if it does interfere, without emerging victorious, one may be fairly certain that for some time it is to

be considered as done for. Witness the insurrections after Thermidor and after 1830*....

*F. Engels's Letter to K. Marx,
December 11, 1851. Marx and Engels,
Selected Correspondence, Moscow,
1965, p. 65*

The 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.

*Marx and Engels, Manifesto
of the Communist Party.
Selected Works, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1962, p. 46*

* Engels is referring to the uprisings of the workers in Paris on April 1 (12th Germinal according to the Republican calendar) and May 20-23, 1795 (Prairial 1-4) against the reactionary regime of the Thermidorians set up in 1794, and the proletarian risings in Lyons in 1831 and 1834 after the July revolution in France in 1830.—Ed.

The *purpose* of the Communist League is to employ all means of propaganda and political struggle to destroy the old society—and *to overthrow the bourgeoisie*—to liberate the proletariat spiritually, politically and economically, and to carry through a communist revolution. In the various stages of the proletariat's struggle the League always represents the interests of the movement as a whole; it strives always to unite and organise all the revolutionary forces of the proletariat around itself; it is clandestine and shall not be dissolved until the proletarian revolution achieves its ultimate goal.

Statuten des Kommunistischen Bundes. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 7, S. 565

Nothing but an international bond of the working classes can ever ensure their definitive triumph. This want has given birth to the International Working-Men's Association. That Association has not been hatched by a sect or a theory. It is the spontaneous growth of the proletarian movement, which itself is the offspring of the natural and irrepressible tendencies of modern society.

K. Marx, The Fourth Annual Report of the General Council of the I.W.M.A. The General Council of the First International. 1866-1868, Moscow, p. 329

As the stage of development reached by different sections of workers in the same country and by the working class in different countries necessarily varies very much, the actual movement necessarily expresses itself in very diverse theoretical forms.

The community of action which the International Working Men's Association called into being, the exchange of ideas by means of the different organs of the sections in all countries, and finally the direct discussions at

the General Congresses will by degrees create for the general workers' movement its common theoretical programme also.

*K. Marx's Letter to F. Engels,
March 5, 1869. Marx and Engels,
Selected Correspondence, Moscow,
1965, p. 220*

The proletariat must strive to form independent political workers' parties, the main aim of which must be the capture of political power by the proletariat for the purpose of organising socialist society.

*V. I. Lenin, A Protest by Russian
Social-Democrats. Collected Works,
Vol. 4, p. 177*

In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation. Disunited by the rule of anarchic competition in the bourgeois world, ground down by forced labour for capital, constantly thrust back to the "lower depths" of utter destitution, savagery, and degeneration, the proletariat can, and inevitably will, become an invincible force only through its ideological unification on the principles of Marxism being reinforced by the material unity of organisation, which welds millions of toilers into an army of the working class. Neither the senile rule of the Russian autocracy nor the senescent rule of international capital will be able to withstand this army. It will more and more firmly close its ranks, in spite of all zigzags and backward steps, in spite of the opportunist phrasemongering of the Girondists of present-day Social-Democracy, in spite of the self-satisfied exaltation of the retrograde circle spirit, and in spite of the tinsel and fuss of *intellectualist* anarchism.

*V. I. Lenin, One Step Forward,
Two Steps Back. Collected Works,
Vol. 7, p. 415*

The lesson our revolution teaches is that only parties which have a definite class backing are strong and able to survive, whatever turn events may take. Open political struggle compels parties to establish closer relations with the masses, for without such ties parties are naught.

V. I. Lenin, How the Socialist-Revolutionaries Sum Up the Revolution and How the Revolution Has Summed Them Up. Collected Works, Vol. 15, p. 342

Without a party of iron that has been tempered in the struggle, a party enjoying the confidence of all honest people in the class in question, a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses, such a struggle cannot be waged successfully.

V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder. Collected Works, Vol. 31, pp. 44-45

Aiming at making the proletariat capable of fulfilling its great historic mission, international Social-Democracy organises the proletariat in an independent political party opposed to all the bourgeois parties, guides all the manifestations of its class struggle, reveals to it the irreconcilable antagonism between the interests of the exploiters and those of the exploited, and explains to the proletariat the historical significance of and the necessary conditions for the impending social revolution. At the same time it reveals to all the other toiling and exploited masses the hopelessness of their position in capitalist society and the need for a social revolution if they are to free themselves from the yoke of capital. The Social-Democratic Party, the party of the working class, calls upon all sections of the toiling and exploited population to join its ranks insofar as they adopt the standpoint of the proletariat.

V. I. Lenin, Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme. Collected Works, Vol. 24, p. 468

To be able to seek, find and correctly determine the specific path or the particular turn of events that will lead the masses to the real, decisive and final revolutionary struggle—such is the main objective of communism in Western Europe and in America today.

V. I. Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" Communism—
an Infantile Disorder. *Collected Works*,
Vol. 31, p. 97

The larger the number of workers who unite in the workers' Social-Democratic Party, the stronger will they be, the sooner will they be able to achieve the complete emancipation of the working class from all oppression, from all wage-labour, from all toil for the benefit of the bourgeoisie.

V. I. Lenin, *To the Rural Poor*.
Collected Works, Vol. 6, p. 408

The more the popular movement spreads, the more clearly will the true nature of the different classes stand revealed and the more pressing will the Party's task be in leading the class, in becoming its organiser, instead of dragging at the tail-end of events. The more the revolutionary independent activity of all kinds develops everywhere, the more obvious will be the hollowness and inanity of the *Rabocheye Dyelo*²¹ catchwords, so eagerly taken up by all ranters, about independent activity in general, the more significant will become the meaning of Social-Democratic independent activity, and the greater will be the demands which events make on our revolutionary initiative. The wider the new streams of the social movement become, the greater becomes the importance of a strong Social-Democratic organisation capable of creating new channels for these streams. The more the democratic propaganda and agitation conducted independently of us works to our advantage, the greater becomes the importance of an organised Social-Democratic leadership to

safeguard the independence of the working class from the bourgeois democrats.

V. I. Lenin, New Tasks and New Forces. Collected Works, Vol. 8, pp. 216-17

Social-Democracy is the combination of the working-class movement and socialism. Its task is not to serve the working-class movement passively at each of its separate stages, but to represent the interests of the movement as a whole, to point out to this movement its ultimate aim and its political tasks, and to safeguard its political and ideological independence. Isolated from Social-Democracy, the working-class movement becomes petty and inevitably becomes bourgeois. In waging only the economic struggle, the working class loses its political independence; it becomes the tail of other parties and betrays the great principle: "The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves".

V. I. Lenin, The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement. Collected Works, Vol. 4, p. 368

The class character of the Social-Democratic movement must not be expressed in the restriction of our tasks to the direct and immediate needs of the "labour movement pure and simple". It must be expressed in our leadership of every aspect and every manifestation of the great struggle for liberation that is being waged by the proletariat, the only truly revolutionary class in modern society. Social-Democracy must constantly and unswervingly spread the influence of the labour movement to all spheres of the social and political life of contemporary society. It must lead, not only the economic, but also the political, struggle of the proletariat. It must never for a moment lose sight of our ultimate goal, but always carry on propaganda for the proletarian ideology—the theory of scientific socialism, viz., Marxism—guard it against distortion, and

develop it further. We must untiringly combat any and every bourgeois ideology, regardless of the fashionable and striking garb in which it may drape itself.

*V. I. Lenin, Political Agitation
and "The Class Point of View".
Collected Works, Vol. 5, p. 342*

The Party's activity must consist in promoting the workers' class struggle. The Party's task is not to concoct some fashionable means of helping the workers, but to join up with the workers' movement, to bring light into it, to assist the workers in the struggle they themselves have already begun to wage. The Party's task is to uphold the interests of the workers and to represent those of the entire working-class movement.

*V. I. Lenin, Draft and Explanation
of a Programme for the Social-
Democratic Party. Collected Works,
Vol. 2, p. 112*

Making the triumph of socialism its ultimate aim, being convinced that political freedom is necessary to achieve that aim, and bearing in mind the circumstance that this freedom at the present time cannot be achieved in a peaceful way, without open mass actions, Social-Democracy is obliged now, as before, to put democratic and revolutionary tasks on the immediate order of the day, without for a moment, of course, abandoning either propaganda of socialism or defence of proletarian class interests in the narrow sense of the word. Representing as it does the most advanced, most revolutionary class in modern society—the proletariat, which in the Russian revolution has proved by deeds its fitness for the role of leader in the mass struggle—Social-Democracy is obliged to do everything it possibly can to retain that role for the proletariat in the approaching new phase of the revolutionary struggle, a phase characterised more than ever before by a preponderance of political consciousness over spontaneity. To

achieve that end *Social-Democracy must strive with all its might for hegemony over the democratic masses and for developing revolutionary energy among them.*

*V. I. Lenin, The Third Duma.
Collected Works, Vol. 13,
pp. 127-28*

In a period when the class struggle has become accentuated to the point of civil war, Social-Democrats must make it their duty not only to participate but also to play the leading role in *this civil war*. The Social-Democrats must train and prepare their organisations to be really able to act as a *belligerent side* which does not miss a single opportunity of inflicting damage on the enemy's forces.

This is a difficult task, there is no denying. It cannot be accomplished at once. Just as the whole people are being retrained and are learning to fight in the course of the civil war, so our organisations must be trained, must be reconstructed in conformity with the lessons of experience to be equal to this task.

*V. I. Lenin, Guerilla Warfare.
Collected Works, Vol. 11,
p. 223*

The Attitude of the Political Party of the Proletariat Towards Other Parties

We are agreed on this: that the proletariat cannot conquer its political domination, the only door to the new society, without violent revolution. For the proletariat to be strong enough to win on the decisive day it must—and this Marx and I have been arguing ever since 1847—form a separate party distinct from all others and opposed to them, a conscious class party.

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 support other parties for short periods in securing measures which either are directly

advantageous to the proletariat or represent progress by way of economic development or political freedom. Whoever wages a real struggle in Germany for the abolition of primogeniture and other feudal survivals, of the bureaucracy, protective tariffs, the Anti-Socialist Law, and of restrictions on the right of assembly and of organisation will be getting my support. If our German progressive party or your Danish *Venstre* were real radical-bourgeois parties and did not simply consist of wretched windbags who take to the bushes at the first threat of a Bismarck or Estrup, I would by no means be *absolutely* opposed to any and every momentary collaboration with them for definite purposes. When our deputies cast their votes for a proposal which was submitted by the other side—and that they have to do often enough—this is accounted collaboration. But I am for this only if the advantage to us is direct or if the historical development of the country in the direction of the economic and political revolution is indisputable and worth while; and provided that the proletarian class character of the Party is not jeopardised thereby. For me this is the absolute limit. You find this policy set forth as early as 1847 in the *Communist Manifesto*; we pursued it in 1848, in the International, everywhere.

*F. Engels's Letter to G. Trier,
December 18, 1889. Marx and Engels,
Selected Correspondence, Moscow, 1965, p. 409*

Victory of the current revolutionary movement will only make us stronger and produce a more favourable climate for us. It would therefore be a most deplorable mistake for us to abstain, or to confine our treatment of the related parties to purely negative criticism. A time may come when we shall have to work hand in hand with them in a positive way. Who knows when it will come?

Naturally, it is not our business to directly prepare a movement that is not exactly the movement of the class

we represent. If the radicals and republicans think the time has come to go into the streets, let them give their impatience free rein. As far as we are concerned, we have been deluded too often by the big promises of these gentlemen to fall into their trap again. Their proclamations and oaths should not affect us. While pledged to support every *genuine* popular movement, we are equally pledged not to sacrifice the only just burgeoning kernel of our proletarian party and prevent the proletariat from being decimated in fruitless local uprisings.

If, on the other hand, the movement is really national, our people will take a hand in it without having to be urged; our participation in such a movement can be taken for granted. However, it has got to be clear, and we must say so openly, that we are taking part in it as an *independent party* momentarily in alliance with the radicals and republicans, but entirely distinct from them; that we have no illusions about the outcome of the struggle in the event of victory; that this outcome is far removed from what we want, that it is for us no more than a phase, a new operational basis for further gains; that our ways will part the very day victory is attained; that from this day on we shall act as the *new opposition* of the new government—not a reactionary, but a progressive opposition, the opposition of the extreme Left, pushing on for new gains across the terrain already *conquered*.

F. Engels, Die künftige italienische Revolution und die Sozialistische Partei. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 22, S. 441-42

I flatly deny that the socialist workers' party of any country is charged with the task of taking into its fold, in addition to the rural proletarians and the small peasants, also the middle and big peasants and perhaps even the tenants of big estates, the capitalist cattle breeders and the other capitalist exploiters of the national soil. To all of them the feudality of landownership may appear to be a

common foe. On certain questions we may make common cause with them and be able to fight side by side with them for definite aims. We can use in our Party individuals from every class of society, but have no use whatever for any groups representing capitalist, middle-bourgeois or middle-peasant interests.

F. Engels, The Peasant Question in France and Germany. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, p. 429

The workers' party will never act as the mere tail of the bourgeois, but as an entirely distinct and independent party. It will remind the bourgeoisie at every opportunity that the class interests of the workers are the very opposite of those of the capitalists and that the workers are aware of it. It will maintain and continue to develop its own organisation in relation to the party organisation of the bourgeoisie and will deal with the latter only as one force with another. It will thus secure for itself a position that commands respect, clarify the individual workers as regards their class interests, and stand prepared for action when the next of the revolutionary storms breaks out, such storms being as regular now as economic crises and equinoctial storms.

F. Engels, Die preussische Militärfrage und die deutsche Arbeiterpartei. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 16, S. 77

The conclusion is clear: to reject compromises "on principle", to reject the permissibility of compromises in general, no matter of what kind, is childishness, which it is difficult even to consider seriously. A political leader who desires to be useful to the revolutionary proletariat must be able to distinguish *concrete* cases of compromises that are inexcusable and are an expression of opportunism and *treachery*; he must direct all the force of criticism, the full intensity of merciless exposure and relentless war, against

these concrete compromises, and not allow the past masters of "practical" socialism and the parliamentary Jesuits to dodge and wriggle out of responsibility by means of disquisitions on "compromises in general". It is in this way that the "leaders" of the British trade unions, as well as of the Fabian society and the "Independent" Labour Party,²² dodge responsibility *for the treachery they have perpetrated*, for having made *a compromise* that is really tantamount to the worst kind of opportunism, treachery and betrayal.

There are different kinds of compromises. One must be able to analyse the situation and the concrete conditions of each compromise, or of each variety of compromise. One must learn to distinguish between a man who has given up his money and fire-arms to bandits so as to lessen the evil they can do and to facilitate their capture and execution, and a man who gives his money and fire-arms to bandits so as to share in the loot. In politics this is by no means always as elementary as it is in this childishly simple example. However, anyone who is out to think up for the workers some kind of recipe that will provide them with cut-and-dried solutions for all contingencies, or promises that the policy of the revolutionary proletariat will never come up against difficult or complex situations, is simply a charlatan.

V. I. Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" Communism—
an Infantile Disorder. *Collected Works*,
Vol. 31, pp. 37-38

Social-Democracy, as the party of the international proletariat, the party which has set itself world-wide socialist aims, cannot, of course, identify itself with any epoch of any bourgeois revolution, nor can it tie its destiny to this or that outcome of this or that bourgeois revolution. Whatever the outcome, we must remain an independent, purely proletarian party, which steadfastly leads the working masses to their great socialist goal. We cannot, therefore, undertake to guarantee that any of the gains of the bourgeois revolution will be permanent, because imperma-

nence and inherent contradiction are immanent features of *all* the gains of the bourgeois revolution as such.

V. I. Lenin, *The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1905-07*.
Collected Works, Vol. 13, p. 426

The Possibility of Victorious Socialist Revolution in One Country

The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in different countries. It cannot be otherwise under commodity production. From this it follows irrefutably that socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously *in all* countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois.

V. I. Lenin, *The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 79

A United States of the World (not of Europe alone) is the state form of the unification and freedom of nations which we associate with socialism—until the time when the complete victory of communism brings about the total disappearance of the state, including the democratic. As a separate slogan, however, the slogan of a United States of the World would hardly be a correct one, first, because it merges with socialism; second, because it may be wrongly interpreted to mean that the victory of socialism in a single country is impossible, and it may also create misconceptions as to the relations of such a country to the others.

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.

V. I. Lenin, *On the Slogan for a United States of Europe*. *Collected Works, Vol. 21, p. 342*

The Growth of Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution into Socialist Revolution

In our country (Germany.—*Ed.*) too the first and direct result of the revolution can and *must* in *form* be nothing but the *bourgeois* republic. But here this is only a brief transitional period as we fortunately do not have a purely republican bourgeois party. The bourgeois republic, headed perhaps by the Progressive Party, will serve us in the beginning to *win over the great masses of the workers to revolutionary socialism*. This will be done in one or two years and will bring about the utter exhaustion and self-destruction, with the exception of ourselves, of all intermediate parties that may still exist. Only then can we successfully take over.

The big mistake the Germans make is to think that the revolution is something that can be made overnight. As a matter of fact it is a process of development of the masses that takes several years even under conditions that favour its acceleration. Any revolution brought about overnight only removed a reaction that was hopeless at the very start (1830) or led directly to the opposite of what had been aspired to (1848, France).

F. Engels's Letter to Bernstein, August 27, 1883.
Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence,
Moscow, 1965, p. 364

The relation of the revolutionary workers' party to the petty-bourgeois democrats is this: it marches together with them against the faction which it aims at overthrowing, it opposes them in everything whereby they seek to consolidate their position in their own interests.

Far from desiring to revolutionise all society for the revolutionary proletarians, the democratic petty bourgeois strive for a change in social conditions by means of which existing society will be made as tolerable and comfortable as possible for them. . . .

But these demands can in nowise suffice for the party of the proletariat. While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible, and with the achievement, at most, of the above demands, it is our interest and 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....

It is self-evident that in the impending bloody conflicts, as in all earlier ones, it is the workers who, in the main, will have to win the victory by their courage, determination and self-sacrifice. As previously, so also in this struggle, the mass of the petty bourgeois will as long as possible remain hesitant, undecided and inactive, and then, as soon as the issue has been decided, will seize the victory for themselves, will call upon the workers to maintain tranquillity and return to their work, will guard against so-called excesses and bar the proletariat from the fruits of victory. It is not in the power of the workers to prevent the petty-bourgeois democrats from doing this, but it is in their power to make it difficult for them to gain the upper hand as against the armed proletariat, and to dictate such conditions to them that the rule of the bourgeois democrats will from the outset bear within it the seeds of their downfall, and that their subsequent extrusion by the rule of the proletariat will be considerably facilitated. Above all things, the workers must counteract, as much as is at all possible, during the conflict and immediately after the struggle, the bourgeois endeavours to allay the storm,

and must compel the democrats to carry out their present terrorist phrases. Their actions must be so aimed as to prevent the direct revolutionary excitement from being suppressed again immediately after the victory. On the contrary, they must keep it alive as long as possible. Far from opposing so-called excesses, instances of popular revenge against hated individuals or public buildings that are associated only with hateful recollections, such instances must not only be tolerated but the leadership of them taken in hand. During the struggle and after the struggle, the workers must, at every opportunity, put forward their own demands alongside of the demands of the bourgeois democrats. They must demand guarantees for the workers as soon as the democratic bourgeois set about taking over the government. If necessary they must obtain these guarantees by force and in general they must see to it that the new rulers pledge themselves to all possible concessions and promises—the surest way to compromise them. In general, they must in every way restrain as far as possible the intoxication of victory and the enthusiasm for the new state of things, which make their appearance after every victorious street battle, by a calm and dispassionate estimate of the situation and by unconcealed mistrust in the new government. Alongside of the new official governments they must establish simultaneously their own revolutionary workers' governments, whether in the form of municipal committees and municipal councils or in the form of workers' clubs or workers' committees, so that the bourgeois-democratic governments not only immediately lose the support of the workers but from the outset see themselves supervised and threatened by authorities which are backed by the whole mass of the workers. In a word, from the first moment of victory, mistrust must be directed no longer against the conquered reactionary party, but against the workers' previous allies, against the party that wishes to exploit the common victory for itself alone....

But in order to be able energetically and threateningly to oppose this party, whose treachery to the workers will

begin from the first hour of victory, the workers must be armed and organised. The arming of the whole proletariat with rifles, muskets, cannon and munitions must be put through at once, the revival of the old Citizens' Guard directed against the workers must be resisted. However, where the latter is not feasible the workers must attempt to organise themselves independently as a proletarian guard with commanders elected by themselves and with a general staff of their own choosing, and to put themselves at the command not of the state authority but of the revolutionary community councils which the workers will have managed to get adopted. Where workers are employed at the expense of the state they must see that they are armed and organised in a separate corps with commanders of their own choosing or as part of the proletarian guard. Arms and ammunition must not be surrendered on any pretext; any attempt at disarming must be frustrated, if necessary by force. Destruction of the influence of the bourgeois democrats upon the workers, immediate independent and armed organisation of the workers and the enforcement of conditions as difficult and compromising as possible upon the inevitable momentary rule of the bourgeois democracy—these are the main points which the proletariat and hence the League must keep in view during and after the impending insurrection. . . .

The immediate consequence of the overthrow of the existing governments will be the election of a national representative assembly. Here the proletariat must see to it:

I. That no groups of workers are barred on any pretext or by any kind of trickery on the part of local authorities or government commissioners.

II. That everywhere workers' candidates are put up alongside of the bourgeois-democratic candidates, that they should consist as far as possible of members of the League, and that their election is promoted by all possible means. Even where there is no prospect whatsoever of their being elected, the workers must put up their own candidates in

order to preserve their independence, to count their forces and to bring before the public their revolutionary attitude and party standpoint. In this connection they must not allow themselves to be seduced by such arguments of the democrats as, for example, that by so doing they are splitting the democratic party and making it possible for the reactionaries to win. The ultimate intention of all such phrases is to dupe the proletariat. The advance which the proletarian party is bound to make by such independent action is infinitely more important than the disadvantage that might be incurred by the presence of a few reactionaries in the representative body. If the democracy from the outset comes out resolutely and terroristically against the reaction, the influence of the latter in the elections will be destroyed in advance. . . .

We have seen how the democrats will come to power with the next movement, how they will be compelled to propose more or less socialistic measures. It will be asked what measures the workers ought to propose in reply. At the beginning of the movement, of course, the workers cannot yet propose any directly communistic measures. But they can:

1. Compel the democrats to interfere in as many spheres as possible of the hitherto existing social order, to disturb its regular course and to compromise themselves as well as to concentrate the utmost possible productive forces, means of transport, factories, railways, etc., in the hands of the state;

2. They must drive the proposals of the democrats, who in any case will not act in a revolutionary but in a merely reformist manner, to the extreme and transform them into direct attacks upon private property; thus, for example, if the petty bourgeois propose purchase of the railways and factories, the workers must demand that these railways and factories shall be simply confiscated by the state without compensation as being the property of reactionaries. If the democrats propose proportional taxes, the workers must demand progressive taxes; if the democrats them-

selves put forward a moderately progressive tax, the workers must insist on a tax with rates that rise so steeply that big capital will be ruined by it; if the democrats demand the regulation of state debts, the workers must demand state bankruptcy. Thus, the demands of the workers must everywhere be governed by the concessions and measures of the democrats.

If the German workers are not able to attain power and achieve their own class interests without completely going through a lengthy revolutionary development, they at least know for a certainty this time that the first act of this approaching revolutionary drama will coincide with the direct victory of their own class in France and will be very much accelerated by it.

But they themselves must do the utmost for their final victory by clarifying their minds as to what their class interests are, by taking up their position as an independent party as soon as possible and by not allowing themselves to be seduced for a single moment by the hypocritical phrases of the democratic petty bourgeois into refraining from the independent organisation of the party of the proletariat. Their battle cry must be: The Revolution in Permanence.

*K. Marx and F. Engels, Address
of the Central Committee to the Communist
League. Marx and Engels,
Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962,
pp. 109-14, 116-17*

Russia is a peasant country, one of the most backward of European countries. Socialism *cannot* triumph there *directly* and *immediately*. But the peasant character of the country, the vast reserve of land in the hands of the nobility, *may*, to judge from the experience of 1905, give tremendous sweep to the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia and *may* make our revolution the *prologue* to the world socialist revolution, a *step* toward it.

*V. I. Lenin, Farewell Letter to the Swiss
Workers. Collected Works,
Vol. 23, p. 371*

How should the class-conscious worker, the socialist, regard the present-day peasant movement? He must support this movement, help the peasants in the most energetic fashion, help them throw off completely both the rule of the bureaucracy and that of the landlords. At the same time, however, he should explain to the peasants that it is not enough to overthrow the rule of the bureaucracy and the landlords. When they overthrow that rule, they must at the same time prepare for the abolition of the rule of capital, the rule of the bourgeoisie, and for that purpose a doctrine that is fully socialist, i.e., Marxist, should be immediately disseminated, the rural proletarians should be united, welded together, and organised for the struggle against the peasant bourgeoisie and the entire Russian bourgeoisie. Can a class-conscious worker forget the democratic struggle for the sake of the socialist struggle, or forget the latter for the sake of the former? No, a class-conscious worker calls himself a Social-Democrat for the reason that he understands the relation between the two struggles. He knows that there is no other road to socialism save the road through democracy, through political liberty. He therefore strives to achieve democratism completely and consistently in order to attain the ultimate goal—socialism. Why are the conditions for the democratic struggle not the same as those for the socialist struggle? Because the workers will certainly have different allies in each of those two struggles. The democratic struggle is waged by the workers together with a section of the bourgeoisie, especially the petty bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the socialist struggle is waged by the workers against the whole of the bourgeoisie. The struggle against the bureaucrat and the landlord can and must be waged together with all the peasants, even the well-to-do and the middle peasants. On the other hand, it is only together with the rural proletariat that the struggle against the bourgeoisie, and therefore against the well-to-do peasants too, can be properly waged.

*V. I. Lenin, Petty-Bourgeois and Proletarian Socialism.
Collected Works, Vol. 9, pp. 442-43*

But since it is a question of a democratic revolution, we are faced with two forces: the autocracy and the revolutionary people, viz., the proletariat as the chief combatant, and the peasantry and all the different petty-bourgeois elements. The interests of the proletariat do not coincide with those of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. Social-Democracy has always stressed the fact that these class differences in the midst of a revolutionary people are unavoidable. In a hard-fought struggle, the object of the struggle may change from hand to hand. A revolutionary people strives for the sovereignty of the people; all the reactionary elements defend the sovereignty of the tsar. A successful revolution, therefore, cannot be anything but the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, whose interests, equally *opposed to the sovereignty of the tsar*, coincide. . . .

If, however, the autocratic government is really overthrown, it will have to be replaced by another. This other can be only a provisional revolutionary government. It can base itself for support only on the revolutionary people—on the proletariat and the peasantry.

V. I. Lenin, *The Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.*
Collected Works, Vol. 8, pp. 384-85

The only force capable of gaining "a decisive victory over tsarism", is the *people*, i.e., the proletariat and the peasantry, if we take the main, big forces, and distribute the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie (also part of "the people") between the two. "The revolution's decisive victory over tsarism" means the establishment of the *revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry*. Our new-*Iskra* group²³ cannot escape from this conclusion, which *Vperyod*²⁴ indicated long ago. No other force is capable of gaining a decisive victory over tsarism.

And such a victory will be precisely a dictatorship, i.e., it must inevitably rely on military force, on the arming

of the masses, on an insurrection, and not on institutions of one kind or another established in a "lawful" or "peaceful" way. It can be only a dictatorship, for realisation of the changes urgently and absolutely indispensable to the proletariat and the peasantry will evoke desperate resistance from the landlords, the big bourgeoisie, and tsarism. Without a dictatorship it is impossible to break down that resistance and repel counter-revolutionary attempts. But of course it will be a democratic, not a socialist dictatorship. It will be unable (without a series of intermediary stages of revolutionary development) to affect the foundations of capitalism. At best, it may bring about a radical redistribution of landed property in favour of the peasantry, establish consistent and full democracy, including the formation of a republic, eradicate all the oppressive features of Asiatic bondage, not only in rural but also in factory life, lay the foundation for a thorough improvement in the conditions of the workers and for a rise in their standard of living. . . . Such a victory will not yet by any means transform our bourgeois revolution into a socialist revolution; the democratic revolution will not immediately overstep the bounds of bourgeois social and economic relationships; nevertheless, the significance of such a victory for the future development of Russia and of the whole world will be immense. Nothing will raise the revolutionary energy of the world proletariat so much, nothing will shorten the path leading to its complete victory to such an extent, as this decisive victory of the revolution that has now started in Russia.

*V. I. Lenin, Two Tactics of Social-Democracy
in the Democratic Revolution. Collected Works,
Vol. 9, pp. 56-57*

Only the proletariat can be a consistent fighter for democracy. It can become a victorious fighter for democracy only if the peasant masses join its revolutionary struggle. If the proletariat is not strong enough for this the bourgeoisie will be at the head of the democratic revolution and will impart an inconsistent and self-seeking nature to it.

Nothing but a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry can prevent this.

*V. I. Lenin, Two Tactics of Social-Democracy
in the Democratic Revolution. Collected Works,
Vol. 9, p. 60*

If, in our fight for a republic and democracy, we could not rely upon the peasantry as well as upon the proletariat, the prospect of our "retaining power" would be hopeless. But if it is not hopeless, if the "revolution's decisive victory over tsarism" opens up such a possibility, then we must indicate it, call actively for its transformation into reality, and issue practical slogans not only *for the contingency* of the revolution being brought into Europe, but also *for the purpose* of taking it there. The reference made by tailist Social-Democrats to the "limited historical scope of the Russian revolution" merely serves to cover up their limited understanding of the aims of this democratic revolution, and of the proletariat's leading role in it!

One of the objections raised to the slogan of "the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" is that dictatorship presupposes a "single will" (*Iskra* No. 95), and that there can be no single will of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie. This objection is unsound, for it is based on an abstract, "metaphysical" interpretation of the term "single will". There may be a single will in one respect and not in another. The absence of unity on questions of socialism and in the struggle for socialism does not preclude singleness of will on questions of democracy and in the struggle for a republic. To forget this would be tantamount to forgetting the logical and historical difference between a democratic revolution and a socialist revolution. To forget this would be tantamount to forgetting the character of the democratic revolution as one *of the whole people*: if it is "of the whole people", that means that there is "singleness of will" precisely in so far as this revolution meets the needs and requirements of the whole people. Beyond the bounds of democratism

there can be no question of the proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie having a single will. Class struggle between them is inevitable, but it is in a democratic republic that this struggle will be the most thoroughgoing and widespread struggle of the people *for socialism*. Like everything else in the world, the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has a past and a future. Its past is autocracy, serfdom, monarchy, and privilege. In the struggle against this past, in the struggle against counter-revolution, a "single will" of the proletariat and the peasantry is possible, for here there is unity of interests.

Its future is the struggle against private property, the struggle of the wage-worker against the employer, the struggle for socialism. Here singleness of will is impossible. Here the path before us lies not from autocracy to a republic, but from a petty-bourgeois democratic republic to socialism.

Of course, in actual historical circumstances, the elements of the past become interwoven with those of the future; the two paths cross. Wage-labour with its struggle against private property exists under the autocracy as well; it arises even under serfdom. But this does not in the least prevent us from logically and historically distinguishing between the major stages of development. We all contrapose bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution; we all insist on the absolute necessity of strictly distinguishing between them; however, can it be denied that in the course of history individual, *particular* elements of the two revolutions become interwoven? Has the period of democratic revolutions in Europe not been familiar with a number of socialist movements and attempts to establish socialism? And will not the future socialist revolution in Europe still have to complete a great deal left undone in the field of democratism?

A Social-Democrat must never for a moment forget that the proletariat will inevitably have to wage a class struggle for socialism even against the most democratic and repub-

lican bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. This is beyond doubt. Hence, the absolute necessity of a separate, independent, strictly class party of Social-Democracy. Hence, the temporary nature of our tactics of "striking a joint blow" with the bourgeoisie and the duty of keeping a strict watch "over our ally, as over an enemy", etc. All this also leaves no room for doubt. However, it would be ridiculous and reactionary to deduce from this that we must forget, ignore, or neglect tasks which, although transient and temporary, are vital at the present time. The struggle against the autocracy is a temporary and transient task for socialists, but to ignore or neglect this task in any way amounts to betrayal of socialism and service to reaction. The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry is unquestionably only a transient, temporary socialist aim, but to ignore this aim in the period of a democratic revolution would be downright reactionary.... The time will come when the struggle against the Russian autocracy will end, and the period of democratic revolution will have passed in Russia; it will then be ridiculous even to speak of "singleness of will" of the proletariat and the peasantry, about a democratic dictatorship, etc. When that time comes we shall deal directly with the question of the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat and speak of it in greater detail. At present the party of the advanced class cannot but strive most energetically for the democratic revolution's decisive victory over tsarism. And a decisive victory means nothing else than the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

V. I. Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution, Collected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 83-86

The victory of the bourgeois revolution is impossible in our country *as the victory of the bourgeoisie*. This sounds paradoxical, but it is a fact. The preponderance of the

peasant population, its terrible oppression by the semi-feudal big landowning system, the strength and class-consciousness of the proletariat already organised in a socialist party—all these circumstances impart to *our* bourgeois revolution a *specific* character. This peculiarity does not eliminate the bourgeois character of the revolution.... It only determines the counter-revolutionary character of our bourgeoisie and the necessity of a dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry for victory *in such* a revolution. For a “coalition of the proletariat and the peasantry”, winning *victory* in a bourgeois revolution, happens to be nothing else than the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

*V. I. Lenin, The Assessment of the Russian Revolution.
Collected Works, Vol. 15, pp. 56-57*

The degree of Russia's economic development (an objective condition), and the degree of class-consciousness and organisation of the broad masses of the proletariat (a subjective condition inseparably bound up with the objective condition) make the immediate and complete emancipation of the working class impossible. Only the most ignorant people can close their eyes to the bourgeois nature of the democratic revolution which is now taking place; only the most naïve optimists can forget how little as yet the masses of the workers are informed about the aims of socialism and the methods of achieving it. We are all convinced that the emancipation of the working classes must be won by the working classes themselves; a socialist revolution is out of the question unless the masses become class-conscious and organised, trained, and educated in an open class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie. Replying to the anarchists' objections that we are putting off the socialist revolution, we say: we are not putting it off, but are taking the first step towards it in the only possible way, along the only correct path, namely, the path of a democratic republic. 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. If any workers ask us at the appropriate moment why we should not go ahead and carry out our maximum programme we shall answer by pointing out how far from socialism the masses of the democratically-minded people still are, how undeveloped class antagonisms still are, and how unorganised the proletarians still are. Organise hundreds of thousands of workers all over Russia; get the millions to sympathise with our programme! Try to do this without confining yourselves to high-sounding but hollow anarchist phrases—and you will see at once that achievement of this organisation and the spread of this socialist enlightenment depend on the fullest possible achievement of democratic transformations.

V. I. Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution. Collected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 28-29

From the democratic revolution we shall at once, and precisely in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organised proletariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop half-way, if we do not now and immediately promise all sorts of "socialisation", that is because we know the actual conditions for that task to be accomplished, and we do not gloss over the new class struggle burgeoning within the peasantry, but reveal that struggle.

At first we support the peasantry *en masse* against the landlords, support it to the hilt and with all means, including confiscation, and then (it would be better to say, at the same time) we support the proletariat against the peasantry *en masse*. To try to calculate *now* what the combination of forces will be within the peasantry "on the day after" the revolution (the democratic revolution) is empty utopianism. Without falling into adventurism or going

against our conscience in matters of science, without striving for cheap popularity we can and do assert *only one thing*: we shall bend every effort to help the entire peasantry achieve the democratic revolution, *in order thereby to make it easier* for us, the party of the proletariat, to pass on as quickly as possible to the new and higher task—the socialist revolution. We promise no harmony, no equalitarianism or “socialisation” following the victory of the *present* peasant uprising, on the contrary, we “promise” a new struggle, new inequality, the new revolution we are striving for. Our doctrine is less “sweet” than the legends of the Socialist-Revolutionaries,²⁵ but let those who want *to be fed* solely on sweets join the Socialist-Revolutionaries; we shall say to such people: good riddance.

V. I. Lenin, *Social-Democracy's Attitude Towards the Peasant Movement*.
Collected Works, Vol. 9, pp. 236-37

The proletariat must carry the democratic revolution to completion, allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush the autocracy's resistance by force and paralyse the bourgeoisie's instability. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population, so as to crush the bourgeoisie's resistance by force and paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie.

V. I. Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*. *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 100

It is the alliance between the proletariat and the peasants *in general* that reveals the bourgeois character of the revolution, for the peasants in general are small producers who exist on the basis of commodity production. Further, the Bolsheviks then added, the proletariat will win over *the entire semi-proletariat* (all the working and exploited people), will neutralise the middle peasants and *overthrow*

the bourgeoisie; this will be a socialist revolution, as distinct from a bourgeois-democratic revolution.

V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky. Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 294-95

Things have turned out just as we said they would. The course taken by the revolution has confirmed the correctness of our reasoning. *First*, with the "whole" of the peasants against the monarchy, against the landowners, against medievalism (and to that extent the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). *Then*, with the poor peasants, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited, *against capitalism*, including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers, and to that extent the revolution becomes a *socialist* one. To attempt to raise an artificial Chinese Wall between the first and second, to separate them *by anything else* than the degree of preparedness of the proletariat and the degree of its unity with the poor peasants, means to distort Marxism dreadfully, to vulgarise it, to substitute liberalism in its place. It means smuggling in a reactionary defence of the bourgeoisie against the socialist proletariat by means of quasi-scientific references to the progressive character of the bourgeoisie in comparison with medievalism.

V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky. Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 300

We solved the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in passing, as a "by-product" of our main and genuinely *proletarian*-revolutionary, socialist activities. We have always said that reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle. We said—and proved it by deeds—that bourgeois-democratic reforms are a by-product of the proletarian, i.e., of the socialist revolution....

The Soviet system is one of the most vivid proofs, or manifestations, of how the one revolution develops into the other. The Soviet system provides the maximum of democracy for the workers and peasants; at the same time, it marks a break with *bourgeois* democracy and the rise of a *new*, epoch-making *type* of democracy, namely, proletarian democracy, or the dictatorship of the proletariat.

V. I. Lenin, Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution. Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 54

The Common Objective Laws Governing the Development of the Socialist Revolutions and Their Specific Features in Different Countries

Communism does not go against human nature, against reason, against the heart; neither is it a theory that conflicts with reality, nor one rooted in fantasy.

It is asked how this theory is to be translated into reality and what measures we might suggest to pave the way for it. There are different ways to this end. The English will probably begin by founding separate colonies and will let each individual decide whether or not he wants to join. The French, on the other hand, will probably prepare and implement communism on a national scale. What the Germans will do is hard to say, because the social movement in Germany is still new.

F. Engels, Zwei Reden in Elberfeld. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 2, S. 546-47

If any Marxist, or any person, indeed, who has a general knowledge of modern science, were asked whether it is likely that the transition of the different capitalist countries to the dictatorship of the proletariat will take place in an identical or harmoniously proportionate way, his answer would undoubtedly be in the negative. There never has been and never could be even, harmonious, or propor-

tionate development in the capitalist world. Each country has developed more strongly first one, then another aspect or feature or group of features of capitalism and of the working-class movement. The process of development has been uneven.

V. I. Lenin, The Third International and Its Place in History. Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 308

The revolution proceeds in its own way in every country . . . and these ways are so diverse that it may be delayed for a year or two. World revolution is not so smooth as to proceed in the same way everywhere, in all countries. If it were, we should have been victorious long ago.

V. I. Lenin, Report at a Joint Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet, Factory Committees and Trade Unions, October 22, 1918. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 123

Every nation must obtain the right to self-determination, and that will make the self-determination of the working people easier. In Finland the process of separation of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie is remarkably clear, forceful and deep. At any rate, things will not proceed there as they do in our country. If we were to declare that we do not recognise any Finnish nation, but only the working people, that would be sheer nonsense. We cannot refuse to recognise what actually exists; it will itself compel us to recognise it. The demarcation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is proceeding in different countries in their own specific ways. Here we must act with utmost caution. We must be particularly cautious with regard to the various nations, for there is nothing worse than lack of confidence on the part of a nation.

V. I. Lenin, Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 174

While the development of world history as a whole follows general laws it is by no means precluded, but, on the contrary, presumed, that certain periods of development may display peculiarities in either the form or the sequence of this development.

*V. I. Lenin, Our Revolution.
Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 477*

All nations will arrive at socialism—this is inevitable, but all will do so in not exactly the same way, each will contribute something of its own to some form of democracy, to some variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the varying rate of socialist transformations in the different aspects of social life. There is nothing more primitive from the viewpoint of theory, or more ridiculous from that of practice, than to paint, “in the name of historical materialism”, *this* aspect of the future in a monotonous grey. The result will be nothing more than Suzdal daubing²⁶.

*V. I. Lenin, A Caricature of Marxism
and Imperialist Economism. Collected
Works, Vol. 23, pp. 69-70*

It is beyond doubt that, in this question too, as always, the task consists in learning to apply the general and basic principles of communism to the *specific relations* between classes and parties, to the *specific features* in the objective development towards communism, which are different in each country and which we must be able to discover, study, and predict.

*V. I. Lenin, “Left-Wing” Communism—
an Infantile Disorder. Collected Works,
Vol. 31, p. 89*

We know that help from you will probably not come soon, comrade American workers, for the revolution is developing in different countries in different forms and at different tempos (and it cannot be otherwise).

*V. I. Lenin, Letter to American
Workers. Collected Works, Vol. 28,
p. 74*

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.

V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism—
an Infantile Disorder. *Collected Works*,
Vol. 31, p. 92

It was easier for us to start the revolution, but it is extremely difficult to continue it and consummate it. It is

terribly difficult to make a revolution in such a highly developed country as Germany, with its splendidly organised bourgeoisie, but all the easier will it be to triumphantly consummate the socialist revolution once it flares up and spreads in the advanced capitalist countries of Europe.

V. I. Lenin, Report Delivered at a Moscow Gubernia Conference of Factory Committees, July 23, 1918. Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 547

There can be no doubt that the chief social group which gives the petty-bourgeois democrats an economic basis is, in Russia, the middle peasants. Undoubtedly the socialist revolution and the transition from capitalism to socialism are bound to assume special forms in a country where the peasant population is numerically large.

V. I. Lenin, Moscow Party Workers' Meeting, November 27, 1918. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 201

Not a single socialist in the world denied that the building of communism would take different courses in countries where large-scale farming prevails and in countries where small-scale farming prevails. That is an elementary truth, an ABC.

V. I. Lenin, Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 205

The transition from capitalism to socialism is conceivable in different forms, depending upon whether big capitalist or small production relationships predominate in the country.

V. I. Lenin, Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 233

The Peaceful and Non-Peaceful Paths of the Revolution

Any means leading to the goal is suitable for me as a revolutionary—both the most violent and that which seems to be the most peaceful.

F. Engels's Letter to G. Trier,
December 18, 1889

Will it be possible to abolish private property in a peaceful way?...

One could only wish that this were possible, and the Communists would surely be the last to object. The Communists know too well that all conspiracies are not only needless, but harmful. They know too well that revolutions cannot be made deliberately and at will, and that they are, everywhere and at all times, the inevitable effect of circumstances independent of the will and leadership of individual parties and even whole classes. Yet they also know that the development of the proletariat in almost all civilised countries is being forcibly suppressed and that the enemies of the Communists are thereby working assiduously for the revolution. If the oppressed proletariat will thus finally be driven to a revolution, we Communists shall defend the cause of the proletarians in action just as well as we are doing it in words at present.

F. Engels, Grundsätze des Kommunismus.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 4, S. 372

It may be assumed that the old society could grow peacefully into a new in countries where popular representation holds all power in its own hands and where it can constitutionally do whatever it likes so long as it has the majority of the people behind it: in democratic republics such as France and America, and in monarchies such as Britain, where the impending abdication of the dynasty for a monetary compensation is daily discussed in the press and where this dynasty is powerless in face of the people's will. In

Germany, however, where the government is almost all-powerful and where the Reichstag and all other representative bodies have no real power—to proclaim anything of the kind in Germany, and quite needlessly besides, means to divest absolutism of its fig-leaf and to take the place of this fig-leaf in covering nudity.

*F. Engels, Zur Kritik des sozialdemokratischen
Programmentwurfs 1891. Marx/Engels, Werke,
Bd. 22, S. 234*

At least in Europe, England is the only country where the inevitable social revolution might be effected entirely by peaceful and legal means. He (Marx.—*Ed.*) certainly never forgot to add that he hardly expected the English ruling classes to submit, without a “pro-slavery rebellion”, to this peaceful and legal revolution.

*F. Engels, Preface to the English Edition
K. Marx, Capital, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1965, p. 6*

Our goals have got to be broad enough to embrace all the forms of working-class activity. If we were to impart to them any special complexion they would serve the needs of but one section of workers, the needs of the working class of but one nation. Yet how can one marshal people to unity in behalf of the interests of but a few? If our Association did so, it would forfeit the right to call itself International. The Association does not prescribe any definite form of political movement; all it demands is that the movement work for one and the same ultimate goal. It embraces a network of branch societies stretching across the whole workers' world. In each part of the world the accent is laid on some special aspect of the problem, and the workers tackle it in their own way. The workers' organisations cannot be absolutely identical to the last detail in Newcastle and Barcelona, London and Berlin. In Britain,

for example, the working class has every opportunity to show their political strength. An uprising would be stupid there, for agitation can achieve the goal more rapidly and effectively. In France, it appears, the numerous suppressive laws and the deadly antagonism between the classes make a violent solution of the social conflicts inevitable. Whether or not this solution is picked, is the business of the country's working class. It is not up to the International to lay down the law in such a matter; it is not even likely to deal out advice. Yet it expresses its sympathies for every movement and renders it assistance within the bounds of its statutes.

*Aufzeichnung eines Interviews,
das Karl Marx einem Korrespondenten
der Zeitung "The World" gewährte.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 17, S. 641*

The worker will some day have to win political supremacy in order to organise labour along new lines; he will have to defeat the old policy supporting old institutions, under penalty—as in the case of the ancient Christians, who neglected and scorned it—of never seeing their kingdom on earth.

But we have by no means affirmed that this goal would be achieved by identical means.

We know of the allowances we must make for the institutions, customs and traditions of the various countries; and we do not deny that there are countries such as America, England, and I would add Holland if I knew your institutions better, where the working people may achieve their goal by peaceful means. If that is true, we must also recognise that in most of the continental countries it is force that will have to be the lever of our revolutions; it is force that we shall some day have to resort to in order to establish a reign of labour.

*K. Marx, The Hague Congress.
Marx and Engels, On Britain,
Moscow, 1962, pp. 494-95*

Apart from Britain and Switzerland, Holland was the only West-European country that was *not* an absolute monarchy in the 16th to 18th centuries, and therefore possesses certain advantages, such, among others, as the survivals of local and provincial self-government without a real bureaucracy in the French or Prussian spirit. This is a palpable advantage for the development of the national character, and also for subsequent development; by making relatively few changes, the working people there could establish free self-government, which ought to be our best weapon in reorganising the mode of production. There is nothing of the kind either in Germany or France, where it will have to be created from scratch.

F. Engels's Letter to F. Domela-Nieuwenhuis, February 4, 1886

We now come to the *Chartists*, the politically active portion of the British *working class*. The six points of the Charter which they contend for contain nothing but the demand of *Universal Suffrage*, and of the conditions without which Universal Suffrage would be illusory for the working class; such as the ballot, payment of members, annual general elections. But Universal Suffrage is the equivalent for political power for the working class of England, where the proletariat forms the large majority of the population, where, in a long, though underground civil war, it has gained a clear consciousness of its position as a class, and where even the rural districts know no longer any peasants, but only landlords, industrial capitalists (farmers) and hired laborers. The carrying of Universal Suffrage in England would, therefore, be a far more socialistic measure than anything which has been honoured with that name on the Continent.

Its inevitable result, here, is *the political supremacy of the working class*.

*K. Marx, The Chartists.
Marx and Engels, On Britain,
Moscow, 1962, p. 361*

If social revolution and practical communism are a necessary result of our existing relations, we shall have to deal first and foremost with measures whereby a violent and bloody upheaval in social relations could be averted. There is but *one* means to this end, namely, peaceful introduction, or at least preparation, of communism. If we do not want a *bloody* solution of the social problem, if we do not want the daily increasing contradiction between the mental level and living standard of our proletarians to reach its peak, at which, according to all our experiences of human nature, this contradiction will seek an escape in brutal violence, in desperation and thirst for revenge, then . . . we must deal earnestly and impartially with the social question; then we must apply all our efforts to ameliorate the lot of the modern helots.

*F. Engels, Zwei Reden in Elberfeld.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 2, S. 556*

The revolution *must* come; it is already too late to bring about a peaceful solution; but it can be made more gentle than that prophesied in the foregoing pages. This depends, however, more upon the development of the proletariat than upon that of the bourgeoisie. In proportion, as the proletariat absorbs socialistic and communistic elements, will the revolution diminish in bloodshed, revenge, and savagery. Communism stands, in principle, above the breach between bourgeoisie and proletariat, recognises only its historic significance for the present, but not its justification for the future; wishes, indeed, to bridge over this chasm, to do away with all the class antagonisms. Hence it recognises as justified, so long as the struggle exists, the exasperation of the proletariat towards its oppressors as a necessity, as the most important lever for a labour movement just beginning; but it goes beyond this exasperation, because communism is a question of humanity and not of the workers alone.

*F. Engels, The Condition of the Working Class
in England. Marx and Engels,
On Britain, Moscow, 1962, p. 334*

From the 18th of March to the entrance of the Versailles troops into Paris, the proletarian revolution remained so free from the acts of violence in which the revolutions, and still more the counter-revolutions, of the "better classes" abound, that no facts were left to its opponents to cry out about.

*K. Marx, The Civil War in France.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 511*

How often has the bourgeoisie demanded we should under all circumstances repudiate the use of revolutionary means and remain within lawful limits, especially now, when the exceptional law²⁷ has fallen and the law treats everybody equally, including the socialists! Regrettably, we cannot do the bourgeoisie this favour. This does not go to say, however, that at the present time we are the ones who are being "hemmed in by the law". On the contrary, the law works so excellently for us that we should be fools to violate it. It is much more likely that the bourgeoisie and their government will be the ones to break the law in order to crush us with violence. Let us wait and see. In the meantime: "Kindly shoot first, Messrs. Bourgeois!"

*F. Engels, Der Sozialismus in
Deutschland. Marx/Engels, Werke
Bd. 22, S. 251*

Our very struggle against the exploiters was taken from experience. If we have sometimes been condemned on account of it, we can say, "Dear capitalist gentlemen, you have only yourselves to blame. If you had not offered such savage, senseless, insolent, and desperate resistance, if you had not joined in an alliance with the world bourgeoisie, the revolution would have assumed more peaceful forms". Now that we have repulsed the savage onslaught on all sides we can change to other methods, because we are

acting not as a narrow circle, but as a party which is leading the millions.

V. I. Lenin, Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 29, pp. 211-12

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.

V. I. Lenin, The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky. Collected Works, Vol. 28, pp. 253-54

Perhaps the authors²⁸ believe that the interests of the world revolution require that it should be *given a push*, and that such a push can be given only by war, never by peace, which might give the people the impression that imperialism was being “legitimised”? Such a “theory” would be completely at variance with Marxism, for Marxism has always been opposed to “pushing” revolutions, which develop with the growing acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions. Such a theory would be tantamount to the view that armed uprising is a form of struggle which is obligatory always and under all conditions. Actually, however, the interests of the world revolution demand that Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country, should *help* that revolution, but that it should choose a *form* of help which is commensurate with its own strength.

V. I. Lenin, Strange and Monstrous. Collected Works, Vol. 27, pp. 71-72

The peaceful development of any revolution is, generally speaking, extremely rare and difficult, because revolution is the maximum exacerbation of the sharpest class contradictions; but in a peasant country, at a time when a union of the proletariat with the peasantry *can give peace* to people worn out by a most unjust and criminal war, when that union can give the peasantry *all the land*, in that country, at that exceptional moment in history, a peaceful development of the revolution is *possible* and *probable* if all power is transferred to the Soviets.

V. I. Lenin, *The Russian Revolution and Civil War. Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 36-37

The working class would, of course, prefer to take power *peacefully* (we have already stated that this seizure of power can be carried out only by the organised working class which has passed through the school of the class struggle), but to *renounce* the revolutionary seizure of power would be *madness* on the part of the proletariat, both from the theoretical and the practical-political points of view; it would mean nothing but a disgraceful retreat in face of the bourgeoisie and all other propertied classes. It is very probable—even most probable—that the bourgeoisie will not make peaceful concessions to the proletariat and at the decisive moment will resort to violence for the defence of its privileges. In that case, no other way will be left to the proletariat for the achievement of its aim but that of revolution. This is the reason the programme of “working-class socialism” speaks of the winning of political power in general *without defining* the method, for the choice of method depends on a future which we cannot precisely determine. But, we repeat, to limit the activities of the proletariat under any circumstances to peaceful “democratisation” alone is arbitrarily to narrow and vulgarise the concept of working-class socialism.

V. I. Lenin, *A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy. Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 276-77

A possibility very seldom to be met with in the history of revolutions now faces the democracy of Russia, the Soviets and the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties—the possibility of convening the Constituent Assembly at the appointed date without further delays, of making the country secure against a military and economic catastrophe, and of ensuring the peaceful development of the revolution.

If the Soviets now take full state power exclusively into their own hands for the purpose of carrying out the programme set forth above, they will not only obtain the support of nine-tenths of the population of Russia, the working class and an overwhelming majority of the peasantry; they will also be assured of the greatest revolutionary enthusiasm on the part of the army and the majority of the people, an enthusiasm without which victory over famine and war is impossible.

There could be no question of any resistance to the Soviets if the Soviets themselves did not waver. No class will dare start an uprising against the Soviets, and the landowners and capitalists, taught a lesson by the experience of the Kornilov revolt,²⁹ will give up their power peacefully and yield to the ultimatum of the Soviets. To overcome the capitalists' resistance to the programme of the Soviets, supervision over the exploiters by workers and peasants and such measures of punishing the recalcitrants as confiscation of their entire property coupled with a short term of arrest will be sufficient.

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, from the movement of April 20 to the Kornilov revolt, 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.

V. I. Lenin, The Tasks of the Revolution. Collected Works, Vol. 26, pp. 67-68

The political situation in Russia now, after July 4, differs radically from the situation between February 27 and July 4.³⁰

During that period of the revolution now past, the so-called "dual power" existed in the country, which both materially and formally expressed the indefinite and transitional condition of state power. Let us not forget that the issue of power is the fundamental issue of every revolution.

At that time state power was unstable. It was shared, by voluntary agreement, between the Provisional Government and the Soviets. The Soviets were delegations from the mass of free—i.e., not subject to external coercion—and armed workers and soldiers. What *really mattered* was that arms were in the hands of the people and that there was no coercion of the people from without. That is what opened up and ensured a peaceful path for the progress of the revolution. The slogan "All Power Must Be Transferred to the Soviets" was a slogan for the next step, the immediately feasible step, on that peaceful path of development. It was a slogan for the peaceful development of the revolution, which was possible and, of course, most desirable

between February 27 and July 4 but which is now absolutely impossible.

V. I. Lenin, On Slogans. Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 183-84

This dear old gentleman, no doubt a most virtuous paterfamilias, a most honest citizen and most conscientious reader and writer of learned works, has forgotten one tiny detail; he has forgotten that such a "systematic" and "regular" transition to socialism (the transition which undoubtedly would be the most advantageous to "the people", abstractly speaking) presumes an absolutely secure victory of the proletariat, the absolute hopelessness of the position of the capitalists, the absolute necessity for them to display the most scrupulous obedience and their readiness to do so.

Is such a conjunction of circumstances possible?

Speaking theoretically, which in this case means speaking quite abstractly, it is possible, of course. For example, let us assume that in nine countries, including all the Great Powers, the Wilsons, Lloyd Georges, Millerands, and other champions of capitalism are already in the same position as Yudenich, Kolchak, Denikin, and their Ministers in our country. Let us assume that after this, in a tenth country, a small country, the capitalists propose to the workers: "Look here, we will conscientiously help you, in obedience to your decisions, to carry out a 'systematic' and peaceful (without destruction!) 'expropriation of the expropriators', for which you will let us have five-ninths of our former income in the first year and four-ninths in the second year."

It is quite conceivable that under the circumstances I have mentioned the capitalists in the tenth country, one of the smallest and most "peaceful" countries, might make such a proposal, and there would be absolutely nothing wrong in the workers of this country discussing this proposal in a business-like way and (after bargaining a bit, for a merchant cannot help asking more than his wares are worth) accepting it.

V. I. Lenin, A Publicist's Notes. Collected Works, Vol. 30, pp. 360-61

Let us consider Marx's idea carefully.

Marx was talking about the Britain of the seventies of the last century, about the culminating point in the development of pre-monopoly capitalism. At that time Britain was a country in which militarism and bureaucracy were less pronounced than in any other, a country in which there was the greatest possibility of a "peaceful" victory for socialism in the sense of the workers "buying out" the bourgeoisie. And Marx said that under certain conditions the workers would certainly not refuse to buy out the bourgeoisie. Marx did not commit himself, or the future leaders of the socialist revolution, to matters of form, to ways and means of bringing about the revolution. He understood perfectly well that a vast number of new problems would arise, that the whole situation would change in the course of the revolution, and that the situation would change *radically and often* in the course of revolution.

Well, and what about Soviet Russia? Is it not clear that *after* the seizure of power by the proletariat and *after* the crushing of the exploiters' armed resistance and sabotage, *certain* conditions prevail which correspond to those which might have existed in Britain half a century ago had a peaceful transition to socialism begun there?

V. I. Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" *Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality*.
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 343

Specific Features of the Socialist Revolution in Russia

Our banking on the world revolution, if you can call it that, has on the whole been fully justified. But from the point of view of the speed of its development we have endured an exceptionally difficult period; we have seen for ourselves that the revolution's development in more advanced countries has proved to be considerably slower, considerably more difficult, considerably more complicated. This should not surprise us for it was naturally easier for

a country such as Russia to start a socialist revolution than it is for the advanced countries. But, in any case, this slower, more complicated, more zigzag development of the socialist revolution in Western Europe has burdened us with incredible difficulties.

V. I. Lenin, Seventh All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 208

The whole difficulty of the Russian revolution is that it was much easier for the Russian revolutionary working class to start than it is for the West-European classes, but it is much more difficult for us to continue. It is more difficult to start a revolution in West-European countries because there the revolutionary proletariat is opposed by the higher thinking that comes with culture, and the working class is in a state of cultural slavery.

V. I. Lenin, Fourth Conference of Trade Unions and Factory Committees of Moscow. Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 464

Would our proletariat have had the moral strength if it had not relied on the sympathy of the workers of the advanced countries, who supported us in spite of the lies about the Soviet power circulated by the imperialists in millions of copies, and in spite of the efforts of the "labour leaders"—the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries—who could have been expected to, and did, hamper the workers' struggle for us? With this support, our proletariat—numerically weak and tormented by poverty and privation—won out because it had the moral strength.

V. I. Lenin, Speech Delivered at the All-Russia Congress of Transport Workers, March 27, 1921. Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 276

First—the revolution connected with the first imperialist world war. Such a revolution was bound to reveal new

features, or variations, resulting from the war itself, for the world has never seen such a war in such a situation. We find that since the war the bourgeoisie of the wealthiest countries have to this day been unable to restore "normal" bourgeois relations: Yet our reformists—petty bourgeois who make a show of being revolutionaries—believed, and still believe, that normal bourgeois relations are the limit (thus far shalt thou go and no farther). And even their conception of "normal" is extremely stereotyped and narrow.

Secondly, they are complete strangers to the idea that while the development of world history as a whole follows general laws it is by no means precluded, but, on the contrary, presumed, that certain periods of development may display peculiarities in either the form or the sequence of this development. For instance, it does not even occur to them that because Russia stands on the border-line between the civilised countries and the countries which this war has for the first time definitely brought into the orbit of civilisation—all the Oriental, non-European countries—she could and was, indeed, bound to reveal certain distinguishing features; although these, of course, are in keeping with the general line of world development, they distinguish her revolution from those which took place in the West-European countries and introduce certain partial innovations as the revolution moves on to the countries of the East.

Infinitely stereotyped, for instance, is the argument they learned by rote during the development of West-European Social-Democracy, namely, that we are not yet ripe for socialism, that, as certain "learned" gentlemen among them put it, the objective economic premises for socialism do not exist in our country. It does not occur to any of them to ask: but what about a people that found itself in a revolutionary situation such as that created during the first imperialist war? Might it not, influenced by the hopelessness of its situation, fling itself into a struggle that would offer it at least some chance of securing conditions for the further development of civilisation that were somewhat unusual?

"The development of the productive forces of Russia has not attained the level that makes socialism possible." All the heroes of the Second International, including, of course, Sukhanov, beat the drums about this proposition. They keep harping on this incontrovertible proposition in a thousand different keys, and think that it is the decisive criterion of our revolution.

But what if the situation, which drew Russia into the imperialist world war that involved every more or less influential West-European country and made her a witness of the eve of the revolutions maturing or partly already begun in the East, gave rise to circumstances that put Russia and her development in a position which enabled us to achieve precisely that combination of a "peasant war" with the working-class movement suggested in 1856 by no less a Marxist than Marx himself as a possible prospect for Prussia?

What if the complete hopelessness of the situation, by stimulating the efforts of the workers and peasants tenfold, offered us the opportunity to create the fundamental requisites of civilisation in a different way from that of the West-European countries? Has that altered the general line of development of world history? Has that altered the basic relations between the basic classes of all the countries that are being, or have been, drawn into the general course of world history?

If a definite level of culture is required for the building of socialism (although nobody can say just what that definite "level of culture" is, for it differs in every West-European country), why cannot we begin by first achieving the prerequisites for that definite level of culture in a revolutionary way, and *then*, with the aid of the workers' and peasants' government and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations?

*V. I. Lenin, Our Revolution.
Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 477-79*

We must make every effort to avoid two mistakes, both of which are of a petty-bourgeois nature. . . . On the one hand, it would be a fatal mistake to declare that since there is a discrepancy between our economic "forces" and our political strength, it "follows" that we should not have seized power. Such an argument can be advanced only by a "man in a muffler"³¹, who forgets that there will always be such a "discrepancy", that it always exists in the development of nature as well as in the development of society, that only by a series of attempts—each of which, taken by itself, will be one-sided and will suffer from certain inconsistencies—will complete socialism be created by the revolutionary co-operation of the proletarians of *all* countries.

On the other hand, it would be an obvious mistake to give free rein to ranters and phrase-mongers who allow themselves to be carried away by the "dazzling" revolutionary spirit, but who are incapable of sustained, thoughtful and deliberate revolutionary work which takes into account the most difficult stages of transition.

*V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Childishness
and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality.
Collected Works, Vol. 27, pp. 345-46*

He who turns away from the socialist revolution now taking place in Russia and points to the obvious disproportion of forces is like the conservative "man in a muffler" who cannot see further than his nose, who forgets that not a single historical change of any importance takes place without there being several instances of a disproportion of forces. Forces grow in the process of the struggle, as the revolution grows. When a country has taken the path of profound change, it is to the credit of that country and the party of the working class which achieved victory in that country, that they should take up in a practical manner the tasks that were formerly raised abstractly, theoretically. This experience will never be forgotten. The experience which the workers now united in trade unions and local

organisations are acquiring in the practical work of organising the whole of production on a national scale cannot be taken away, no matter how difficult the vicissitudes the Russian revolution and the international socialist revolution may pass through. It has gone down in history as socialism's gain, and on it the future world revolution will erect its socialist edifice.

V. I. Lenin, *Speech at the First Congress
of Economic Councils,
May 26, 1918.
Collected Works,
Vol. 27, pp. 412-13*

There is no doubt that in a country where the overwhelming majority of the population consists of small agricultural producers, a socialist revolution can be carried out only through the implementation of a whole series of special transitional measures which would be superfluous in highly developed capitalist countries where wage-workers in industry and agriculture make up the vast majority. Highly developed capitalist countries have a class of agricultural wage-workers that has taken shape over many decades. Only such a class can socially, economically, and politically support a direct transition to socialism. Only in countries where this class is sufficiently developed is it possible to pass directly from capitalism to socialism, without any special country-wide transitional measures. We have stressed in a good many written works, in all our public utterances, and all our statements in the press, that this is not the case in Russia, for here industrial workers are a minority and petty farmers are the vast majority. In such a country, the socialist revolution can triumph only on two conditions. First, if it is given timely support by a socialist revolution in one or several advanced countries. As you know, we have done very much indeed in comparison with the past to bring about this condition, but far from enough to make it a reality.

The second condition is agreement between the proletariat, which is exercising its dictatorship, that is, holds state

power, and the majority of the peasant population. Agreement is a very broad concept which includes a whole series of measures and transitions. . . .

We know that so long as there is no revolution in other countries, only agreement with the peasantry can save the socialist revolution in Russia.

*V. I. Lenin, Tenth Congress of the
R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 32,
pp. 214-15*

In the first months after the proletariat in Russia had won political power (October 25 [November 7], 1917), it might have seemed that the enormous difference between backward Russia and the advanced countries of Western Europe would lead to the proletarian revolution in the latter countries bearing very little resemblance to ours. 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.

It would, of course, be grossly erroneous to exaggerate this truth and to extend it beyond certain fundamental features of our revolution. It would also be erroneous to lose sight of the fact that, soon after the victory of the proletarian revolution in at least one of the advanced countries, a sharp change will probably come about: Russia will

cease to be the model and will once again become a backward country (in the "Soviet" and the socialist sense)....

The Russian model ... reveals to *all* countries something—and something highly significant—of their near and inevitable future. Advanced workers in all lands have long realised this; more often than not, they have grasped it with their revolutionary class instinct rather than realised it. Herein lies the international "significance" (in the narrow sense of the word) of Soviet power, and of the fundamentals of Bolshevik theory and tactics.

*V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism—
an Infantile Disorder. Collected Works,
Vol. 31, pp. 21-22*

The Possibility of Victorious Socialist Revolutions in Backward Countries

It is historically impossible for a lower stage of economic development to resolve the riddles and conflicts that have sprung up, and could only spring up, in a much higher stage. All the forms of patrimonial association which originated before the appearance of commodity production and barter have only this one point in common with the future socialist society that certain things, the means of production, are in the common possession and the common use of certain groups. That one common feature, however, does not make this lower social form capable of producing out of itself the future socialist society, the ultimate product of capitalism, which capitalism itself produces. Each given economic formation has to solve its own problems—the problems that it generates itself. To tackle problems that belong to another, entirely different formation, would be absolute nonsense....

On the other hand, it is not only possible, but certain, that as soon as the proletariat wins and the means of production are made public property among the West-European peoples, the countries that have only just embarked on capitalist production, where the patrimonial order or

survivals of it are still on hand, may employ these remnants of common ownership and the attendant folk customs to good advantage in considerably shortening the development to a socialist society and thus sparing much of the suffering and struggle that we in Western Europe have to contend with. But the example and active support of the heretofore capitalist West are an inescapable condition for this. It is only after capitalist economy is overcome in its native region and in countries where it reached its bloom, only after the backward countries see from this example "how it is done", how modern industrial productive forces are pressed into the service of all society as public property—it is only then that they will be able to undertake this shortened process of development. But then with certain success!

F. Engels, Nachwort zu "Soziales aus Russland". Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 22, S. 428-29

In the West the resolution of contradictions through the reorganisation of society presupposes the transfer of all means of production, hence also of the land, into the common possession of society. What is the relation to this still-to-be-created common ownership of the already existing or, more precisely, still existing common ownership in Russia? Would it not serve as a point of departure for a national action that will, skipping the whole capitalist period, at once transform the Russian peasant communism into modern socialist common ownership of all means of production, enriching it with all the technical achievements of the capitalist era?...

So, if there is any question of whether or not the Russian commune will ever have a different and better fate, this is not its own fault, but solely that of the fact that it has survived in a European country in relative strength until a time when not only commodity production generally, but even its highest and last form, capitalist production, has come into conflict in Western Europe with the

productive forces it has itself created and when it is proving itself incapable of guiding these forces any longer and is being destroyed through its intrinsic contradictions and the class conflicts contingent upon them. This alone infers that the initiative for such an eventual transformation of the Russian commune can only come from the industrial proletarians of the West, and not from itself. Victory of the West-European proletariat over the Bourgeoisie and the attendant replacement of capitalist production with socially guided production is a necessary precondition for the lifting of the Russian commune to the same level.

F. Engels, Nachwort zu "Soziales aus Russland". Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 22, S. 425-27

The commune and, to a certain extent, the artel, unquestionably contained some embryos that could have developed in certain circumstances and spared Russia the torments of the capitalist system. I subscribe wholly to the letter of our author* concerning Zhukovsky's article. But . . . in his foreword to the old manifesto** in January 1882, of which you know, the author replied as follows to the question of whether or not the Russian commune could be a point of departure for a new and higher social development: if the upheaval in Russia's economic system coincides in time with the upheaval in the Western economic system, so that they supplement each other, contemporary Russian land tenure may serve as a point of departure for a new social development.

F. Engels's Letter to N. Danielson, February 24, 1893

The artel is a co-operative society which has arisen spontaneously and is, therefore, still very undeveloped, and as such neither exclusively Russian nor even Slavic. Such

* Karl Marx.—Ed.

** *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.—Ed.

societies are formed wherever the need for them exists. For instance, in Switzerland among the dairy farmers, in England among the fishermen, where they even assume a great variety of forms. The Silesian navvies (Germans, not Poles), who built so many German railways in the forties, were organised in complete artels. The predominance of this form in Russia proves, it is true, the existence in the Russian people of a strong impulse to associate, but is far from proving their ability to jump, with the aid of this impulse, from the artel straight into the socialist order of society. For that, it is necessary above all that the artel itself should be capable of development, that it shed its primitive form, in which, as we saw, it serves the workers less than it does capital, and rise *at least* to the level of the West-European co-operative societies.

*F. Engels, On Social Relations in Russia.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II,
Moscow, 1962, pp. 54-55*

Communal ownership in Russia is long past its period of florescence and to all appearances is moving towards its disintegration. Nevertheless, the possibility undeniably exists of raising this form of society to a higher one, if it should last until circumstances are ripe for that, and if it shows itself capable of development in such manner that the peasants no longer cultivate the land separately, but collectively; of raising it to this higher form without it being necessary for the Russian peasants to go through the intermediate stage of bourgeois small holdings. This, however, can only happen if, before the complete break-up of communal ownership, a proletarian revolution is successfully carried out in Western Europe, creating for the Russian peasant the preconditions requisite for such a transition, particularly the material conditions which he needs if only to carry through the revolution necessarily connected therewith of his whole agricultural system.

*F. Engels, On Social Relations in Russia.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II,
Moscow, 1962, p. 58*

Chinese socialism may stand in the same relation to the European variety as Chinese philosophy stands to the Hegelian. Yet it is a gratifying fact that the bales of calico of the English bourgeoisie have in eight years brought the oldest and most imperturbable empire on earth to the threshold of a social upheaval, one that will in any case hold most significant consequences for civilisation. When in their imminent flight across Asia our European reactionaries will ultimately arrive at the Wall of China, at the gates that lead to the stronghold of arch-reaction and arch-conservatism, who knows if they will not find there the inscription:

RÉPUBLIQUE CHINOISE
LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ.

Marx and Engels, First International Review.
K. Marx and F. Engels, On Colonialism,
Moscow, 1962, p. 14

Most of the Eastern peoples are in a worse position than the most backward country in Europe—Russia. But in our struggle against feudal survivals and capitalism, we succeeded in uniting the peasants and workers of Russia; and it was because the peasants and workers united against capitalism and feudalism that our victory was so easy. Here contact with the peoples of the East is particularly important, because the majority of the Eastern peoples are typical representatives of the working people—not workers who have passed through the school of capitalist factories, but typical representatives of the working and exploited peasant masses who are victims of medieval oppression. The Russian revolution showed how the proletarians, after defeating capitalism and uniting with the vast diffuse mass of working peasants, rose up victoriously against medieval oppression. Our Soviet Republic must now muster all the awakening peoples of the East and, together with them, wage a struggle against international imperialism.

In this respect you are confronted with a task which has not previously confronted the Communists of the world: relying upon the general theory and practice of communism, you must adapt yourselves to specific conditions such as do not exist in the European countries; you must be able to apply that theory and practice to conditions in which the bulk of the population are peasants, and in which the task is to wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism. That is a difficult and specific task, but a very thankful one, because masses that have taken no part in the struggle up to now are being drawn into it, and also because the organisation of communist cells in the East gives you an opportunity to maintain the closest contact with the Third International. You must find specific forms for this alliance of the foremost proletarians of the world with the labouring and exploited masses of the East whose conditions are in many cases medieval. We have accomplished on a small scale in our country what you will do on a big scale and in big countries. And that latter task you will, I hope, perform with success. Thanks to the communist organisations in the East, of which you here are the representatives, you have contact with the advanced revolutionary proletariat. Your task is to continue to ensure that communist propaganda is carried on in every country in a language the people understand.

It is self-evident that final victory can be won only by the proletariat of all the advanced countries of the world, and we, the Russians, are beginning the work which the British, French or German proletariat will consolidate. But we see that they will not be victorious without the aid of the working people of all the oppressed colonial nations, first and foremost, of Eastern nations. We must realise that the transition to communism cannot be accomplished by the vanguard alone. The task is to arouse the working masses to revolutionary activity, to independent action and to organisation, regardless of the level they have reached; to translate the true communist doctrine, which was intended for the Communists of the more advanced countries,

into the language of every people; to carry out those practical tasks which must be carried out immediately, and to join the proletarians of other countries in a common struggle.

Such are the problems whose solution you will not find in any communist book, but will find in the common struggle begun by Russia. You will have to tackle that problem and solve it through your own independent experience. In that you will be assisted, on the one hand, by close alliance with the vanguard of the working people of other countries, and, on the other, by ability to find the right approach to the peoples of the East whom you here represent. You will have to base yourselves on the bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken, among those peoples, and which has its historical justification. At the same time, you must find your way to the working and exploited masses of every country and tell them in a language they understand that their only hope of emancipation lies in the victory of the international revolution, and that the international proletariat is the only ally of all the hundreds of millions of the working and exploited peoples of the East.

Such is the immense task which confronts you, and which, thanks to the era of revolution and the growth of the revolutionary movement—of that there can be no doubt—will, by the joint efforts of the communist organisations of the East, be successfully accomplished and crowned by complete victory over international imperialism.

V. I. Lenin, Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, November 22, 1919. Collected Works, Vol. 30, pp. 160-62

Here we have practical proof that when a revolutionary war really does attract and interest the working and oppressed people, when it makes them conscious that they are fighting the exploiters—such a revolutionary war engenders the strength and ability to perform miracles.

I think that what the Red Army has accomplished, its struggle, and the history of its victory, will be of colossal, epochal significance for all the peoples of the East. It will show them that, weak as they may be, and invincible as may seem the power of the European oppressors, who in the struggle employ all the marvels of technology and of the military art—nevertheless, a revolutionary war waged by oppressed peoples, if it really succeeds in arousing the millions of working and exploited people, harbours such potentialities, such miracles, that the emancipation of the peoples of the East is now quite practicable, from the standpoint not only of the prospects of the international revolution, but also of the direct military experience acquired in Asia, in Siberia, the experience of the Soviet Republic, which has suffered the armed invasion of all the powerful imperialist countries.

V. I. Lenin, Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, November 22, 1919. Collected Works, Vol. 30, pp. 153-54

The movement in the colonial countries is still regarded as an insignificant national and totally peaceful movement. But this is not so. It has undergone great change since the beginning of the twentieth century: 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.

V. I. Lenin, Third Congress of the Communist International. Collected Works, Vol. 32, pp. 481-82

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

*V. I. Lenin, A Caricature of Marxism
and Imperialist Economism.
Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 60*

The Russian Communists' practical activities in the former tsarist colonies, in such backward countries as Turkestan, etc., have confronted us with the question of how to apply the communist tactics and policy in pre-capitalist conditions. The preponderance of pre-capitalist relationships is still the main determining feature in these countries, so that there can be no question of a purely proletarian movement in them. There is practically no industrial proletariat in these countries. Nevertheless, we have assumed, we must assume, the role of leader even there. Experience has shown us that tremendous difficulties have to be surmounted in these countries. However, the practical results of our work have also shown that despite these difficulties we are in a position to inspire in the masses an urge for independent political thinking and independent political action, even where a proletariat is practically non-existent. This work has been more difficult for us than it will be for comrades in the West-European countries, because in Russia the proletariat is engrossed in the work of state administration. It will readily be understood that peasants living in conditions of semi-feudal dependence can easily assimilate and give effect to the idea of Soviet organisation. It is also clear that the oppressed masses, those who are exploited, not only by merchant capital but also by the feudalists, and by a state based on feudalism,

can apply this weapon, this type of organisation, in their conditions too. The idea of Soviet organisation is a simple one, and is applicable, not only to proletarian, but also to peasant feudal and semi-feudal relations. . . .

This opens up a very interesting and very important field for our practical work. So far our joint experience in this respect has not been extensive, but more and more data will gradually accumulate. 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. Not only should we create independent contingents of fighters and party organisations in the colonies and the backward countries, not only at once launch propaganda for the organisation of peasants' Soviets and strive to adapt them to the pre-capitalist conditions, but the Communist International should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical grounding, that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage.

*V. I. Lenin, The Second Congress
of the Communist International.
Collected Works, Vol. 31,
pp. 242-44*

We stand and shall continue to stand for the closest association and merging of the class-conscious workers of the advanced countries with the workers, peasants and slaves of *all* the oppressed countries. We have always advised and shall continue to advise all the oppressed classes in all the oppressed countries, the colonies included, *not* to separate from us, but to form the closest possible ties and merge with us. . . .

We shall exert every effort to foster association and merger with the Mongolians, Persians, Indians, Egyptians. We believe it is our duty and *in our interest* to do this, for otherwise socialism in Europe will *not be secure*. We shall endeavour to render these nations, more backward and oppressed than we are, "disinterested cultural assistance", to borrow the happy expression of the Polish Social-Democrats. In other words, we will help them pass to the use of machinery, to the lightening of labour, to democracy, to socialism.

*V. I. Lenin, A Caricature of Marxism
and Imperialist Economism.
Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 67*

A backward country can easily begin because its adversary has become rotten, because its bourgeoisie is not organised, but for it to continue demands of that country a hundred thousand times more circumspection, caution and endurance.

*V. I. Lenin, Session of the All-
Russia C.E.C., April 29, 1918.
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 291*

The Prerequisites for the Triumph of the Socialist Revolution

Insurrection is an art quite as much as war or any other art, and is subject to certain rules which, if neglected, lead to the downfall of the party guilty of such neglect. These rules, the logical upshot of the substance of the parties and

of the circumstances one has to deal with in such a case, are so clear and simple that the brief experience of 1848 has brought them home quite conclusively to the Germans. First, one must never play with an insurrection, unless one is firmly determined to face all the consequences of the game. An uprising is an equation with a lot of unknowns, whose values may change every day. The forces of the adversary have all the advantages of organisation, discipline and traditional authority. If the forces opposing them are not greatly superior, they will be beaten and destroyed. Secondly, once an insurrection is begun it has to be pressed forward with the utmost determination and has to capture the offensive. The defensive is death to any armed insurrection; the insurrection is lost then before it ever comes to grips with the enemy. Spring a surprise on your opponent while his forces are scattered and see to it that you have new, albeit small, successes every day; retain the moral advantage that the initial success of the insurrection has given you; attract thereby the vacillating elements, who always obey the stronger push and fall in with the surer side; compel your enemy to retreat before he has time to gather his strength against you, so that you can act, as enjoined by Danton, so far the greatest known master of revolutionary tactics, *de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace*.

*F. Engels, Revolution und Konterrevolution
in Deutschland. Marx/Engels,
Werke, Bd. 8, S. 95*

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 circumstances 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. Such a situation existed in 1905 in Russia, and in all revolutionary periods in the West; it also existed in Germany in the sixties of the last century, and in Russia in 1859-61 and 1879-80, although no revolution occurred in these instances. Why was that? It was because 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, views that have been developed many, many times, have been accepted as indisputable by all Marxists, and for us, Russians, were corroborated in a particularly striking fashion by the experience of 1905.

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.

V. I. Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" Communism—
an Infantile Disorder. *Collected Works*,
Vol. 31, pp. 84-85

Revolutions are not made to order, they cannot be timed for any particular moment; they mature in a process of historical development and break out at a moment determined by a whole complex of internal and external causes.

V. I. Lenin, *Report Delivered at a
Moscow Gubernia Conference of
Factory Committees, July 23, 1918*,
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 547

Of course, there are people who believe that revolution can break out in a foreign country to order, by agreement. These people are either mad or they are provocateurs. We have experienced two revolutions during the past twelve years. We know that revolutions cannot be made to order, or by agreement; they break out when tens of millions of people come to the conclusion that it is impossible to live in the old way any longer.

V. I. Lenin, Fourth Conference of Trade Unions and Factory Committees of Moscow. Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 480

Every revolution means a sharp turn in the lives of a vast number of people. Unless the time is ripe for such a turn, no real revolution can take place. And just as any turn in the life of an individual teaches him a great deal and brings rich experience and great emotional stress, so a revolution teaches an entire people very rich and valuable lessons in a short space of time.

V. I. Lenin, Lessons of the Revolution. Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 225

It would be a mistake to think that the revolutionary classes are invariably strong enough to effect a revolution whenever such a revolution has fully matured by virtue of the conditions of social and economic development. No, human society is not constituted so rationally or so "conveniently" for progressive elements. A revolution may be ripe, and yet the forces of its revolutionary creators may prove insufficient to carry it out, in which case society decays, and this process of decay sometimes drags on for decades. There is no doubt that Russia is ripe for a democratic revolution, but it still remains to be seen whether the revolutionary classes have sufficient strength at present to carry it out. This will be settled by the struggle, whose crucial moment is approaching at tremendous speed—if the numerous direct and indirect indications do not

deceive us. The moral preponderance is indubitable—the moral force is already overwhelmingly great; without it, of course, there could be no question of any revolution whatever. It is a necessary condition, but it *is not sufficient*. Only the outcome of the struggle will show whether it will be translated into a material force sufficient to smash the very serious (we shall not close our eyes to this) resistance of the autocracy. The slogan of insurrection is a slogan for deciding the issue by material force, which in present-day European civilisation can only be military force. This slogan should not be put forward until the general prerequisites for revolution have matured, until the masses have definitely shown that they have been roused and are ready to act, until the external circumstances have led to an open crisis. But once such a slogan has been issued, it would be an arrant disgrace to retreat from it, back to moral force again, to one of the conditions that prepare the ground for an uprising, to a “possible transition”, etc., etc. No, once the die is cast, all subterfuges must be done with; it must be explained directly and openly to the masses what the practical conditions for a successful revolution are at the present time.

V. I. Lenin, *The Latest in “Iskra” Tactics, or Mock Elections as a New Incentive to an Uprising. Collected Works, Vol. 9, pp. 368-69*

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.

V. I. Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" Communism—*an Infantile Disorder*. *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 92-93

An overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive point at the decisive moment—this "law" of military success is also the law of political success, especially in that fierce, seething class war which is called revolution.

V. I. Lenin, *The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 258

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. It is also true, of course, that the present Russian revolution can be victorious only if it is nation-wide *in that specific sense* of the word that the conscious participation of the overwhelming majority of the population in the struggle is essential for victory to be won.

That, however, is the limit of the conventional truthfulness of the catchword of a "nation-wide" revolution. No further conclusions can be drawn from this concept, which is nothing but a truism (only an overwhelming majority can be victorious over an organised and dominant minority). For this reason it is fundamentally incorrect and profoundly un-Marxist to apply it as a general formula, as a model, a criterion of tactics. The concept of a "nation-wide revolu-

tion" 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 Marxism and a return to the vulgar phraseology of the petty-bourgeois democrats or petty-bourgeois socialists.

V. I. Lenin, *On the Question
of a Nation-Wide Revolution.*
Collected Works, Vol. 12, p. 404

The units of the revolutionary army are springing up out of the army itself.

The task of these units is to proclaim the insurrection, to give the masses *military leadership*, as essential in civil war as in any other war; to create strong points for the open mass struggle; to spread the uprising to neighbouring districts; to establish complete political freedom, if only at first in a small part of the country; to embark on the revolutionary transformation of the decayed absolutist system; and to give full scope to the revolutionary creative activity of the masses, who participate but little in this activity in time of peace, but who come to the forefront in revolutionary epochs.

V. I. Lenin, *The Revolutionary Army
and the Revolutionary Government.*
Collected Works, Vol. 8, pp. 562-63

History will not forgive revolutionaries for procrastinating when they could be victorious today (and they certainly will be victorious today), while they risk losing much tomorrow, in fact, they risk losing everything.

If we seize power today, we seize it not in opposition to the Soviets but on their behalf.

The seizure of power is the business of the uprising; its political purpose will become clear after the seizure.

It would be a disaster, or a sheer formality, to await the wavering vote of October 25. The people have the right and are in duty bound to decide such questions not by a vote, but by force; in critical moments of revolution, the people have the right and are in duty bound to give directions to their representatives, even their best representatives, and not to wait for them.

This is proved by the history of all revolutions; and it would be an infinite crime on the part of the revolutionaries were they to let the chance slip, knowing that the *salvation of the revolution*, the offer of peace, the salvation of Petrograd, salvation from famine, the transfer of the land to the peasants depend upon them.

The government is tottering. It must be *given the death-blow* at all costs.

To delay action is fatal.

V. I. Lenin, *Letter to Central Committee Members. Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 235

The Socialist Revolution and the Destruction of the Bourgeois State Machine

This executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organisation, with its ingenious state machinery, embracing wide strata, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half million, this appalling parasitic body, which enmeshes the body of French society like a net and chokes all its pores, sprang up in the days of the absolute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system, which it helped to hasten. The seignorial privileges of the landowners and towns became transformed into so many attributes of the state power, the feudal dignitaries into paid officials and the motley pattern of conflicting medieval plenary powers into the regulated plan of a state authority whose work is divided and centralised as in a factory. The first French Revolution, with its task of breaking all separate local, territorial, urban and provin-

cial powers in order to create the civil unity of the nation, was bound to develop what the absolute monarchy had begun: centralisation, but at the same time the extent, the attributes and the agents of governmental power. Napoleon perfected this state machinery. The Legitimist monarchy and the July monarchy added nothing but a greater division of labour, growing in the same measure as the division of labour within bourgeois society created new groups of interests, and, therefore, new material for state administration. Every *common* interest was straightway severed from society, counterposed to it as a higher, *general* interest, snatched from the activity of society's members themselves and made an object of government activity, from a bridge, a schoolhouse and the communal property of a village community to the railways, the national wealth and the national university of France. Finally, in its struggle against the revolution, the parliamentary republic found itself compelled to strengthen, along with the repressive measures, the resources and centralisation of governmental power. All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it. The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor.

K. Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 332-33

If you look at the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will find that I declare that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it, and this is the preliminary condition for every real people's revolution on the Continent.

K. Marx's Letter to L. Kugelmann, April 12, 1871. Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence, Moscow, 1965, pp. 262-63

What the workers had to destroy was not a more or less inconclusive form of government of the old society, but this very power in its final and ultimate form—*imperial rule*. The diametrical opposite of *imperial rule* was the *Commune*.

In its simplest conception, the Commune meant the initial destruction of the old machinery of state in its central seats, in Paris and the other big cities of France, and its replacement with true self-government which, in Paris and the big cities, those social citadels of the working class, amounted to government by the working class.

K. Marx, Entwürfe zum "Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich" [Zweiter Entwurf]. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 17, S. 595

The proletariat cannot, as the ruling classes and their various competing factions have done after their victory, simply take possession of the existing machinery of state and employ this ready-made machinery for its own purposes. The prime condition for retaining its political power is to reconstruct this inherited executive machine and to destroy it as an instrument of class domination.

K. Marx, Entwürfe zum "Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich" [Zweiter Entwurf]. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 17, S. 591

Revolution consists in the proletariat *destroying* the "administrative apparatus" and the *whole* state machine, replacing it by a new one, made up of the armed workers.

V. I. Lenin, The State and Revolution. Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 486

We have already said above, and shall show more fully later, that the theory of Marx and Engels of the inevitability of a violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. The latter *cannot* be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of "withering away", but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution. . . . The necessity of systematically imbuing the

masses with *this* and precisely this view of violent revolution lies at the root of the *entire* theory of Marx and Engels. The betrayal of their theory by the now prevailing social-chauvinist and Kautskyite trends expresses itself strikingly in both these trends ignoring *such* propaganda and agitation.

The supersession of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution. The abolition of the proletarian state, i.e., of the state in general, is impossible except through the process of "withering away".

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 400

Since the proletariat needs the state as a *special* form of organisation of violence *against* the bourgeoisie, the following conclusion suggests itself: is it conceivable that such an organisation can be created without first abolishing, destroying the state machine created by the bourgeoisie *for themselves*? The *Communist Manifesto* leads straight to this conclusion, and it is of this conclusion that Marx speaks when summing up the experience of the revolution of 1848-51....

The conclusion is extremely precise, definite, practical and palpable: all previous revolutions perfected the state machine, whereas it must be broken, smashed.

This conclusion is the chief and fundamental point in the Marxist theory of the state.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 404-06

Marx's idea is that the working class must *break up*, *smash* the "ready-made state machinery", and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it.

On April 12, 1871, i.e., just at the time of the Commune, Marx wrote to Kugelmann:

"If you look up the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will find that I declare that the next attempt of

the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it [Marx's italics—the original is *zerbrechen*], and this is the precondition for every real people's revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting."

The words, "to smash the bureaucratic-military machine", briefly express the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during a revolution in relation to the state. And it is this lesson that has been not only completely ignored, but positively distorted by the prevailing, Kautskyite, "interpretation" of Marxism!

As for Marx's reference to *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, we have quoted the relevant passage in full above.

It is interesting to note, in particular, two points in the above-quoted argument of Marx. First, he restricts his conclusion to the Continent. This was understandable in 1871, when Britain was still the model of a purely capitalist country, but without a militarist clique and, to a considerable degree, without a bureaucracy. Marx therefore excluded Britain, where a revolution, even a people's revolution, then seemed possible, and indeed was possible, *without* the precondition of destroying the "ready-made state machinery".

Today, in 1917, at the time of the first great imperialist war, this restriction made by Marx is no longer valid. Both Britain and America, the biggest and the last representatives—in the whole world—of Anglo-Saxon "liberty", in the sense that they had no militarist cliques and bureaucracy, have completely sunk into the all-European filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions which subordinate everything to themselves, and suppress everything. Today, in Britain and America, too, "the preliminary condition for every real people's revolution" is the *smashing*, the *destruction* of the "ready-made state machinery" (made and brought up to "European", general imperialist, perfection in those countries in the years 1914-17).

The point is whether the old state machine (bound by thousands of threads to the bourgeoisie and permeated through and through with routine and inertia) shall remain, or be *destroyed* and replaced by a *new* one. Revolution consists not in the new class commanding, governing with the aid of the *old* state machine, but in this class *smashing* this machine and commanding, governing with the aid of a *new* machine.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 486

If the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, if it is a power standing *above* society and "*alienating itself more and more from it*", it is obvious that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, *but also without the destruction* of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class and which is the embodiment of this "alienation". As we shall see later, Marx very explicitly drew this theoretically self-evident conclusion on the strength of a concrete historical analysis of the tasks of the revolution.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 388

Imperialism—the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism—has clearly shown an extraordinary strengthening of the "state machine" and an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries.

World history is now undoubtedly leading, on an incomparably larger scale than in 1852, to the "concentration of all the forces" of the proletarian revolution on the "destruction" of the state machine.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 410

The state ... is a class concept. The state is an organ or instrument of violence exercised by one class against another. So long as it is an instrument of violence exercised by the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, the proletariat can have only one slogan: *destruction* of this state. But when the state will be a proletarian state, when it will be an instrument of violence exercised by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, we shall be fully and unreservedly in favour of a strong state power and of centralism.

V. I. Lenin, *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power? Collected Works, Vol. 26,*
p. 116

"We must not even think of destroying the old state machine; how can we do without ministries and officials?" argues the opportunist, who is completely saturated with philistinism and who, at bottom, not only does not believe in revolution, in the creative power of revolution, but lives in mortal dread of it (like our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries).

"We must think *only* of destroying the old state machine; it is no use probing into the *concrete* lessons of earlier proletarian revolutions and analysing *what* to put in the place of what has been destroyed, and *how*," argues the anarchist (the best of the anarchists, of course, and not those who, following the Kropotkins and Co., trail behind the bourgeoisie). Consequently, the tactics of the anarchist become the tactics of *despair* instead of a ruthlessly bold revolutionary effort to solve concrete problems while taking into account the practical conditions of the mass movement.

Marx teaches us to avoid both errors; he teaches us to act with supreme boldness in destroying the entire old state machine, and at the same time he teaches us to put the question concretely: the Commune was able in the space of a few weeks to *start* building a *new*, proletarian state machine by introducing such-and-such measures to provide wider democracy and to uproot bureaucracy. Let us learn revolutionary boldness from the Communards; let us see

in their practical measures the *outline* of really urgent and immediately possible measures, and then, *following this road*, we shall achieve the complete destruction of bureaucracy.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 488

The distinction between the Marxists and the anarchists is this: (1) The former, while aiming at the complete abolition of the state, recognise that this aim can only be achieved after classes have been abolished by the socialist revolution, as the result of the establishment of socialism, which leads to the withering away of the state. The latter want to abolish the state completely overnight, not understanding the conditions under which the state can be abolished. (2) The former recognise that after the proletariat has won political power it must completely destroy the old state machine and replace it by a new one consisting of an organisation of the armed workers, after the type of the Commune. The latter, while insisting on the destruction of the state machine, have a very vague idea of *what* the proletariat will put in its place and *how* it will use its revolutionary power. The anarchists even deny that the revolutionary proletariat should use the state power, they reject its revolutionary dictatorship. (3) The former demand that the proletariat be trained for revolution by utilising the present state. The anarchists reject this.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 484

In addition to the chiefly "oppressive" apparatus—the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy—the modern state possesses an apparatus which has extremely close connections with the banks and syndicates, an apparatus which performs an enormous amount of accounting and registration work, if it may be expressed this way. This apparatus must not, and should not, be smashed. It must be wrested

from the control of the capitalists; the capitalists and the wires they pull must be *cut off, lopped off, chopped away from* this apparatus; it must be *subordinated* to the proletarian Soviets; it must be expanded, made more comprehensive, and nation-wide. And this *can* be done by utilising the achievements already made by large-scale capitalism (in the same way as the proletarian revolution can, in general, reach its goal only by utilising these achievements).

Capitalism has created an accounting *apparatus* in the shape of the banks, syndicates, postal service, consumers' societies, and office employees' unions. *Without big banks socialism would be impossible.*

V. I. Lenin, *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* Collected Works, Vol. 26, pp. 105-06

Chapter Four

THE HISTORICAL MISSION OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

The Necessity of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

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*.

*K. Marx, Critique of the Gotha Programme.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II,
Moscow, 1962, pp. 32-33*

Once the existing conditions of oppression are eliminated by the transfer of the means of production to the producing workers, whereby every able-bodied individual is forced to work for his livelihood, the sole basis for class domination and oppression will also be put out of the way. But before such a change can be accomplished it is necessary to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, whose prime condition is a proletarian army. The working classes have to win the right to emancipation in the battlefield.

*K. Marx, Rede auf der Feier zum siebenten.
Jahrestag der Internationalen Arbeiterassoziation
am 25. September 1871 in London.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 17, S. 433*

The goal of the Association is to overthrow all the privileged classes and to subject them to the dictatorship of the proletariat, through which the revolution will gain permanence until the materialisation of communism, the ultimate organisational form of the human family.

K. Marx/Engels, Weltgesellschaft der revolutionären Kommunisten. Werke, Bd. 7, S. 553

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And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering 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 prove: 1) that the *existence of classes* is only bound up with *particular historical phases in the development of production*, 2) that the 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's Letter to J. Weydemeyer, March 5, 1852. Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence, Moscow, 1965, p. 69

Ever since 1845, Marx and I have believed that the gradual withering away of the political organisation designated by the word *state* would be one of the ultimate effects of the coming proletarian revolution. From the very beginning, the main purpose of that organisation was to secure by armed force the economic subjection of the working majority by the exclusively privileged minority. The disappearance of an exclusively privileged minority will also see the disappearance of the need for an armed force of oppression, or state power. Yet it has always been our opinion that to attain this and the other much more important goals of the coming social revolution, the working class will first have to assume possession of organised political power, and with

its help stamp out the resistance of the capitalist class and reorganise society. This is set out in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, Chapter II, Conclusion.

The anarchists stand the matter on its head. They declare that the proletarian revolution should *begin* by abolishing the political organisation of the state. Yet the only organisation the proletariat finds ready-made after its victory is the state. This state may have to undergo considerable changes before it can fulfil its new functions. But to destroy it at such a time would be to destroy the only organism whereby the victorious proletariat can make its newly-won power valid, suppress its capitalist adversaries and carry through the economic revolution of society without which its whole victory would end in a fresh defeat and a wholesale slaughter of the workers, similar to that which followed the Paris Commune.

*F. Engels, Zum Tode von Karl Marx.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 19, S. 344-45*

The theory of the class struggle, applied by Marx to the question of the state and the socialist revolution, leads as a matter of course to the recognition of the *political rule* of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, i.e., of undivided power directly backed by the armed force of the people. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be achieved only by the proletariat becoming the *ruling class*, capable of crushing the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and of organising *all* the working and exploited people for the new economic system.

The proletariat needs state power, a centralised organisation of force, an organisation of violence, both to crush the resistance of the exploiters and to *lead* the enormous mass of the population—the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and semi-proletarians—in the work of organising a socialist economy.

*V. I. Lenin, The State and Revolution.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 404*

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

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.

*V. I. Lenin, Draft Programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.
Collected Works, Vol. 6, pp. 28-29*

The dictatorship of the proletariat alone can emancipate humanity from the oppression of capital, from the lies, falsehood and hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy—democracy *for the rich*—and establish democracy *for the poor*, that is, make the blessings of democracy *really* accessible to the workers and poor peasants. . . .

But why not reach this goal without the dictatorship of one class? Why not switch directly to “pure” democracy? So ask the hypocritical friends of the bourgeoisie or the naïve petty bourgeois and philistines gulled by them.

And we reply: Because in any capitalist society the decisive say lies with either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat, while the small proprietors, inevitably, remain wavering, helpless, stupid dreamers of “pure”, i.e., non-class or above-class, democracy. Because from a society in which one class oppresses another there is no way out other than through the dictatorship of the oppressed class. Because the proletariat alone is capable of defeating the bourgeoisie, of overthrowing them, being the sole class which capitalism has united and “schooled”, and which is capable of drawing to its side the wavering mass of the working population with a petty-bourgeois way of life, of drawing them to its side or at least “neutralising” them. Because only mealy-mouthed petty bourgeois and philistines can dream—deceiving thereby both themselves and the workers—of over-

throwing capitalist oppression without a long and difficult process of *suppressing the resistance* of the exploiters. . . . But once expropriation begins the resistance will be fierce and desperate.

V. I. Lenin, "Democracy" and Dictatorship. *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 370-72

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.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*. *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 413

Whoever has failed to understand that dictatorship is essential to the victory of any revolutionary class has no understanding of the history of revolutions, or else does not want to know anything in this field.

V. I. Lenin, *A Contribution to the History of the Question of the Dictatorship*. *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 340

The socialist revolution does not imply a change in the form of state, not the replacement of a monarchy by a republic, nor new elections in which people are assumed to be absolutely "equal" but which are actually nothing but an artificial obfuscation, a screen for the fact that some own property and others do not. . . . In bourgeois society, the mass of the working people are governed by the bourgeoisie with the help of more or less democratic forms. They are governed by a minority, the property-owners, those who have a share in capitalist property and who have turned education and science, that supreme bulwark and flower of capitalist civilisation, into an instrument of exploitation,

into a monopoly, in order to keep the overwhelming majority of the people in slavery. The revolution we have begun and have been making for two years, and which we are firmly determined to carry through to the end is possible and feasible only provided we manage to transfer power to the new class, provided the bourgeoisie, the capitalist slave-owners, the bourgeois intellectuals, the representatives of all the owners and property-holders are replaced by the new class in all spheres of government, in all state affairs, in the entire business of running the new life, from top to bottom.

*V. I. Lenin, Report at the Second All-Russia Trade Union Congress, January 20, 1919.
Collected Works, Vol. 28, pp. 419-20*

Objective conditions make it the urgent task of the day to prepare the proletariat in every way for the conquest of political power in order to carry out the economic and political measures which are the sum and substance of the socialist revolution.

*V. I. Lenin, Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme. Collected Works,
Vol. 24, p. 460*

One of the chief conditions for the socialist revolution's victory is that the working class must realise it has to *rule* and that its rule should be carried through during the transition period from capitalism to socialism. The *rule* of the proletariat, the vanguard of all the working and exploited people, is essential in this transition period if classes are to be completely abolished, if the resistance of the exploiters is to be suppressed, and if the entire mass of the working and exploited people—crushed, downtrodden and disunited by capitalism—are to be *united* around the urban workers and brought in close alliance with them.

*V. I. Lenin, Letter to the Presidium of the Conference of the Proletarian Cultural and Educational Organisations.
Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 94*

During every transition from capitalism to socialism, dictatorship is necessary for two main reasons, or along two main channels. Firstly, capitalism cannot be defeated and eradicated without the ruthless suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, who cannot at once be deprived of their wealth, of their advantages of organisation and knowledge, and consequently for a fairly long period will inevitably try to overthrow the hated rule of the poor; secondly, every great revolution, and a socialist revolution in particular, even if there is no external war, is inconceivable without internal war, i.e., civil war, which is even more devastating than external war, and involves thousands and millions of cases of wavering and desertion from one side to another, implies a state of extreme indefiniteness, lack of equilibrium and chaos. And of course, all the elements of disintegration of the old society, which are inevitably very numerous and connected mainly with the petty bourgeoisie (because it is the petty bourgeoisie that every war and every crisis ruins and destroys first), are bound to "reveal themselves" during such a profound revolution. And these elements of disintegration *cannot* "reveal themselves" otherwise than in an increase of crime, hooliganism, corruption, profiteering and outrages of every kind. To put these down requires time and *requires an iron hand*.

V. I. Lenin, *The Immediate Tasks
of the Soviet Government. Collected Works,*
Vol. 27, p. 264

The dictatorship of the proletariat means a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful* enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased *tenfold* by their overthrow (even if only in a single country), and whose power lies, not only in the strength of international capital, the strength and durability of their international connections, but also in the *force of habit*, in the strength of *small-scale production*. Unfortunately, small-scale production is still widespread in the world, and small-scale production *engenders* capitalism and the

bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale. All these reasons make the dictatorship of the proletariat necessary, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and desperate life-and-death struggle which calls for tenacity, discipline, and a single and inflexible will.

I repeat: the experience of the victorious dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia has clearly shown even to those who are incapable of thinking or have had no occasion to give thought to the matter that absolute centralisation and rigorous discipline in the proletariat are an essential condition of victory over the bourgeoisie.

V. I. Lenin, *"Left-Wing" Communism—
an Infantile Disorder*, *Collected Works*,
Vol. 31, pp. 23-24

Gone is the time of naïve, utopian, fantastic, mechanical and intellectual socialism, when people imagined that it was sufficient to convince the majority, that it was sufficient to paint a beautiful picture of socialist society to persuade the majority to adopt socialism. Gone, too, is the time when it was possible to entertain oneself and others with these children's fairy-tales. Marxism, which recognises the necessity for the class struggle, asserts that mankind can reach the goal of socialism only through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

V. I. Lenin, *First All-Russia Congress
on Adult Education*, *Collected Works*,
Vol. 29, p. 355

Socialism leads to the withering away of *every* state, consequently also of every democracy, but socialism can be implemented only *through* the dictatorship of the proletariat, which combines violence against the bourgeoisie, i.e., the minority of the population, with *full* development of democracy, i. e., the genuinely equal and genuinely universal

participation of the *entire* mass of the population in all state affairs and in all the complex problems of abolishing capitalism.

V. I. Lenin, Reply to P. Kievsky (Y. Pyatakov). Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 25

Proletarian dictatorship is not only an absolutely legitimate means of overthrowing the exploiters and suppressing their resistance, but also absolutely necessary to the entire mass of working people, being their only defence against the bourgeois dictatorship which led to the war and is preparing new wars.

V. I. Lenin, First Congress of the Communist International. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 463

The issue of the struggle for supremacy waged against the bourgeoisie can be settled only by the dictatorship of one class—the proletariat. Only the dictatorship of the proletariat can defeat the bourgeoisie. Only the proletariat can overthrow the bourgeoisie. And only the proletariat can secure the following of the people in the struggle against the bourgeoisie.

V. I. Lenin, Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 200

The proletarian dictatorship is absolutely indispensable during the transition from capitalism to socialism, and in our revolution this truth has been fully confirmed in practice.

V. I. Lenin, Six Theses on the Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government. Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 316

The Essence and Tasks of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

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 hands 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.

*Marx and Engels, Manifesto
of the Communist Party.
Selected Works, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1962, p. 53*

To begin with, the proletarian revolution will create a *democratic constitution* and thereby, directly or indirectly, also political dominance of the proletariat. . . .

Democracy is quite needless to the proletariat if it is not at once used as the means to further measures directly attacking private property and securing the existence of the proletariat. The principal measures, which stem inevitably from the already existing circumstances, are the following:

1) Restriction of private property through progressive taxes, large inheritance taxes, abolition of inheritance by remoter relatives (brothers, nephews, etc.), forced loans, and the like.

2) Gradual expropriation of landed proprietors, factory owners, railway owners and shipowners, partly by the competition of state-operated industry and partly by assignat compensation.

3) Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels against the majority rule of the people.

4) Organisation of work or employment of proletarians on national estates, in factories and workshops, whereby competition of workers among themselves is eliminated and the factory owners, so long as they still exist, are compelled to pay them wages as high as those paid by the state.

5) Equal labour duty for all members of society until private property is entirely done away with. Formation of industrial armies, particularly for agriculture.

6) Centralisation of the credit system and finance in the hands of the state through a national bank with state capital, and suppression of all private banks and bankers.

7) Increase in the number of nationalised factories, workshops, railways and ships; cultivation of all land and improvement of land already under cultivation in proportion to the capital and the workers at the disposal of the nation.

8) Maintenance of all children from the moment they can dispense with maternal care in national institutions at the cost of the state. Combination of education and factory work.

9) Construction of large palaces on the national estates as common dwellings for communities of citizens, who should pursue industry as well as agriculture and enjoy the advantages of urban as well as rural life without the one-sidedness and disadvantages of either.

10) Destruction of all unhealthy and badly built dwellings and town quarters.

11) Equal rights of inheritance for children born in and out of wedlock.

12) Concentration of all means of transport in the hands of the nation. . . .

These measures, and the consequent centralisation, will be practicable to the extent to which the productive forces of the country are multiplied by the labour of the proletariat.

*F. Engels, Grundsätze des Kommunismus.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 4, S. 372, 373-74, 375*

Every state is a machine for the suppression of one class by another. . . . The most democratic bourgeois republic is a machine for the oppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, the proletarian state,

which is a machine for the suppression of *the bourgeoisie by the proletariat*, is not a "form of government", but a *state of a different type*. Suppression is necessary because the bourgeoisie will always furiously resist being expropriated.

V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. Collected Works, Vol. 28, pp. 107-08

Dictatorship is not a "form of government"; that is ridiculous nonsense. And Marx does not speak of the "form of government" but of the form or type of *state*. That is something altogether different, entirely different. It is altogether wrong, too, to say that a *class* cannot govern: such an absurdity could only have been uttered by a "parliamentary cretin", who sees nothing but bourgeois parliaments and notices nothing but "ruling parties". Any European country will provide Kautsky with examples of government by a ruling *class*, for instance, by the landowners in the Middle Ages, in spite of their insufficient organisation.

To sum up: Kautsky has in a most unparalleled manner distorted the concept dictatorship of the proletariat, and has turned Marx into a common liberal; that is, he himself has sunk to the level of a liberal who utters banal phrases about "pure democracy", embellishing and glossing over the class content of *bourgeois* democracy, and shrinking, above all, from the use of *revolutionary violence* by the oppressed class. By so "interpreting" the concept "revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat" as to expunge the revolutionary violence of the oppressed class against its oppressors, Kautsky has beaten the world record in the liberal distortion of Marx. The renegade Bernstein has proved to be a mere puppy compared with the renegade Kautsky.

V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. Collected Works, Vol. 28, pp. 241-42

From this capitalist democracy—that is inevitably narrow and stealthily pushed aside the poor, and is therefore hypocritical and false through and through—forward devel-

opment does not proceed simply, directly and smoothly, towards "greater and greater democracy", as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have us believe. No, forward development, i.e., development towards communism, proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and cannot do otherwise, for the *resistance* of the capitalist exploiters cannot be *broken* by anyone else or in any other way.

And the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the organisation of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of suppressing the oppressors, cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy. *Simultaneously* with an immense expansion of democracy, which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must suppress them in order to free humanity from wage-slavery, their resistance must be crushed by force; it is clear that there is no freedom and no democracy where there is suppression and where there is violence.

Engels expressed this splendidly in his letter to Bebel when he said, as the reader will remember, that "the proletariat needs the state, not in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist."³²

Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e., exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the change democracy undergoes during the *transition* from capitalism to communism.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 461-62

Dictatorship does not necessarily mean the abolition of democracy for the class that exercises the dictatorship over other classes; but it does mean the abolition (or very

material restriction, which is also a form of abolition) of democracy for the class over which, or against which, the dictatorship is exercised.

*V. I. Lenin, The Proletarian Revolution
and the Renegade Kautsky. Collected Works,
Vol. 28, p. 235*

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

*V. I. Lenin, The Proletarian Revolution
and the Renegade Kautsky. Collected Works,
Vol. 28, p. 236*

We have always known, said and emphasised that socialism cannot be "introduced", that it takes shape in the course of the most intense, the most acute class struggle—which reaches heights of frenzy and desperation—and civil war; we have always said that a long period of "birth-pangs" lies between capitalism and socialism; that violence is always the midwife of the old society; that a special state (that is, a special system of organised coercion of a definite class) corresponds to the transitional period between the bourgeois and the socialist society, namely, the dictatorship of the proletariat. What dictatorship implies and means is a state of simmering war, a state of military measures of struggle against the enemies of the proletarian power. The Commune was a dictatorship of the proletariat, and Marx and Engels reproached it for what they considered to be one of the causes of its downfall, namely, that the Commune had not used its armed force with *sufficient* vigour to suppress the resistance of the exploiters.

*V. I. Lenin, Fear of the Collapse of the Old
and the Fight for the New.
Collected Works, Vol. 26, p. 401*

The question of restricting the franchise is a nationally specific and not a general question of the dictatorship. One must approach the question of restricting the franchise by studying the *specific conditions* of the Russian revolution and the *specific path* of its development. This will be done later on in this pamphlet. It would be a mistake, however, to guarantee in advance that the impending proletarian revolutions in Europe will all, or the majority of them, be necessarily accompanied by restriction of the franchise for the bourgeoisie. It may be so. After the war and the experience of the Russian revolution it probably will be so; but it is *not absolutely necessary* for the exercise of the dictatorship, it is not an *indispensable* characteristic of the logical concept "dictatorship", it does not enter as an *indispensable* condition in the historical and class concept "dictatorship".

The indispensable characteristic, the necessary condition of dictatorship is the *forcible* suppression of the exploiters as a *class*, and consequently the *infringement* of "pure democracy", i.e., of equality and freedom, *in regard to that class*....

In which countries, and given what national features of capitalism, democracy for the exploiters will be in one or another form restricted (wholly or in part), infringed upon, is a question of the specific national features of this or that capitalism, of this or that revolution.

V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky. Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 255-56

We do not at all regard the question of disfranchising the bourgeoisie from an absolute point of view, because it is theoretically quite conceivable that the dictatorship of the proletariat may suppress the bourgeoisie at every step without disfranchising them. This is theoretically quite conceivable. Nor do we propose our Constitution as a model for other countries. All we say is that whoever conceives the transition to socialism without the suppression of the bour-

geoisie is not a socialist. But while it is essential to suppress the bourgeoisie as a class, it is not essential to deprive them of suffrage and of equality.

*V. I. Lenin, Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).
Collected Works, Vol. 29, pp. 184-85*

The dictatorship of the proletariat implies a recognition of the necessity to suppress the resistance of the exploiters by force, and the readiness, ability and determination to do it.

*V. I. Lenin, Draft (or Theses) of the R.C.P.'s
Reply to the Letter of the Independent
Social-Democratic Party of Germany.
Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 340*

The proletariat needs the state—this is repeated by all the opportunists, social-chauvinists and Kautskyites, who assure us that this is what Marx taught. But they “forget” to add that, in the first place, according to Marx, the proletariat needs only a state which is withering away, i.e., a state so constituted that it begins to wither away immediately, and cannot but wither away. And, secondly, the working people need a “state, i.e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class”.

The state is a special organisation of force: it is an organisation of violence for the suppression of some class. What class must the proletariat suppress? Naturally, only the exploiting class, i.e., the bourgeoisie. The working people need the state only to suppress the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat can direct this suppression, can carry it out. For the proletariat is the only class that is consistently revolutionary, the only class that can unite all the working and exploited people in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in completely removing it.

The exploiting classes need political rule to maintain exploitation, i.e., in the selfish interests of an insignificant

minority against the vast majority of the people. The exploited classes need political rule in order to completely abolish all exploitation, i.e., in the interests of the vast majority of the people, and against the insignificant minority consisting of the modern slave-owners—the landowners and capitalists.

*V. I. Lenin, The State and Revolution.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 402-03*

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.

*V. I. Lenin, Greetings to the Hungarian
Workers. Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 388*

As I have had occasion to point out more than once, among other occasions in the speech I delivered at a session of the Petrograd Soviet on March 12, the dictatorship of the proletariat is not only the use of force against the exploiters, and not even mainly the use of force. The economic foundation of this use of revolutionary force, the guarantee of its effectiveness and success is the fact that the proletariat represents and creates a higher type of social organi-

sation of labour compared with capitalism. This is what is important, this is the source of the strength and the guarantee that the final triumph of communism is inevitable.

*V. I. Lenin, A Great Beginning.
Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 419*

If we translate the Latin, scientific, historico-philosophical term "dictatorship of the proletariat" into simpler language, it means just the following:

Only a definite class, namely, the urban workers and the factory, industrial workers in general, is able to lead the whole mass of the working and exploited people in the struggle to throw off the yoke of capital, in actually carrying it out, in the struggle to maintain and consolidate the victory, in the work of creating the new, socialist social system and in the entire struggle for the complete abolition of classes.

*V. I. Lenin, A Great Beginning.
Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 420*

The dictatorship of the proletariat means that all toiling and exploited people, who have been disunited, deceived, intimidated, oppressed, downtrodden and crushed by the capitalist class, come under the full leadership of the only class trained for that leadership by the whole history of capitalism.

*V. I. Lenin, Theses on the Fundamental
Tasks of the Second Congress of the
Communist International. Collected Works,
Vol. 31, p. 191*

The proletariat should become the ruling class in the sense of being the leader of all who work; it should be the ruling class politically.

The illusion that only the bourgeoisie could run the state must be fought against. The proletariat must take the rule of the state upon itself.

*V. I. Lenin, Report on the Economic Condition of Petrograd Workers and the Tasks of the Working Class
Delivered at a Meeting of the Workers' Section of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies,
December 4 (17), 1917. Collected Works, Vol. 26, p. 365*

The supreme principle of the dictatorship is the maintenance of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry in order that the proletariat may retain its leading role and its political power.

*V. I. Lenin, Third Congress
of the Communist International.
Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 490*

In mockery of the teachings of Marx, those gentlemen, the opportunists, including the Kautskyites, "teach" the people that the proletariat must first win a majority by means of universal suffrage, then obtain state power, by the vote of that majority, and only after that, on the basis of "consistent" (some call it "pure") democracy, organise socialism.

But we say on the basis of the teachings of Marx and the experience of the Russian revolution:

The proletariat must first overthrow the bourgeoisie and win *for itself* state power, and then use that state power, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat, as an instrument of its class for the purpose of winning the sympathy of the majority of the working people.

*V. I. Lenin, The Constituent Assembly
Elections and the Dictatorship of
the Proletariat. Collected Works,
Vol. 30, p. 263*

The dictatorship of the proletariat implies and signifies a clear concept of the truth that the proletariat, because of its objective economic position in every capitalist society, *correctly* expresses the interests of the *entire mass* of working and exploited people, all semi-proletarians (i.e., those who live partly by the sale of their labour-power), all small peasants and similar categories.

V. I. Lenin, *Draft (or Theses) of the R.C.P.'s Reply to the Letter of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany. Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 339*

Proletarian dictatorship is similar to the dictatorship of other classes in that it arises out of the need, as every other dictatorship does, to forcibly suppress the resistance of the class that is losing its political sway. The fundamental distinction between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of other classes—landlord dictatorship in the Middle Ages and bourgeois dictatorship in all the civilised capitalist countries—consists in the fact that the dictatorship of the landowners and bourgeoisie was the forcible suppression of the resistance offered by the vast majority of the population, namely, the working people. In contrast, proletarian dictatorship is the forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, i.e., an insignificant minority of the population, the landowners and capitalists.

It follows that proletarian dictatorship must inevitably entail not only a change in democratic forms and institutions, generally speaking, but precisely such a change as provides an unparalleled extension of the actual enjoyment of democracy by those oppressed by capitalism—the toiling classes.

And indeed, the form of proletarian dictatorship that has already taken shape, i.e., Soviet power in Russia, the Räte-System in Germany, the Shop Stewards Committees in Britain and similar Soviet institutions in other countries, all this implies and presents to the toiling classes, i.e., the vast majority of the population, greater practical opportunities

for enjoying democratic rights and liberties than ever existed before, even approximately, in the best and the most democratic bourgeois republics.

*V. I. Lenin, First Congress
of the Communist International.
Collected Works, Vol. 28, pp. 464-65*

Throughout the world socialism has set itself the task of combating every kind of exploitation of man by man. That democracy has real value for us which serves the exploited, the underprivileged. If those who do not work are disfranchised that would be real equality between people. Those who do not work should not eat.

*V. I. Lenin, The Tasks of the Working Women's
Movement in the Soviet
Republic. Collected Works,
Vol. 30, p. 42*

But if the oppression of the bourgeois system is to be abolished, there has to be firm revolutionary power of the working classes, the power of a revolutionary state. This is the essence of communism. When the masses are themselves taking up arms to start an unrelenting struggle against the exploiters, when a new people's power is being applied that has nothing in common with parliamentary power, it is no longer the old state, outdated in its traditions and forms, that they have before them, but something new, something based on the creative power of the people.

*V. I. Lenin, Third All-Russia Congress
of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers'
and Peasants' Deputies. Collected Works,
Vol. 26, p. 475*

The whole point is that a bourgeois state which is exercising the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through a democratic republic cannot confess to the people that it is serving the bourgeoisie; it cannot tell the truth, and has to play the hypocrite.

But the state of the Paris Commune type, the Soviet state, openly and frankly tells the people the *truth* and declares that it is the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants; and by this truth it wins over scores and scores of millions of new citizens who are kept down in any democratic republic, but who are drawn by the Soviets into political life, *into democracy*, into the administration of the state. The Soviet Republic sends into the rural districts detachments of armed workers, primarily the more advanced, from the capitals. These workers carry socialism into the countryside, win over the poor, organise and enlighten them, and help them to *suppress the resistance of the bourgeoisie*.

V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky. Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 302-03

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.

V. I. Lenin, *The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 263

It was natural and inevitable in the first period after the proletarian revolution that we should be engaged primarily on the main and fundamental task of overcoming the resistance of the bourgeoisie, of vanquishing the exploiters, of crushing their conspiracy (like the "slave-owners"³³ conspiracy" to surrender Petrograd, in which all from the Black Hundreds³⁴ and Cadets³⁵ to the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were involved). But simultaneously with this task, another task comes to the forefront just as inevitably and ever more imperatively as time goes on, namely, the more important task of positive communist construction, the creation of new economic relations, of a new society.

*V. I. Lenin, A Great Beginning.
Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 419*

In order to administer successfully . . . we must be able to do *practical organisational work*. This is the most difficult task, because it is a matter of organising in a new way the most deep-rooted, the economic, foundations of life of scores of millions of people. And it is the most gratifying task, because only *after* it has been fulfilled (in the principal and main outlines) will it be possible to say that *Russia has become* not only a Soviet, but also a socialist, republic.

*V. I. Lenin, The Immediate Tasks
of the Soviet Government.
Collected Works, Vol. 27,
pp. 242-43*

We must organise economic life on a new and more perfect basis, counting on and utilising all the achievements of capitalism. Without this we shall never be able to build socialism and communism. This is much more difficult than the war tasks. In many respects the war tasks are easier to accomplish. They can be accomplished by enthusiasm, energy and self-sacrifice. It was easier for the peasant to fight

his inveterate enemy, the landowner, and more within his understanding.

V. I. Lenin, Speech Delivered at the Third All-Russia Trade Union Congress, April 7, 1920. Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 507

We must devote our attention to business and not to resolutions. Under the bourgeois system, business matters were managed by private owners and not by state agencies; but now, business matters are our common concern. These are the politics that interest us most.

V. I. Lenin, Tenth All-Russia Conference of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 430

The task of governing the country that has now forged to the forefront for Soviet power has the distinctive feature that today—probably for the first time in the history of modern civilisation—we are concerned with government in which economics, rather than politics, holds priority. Usually, the word “government” is associated precisely and principally with activities that are predominantly, or even purely, political. Yet the very foundations, the very essence of Soviet power, like the essence of the transition from capitalist to socialist society, lies in that political tasks are subordinate in relation to the economic tasks. Today, especially after the practical experience of the more than four months of Soviet power in Russia, it ought to be perfectly clear to us that the task of government now boils down first and foremost to the purely economic job of curing the country of its war wounds, restoring the productive forces, keeping account of, and controlling, the production and distribution of products and raising the productivity of labour. In a nutshell, the task boils down to economic reorganisation.

It may be said that this task breaks down into two main departments: 1) keeping account of, and controlling, the

production and distribution of products in terms of the broadest, all-embracing and universal forms of such accounting and control, and 2) raising the productivity of labour.

*V. I. Lenin, Original Version of the Article
"The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government".
Collected Works, Fifth Russian edition,
Vol. 36, pp. 130-31*

It is one of our basic tasks to contrapose our own truth to bourgeois "truth", and win its recognition.

The transition from bourgeois society to the policy of the proletariat is a very difficult one, all the more so for the bourgeoisie incessantly slandering us through its entire apparatus of propaganda and agitation. It bends every effort to play down an even more important mission of the dictatorship of the proletariat, its educational mission, which is particularly important in Russia, where the proletariat constitutes a minority of the population. Yet in Russia this mission must be given priority, for we must prepare the masses to build up socialism. The dictatorship of the proletariat would have been out of the question if, in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, the proletariat had not developed a keen class-consciousness, strict discipline and profound devotion, in other words, all the qualities required to assure the proletariat's complete victory over its old enemy.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech Delivered at an
All-Russia Conference of Political
Education Workers of Gubernia and
Uyezd Education Departments,
November 3, 1920. Collected Works,
Vol. 31, p. 364*

In order to achieve victory, in order to build up and consolidate socialism the proletariat must fulfil a twofold or dual task: first, it must, by its supreme heroism in the revo-

lutionary struggle against capital, win over the entire mass of the working and exploited people; it must win them over, organise them and lead them in the struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and utterly suppress their resistance. Secondly, it must lead the whole mass of the working and exploited people, as well as all the petty-bourgeois groups, on to the road of new economic development, towards the creation of a new social bond, a new labour discipline, a new organisation of labour, which will combine the last word in science and capitalist technology with the mass association of class-conscious workers creating large-scale socialist industry.

*V. I. Lenin, A Great Beginning.
Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 423*

The experience of the revolution shows that changes in the form of government are not difficult, that it is possible to oust the ruling class of landowners and capitalists in a short time; if the revolution develops successfully it may be done in a few weeks, but the reorganisation of the fundamental conditions of economic life, the struggle against habits that in the course of hundreds and thousands of years have become second nature to every petty proprietor is something that requires many long years of persistent organisational work after the exploiting classes have been completely overthrown.

*V. I. Lenin, The Food and War Situation.
Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 523*

When a revolution takes place, it does not happen as in the case of the death of an individual, when the deceased is simply removed. When the old society perishes, its corpse cannot be nailed up in a coffin and lowered into the grave. It disintegrates in our midst; the corpse rots and infects us.

No great revolution has ever proceeded otherwise; no great revolution can proceed otherwise. The very things

we have to combat in order to preserve and develop the sprouts of the new order in an atmosphere infested with the miasmas of a decaying corpse, the literary and political atmosphere, the play of political parties, which from the Constitutional-Democrats to the Mensheviks are infested with these miasmas of a decaying corpse, are all going to be used against us to put a spoke in our wheel. A socialist revolution can never be engendered in any other way; and not a single country can pass from capitalism to socialism except in an atmosphere of disintegrating capitalism and of painful struggle against it.

V. I. Lenin, Joint Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet of Workers', Peasants' and Red Army Deputies and the Trade Unions, June 4, 1918. Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 434

One of the basic tasks is to raise the level of labour productivity, for without this the full transition to communism is impossible. In addition to lengthy work to educate the masses and raise their cultural level, the achievement of this goal requires the immediate, extensive and comprehensive employment in science and technology of those specialists who have been left us as our heritage from capitalism and, as a rule, are imbued with the bourgeois world outlook and habits.

V. I. Lenin, Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 113

The workers were never separated by a Chinese Wall from the old society. And they have preserved a good deal of the traditional mentality of capitalist society. The workers are building a new society without themselves having become new people, or cleansed of the filth of the old world; they are still standing up to their knees in that filth. We

can only dream of clearing the filth away. It would be utterly utopian to think this could be done all at once. It would be so utopian that in practice it would only postpone socialism to kingdom come.

No, that is not the way we intend to build socialism. We are building while still standing on the soil of capitalist society, combating all those weaknesses and shortcomings which also affect the working people and which tend to drag the proletariat down. There are many old separatist habits and customs of the small holder in this struggle, and we still feel the effects of the old maxim: "Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." There used to be quite enough of that in every trade union, in every factory, which often thought only of itself, and left everything else to the tender care of the Lord and our betters. We have been through all that, and know the cost. It has been the cause of so many mistakes, so many dreadful mistakes, that now, on the strength of that experience, we give our comrades a most emphatic warning against any arbitrary action in this field. Instead of building socialism, it would mean we had all succumbed to the weaknesses of capitalism.

*V. I. Lenin, Report at the Second All-Russia
Trade Union Congress, January 20, 1919.
Collected Works, Vol. 28, pp. 424-25*

The urgency of the struggle against this evil, against the most deep-rooted petty-bourgeois national prejudices, looms ever larger with the mounting exigency of the task of converting the dictatorship of the proletariat from a national dictatorship (i.e., existing in a single country and incapable of determining world politics) into an international one (i.e., a dictatorship of the proletariat involving at least several advanced countries and capable of exercising a decisive influence upon world politics as a whole).

*V. I. Lenin, Preliminary Draft Theses
on the National and the Colonial Questions.
Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 148*

We in Russia (in the third year since the overthrow of the bourgeoisie) are making the first steps in the transition from capitalism to socialism or the lower stage of communism. Classes still remain, and will remain everywhere *for years after* the proletariat's conquest of power. Perhaps in Britain, where there is no peasantry (but where petty proprietors exist), this period may be shorter. The abolition of classes means, not merely ousting the landowners and the capitalists—that is something we accomplished with comparative ease; it also means *abolishing the small commodity producers*, and they *cannot be ousted*, or crushed; we *must learn to live* with them. They can (and must) be transformed and re-educated only by means of very prolonged, slow, and cautious organisational work.

V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism—
an Infantile Disorder. Collected Works,
Vol. 31, p. 44

Economy in the Period of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

No one, I think, in studying the question of the economic system of Russia, has denied its transitional character. Nor, I think, has any Communist denied that the term Soviet Socialist Republic implies the determination of the Soviet power to achieve the transition to socialism, and not that the existing economic system is recognised as a socialist order.

But what does the word "transition" mean? Does it not mean, as applied to an economy, that the present system contains elements, particles, fragments of both capitalism and socialism? Everyone will admit that it does. But not all who admit this take the trouble to consider what elements actually constitute the various socio-economic structures that exist in Russia at the present time. And this is the crux of the question.

Let us enumerate these elements:

- 1) patriarchal, i.e., to a considerable extent natural, peasant farming;
- 2) small commodity production (this includes the majority of those peasants who sell their grain);
- 3) private capitalism;
- 4) state capitalism;
- 5) socialism.

Russia is so vast and so varied that all these different types of socio-economic forms are intermingled. This is what constitutes the specific feature of the situation.

The question arises: What elements predominate? Clearly, in a small-peasant country, the petty-bourgeois element predominates and it must predominate, for the great majority—those working the land—are small commodity producers.

*V. I. Lenin, The Tax in Kind.
Collected Works, Vol. 32, pp. 330-31*

While we live in a small-peasant country, there is a firmer economic basis for capitalism in Russia than for communism. That must be borne in mind. Anyone who has carefully observed life in the countryside, as compared with life in the cities, knows that we have not torn up the roots of capitalism and have not undermined the foundation, the basis, of the internal enemy. The latter depends on small-scale production, and there is only one way of undermining it, namely, to place the economy of the country, including agriculture, on a new technical basis, that of modern large-scale production.

*V. I. Lenin, The Eighth All-Russia Congress
of Soviets. Collected Works, Vol. 31,
p. 516*

Theoretically, there can be no doubt that between capitalism and communism there lies a definite transition period which must combine the features and properties of both these forms of social economy. This transition period has

to be a period of struggle between dying capitalism and nascent communism—or, in other words, between capitalism which has been defeated but not destroyed and communism which has been born but is still very feeble.

The necessity for a whole historical era distinguished by these transitional features should be obvious not only to Marxists, but to any educated person who is in any degree acquainted with the theory of development. Yet all the talk on the subject of the transition to socialism which we hear from present-day petty-bourgeois democrats (and such, in spite of their spurious socialist label, are all the leaders of the Second International, including such individuals as MacDonald, Jean Longuet, Kautsky and Friedrich Adler) is marked by complete disregard of this obvious truth. Petty-bourgeois democrats are distinguished by an aversion to class struggle, by their dreams of avoiding it, by their efforts to smooth over, to reconcile, to remove sharp corners. Such democrats, therefore, either avoid recognising any necessity for a whole historical period of transition from capitalism to communism or regard it as their duty to concoct schemes for reconciling the two contending forces instead of leading the struggle of one of these forces....

In Russia, the dictatorship of the proletariat must inevitably differ in certain particulars from what it would be in the advanced countries, owing to the very great backwardness and petty-bourgeois character of our country. But the basic forces—and the basic forms of social economy—are the same in Russia as in any capitalist country, so that the peculiarities can apply only to what is of lesser importance.

The basic forms of social economy are capitalism, petty commodity production, and communism. The basic forces are the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie (the peasantry in particular) and the proletariat.

The economic system of Russia in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat represents the struggle of labour, united on communist principles on the scale of a vast state and making its first steps—the struggle against petty commodity production and against the capitalism which still

persists and against that which is newly arising on the basis of petty commodity production.

V. I. Lenin, Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Collected Works, Vol. 30, pp. 107-08

If we were to ask ourselves what the present economic system of Soviet Russia is, we should have to say that it consists in laying the foundations of socialism in large-scale industry, in reorganising the old capitalist economy with the capitalists putting up a stubborn resistance in millions and millions of different ways.

V. I. Lenin, Report on Subbotniks Delivered to a Moscow City Conference of the R.C.P.(B.), December 20, 1919. Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 286

The Classes and the Class Struggle in the Period of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The dictatorship of the proletariat is *also* a period of class struggle, which is inevitable as long as classes have not been abolished, and which changes in form, being particularly fierce and particularly peculiar in the period immediately following the overthrow of capital. The proletariat does not cease the class struggle after it has captured political power, but continues it until classes are abolished—of course, under different circumstances, in different form and by different means.

V. I. Lenin, A Great Beginning. Collected Works, Vol. 29, pp. 420-21

After capturing state power the proletariat does not thereby cease its class struggle, but continues it in a different form and by different means. The dictatorship of the pro-

letariat is the class struggle of the proletariat conducted with the aid of an instrument like state power, a class struggle, one of whose aims is to demonstrate to the non-proletarian sections of the working people by means of their long experience and a long list of practical examples that it is more to their advantage to side with the dictatorship of the proletariat than with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and that there can be no third course.

*V. I. Lenin, The Constituent
Assembly Elections and the
Dictatorship of the Proletariat.
Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 269*

The dictatorship of the proletariat does not signify a cessation of the class struggle, but its continuation in a new form and with new weapons. This dictatorship is essential as long as classes exist, as long as the bourgeoisie, overthrown in one country, intensifies tenfold its attacks on socialism on an international scale. In the transition period, the small farmer class is bound to experience certain vacillations. The difficulties of transition, and the influence of the bourgeoisie, inevitably cause the mood of this mass to change from time to time. Upon the proletariat, enfeebled and to a certain extent declassed by the destruction of the large-scale machine industry, which is its vital foundation, devolves the very difficult but paramount historic task of holding out in spite of these vacillations, and of carrying to victory its cause of emancipating labour from the yoke of capital.

*V. I. Lenin, Third Congress of the
Communist International. Collected
Works, Vol. 32, p. 460*

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 im-

mediately 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.

V. I. Lenin, *Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists. Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 60*

It was not difficult to drive out the tsar—that required only a few days. It was not very difficult to drive out the landowners—that was done in a few months. Nor was it very difficult to drive out the capitalists. But it is incomparably more difficult to abolish classes; we still have the division into workers and peasants. If the peasant is installed on his plot of land and appropriates his surplus grain, that is, grain that he does not need for himself or for his cattle, while the rest of the people have to go without bread, then the peasant becomes an exploiter. The more grain he clings to, the more profitable he finds it; as for the rest, let them starve: “The more they starve, the dearer I can sell this grain.” All should work according to a single common plan, on common land, on common factories and in accordance with a common system. Is that easy to attain? You see that it is not as easy as driving out the tsar, the landowners and the capitalists. What is required is that the proletariat re-educate a section of the peasantry; it must win over the working peasants in order to crush the resistance of those peasants who are rich and are profiting from the poverty and want of the rest. Hence the task of the proletarian struggle is not quite completed after we have overthrown the tsar and driven out the landowners and capitalists; to accomplish that is the task of the system we call the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The class struggle is continuing; it has merely changed its forms. It is the class struggle of the proletariat to

prevent the return of the old exploiters, to unite in a single union the scattered masses of unenlightened peasants. The class struggle is continuing and it is our task to subordinate all interests to that struggle.

V. I. Lenin, *The Tasks of the Youth Leagues. Collected Works, Vol. 31,*
pp. 292-93

Socialism means the abolition of classes. The dictatorship of the proletariat has done all it could to abolish classes. But classes cannot be abolished at one stroke.

And classes still *remain* and *will remain* in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship will become unnecessary when classes disappear. Without the dictatorship of the proletariat they will not disappear.

Classes have remained, but in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat *every* class has undergone a change, and the relations between the classes have also changed. The class struggle does not disappear under the dictatorship of the proletariat; it merely assumes different forms.

Under capitalism the proletariat was an oppressed class, a class which had been deprived of the means of production, the only class which stood directly and completely opposed to the bourgeoisie, and therefore the only one capable of being revolutionary to the very end. Having overthrown the bourgeoisie and conquered political power, the proletariat has become the *ruling* class; it wields state power, it exercises control over means of production already socialised; it guides the wavering and intermediary elements and classes; it crushes the increasingly stubborn resistance of the exploiters. All these are *specific* tasks of the class struggle, tasks which the proletariat formerly did not and could not have set itself.

The class of exploiters, the landowners and capitalists, has not disappeared and cannot disappear all at once under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The exploiters have been smashed, but not destroyed. They still have an international base in the form of international capital, of which

they are a branch. They still retain certain means of production in part, they still have money, they still have vast social connections. Because they have been defeated, the energy of their resistance has increased a hundred- and a thousandfold. The "art" of state, military and economic administration gives them a superiority, and a very great superiority, so that their importance is incomparably greater than their numerical proportion of the population. The class struggle waged by the overthrown exploiters against the victorious vanguard of the exploited, i.e., the proletariat, has become incomparably more bitter. And it cannot be otherwise in the case of a revolution, unless this concept is replaced (as it is by all the heroes of the Second International) by reformist illusions.

Lastly, the peasants, like the petty bourgeoisie in general, occupy a half-way, intermediate position *even* under the dictatorship of the proletariat: on the one hand, they are a fairly large (and in backward Russia, a vast) mass of working people, united by the common interest of all working people to emancipate themselves from the landowner and the capitalist; on the other hand, they are disunited small proprietors, property-owners and traders. Such an economic position inevitably causes them to vacillate between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In view of the acute form which the struggle between these two classes has assumed, in view of the incredibly severe break-up of all social relations, and in view of the great attachment of the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie generally to the old, the routine, and the unchanging, it is only natural that we should inevitably find them swinging from one side to the other, that we should find them wavering, changeable, uncertain, and so on.

In relation to this class—or to these social elements—the proletariat must strive to establish its influence over it, to guide it. To give leadership to the vacillating and unstable—such is the task of the proletariat.

If we compare all the basic forces or classes and their interrelations, as modified by the dictatorship of the prole-

tariat, we shall realise how unutterably nonsensical and theoretically stupid is the common petty-bourgeois idea shared by all representatives of the Second International, that the transition to socialism is possible "by means of democracy" in general. The fundamental source of this error lies in the prejudice inherited from the bourgeoisie that "democracy" is something absolute and above classes. As a matter of fact, democracy itself passes into an entirely new phase under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the class struggle rises to a higher level, dominating over each and every form,

*V. I. Lenin, Economics and Politics
in the Era of the Dictatorship of
the Proletariat. Collected Works,
Vol. 30, pp. 114-16*

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the most determined and revolutionary form of the proletariat's class struggle against the bourgeoisie.

*V. I. Lenin, Theses on the Fundamental
Tasks of the Second Congress of the
Communist International. Collected
Works, Vol. 31, pp. 190-91*

The abolition of classes means, not merely ousting the landowners and the capitalists—that is something we accomplished with comparative ease; it also means *abolishing the small commodity producers*, and they cannot be ousted, or crushed; we must *learn to live* with them. They can (and must) be transformed and re-educated only by means of very prolonged, slow, and cautious organisational work. They surround the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat, and constantly causes among the proletariat relapses into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism, and alternating moods of exaltation and dejection. The strictest centralisation and discipline are required

within the political party of the proletariat in order to counteract this, in order that the *organisational* role of the proletariat (and that is its *principal* role) may be exercised correctly, successfully and victoriously. The dictatorship of the proletariat means a persistent struggle—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society.

V. I. Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" Communism—
an Infantile Disorder. *Collected Works*,
Vol. 31, p. 44

The dictatorship of the proletariat is not the end of class struggle but its continuation in new forms. The dictatorship of the proletariat is class struggle waged by a proletariat that is victorious and has taken political power into its hands against a bourgeoisie that has been defeated but not destroyed, a bourgeoisie that has not vanished, not ceased to offer resistance, but that has intensified its resistance. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a specific form of class alliance between the proletariat, the vanguard of the working people, and the numerous non-proletarian strata of the working people (petty bourgeoisie, small proprietors, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, etc.), or the majority of these strata, an alliance against capital, an alliance whose aim is the complete overthrow of capital, complete suppression of the resistance offered by the bourgeoisie as well as of attempts at restoration on its part, an alliance for the final establishment and consolidation of socialism.

V. I. Lenin, *Foreword to the Published Speech*
"Deception of the People with Slogans of Freedom
and Equality". *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 380-81

Naturally, in view of the fact that the peasantry preponderates enormously among the population, the principal task—of our policy in general, and of our economic policy

in particular—is to establish definite relations between the working class and the peasantry. For the first time in modern history we have a social system from which the exploiting class has been eliminated but in which there are two different classes—the working class and the peasantry. The enormous preponderance of the peasantry could not but have an effect on our economic policy, and our policy in general. The principal problem that still confronts us—and will inevitably confront us for many years to come—is that of establishing proper relations between these two classes, proper from the standpoint of abolishing classes. The enemies of the Soviet power discuss the formula of agreement between the working class and the peasantry with such frequency, and so very often use it against us, because it is so vague. Agreement between the working class and the peasantry may be taken to mean anything. Unless we assume that, from the working-class standpoint, an agreement is possible in principle, permissible, and correct only if it supports the dictatorship of the working class and is one of the measures aimed at the abolition of classes, then, of course, it remains a formula on which all the enemies of the Soviet power, all the enemies of the dictatorship, operate.

*V. I. Lenin, Tenth All-Russia Conference
of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works,
Vol. 32, p. 404*

Our united efforts in the direction we have taken will lay a firm foundation for a successful economic policy that will create an alliance between the working class and the peasantry, the two main classes on which the Soviet power rests, the economic alliance which alone can guarantee the success of all our work of socialist construction.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech Delivered at the Third
All-Russia Food Conference, June 16, 1921.
Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 449*

As long as classes exist, the class struggle is inevitable. In the period of transition from capitalism to socialism the existence of classes is inevitable; and the Programme of the Russian Communist Party definitely states that we are taking only the first steps in the transition from capitalism to socialism. Hence, the Communist Party, the Soviet government and the trade unions must frankly admit the existence of the class struggle and its inevitability until the electrification of industry and agriculture is completed—at least in the main—and until small production and the supremacy of the market are thereby cut off at the roots.

On the other hand, it is obvious that under capitalism the ultimate object of the strike struggle is to break up the state machine and to overthrow the given class state power. Under the transitional type of proletarian state such as ours, however, the ultimate object of the strike struggle can only be to fortify the proletarian state and the state power of the proletarian class by combating the bureaucratic distortions, mistakes and flaws in this state, and by curbing the class appetites of the capitalists who try to evade its control, etc. Hence, the Communist Party, the Soviet government and the trade unions must never forget and must never conceal from the workers and the mass of the working people that the strike struggle in a state where the proletariat holds political power can be explained and justified only by the bureaucratic distortions of the proletarian state and by all sorts of survivals of the old capitalist system in the government offices on the one hand, and by the political immaturity and cultural backwardness of the mass of the working people on the other. Hence, when friction and disputes arise between individual contingents of the working class and individual departments and organs of the workers' state, the task of the trade unions is to facilitate the speediest and smoothest settlement of these disputes to the maximum advantage of the groups of workers they represent, taking care, however, not to prejudice the interests of other groups of workers and the development of the workers' state and its economy as a

whole; for only this development can lay the foundations for the material and spiritual welfare of the working class.

V. I. Lenin, Draft Theses on "The Role and Functions of the Trade Unions Under the New Economic Policy". Collected Works, Vol. 33, pp. 186-87

The competition and rivalry that we have placed on the order of the day by proclaiming NEP is a serious business. It appears to be going on in all government offices; but as a matter of fact it is one more form of the struggle between two irreconcilably hostile classes. It is another form of the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

V. I. Lenin, Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 289

We have not learned to wage the class struggle in the newspapers as skilfully as the bourgeoisie did. Remember the skill with which it *hounded its* class enemies in the press, ridiculed them, disgraced them, and tried to sweep them away. And we? Doesn't the class struggle in the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism take the form of safeguarding the interests of the working *class* against the few, the groups and sections of workers who stubbornly cling to capitalist traditions and continue to regard the Soviet state in the old way: work as little and as badly as they can and grab as much money as possible from the state.

V. I. Lenin, The Character of Our Newspapers. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 97

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. . . .

V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 254

The Forms of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The Multiplicity of Forms of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

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

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*. Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 413

There is a still greater difference, despite homogeneity in essentials, between political forms in the advanced imperialist countries—America, England, France, Germany.

The same variety will manifest itself also in the path mankind will follow from the imperialism of today to the socialist revolution of tomorrow.

*V. I. Lenin, A Caricature of
Marxism and Imperialist Economism.
Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 69*

The Paris Commune as a Form of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

What is the Commune, this Sphinx that puts bourgeois minds to so hard a test?

In its plainest conception, it is the form in which the working class seizes political power in Paris and the other industrial centres, the social strongholds of the proletariat.

*K. Marx, Entwürfe zum "Bürgerkrieg
in Frankreich" [Zweiter Entwurf].
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 17, S. 591*

The direct antithesis to the empire was the Commune. The cry of "social republic", with which the revolution of February was ushered in by the Paris proletariat, did but express a vague aspiration after a Republic that was not only to supersede the monarchical form of class-rule, but class-rule itself. The Commune was the positive form of that Republic. . . .

The first decree of the Commune . . . was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people.

The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time. Instead of continuing to be the agent of the Central Government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the

responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the Administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at *workmen's wages*. The vested interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of State disappeared along with the high dignitaries themselves. Public functions ceased to be the private property of the tools of the Central Government. Not only municipal administration, but the whole initiative hitherto exercised by the State was laid into the hands of the Commune.

Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the physical force elements of the old Government, the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the "parson-power", by the disestablishment and disendowment of all churches as proprietary bodies. The priests were sent back to the recesses of private life, there to feed upon the alms of the faithful in imitation of their predecessors, the Apostles. The whole of the educational institutions were opened to the people gratuitously, and at the same time cleared of all interference of Church and State. Thus, not only was education made accessible to all, but science itself freed from the fetters which class prejudice and governmental force had imposed upon it.

The judicial functionaries were to be divested of that sham independence which had but served to mask their abject subserviency to all succeeding governments to which, in turn, they had taken, and broken, the oaths of allegiance. Like the rest of public servants, magistrates and judges were to be elective, responsible, and revocable.

The Paris Commune was, of course, to serve as a model to all the great industrial centres of France. The communal régime once established in Paris and the secondary centres, the old centralised Government would in the provinces, too, have to give way to the self-government of the producers. In a rough sketch of national organisation which the Commune had no time to develop, it states clearly that the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest

country hamlet, and that in the rural districts the standing army was to be replaced by a national militia, with an extremely short term of service. The rural communes of every district were to administer their common affairs by an assembly of delegates in the central town, and these district assemblies were again to send deputies to the National Delegation in Paris, each delegate to be at any time revocable and bound by the *mandat impératif* (formal instructions) of his constituents. The few but important functions which still would remain for a central government were not to be suppressed, as has been intentionally mis-stated, but were to be discharged by Communal, and therefore strictly responsible agents. The unity of the nation was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, to be organised by the Communal Constitution and to become a reality by the destruction of the State power which claimed to be the embodiment of that unity independent of, and superior to, the nation itself, from which it was but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority usurping pre-eminence over society itself, and restored to the responsible agents of society. Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workmen and managers in his business. . . .

The Commune made that catchword of bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality, by destroying the two greatest sources of expenditure—the standing army and State functionarism. Its very existence presupposed the non-existence of monarchy, which, in Europe at least, is the normal encumbrance and indispensable cloak of class-rule. It supplied the Republic with the basis of really democratic institutions. But neither cheap Government nor the “true Republic” was its ultimate aim; they were its mere concomitants.

The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which construed it in their favour, show that it was a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working-class government, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour.

*K. Marx, The Civil War in France,
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. I, pp. 518-22*

The *Commune* is the recapture of political power by society as its own living power in place of the power that subordinated and oppressed society; it is the recapture of political power by the mass of the people, who establish their own power in place of the organised power of suppression; it is the political form of their social emancipation in place of the artificial power (which their oppressors arrogated) (their own power opposed to, and organised against the oppressors) of society maintained by their enemies to suppress them. Like all great things, the form was simple. In contrast to earlier revolutions, in which the time necessary for all historical development was usually lost and the victorious arms laid down by the people in the first few days after their triumph were then turned against the people, the Commune was the first to replace the army with the National Guard. . . .

Just as the machinery of state and parliamentarism are not the true life of the governing classes, but only the organised universal organs of their rule, the political guarantees, forms and expressions of the old state of affairs, so is the Commune not the social movement of the working class and therefore not the movement for a universal renovation of mankind, but its organised means of action. The Commune does not eliminate the class

struggle through which the working classes want to achieve the abolition of all classes and, hence, of all class domination (because it does not represent any special interests. It represents the emancipation of "labour", that is the basic and natural condition of individual and social life, which the minority can impose on the majority solely by usurpation, deceit and artificial machinations), but provides the rational intermediate stage in which this class struggle can run through all its various phases in the most rational and humane manner. The Commune can bring about violent reactions and no less violent revolutions. It begins the *liberation of labour*, its great goal, by abolishing the unproductive and harmful activity of the state parasites, removing the causes that surrender a giant portion of the national product to feed the state monster, on the one hand, and by discharging the actual local and national work of administration for a worker's wage. It begins, therefore, with an incalculable saving, with economic reform, as well as with political reorganisation.

K. Marx, Entwürfe zum "Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich" [Erster Entwurf]. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 17, S. 543, 545-46

Of late, the Social-Democratic philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

F. Engels, Introduction to K. Marx's work "The Civil War in France". Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 485

Almost only workers, or recognised representatives of the workers, sat in the Commune, its decisions bore a decidedly proletarian character. Either these decisions decreed reforms which the republican bourgeoisie had failed to pass

solely out of cowardice, but which provided a necessary basis for the free activity of the working class—such as the realisation of the principle that *in relation to the state*, religion is a purely private matter—or the Commune promulgated decrees which were in the direct interest of the working class and in part cut deeply into the old order of society. In a beleaguered city, however, it was possible to make at most a start in the realisation of all this.

*F. Engels, Introduction to K. Marx's work
"The Civil War in France".
Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1962, p. 479*

From the very outset the Commune was compelled to recognise that the working class, once come to power, could not go on managing with the old state machine; that in order not to lose again its only just conquered supremacy, this working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old repressive machinery previously used against it itself, and, on the other, safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials, by declaring them all, without exception, subject to recall at any moment.

*F. Engels, Introduction to K. Marx's work
"The Civil War in France".
Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1962, p. 483*

The utopians busied themselves with "discovering" political forms under which the socialist transformation of society was to take place. The anarchists dismissed the question of political forms altogether. The opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy accepted the bourgeois political forms of the parliamentary democratic state as the limit which should not be overstepped; they battered their foreheads praying before this "model", and denounced as anarchism every desire to *break* these forms.

Marx deduced from the whole history of socialism and the political struggle that the state was bound to disappear,

and that the transitional form of its disappearance (the transition from state to non-state) would be the "proletariat organised as the ruling class". Marx, however, did not set out to *discover* the political *forms* of this future stage. He limited himself to carefully observing French history, to analysing it, and to drawing the conclusion to which the year 1851 had led, namely, that matters were moving towards the *destruction* of the bourgeois state machine.

And when the mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat burst forth, Marx, in spite of its failure, in spite of its short life and patent weakness, began to study the forms it had *discovered*.

The Commune is the form "at last discovered" by the proletarian revolution, under which the economic emancipation of labour can take place.

The Commune is the first attempt by a proletarian revolution to *smash* the bourgeois state machine; and it is the political form "at last discovered", by which the smashed state machine can and must be *replaced*.

We shall see further on that the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, in different circumstances and under different conditions, continue the work of the Commune and confirm Marx's brilliant historical analysis.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 431-32

The Commune substitutes for the venal and rotten parliamentarism of bourgeois society institutions in which freedom of opinion and discussion does not degenerate into deception, for the parliamentarians themselves have to work, have to execute their own laws, have themselves to test the results achieved in reality, and to account directly to their constituents. Representative institutions remain, but there is *no* parliamentarism here as a special system, as the division of labour between the legislative and the executive, as a privileged position for the deputies. We cannot imagine democracy, even proletarian democracy, without

representative institutions, but we can and *must* imagine democracy without parliamentarism....

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 424

Engels emphasised once again that not only under a monarchy, but *also in a democratic republic* the state remains a state, i.e., it retains its fundamental distinguishing feature of transforming the officials, the "servants of society", its organs, into the *masters* of society.

"Against this transformation of the state and the organs of the state from servants of society into masters of society—an inevitable transformation in all previous states—the Commune used two infallible means. In the first place, it filled all posts—administrative, judicial and educational—by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, subject to recall at any time by the electors. And, in the second place, it paid all officials, high or low, only the wages received by other workers. The highest salary paid by the Commune to anyone was 6,000 francs.* In this way a dependable barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even apart from the binding mandates to delegates to representative bodies, which were added besides³⁶...."

Engels here approached the interesting boundary line at which consistent democracy, on the one hand, is *transformed* into socialism and, on the other, *demand*s socialism. For, in order to abolish the state, it is necessary to convert the functions of the civil service into the simple operations of control and accounting that are within the scope and ability of the vast majority of the population, and, subsequently, of every single individual. And if

* Nominally about 2,400 rubles or, according to the present rate of exchange, about 6,000 rubles. The action of those Bolsheviks who propose that a salary of 9,000 rubles be paid to members of municipal councils, for instance, instead of a maximum salary of 6,000 rubles—quite an adequate sum—*throughout the state*, is inexcusable.

careerism is to be abolished completely, it must be made *impossible* for "honourable" though profitless posts in the Civil Service to be used as a springboard to highly lucrative posts in banks or joint-stock companies, as *constantly* happens in all the freest capitalist countries.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 451-52

The Soviets as a Form of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The Soviets are the Russian form of the proletarian dictatorship. If a Marxist theoretician, writing a work on the dictatorship of the proletariat, had really studied the subject (and not merely repeated the petty-bourgeois lamentations against dictatorship, as Kautsky did, singing to Menshevik tunes), he would first have given a general definition of dictatorship, and would then have examined its peculiar, national, form, the Soviets; he would have given his critique of them as one of the forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution
and the Renegade Kautsky*. *Collected Works*,
Vol. 28, p. 257

Not a parliamentary republic—to return to a parliamentary republic from the Soviets of Workers' Deputies would be a retrograde step—but a republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country, from top to bottom.

Abolition of the police, the army and the bureaucracy.*

The salaries of all officials, all of whom are elective and displaceable at any time, not to exceed the average wage of a competent worker.

V. I. Lenin, *The Tasks of the Proletariat
in the Present Revolution*. *Collected Works*,
Vol. 24, p. 23

* I.e., the standing army to be replaced by the arming of the whole people.

The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which cover the whole of Russia with their network, now stand at the centre of the revolution; it seems to me, however, that we have not sufficiently studied or understood them. Should they take over the power, it will no longer be a state in the ordinary sense of the word. The world has seen no such state power functioning for any considerable length of time, but the whole world's labour movement has been approaching it. This would be a state of the Paris Commune type. Such power is a dictatorship, i.e., it rests not on law, not on the formal will of the majority, but on direct, open force. Force is the instrument of power. How, then, will the Soviets apply this power? Will they return to the old way of governing by means of the police? Will they govern by means of the old organs of power? In my opinion they cannot do this. At any rate, they will be faced with the immediate task of creating a state that is not bourgeois. Among Bolsheviki, I have compared this state to the Paris Commune in the sense that the latter destroyed the old administrative organs and replaced them by absolutely new ones that were the direct organs of the workers.

V. I. Lenin, The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 24, p. 239

"Power to the Soviets" means radically reshaping the entire old state apparatus, that bureaucratic apparatus which hampers everything democratic. It means removing this apparatus and substituting for it a new, popular one, i.e., a truly democratic apparatus of Soviets, i.e., the organised and armed majority of the people—the workers, soldiers and peasants. It means allowing the majority of the people initiative and independence not only in the election of deputies, but also in state administration, in effecting reforms and various other changes. . . .

The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are particularly valuable because they represent a new

type of state apparatus, which is immeasurably higher, incomparably more democratic.

V. I. Lenin, One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution. Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 368-69

What is Soviet power? What is the essence of this new power, which people in most countries still will not, or cannot, understand? The nature of this power, which is attracting larger and larger numbers of workers in every country, is the following: in the past the country was, in one way or another, governed by the rich, or by the capitalists, but now, for the first time, the country is being governed by the classes, and moreover, by the masses of those classes, which capitalism formerly oppressed. Even in the most democratic and freest republics, as long as capital rules and the land remains private property, the government will always be in the hands of a small minority, nine-tenths of which consist of capitalists, or rich men.

In this country, in Russia, for the first time in the world history, the government of the country is so organised that only the workers and the working peasants, to the exclusion of the exploiters, constitute those mass organisations known as Soviets, and these Soviets wield all state power. That is why, in spite of the slander that the representatives of the bourgeoisie in all countries spread about Russia, the word "Soviet" has now become not only intelligible but popular all over the world, has become the favourite word of the workers, and of all working people. And that is why, notwithstanding all the persecution to which the adherents of communism in the different countries are subjected, Soviet power must necessarily, inevitably, and in the not distant future, triumph all over the world.

We know very well that there are still many defects in the organisation of Soviet power in this country. Soviet power is not a miracle-working talisman. It does not, overnight, heal all the evils of the past—illiteracy, lack of culture, the consequences of a barbarous war, the after-

math of predatory capitalism. But it does pave the way to socialism. It gives those who were formerly oppressed the chance to straighten their backs and to an ever-increasing degree to take the whole government of the country, the whole administration of the economy, the whole management of production, into their own hands.

Soviet power is the road to socialism that was discovered by the masses of the working people, and that is why it is the true road, that is why it is invincible.

V. I. Lenin, *Speeches on Gramophone Records. Collected Works, Vol. 29, pp. 248-49*

The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and other Deputies are not understood, not only in the sense that their class significance, their role *in the Russian* revolution, is not clear to the majority. They are not understood also in the sense that they constitute a new form or rather a new *type of state*.

The most perfect, the most advanced type of bourgeois state is the *parliamentary democratic republic*: power is vested in parliament; the state machine, the apparatus and organ of administration, is of the customary kind: the standing army, the police, and the bureaucracy—which in practice is undisplaceable, is privileged and stands *above* the people.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, however, revolutionary epochs have advanced a *higher* type of democratic state, a state which in certain respects, as Engels put it, ceases to be a state, is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word". This is a state of the Paris Commune type, one in which a standing army and police divorced from the people are *replaced* by the direct arming of the people themselves. It is *this feature* that constitutes the very essence of the Commune, which has been so misrepresented and slandered by the bourgeois writers, and to which has been erroneously ascribed, among other things, the intention of immediately "introducing" socialism.

This is the type of state which the Russian revolution began to create in 1905 and in 1917. A Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and other Deputies, united in an All-Russia Constituent Assembly of people's representatives or in a Council of Soviets, etc., is what is *already being realised* in our country now, at this juncture. It is being realised by the initiative of the nation's millions, who are creating a democracy on their own, *in their own way*. . . .

The main distinctions between a state of the latter type and the old state are as follows.

It is quite easy (as history proves) to revert from a parliamentary bourgeois republic to a monarchy, for all the machinery of oppression—the army, the police, and the bureaucracy—is left intact. The Commune and the Soviets *smash* that machinery and do away with it.

The parliamentary bourgeois republic hampers and stifles the independent political life of the *masses*, their direct participation in the *democratic* organisation of the life of the state from the bottom up. The opposite is the case with the Soviets.

The latter reproduce the type of state which was being evolved by the Paris Commune and which Marx described as "the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour".³⁷

V. I. Lenin, *The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution. Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 67-69

The Soviet power is not an invention or a party trick, but is the result of the development of life itself, the outcome of the world revolution as it spontaneously takes shape. You will recall that all great revolutions invariably strove to raze the old capitalist system to the ground; they strove not only to win political rights but also to wrest the very reins of government from the hands of the ruling classes, and all the exploiters and oppressors of the work-

ing people, so as to put an end to all exploitation and all oppression for good. Great revolutions strove to demolish this old exploiting state machine but had not managed to bring it off until now. And now Russia, in virtue of the peculiarities of her economic and political position, has first achieved this transfer of government powers into the hands of the working people. We shall now proceed to build, on the space cleared of historical rubbish, the airy towering edifice of the socialist society. A new type of state power is being created for the first time in history, a power that the will of the revolution has called upon to wipe out all exploitation, oppression and slavery the world over.

V. I. Lenin, Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Collected Works, Vol. 26, pp. 479-80

The Soviets have been created by the working people themselves, by their revolutionary energy and initiative, and that is the only guarantee of their working entirely to promote the interests of the masses. The truly popular nature of the Soviets is evident in the fact that every peasant sends his representatives to the Soviet and is also entitled to recall them.

V. I. Lenin, Report on the Right to Recall at a Meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, November 21 (December 4), 1917. Collected Works, Vol. 26, pp. 338-39

Had not the popular creative spirit of the Russian revolution, which had gone through the great experience of the year 1905, given rise to the Soviets as early as February 1917, they could not under any circumstances have assumed power in October, because success depended entirely upon the existence of available organisational forms of a movement embracing millions. The Soviets were the available form, and that is why in the political sphere the future held out to us those brilliant successes, the continuous

triumphal march, that we had; for the new form of political power was already available.

*V. I. Lenin, Extraordinary Seventh Congress
of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works,
Vol. 27, pp. 89-90*

Soviet power has been consolidated in Russia and has won the absolute sympathy of the working and exploited people because it has destroyed the old state apparatus that was an instrument of oppression and has laid the foundation of a state of a new and higher form of which the Paris Commune was the prototype. The Commune destroyed the old state machine and replaced it by the armed force of the masses themselves, replaced bourgeois parliamentary democracy by the democracy of the working people, which excluded the exploiters and systematically suppressed their resistance.

*V. I. Lenin, Extraordinary Fourth All-Russia
Congress of Soviets. Collected Works,
Vol. 27, p. 175*

The change in the political part of our Programme must consist in the most accurate and comprehensive definition possible of the new type of state, the Soviet Republic, as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat and as a continuation of those achievements of the world working-class revolution which the Paris Commune began. The Programme must show that our Party does not reject the use even of bourgeois parliamentarism, should the course of the struggle push us back, for a time, to this historical stage which our revolution has now passed. But in any case and under all circumstances the Party will strive for a Soviet Republic as the highest, from the standpoint of democracy, type of state, as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of abolition of the exploiters' yoke and of suppression of their resistance.

*V. I. Lenin, Extraordinary Seventh Congress
of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works,
Vol. 27, p. 140*

Soviet power is machinery, machinery that will enable the masses to begin right away learning to govern the state and organise production on a nation-wide scale. It is a task of tremendous difficulty. It is, however, historically important that we are setting about its fulfilment, and not only from the point of view of our one country; we are calling upon European workers to help. We must give a concrete explanation of our Programme from precisely that common point of view. That is why we consider it a continuation of the road taken by the Paris Commune. That is why we are confident that the European workers will be able to help once they have entered on that path. They will do what we are doing, but do it better, and the centre of gravity will shift from the formal point of view to the concrete conditions. In the old days the demand for freedom of assembly was a particularly important one, whereas our point of view on freedom of assembly is that nobody can now prevent meetings, and Soviet power has only to provide premises for meetings. General proclamations of broad principles are important to the bourgeoisie: "All citizens have freedom to assemble, but they must assemble in the open, we shall not give them premises." But we say: "Fewer empty phrases, and more substance." The palaces must be expropriated—not only the Taurida Palace, but many others as well—and we say nothing about freedom of assembly. That must be extended to all other points in the democratic programme. We must be our own judges. All citizens must take part in the work of the courts and in the government of the country. It is important for us to draw literally all working people into the government of the state. It is a task of tremendous difficulty. But socialism cannot be implemented by a minority, by the Party. It can be implemented only by tens of millions when they have learned to do it themselves. We regard it as a point in our favour that we are trying to help

the masses themselves set about it immediately, and not to learn to do it from books and lectures.

V. I. Lenin, Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 27, pp. 134-35

Soviet power is a new type of state without a bureaucracy, without police, without a regular army, a state in which bourgeois democracy has been replaced by a new democracy, a democracy that brings to the fore the vanguard of the working people, gives them legislative and executive authority, makes them responsible for military defence and creates state machinery that can re-educate the masses.

V. I. Lenin, Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 133

Soviet power is nothing but an organisational form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the dictatorship of the advanced class, which raises to a new democracy and to independent participation in the administration of the state tens upon tens of millions of working and exploited people, who by their own experience learn to regard the disciplined and class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat as their most reliable leader.

V. I. Lenin, The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government. Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 265

The victory of Soviet power throughout the world is assured. It is only a question of time.

Why is Soviet power so firm and stable, despite the incredible ordeals, the terrible famine and the difficulties created by war and economic dislocation?

Because it is the power of the working people themselves, of the millions of workers and peasants.

The workers hold state power. The workers help the millions of labouring peasants.

The Soviet government has overthrown the landowners and capitalists and is steadfastly defending the people against attempts to restore their rule.

The Soviet government gives all the aid it is capable of to the labouring peasants, the poor and middle peasants, who make up the vast majority.

The Soviet government holds a tight rein on the kulak, the village money-bag, the proprietor, the profiteer, on everyone who wants to get rich without having to work, everyone who battens on the misery and hunger of the people.

The Soviet government is *for* the labouring people, *against* the profiteers, proprietors, capitalists and landowners.

That is the source of the strength, stability and invincibility of Soviet power throughout the world.

*V. I. Lenin, Two Years of Soviet Power.
Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 125*

The Soviets of Workers and Peasants are a new *type* of state, a new and higher *type* of democracy, a form of the proletarian dictatorship, a means of administering the state *without* the bourgeoisie and *against* the bourgeoisie. For the first time democracy is here serving the people, the working people, and has ceased to be democracy for the rich as it still is in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic. For the first time, the people are grappling, on a scale involving one hundred million, with the problem of implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat and semi-proletariat—a problem which, if not solved, makes socialism *out of the question*.

*V. I. Lenin, Letter to American Workers.
Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 73*

The substance of Soviet government is that the permanent and only foundation of state power, the entire machinery of state, is the mass-scale organisation of the classes oppressed by capitalism, i.e., the workers and the semi-proletarians (peasants who do not exploit the labour of others and regularly resort to the sale of at least a part of their own labour-power). It is the people, who even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, while possessing equal rights by law, have in fact been debarred by thousands of devices and subterfuges from participation in political life and enjoyment of democratic rights and liberties, that are now drawn into constant and unfailing, moreover, decisive, participation in the democratic administration of the state. . . .

The equality of citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, race, or nationality, which bourgeois democracy everywhere has always promised but never effected, and never could effect because of the domination of capital, is given immediate and full effect by the Soviet system, or dictatorship of the proletariat. The fact is that this can only be done by a government of the workers, who are not interested in the means of production being privately owned and in the fight for their division and redivision. . . .

The old, i.e., bourgeois, democracy and the parliamentary system were so organised that it was the mass of working people who were kept farthest away from the machinery of government. Soviet power, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat, on the other hand, is so organised as to bring the working people close to the machinery of government. That, too, is the purpose of combining the legislative and executive authority under the Soviet organisation of the state and of replacing territorial constituencies by production units—the factory. . . .

The army was a machine of oppression not only under the monarchy. It remains as such in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic ones. Only the Soviets, the permanent organisations of government authority of the classes that were oppressed by capitalism, are in a

position to destroy the army's subordination to bourgeois commanders and really merge the proletariat with the army; only the Soviets can effectively arm the proletariat and disarm the bourgeoisie. Unless this is done, the victory of socialism is impossible. . . .

The Soviet organisation of the state is suited to the leading role of the proletariat as a class most concentrated and enlightened by capitalism. The experience of all revolutions and all movements of the oppressed classes, the experience of the world socialist movement teaches us that only the proletariat is in a position to unite and lead the scattered and backward sections of the working and exploited population. . . .

Only the Soviet organisation of the state can really effect the immediate break-up and total destruction of the old, i.e., bourgeois, bureaucratic and judicial machinery, which has been, and has inevitably had to be, retained under capitalism even in the most democratic republics, and which is, in actual fact, the greatest obstacle to the practical implementation of democracy for the workers and working people generally. The Paris Commune took the first epoch-making step along this path. The Soviet system has taken the second. . . .

Destruction of state power is the aim set by all socialists, including Marx above all. Genuine democracy, i.e., liberty and equality, is unrealisable unless this aim is achieved. But its practical achievement is possible only through Soviet, or proletarian, democracy, for by enlisting the mass organisations of the working people in constant and unfailing participation in the administration of the state, it immediately begins to prepare the complete withering away of any state.

*V. I. Lenin, First Congress of the
Communist International. Collected
Works, Vol. 28, pp. 465-67*

Proletarian democracy, of which Soviet government is one of the forms, has brought a development and expan-

sion of democracy unprecedented in the world, for the vast majority of the population, for the exploited and working people....

Under bourgeois democracy the capitalists, by thousands of tricks—which are the more artful and effective the more “pure” democracy is developed—*drive* the people away from administrative work, from freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, etc. The Soviet government is the *first* in the world (or strictly speaking, the second, because the Paris Commune began to do the same thing) to *enlist* the people, specifically the *exploited* people, in the work of administration. The working people are *barred* from participation in bourgeois parliaments (they *never decide* important questions under bourgeois democracy, which are decided by the stock exchange and the banks) by thousands of obstacles, and the workers know and feel, see and realise perfectly well that the bourgeois parliaments are institutions *alien* to them, *instruments for the oppression* of the workers by the bourgeoisie, institutions of a hostile class, of the exploiting minority.

The Soviets are the direct organisation of the working and exploited people themselves, which *helps* them to organise and administer their own state in every possible way. And in this it is the vanguard of the working and exploited people, the urban proletariat, that enjoys the advantage of being best united by the large enterprises; it is easier for it than for all others to elect and exercise control over those elected. The Soviet form of organisation automatically *helps* to unite all the working and exploited people around their vanguard, the proletariat. The old bourgeois apparatus—the bureaucracy, the privileges of wealth, of bourgeois education, of social connections, etc. (these real privileges are the more varied the more highly bourgeois democracy is developed)—all this disappears under the Soviet form of organisation. Freedom of the press ceases to be hypocrisy, because the printing-plants and stocks of paper are taken away from the bourgeoisie. The same thing applies to the best buildings, the palaces, the

mansions and manor-houses, Soviet power took thousands upon thousands of these best buildings from the exploiters at one stroke, and in this way made the right of assembly—without which democracy is a fraud—*a million times* more democratic for the people. Indirect elections to non-local Soviets make it easier to hold congresses of Soviets, they make the *entire* apparatus less costly, more flexible, more accessible to the workers and peasants at a time when life is seething and it is necessary to be able very quickly to recall one's local deputy or to delegate him to a general congress of Soviets.

Proletarian democracy is *a million times* more democratic than any bourgeois democracy; Soviet power is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic.

V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky. Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 246-48

Bolshevism has popularised throughout the world the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat", has translated these words from the Latin, first into Russian, and then into *all* the languages of the world, and has shown by the example of *Soviet government* that the workers and poor peasants, *even* of a backward country, even with the least experience, education and habits of organisation, *have been able* for a whole year, amidst gigantic difficulties and amidst a struggle against the exploiters (who were supported by the bourgeoisie of the *whole* world), to maintain the power of the working people, to create a democracy that is immeasurably higher and broader than all previous democracies in the world, and to *start* the creative work of tens of millions of workers and peasants for the practical construction of socialism.

V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky. Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 293

For the capitalist the internal organisation of his enterprise was something veiled by trade secrets from the eyes of the outside world, something over which, it seems, he wanted to be omnipotent and in sole command, hidden not only from criticism, not only from outside interference, but also from outside eyes. For the Soviet government, on the contrary, it is the organisation of labour in any particular large enterprises, in any particular village communes that is the chief, fundamental and urgent question of all social life.

V. I. Lenin, Original Version of the Article "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government". Collected Works, Vol. 27, pp. 203-04

For the first time in history, Soviet power has not only greatly facilitated the organisation of the masses who were oppressed under capitalism, but has made that organisation the essential permanent basis of the entire state apparatus, local and central, from top to bottom. Only in this way is it possible to ensure democracy for the great majority of the population (the working people), i.e., actual participation in state administration, in contrast to the actual administration of the state mainly by members of the bourgeois classes as is the case in the most democratic bourgeois republics.

V. I. Lenin, Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 29, pp. 106-07

We had to exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat in its harshest form.

V. I. Lenin, Moscow Party Workers' Meeting, November 27, 1918. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 207

The example of the Soviet Republic will stand before them for a long time to come. Our socialist Republic of Soviets will stand secure, as a torch of international social-

ism and as an example to all the working people. Over there—conflict, war, bloodshed, the sacrifice of millions of people, capitalist exploitation; here—a genuine policy of peace and a socialist Republic of Soviets.

Things have turned out differently from what Marx and Engels expected and we, the Russian working and exploited classes, have the honour of being the vanguard of the international socialist revolution; we can now see clearly how far the development of the revolution will go. The Russian began it—the German, the Frenchman and the Englishman will finish it, and socialism will be victorious.

V. I. Lenin, Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Collected Works, Vol. 26, p. 472

The Structure of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The dictatorship is exercised by the proletariat organised in the Soviets; the proletariat is guided by the Communist Party of Bolsheviks. . . . We are apprehensive of an excessive growth of the Party, because careerists and charlatans, who deserve only to be shot, inevitably do all they can to insinuate themselves into the ranks of the ruling party. The last time we opened wide the doors of the Party—to workers and peasants only—was when (in the winter of 1919) Yudenich was within a few versts of Petrograd, and Denikin was in Orel (about 350 versts from Moscow), i.e., when the Soviet Republic was in mortal danger, and when adventurers, careerists, charlatans and unreliable persons generally could not possibly count on making a profitable career (and had more reason to expect the gallows and torture) by joining the Communists. The Party, which holds annual congresses (the most recent on the basis of one delegate per 1,000 members), is directed by a Central Committee of nineteen elected at the congress, while the current work in Moscow has to be carried on by still smaller bodies, known as the Organising Bureau and

the Political Bureau, which are elected at plenary meetings of the Central Committee, five members of the Central Committee to each bureau. This, it would appear, is a full-fledged "oligarchy". No important political or organisational question is decided by any state institution in our republic without the guidance of the Party's Central Committee.

In its work, the Party relies directly on the *trade unions*, which, according to the data of the last congress (April 1920), now have a membership of over four million and are formally *non-Party*. Actually, all the directing bodies of the vast majority of the unions, and primarily, of course, of the all-Russia general trade union centre or bureau (the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions), are made up of Communists and carry out all the directives of the Party. Thus, on the whole, we have a formally non-communist, flexible and relatively wide and very powerful proletarian apparatus, by means of which the Party is closely linked up with the *class* and the *masses*, and by means of which, under the leadership of the Party, the *class dictatorship* is exercised. Without close contacts with the trade unions, and without their energetic support and devoted efforts, not only in economic, *but also in military* affairs, it would of course have been impossible for us to govern the country and to maintain the dictatorship for two and a half months, let alone two and a half years. In practice, these very close contacts naturally call for highly complex and diversified work in the form of propaganda, agitation, timely and frequent conferences, not only with the leading trade union workers, but with influential trade union workers generally; they call for a determined struggle against the Mensheviks, who still have a certain though very small following to whom they teach all kinds of counter-revolutionary machinations, ranging from an ideological defence of (*bourgeois*) democracy and the preaching that the trade unions should be "independent" (independent of proletarian state power!) to sabotage of proletarian discipline, etc., etc.

We consider that contacts with the "masses" through the trade unions are not enough. In the course of our

revolution, practical activities have given rise to such institutions as *non-Party workers' and peasants' conferences*, and we strive by every means to support, develop and extend this institution in order to be able to observe the temper of the masses, come closer to them, meet their requirements, promote the best among them to state posts, etc. Under a recent decree on the transformation of the People's Commissariat of State Control into the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, non-Party conferences of this kind have been empowered to select members of the State Control to carry out various kinds of investigations, etc.

Then, of course, all the work of the Party is carried on through the Soviets, which embrace the working masses, irrespective of occupation. The district congresses of Soviets are *democratic* institutions, the like of which even the best of the democratic republics of the bourgeois world have never known; through these congresses (whose proceedings the Party endeavours to follow with the closest attention), as well as by continually appointing class-conscious workers to various posts in the rural districts, the proletariat exercises its role of leader of the peasantry, gives effect to dictatorship of the urban proletariat, wages a systematic struggle against the rich, bourgeois, exploiting and profiteering peasantry, etc.

Such is the general mechanism of the proletarian state power viewed "from above", from the standpoint of the practical implementation of the dictatorship. We hope that the reader will understand why the Russian Bolshevik, who has known this mechanism for twenty-five years and has seen it develop out of small, illegal and underground circles, cannot help regarding all this talk about "from above" or "from below", about the dictatorship of leaders or the dictatorship of the masses, etc., as ridiculous and childish nonsense, something like discussing whether a man's left leg or right arm is of greater use to him.

V. I. Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" Communism—
an Infantile Disorder. Collected Works,
Vol. 31, pp. 47-49

After two and a half years of the Soviet power we came out in the Communist International and told the world that the dictatorship of the proletariat would not work except through the Communist Party.

*V. I. Lenin, Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).
Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 199*

Marxism teaches—and this tenet has not only been formally endorsed by the whole of the Communist International in the decisions of the Second (1920) Congress of the Comintern on the role of the political party of the proletariat, but has also been confirmed in practice by our revolution—that only the political party of the working class, i.e., the Communist Party, is capable of uniting, training and organising a vanguard of the proletariat and of the whole mass of the working people that alone will be capable of withstanding the inevitable petty-bourgeois vacillations of this mass and the inevitable traditions and relapses of narrow craft unionism or craft prejudices among the proletariat, and of guiding all the united activities of the whole of the proletariat, i.e., of leading it politically, and through it, the whole mass of the working people. Without this the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible.

The wrong understanding of the role of the Communist Party in its relation to the non-Party proletariat, and in the relation of the first and second factors to the whole mass of working people, is a radical theoretical departure from communism and a deviation towards syndicalism and anarchism, and this deviation permeates all the views of the Workers' Opposition group.³⁸

*V. I. Lenin, Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).
Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 246*

The primacy of the Communist Party's policy must be frankly recognised in the work of that body (the Chief Committee for Political Education.—*Ed.*). We know of no other form of guidance; and no other has been evolved in

any country. Parties may represent the interests of their class in one degree or another; they may undergo changes or modifications, but we do not yet know of any better form. The entire course of the struggle waged by Soviet Russia, which for three years has withstood the onslaught of world imperialism, is bound up with the fact that the Party has consciously set out to help the proletariat perform its function of educator, organiser and leader, without which the collapse of capitalism is impossible. The working masses, the masses of peasants and workers, must oust the old intellectualist habits and re-educate themselves for the work of building communism. Otherwise the work of construction cannot be undertaken. Our entire experience shows that this is a very serious matter, and we must therefore give prominence to Party primacy and never lose sight of it when discussing our activities and our organisational development. How this is to be done will still have to be discussed at length; it will have to be discussed in the Party's Central Committee and in the Council of People's Commissars. The decree which was endorsed yesterday laid down the fundamentals in respect of the Chief Committee for Political Education, but it has not yet gone through all the stages in the Council of People's Commissars. The decree will be published within the next few days, and you will see that its final form makes no direct mention of relations with the Party.

We must, however, know and remember that, in law and in practice, the Constitution of the Soviet Republic is based on the tenet that the Party rectifies, prescribes and builds according to a single principle—to enable the communist elements linked with the proletariat to imbue the proletariat with their own spirit, win its adherence, and open its eyes to the bourgeois deceit which we have been trying so long to eliminate.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech Delivered at an All-Russian
Conference of Political Education
Workers of Gubernia and Uyezd
Education Departments, November 3, 1920.
Collected Works, Vol. 31, pp. 367-68*

In the sea of people we are after all but a drop in the ocean, and we can administer only when we express correctly what the people are conscious of. Unless we do this the Communist Party will not lead the proletariat, the proletariat will not lead the masses, and the whole machine will collapse.

*V. I. Lenin, Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).
Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 304*

Communism says: The Communist Party, the vanguard of the proletariat, leads the non-Party workers' masses, educating, preparing, teaching and training the masses ("school" of communism)—first the workers and then the peasants—to enable them eventually to concentrate in their hands the administration of the whole national economy.

Syndicalism hands over to the mass of non-Party workers, who are compartmentalised in the industries, the management of their industries ("the chief administrations and central boards"), thereby making the Party superfluous, and failing to carry on a sustained campaign either in training the masses or in *actually* concentrating in *their* hands the management of the whole national economy.

*V. I. Lenin, The Party Crisis.
Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 50*

The Soviets are a new state apparatus which, in the first place, provides an armed force of workers and peasants; and this force is not divorced from the people, as was the old standing army, but is very closely bound up with the people. From the military point of view this force is incomparably more powerful than previous forces; from the revolutionary point of view, it cannot be replaced by anything else. Secondly, this apparatus provides a bond with the people, with the majority of the people, so intimate, so indissoluble, so easily verifiable and renewable, that nothing even remotely like it existed in the previous

state apparatus. Thirdly, this apparatus, by virtue of the fact that its personnel is elected and subject to recall at the people's will without any bureaucratic formalities, is far more democratic than any previous apparatus. Fourthly, it provides a close contact with the most varied professions, thereby facilitating the adoption of the most varied and most radical reforms without red tape. Fifthly, it provides an organisational form for the vanguard, i.e., for the most class-conscious, most energetic and most progressive section of the *oppressed* classes, the workers and peasants, and so constitutes an apparatus by means of which the vanguard of the oppressed classes can elevate, train, educate, and lead *the entire vast mass* of these classes, which has up to now stood completely outside of political life and history. Sixthly, it makes it possible to combine the advantages of the parliamentary system with those of immediate and direct democracy, i.e., to vest in the people's elected representatives both legislative and *executive* functions. Compared with the bourgeois parliamentary system, this is an advance in democracy's development which is of world-wide, historic significance.

V. I. Lenin, *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power? Collected Works*,
Vol. 26, pp. 103-04

Trade unions are not just historically necessary; they are historically inevitable as an organisation of the industrial proletariat, and, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, embrace nearly the whole of it. . . .

It follows from what I have said that the trade unions have an extremely important part to play at every step of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But what is their part? I find that it is a most unusual one, as soon as I delve into this question, which is one of the most fundamental theoretically. On the one hand, the trade unions, which take in all industrial workers, are an organisation of the ruling, dominant, governing class, which has now set up a dictatorship and is exercising coercion through the state. But it is

not a state organisation; nor is it one designed for coercion, but for education. It is an organisation designed to draw in and to train; it is, in fact, a school: a school of administration, a school of economic management, a school of communism. It is a very unusual type of school, because there are no teachers or pupils; this is an extremely unusual combination of what has necessarily come down to us from capitalism, and what comes from the ranks of the advanced revolutionary detachments, which you might call the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. To talk about the role of the trade unions without taking these truths into account is to fall straight into a number of errors.

Within the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the trade unions stand, if I may say so, between the Party and the government. In the transition to socialism the dictatorship of the proletariat is inevitable, but it is not exercised by an organisation which takes in all industrial workers. Why not? The answer is given in the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International on the role of political parties in general. I will not go into this here. What happens is that the Party, shall we say, absorbs the vanguard of the proletariat, and this vanguard exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship cannot be exercised or the functions of government performed without a foundation such as the trade unions. These functions, however, have to be performed through the medium of special institutions which are also of a new type, namely, the Soviets. What are the practical conclusions to be drawn from this peculiar situation? They are, on the one hand, that the trade unions are a *link* between the vanguard and the masses, and by their daily work bring conviction to the masses, the masses of the class which alone is capable of taking us from capitalism to communism. On the other hand, the trade unions are a "reservoir" of the state power. This is what the trade unions are in the period of transition from capitalism to communism. In general, this transition cannot be achieved without the leadership of that class which is the only class capitalism has trained for large-

scale production and which alone is divorced from the interests of the petty proprietor. But the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be exercised through an organisation embracing the whole of that class, because in all capitalist countries (and not only over here, in one of the most backward) the proletariat is still so divided, so degraded, and so corrupted in parts (by imperialism in some countries) that an organisation taking in the whole proletariat cannot directly exercise proletarian dictatorship. It can be exercised only by a vanguard that has absorbed the revolutionary energy of the class. The whole is like an arrangement of cog-wheels. Such is the basic mechanism of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and of the essentials of transition from capitalism to communism.

*V. I. Lenin, The Trade Unions,
the Present Situation and Trotsky's
Mistakes. Collected Works, Vol. 32,
pp. 19-21*

We shall find that we can cope with this task and teach vast numbers of working people how to run the state and industry. We shall discover we can develop practical activity, and shatter that pernicious prejudice which for decades and centuries has been implanted among the working people, namely, that state administration is the preserve of the privileged few, that it is a special art. That is not true. We shall inevitably make mistakes; but now every mistake will serve to teach, not handfuls of students taking some course of theory in state administration, but millions of working people who will personally suffer the consequences of every mistake. They will themselves see that they are faced with the urgent task of registering and distributing products, of increasing labour productivity, and will see from experience that power is in their own hands and that nobody will help them if they do not help themselves. That is the new mentality which is awakening in the working class. That is the new task of tremendous historical importance which faces the proletariat and which must,

more than any other, strike root in the minds of trade unionists and the leaders of the trade union movement.

V. I. Lenin, Report at the Second All-Russia Trade Union Congress, January 20, 1919. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 427

The proletariat is the class foundation of the state accomplishing the transition from capitalism to socialism. In a country where the small peasantry is overwhelmingly predominant the proletariat can successfully fulfil this function only if it very skilfully, cautiously and gradually establishes an alliance with the vast majority of the peasantry. The trade unions must collaborate closely and constantly with the government, all the political and economic activities of which are guided by the class-conscious vanguard of the working class—the Communist Party.

V. I. Lenin, Draft Theses on "The Role and Functions of the Trade Unions Under the New Economic Policy". Collected Works, Vol. 33, pp. 189-90

We must go on extending the participation of the working people in economic administration and in building a new economy. We shall never bring the work of communist construction to its completion unless we cope with this task, unless we convert the trade unions into organs for training ten times as many people as at present for direct participation in state administration. That we realise quite clearly. It is dealt with in our resolution, and it is a matter I want to direct your attention to particularly.

In this greatest revolution in history, when the proletariat has taken state power into its own hands, all the functions of the trade unions are undergoing a profound change. The trade unions are becoming the chief builders of the new society, for only the millions can build this society. In the era of serfdom these builders numbered hundreds; in the capitalist era the builders of the state numbered thousands and tens of thousands. The socialist revolution can be made only with the active and direct practical participa-

tion of tens of millions in state administration. That is our goal but we are not there yet.

The trade unions should know that there is a higher and more important task than those tasks which are partly still in force and partly have already lapsed, and which, at any rate, even if they are still in force, can only be minor ones in our eyes: registration, establishing work standards, amalgamation of organisations. This task is to teach the people the art of administration, not from books, not from lectures or meetings, but from practical experience, so that instead of just the vanguard of the proletariat which has been set to command and organise, more and more fresh blood may enter the departments, and this new section may be reinforced by ten others like it. This may seem an immense and difficult task. But it will not seem so overpowering if we stop to think how rapidly the experience of the revolution has enabled us to cope with the immense tasks that have cropped up since the October Revolution, and how the working people who had had no access to and no use for knowledge are now thirsting for it.

V. I. Lenin, Report at the Second All-Russia Trade Union Congress, January 20, 1919. Collected Works, Vol. 28, pp. 426-27

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat— A New Type of Democracy

We have always said: the emancipation of the working people from oppression cannot be brought from outside; the working people themselves, by their struggle, by their movement, by their agitation, must learn to solve a new historical problem; and the more difficult, the greater, the more responsible this new historical problem is, the larger must be the number of those enlisted for the purpose of taking an independent part in solving it.

V. I. Lenin, Fourth Conference of Trade Unions and Factory Committees of Moscow. Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 469

For the first time, the people are grappling, on a scale involving one hundred million, with the problem of implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat and semi-proletariat—a problem which, if not solved, makes socialism *out of the question*.

V. I. Lenin, Letter to American Workers. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 73

The permanence of the socialist revolution will depend on the extent we can elevate the new class, the proletariat, to the work of government, have Russia governed by the proletariat. We must make this work of government a step towards the universal training of the working people in the art of governing the state, a training not derived from books or newspapers, speeches or pamphlets, but from practice, enabling everyone to try his hand at this work.

V. I. Lenin, Speech at a Joint Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet and All-Russia Trade Union Congress, January 17, 1919. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 393

As the dictatorship of a minority, the old regime was able to maintain itself solely with the aid of police devices, solely by preventing the masses of the people from taking part in the government, and from supervising the government. The old authority persistently distrusted the masses, feared the light, maintained itself by deception. As the dictatorship of the overwhelming majority, the new authority maintained itself and could maintain itself solely because it enjoyed the confidence of the vast masses, solely because it, in the freest, widest, and most resolute manner, enlisted all the masses in the task of government. It concealed nothing, it had no secrets, no regulations, no formalities. . . . It was an authority open to all, it carried out all its functions before the eyes of the masses, was accessible to the masses,

sprang directly from the masses; and was a direct and immediate instrument of the popular masses, of their will.

V. I. Lenin, A Contribution to the History of the Question of the Dictatorship. Collected Works, Vol. 31, pp. 351-52

Capitalism cannot be vanquished without *taking over the banks*, without repealing *private ownership* of the means of production. These revolutionary measures, however, cannot be implemented without organising the entire people for democratic administration of the means of production captured from the bourgeoisie, without enlisting the entire mass of the working people, the proletarians, semi-proletarians and small peasants, for the democratic organisation of their ranks, their forces, their participation in state affairs.

V. I. Lenin, Reply to P. Kievsky (Y. Pyatakov). Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 25

We have a "magic way" to enlarge our state apparatus *tenfold* at once, at one stroke, a way which no capitalist state ever possessed or could possess. This magic way is to draw the working people, to draw the poor, into the daily work of state administration.

V. I. Lenin, Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power? Collected Works, Vol. 26, pp. 111-12

The chief source of our strength is the class-consciousness and heroism of the workers, who had, and still have, the sympathies and support of the labouring peasants. Our victories were due to the direct appeal made by our Party and by the Soviet government to the working masses, with every new difficulty and problem pointed out as it arose; to our ability to explain to the masses why it was necessary to devote all energies first to one, then to another aspect of

Soviet work at a given moment; to our ability to arouse the energy, heroism and enthusiasm of the masses and to concentrate every ounce of revolutionary effort on the most important task of the hour.

*V. I. Lenin, The Fight to Overcome
the Fuel Crisis. Collected Works,
Vol. 30, p. 139*

The gist of Bolshevism and the Russian October Revolution is getting into politics the very people who were most oppressed under capitalism. They were downtrodden, cheated and robbed by the capitalists, both under the monarchy and in the bourgeois-democratic republics. So long as the land and the factories were privately owned this oppression and deceit and the plunder of the people's labour by the capitalists were inevitable.

The essence of Bolshevism and the Soviet power is to expose the falsehood and mummery of bourgeois democracy, to abolish the private ownership of land and the factories and concentrate all state power in the hands of the working and exploited masses. They, these masses, get hold of politics, that is, of the business of building the new society. This is no easy task: the masses are downtrodden and oppressed by capitalism, but there is no other way—and there can be no other way—out of the wage-slavery and bondage of capitalism.

But you cannot draw the masses into politics without drawing in the women as well. For under capitalism the female half of the human race is doubly oppressed.

*V. I. Lenin, International Working Women's
Day. Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 161*

The socialist character of Soviet, i.e. *proletarian*, democracy, as concretely applied today, lies first in the fact that the electors are the working and exploited people; the bourgeoisie is excluded. Secondly, it lies in the fact that all

bureaucratic formalities and restrictions of elections are abolished; the people themselves determine the order and time of elections, and are completely free to recall any elected person. Thirdly, it lies in the creation of the best mass organisation of the vanguard of the working people, i.e., the proletariat engaged in large-scale industry, which enables it to lead the vast mass of the exploited, to draw them into independent political life, to educate them politically by their own experience; therefore for the first time a start is made by the *entire* population in learning the art of administration, and in beginning to administer.

These are the principal distinguishing features of the democracy now applied in Russia, which is a higher *type* of democracy, a break with the bourgeois distortion of democracy, transition to socialist democracy and to the conditions in which the state can begin to wither away.

It goes without saying that the element of petty-bourgeois disorganisation (which must *inevitably* be apparent to some extent in *every* proletarian revolution, and which is especially apparent in our revolution, owing to the petty-bourgeois character of our country, its backwardness and the consequences of a reactionary war) cannot but leave its impress upon the Soviets as well.

We must work unremittingly to develop the organisation of the Soviets and of the Soviet government. There is a petty-bourgeois tendency to transform the members of the Soviets into "parliamentarians", or else into bureaucrats. We must combat this by drawing *all* the members of the Soviets into the practical work of administration. In many places the departments of the Soviets are gradually merging with the Commissariats. Our aim is to draw *the whole of the poor* into the practical work of administration, and all steps that are taken in this direction—the more varied they are, the better—should be carefully recorded, studied, systematised, tested by wider experience and embodied in law. Our aim is to ensure that *every* toiler, having finished his eight hours' "task" in productive labour, shall perform state duties *without pay*; the transition to this is particularly

difficult, but this transition alone can guarantee the final consolidation of socialism.

*V. I. Lenin, The Immediate Tasks
of the Soviet Government. Collected Works,
Vol. 27, pp. 272-73*

The transition from the old to the new, if it proceeds as sharply as it has in Russia since February 1917, presupposes of course a gigantic destruction of what has become obsolete and moribund in social life. And it is clear that the search for the new cannot at once provide those definite, established, almost fixed and final forms which previously took shape in the course of centuries and lasted for centuries. The present Soviet institutions and the economic organisations which are characterised by the concept of workers' control in industry—those organisations are still in a period of ferment and instability. In these organisations, naturally, the aspect characterised by discussion and the airing of questions at meetings prevails over the business aspect. It could not be otherwise, for without drawing new sections of the people into socialist construction, without awakening to activity the broad masses hitherto asleep, there could be no question of any revolutionary change. The endless discussions and endless holding of meetings—about which the bourgeois press talks so much and so acrimoniously—is a necessary transition of the masses still completely unprepared for social construction, a transition from historical somnolence to new historical creativeness. There is absolutely nothing terrible in the fact that this transition is protracted in some places, or in the fact that the training of the masses in new work does not go forward with the rapidity which could be dreamt of by a man who is accustomed to work in isolation and does not understand what is involved in rousing hundreds, thousands and millions to independent political life.

*V. I. Lenin, Original Version of the
Article "The Immediate Tasks of the
Soviet Government". Collected Works,
Vol. 27, pp. 209-10*

Of course, not weeks, but long months and years are required for a new social class, especially a class which up to now has been oppressed and crushed by poverty and ignorance, to get used to its new position, look around, organise its work and promote its *own* organisers. It is understandable that the Party which leads the revolutionary proletariat has not been able to acquire the experience and habits of large organisational undertakings embracing millions and tens of millions of citizens; the remoulding of the old, almost exclusively agitators' habits is a very lengthy process. But there is nothing impossible in this, and as soon as the necessity for a change is clearly appreciated, as soon as there is firm determination to effect the change and perseverance in pursuing a great and difficult aim, we shall achieve it. There is an enormous amount of organising talent among the "people", i.e., among the workers and the peasants who do not exploit the labour of others. Capital crushed these talented people in thousands; it killed their talent and threw them on to the scrap-heap. We are not yet able to find them, encourage them, put them on their feet, promote them. But we shall learn to do so if we set about it with all-out revolutionary enthusiasm, without which there can be no victorious revolutions.

*V. I. Lenin, The Immediate Tasks
of the Soviet Government. Collected Works,
Vol. 27, p. 262*

**The Dictatorship of the Proletariat
as a Type of State
Corresponding to the Period of Transition
from Capitalism to Socialism**

Once class domination disappears there will no longer be a state in the present political sense of the word.

*K. Marx, Konspekt von Bakunins Buch
"Staatlichkeit und Anarchie". Marx/Engels,
Werke, Bd. 18, S. 634*

Class-rule of the workers over the resisting elements of the old world must continue until the economic foundations for the existence of classes are done away with.

*K. Marx, Konspekt von Bakunins Buch
"Staatlichkeit und Anarchie". Marx/Engels,
Werke, Bd. 18, S. 636*

Consolidation and further development of the Federative Republic of Soviets as an immeasurably higher and more progressive form of democracy than bourgeois parliamentarism, and as the sole type of state corresponding ... to the transitional period between capitalism and socialism, i.e., to the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

*V. I. Lenin, Extraordinary Seventh
Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Rough
Outline of the Draft Programme.
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 153*

The proletarian dictatorship is absolutely indispensable during the transition from capitalism to socialism.

*V. I. Lenin, Six Theses on the Immediate
Tasks of the Soviet Government. Collected
Works, Vol. 27, p. 316*

This dictatorship (of the proletariat—*Ed.*) is essential as long as classes exist, as long as the bourgeoisie, overthrown in one country, intensifies tenfold its attacks on socialism on an international scale.

*V. I. Lenin, Third Congress of the Communist
International. Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 460*

Chapter Five

SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION FROM CAPITALISM TO SOCIALISM

The Conversion of Capitalist Private Property Into Socialist Property

To begin with, management of industry and all branches of production will be taken out of the hands of single, competing individuals. Instead, all branches of production will be run by the whole of society, that is, in the interest of all society, according to a common plan and with the participation of all members of society. Competition will thus be abolished and association will take its place. Since industrial management by individuals presupposes private property, and competition is nothing but a means of industrial management by individual property owners, private property is inseparable from individual industrial management and competition. Private property will therefore have to be abolished as well, and replaced by the common use of all instruments of production and the distribution of all products according to common agreement, that is, by common ownership. To be sure, abolition of private property is the shortest and most general expression of the social reconstruction made necessary by the development of industry, and is therefore rightly advanced by the Communists as their principal demand.

*F. Engels, Grundsätze des Kommunismus.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 4, S. 370-71*

The possession of the means of production is possible only in two forms: either as individual possession, which form never and nowhere existed for the producers in general, and is daily being made more impossible by industrial progress; or as common possession, a form the material and intellectual preconditions of which have been established by the development of capitalist society itself; that therefore taking *collective* possession of the means of production must be fought for by all means at the disposal of the proletariat.

The common possession of the means of production is thus set forth here as the sole principal goal to be striven for. Not only in industry, where the ground has already been prepared, but in general, hence also in agriculture.

F. Engels, The Peasant Question in France and Germany. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, p. 426

What, besides, gives our work quite special significance is the circumstance that it was the first to express the formula in which, by common agreement, the workers' parties of all countries in the world briefly summarise their demand for economic transformation: the appropriation of the means of production by society.

F. Engels, Introduction to K. Marx's work "The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850". Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 121

Conversion of contemporary capitalist production, conducted in the interest of individuals or stock companies, into socialist production in the interest of society as a whole in accordance with a pre-determined plan—a conversion, . . . that alone can liberate the working class and hence liberate all members of society without exception.

F. Engels, Zur Kritik des sozialdemokratischen Programmentwurfs, 1891. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 22, S. 232

The genuine liberation of the working class is impossible until the workers become the joint proprietors of all means of labour—of the land and soil, raw materials, machines, etc., and thus the proprietors of *the entire product of their own labour*.

F. Engels, Das Lohnsystem. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 19, S. 253

However excellent in principle, and however useful in practice, co-operative labour, if kept within the narrow circle of the casual efforts of private workmen, will never be able to arrest the growth in geometrical progression of monopoly, to free the masses, nor even to perceptibly lighten the burden of their miseries.... To save the industrious masses, co-operative labour ought to be developed to national dimensions, and consequently, to be fostered by national means.

K. Marx, Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 383-84

Wherever medium-sized and large estates prevail, *farm labourers* form the most numerous class in the countryside. This is the case throughout the North and East of Germany and it is *there* that the industrial workers of the towns find their *most numerous and most natural allies*. In the same way as the capitalist confronts the industrial worker, the landowner or large tenant confronts the farm labourer. The same measures that help the one must also help the other. The industrial workers can free themselves only by transforming the capital of the bourgeois, that is, the raw materials, machines and tools, and the means of subsistence they need to work in production, into the property of society, that is, into their own property, used by them in common. Similarly, the farm labourers can be rescued from

their hideous misery only when, primarily, their chief object of labour, the land itself, is withdrawn from the private ownership of the big peasants and the still bigger feudal lords, transformed into public property and cultivated by cooperative associations of agricultural workers on their common account.

F. Engels, The Peasant War in Germany, Moscow, 1965 p. 15

As soon as our Party is in possession of political power it has simply to expropriate the big landed proprietors just like the manufacturers in industry. Whether this expropriation is to be compensated for or not will to a great extent depend not upon us but the circumstances under which we obtain power, and particularly upon the attitude adopted by these gentry, the big landowners, themselves. We by no means consider compensation as impermissible in any event; Marx told me (and how many times!) that in his opinion we would get off cheapest if we could buy out the whole lot of them. But this does not concern us here. The big estates thus restored to the community are to be turned over by us to the rural workers who are already cultivating them and are to be organised into co-operatives. They are to be assigned to them for their use and benefit under the control of the community. Nothing can as yet be stated as to the terms of their tenure. At any rate the transformation of the capitalist enterprise into a social enterprise is here fully prepared for and can be carried into execution overnight. . . .

F. Engels, The Peasant Question in France and Germany. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 438-39

The aim (and essence) of socialism—the transfer of the land, factories, etc., in general, of all the means of production, to the ownership of the whole of society and the

replacement of the capitalist mode of production by production according to a common plan in the interests of all members of society. . . .

V. I. Lenin, A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy. Collected Works, Vol. 4, p. 275

There is only one way of ending the exploitation of labour by capital, and that is to abolish the private ownership of the instruments of labour, to hand over all the factories, mills, mines, and also all the big estates, etc., to the whole of society and to conduct socialist production in common, directed by the workers themselves.

V. I. Lenin, Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party. Collected Works, Vol. 2, p. 108

Any and all direct or indirect legalisation of the ownership by workers of a specific factory or a specific trade, of their specific production; or of their right to weaken or obstruct the directives of the state administration, constitutes a gross distortion of the rudimentary principles of Soviet power and a total repudiation of socialism.

V. I. Lenin, On Democratism and the Socialist Character of Soviet Power. Collected Works, Fifth Russian edition, Vol. 36, p. 481

We acted quite simply; not fearing to call forth the reproaches of the "educated" people, or rather of the uneducated supporters of the bourgeoisie who were trading in the remnants of their knowledge, we said we had at our disposal armed workers and peasants. This morning they must occupy all the private banks. After they have done that, after power is in our hands, only after this, we shall discuss what measures to adopt. In the morning the banks were occupied and in the evening the Central

Executive Committee issued a decree: "The banks are declared national property"—state control, the socialisation of banking, its transfer to Soviet power, took place.

There was not a man among us who could imagine that an intricate and subtle apparatus like banking, which grew out of the capitalist system of economy in the course of centuries, could be broken or transformed in a few days. We never said that. And when scientists, or pseudo-scientists, shook their heads and prophesied, we said: you can prophesy what you like. We know only one way for the proletarian revolution, namely, to occupy the enemy's positions—to learn to rule by experience, from our mistakes. We do not in the least belittle the difficulties in our path, but we have done the main thing. The source of capitalist wealth has been undermined in the place of its distribution. After all this, the repudiation of the state loans, the overthrow of the financial yoke, was a very easy step. The transition to confiscation of the factories, after workers' control had been introduced, was also very easy. When we were accused of breaking up production into separate departments by introducing workers' control, we brushed aside this nonsense. In introducing workers' control, we knew that it would take much time before it spread to the whole of Russia, but we wanted to show that we recognise only one road—changes from below; we wanted the workers themselves, from below, to draw up the new, basic economic principles. Much time will be required for this.

From workers' control we passed on to the creation of a Supreme Economic Council. Only this measure, together with the nationalisation of the banks and railways which will be carried out within the next few days, will make it possible for us to begin work to build up a new socialist economy.

V. I. Lenin, Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. Collected Works, Vol. 26, pp. 467-68

All a government would have had to do, if its name of revolutionary-democratic government were not merely a joke, would have been to decree, in the very first week of its existence, the adoption of the principal measures of control....

These principal measures are:

1) Amalgamation of all banks into a single bank, and state control over its operations, or nationalisation of the banks.

2) Nationalisation of the syndicates, i.e., the largest, monopolistic capitalist associations (sugar, oil, coal, iron and steel, and other syndicates).

3) Abolition of commercial secrecy.

4) Compulsory syndication (i.e., compulsory amalgamation into associations) of industrialists, merchants and employers generally.

5) Compulsory organisation of the population into consumers' societies, or encouragement of such organisation, and the exercise of control over it....

The banks, as we know, are centres of modern economic life, the principal nerve centres of the whole capitalist economic system. To talk about "regulating economic life" and yet evade the question of the nationalisation of the banks means either betraying the most profound ignorance or deceiving the "common people" by florid words and grandiloquent promises with the deliberate intention of not fulfilling these promises....

Only by nationalising the banks *can* the state *put itself in a position* to know where and how, whence and when, millions and billions of rubles flow. And only control over the banks, over the centre, over the pivot and chief mechanism of capitalist circulation, would make it possible to organise real and not fictitious control over all economic life, over the production and distribution of staple goods, and organise that "regulation of economic life" which otherwise is inevitably doomed to remain a ministerial phrase designed to fool the common people. Only control over banking operations, provided they were concentrated

in a single state bank, would make it possible, if certain other easily-practicable measures were adopted, to organise the effective collection of income tax in such a way as to prevent the concealment of property and incomes; for at present the income tax is very largely a fiction.

V. I. Lenin, *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It. Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 328-29, 331

Capitalism has created an accounting *apparatus* in the shape of the banks, syndicates, postal service, consumers' societies, and office employees' unions. *Without big banks socialism would be impossible.*

The big banks *are* the "state apparatus" which we *need* to bring about socialism, and which we *take ready-made* from capitalism; our task here is merely to *lop off* what *capitalistically mutilates* this excellent apparatus, to make it *even bigger*, even more democratic, even more comprehensive. Quantity will be transformed into quality. A single State Bank, the biggest of the big, with branches in every rural district, in every factory, will constitute as much as nine-tenths of the *socialist* apparatus. This will be country-wide *book-keeping*, country-wide *accounting* of the production and distribution of goods, this will be, so to speak, something in the nature of the *skeleton* of socialist society.

We can "lay hold of" and "set in motion" this "state apparatus" (which is not fully a state apparatus under capitalism, but which will be so with us, under socialism) at one stroke, by a single decree, because the actual work of book-keeping, control, registering, accounting and counting is performed by *employees*, the majority of whom themselves lead a proletarian or semi-proletarian existence....

The conversion of the bank, syndicate, commercial, etc., etc., rank-and-file employees into state employees is quite feasible both technically (thanks to the preliminary work performed for us by capitalism, including finance capital-

ism) and politically, provided the *Soviets* exercise control and supervision.

V. I. Lenin, Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power? Collected Works, Vol. 26, pp. 106-07

The Specific Features of State Capitalism as a Form of Transition from Private Capitalist Production to Socialist Production

State capitalism in a society where power belongs to capital, and state capitalism in a proletarian state, are two different concepts. In a capitalist state, state capitalism means that it is recognised by the state and controlled by it for the benefit of the bourgeoisie, and to the detriment of the proletariat. In the proletarian state, the same thing is done for the benefit of the working class, for the purpose of withstanding the as yet strong bourgeoisie, and of fighting it. It goes without saying that we must grant concessions to the foreign bourgeoisie, to foreign capital. Without the slightest denationalisation, we shall lease mines, forests and oilfields to foreign capitalists, and receive in exchange manufactured goods, machinery, etc., and thus restore our own industry.

V. I. Lenin, Third Congress of the Communist International. Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 491

Can the Soviet state and the dictatorship of the proletariat be combined with state capitalism? Are they compatible?

Of course they are. This is exactly what I argued in May 1918. I hope I had proved it then. I had also proved that state capitalism is a step forward compared with the small-proprietor (both small-patriarchal and petty-bourgeois) element. Those who compare state capitalism only with socialism commit a host of mistakes, for in the

present political and economic circumstances it is essential to compare state capitalism also with petty-bourgeois production.

The whole problem—in theoretical and practical terms—is to find the correct methods of directing the development of capitalism (which is to some extent and for some time inevitable) into the channels of state capitalism, and to determine how we are to hedge it about with conditions to ensure its transformation into socialism in the near future.

In order to approach the solution of this problem we must first of all picture to ourselves as distinctly as possible what state capitalism will and can be in practice inside the Soviet system and within the framework of the Soviet state.

Concessions are the simplest example of how the Soviet government directs the development of capitalism into the channels of state capitalism and “implants” state capitalism. We all agree now that concessions are necessary, but have we all thought about the implications? What are concessions under the Soviet system, viewed in the light of the above-mentioned forms of economy and their interrelations? They are an agreement, an alliance, a bloc between the Soviet, i.e., proletarian, state power and state capitalism against the small-proprietor (patriarchal and petty-bourgeois) element. The concessionaire is a capitalist. He conducts his business on capitalist lines, for profit, and is willing to enter into an agreement with the proletarian government in order to obtain superprofits or raw materials which he cannot otherwise obtain, or can obtain only with great difficulty. Soviet power gains by the development of the productive forces, and by securing an increased quantity of goods immediately, or within a very short period. We have, say, a hundred oilfields, mines and forest tracts. We cannot develop all of them for we lack the machines, the food and the transport. This is also why we are doing next to nothing to develop the other territories. Owing to the insufficient development of the large

enterprises the small-proprietor element is more pronounced in all its forms, and this is reflected in the deterioration of the surrounding (and later the whole of) peasant farming, the disruption of its productive forces, the decline in its confidence in the Soviet power, pilfering and widespread petty (the most dangerous) profiteering, etc. By "implanting" state capitalism in the form of concessions, the Soviet government strengthens large-scale production as against petty production, advanced production as against backward production, and machine production as against hand production. It also obtains a larger quantity of the products of large-scale industry (its share of the output), and strengthens state-regulated economic relations as against the anarchy of petty-bourgeois relations. The moderate and cautious application of the concessions policy will undoubtedly help us quickly to improve (to a modest extent) the state of industry and the condition of the workers and peasants. We shall, of course, have all this at the price of certain sacrifices and the surrender to the capitalist of many millions of poods of very valuable products. The scale and the conditions under which concessions cease to be a danger and are turned to our advantage depend on the relation of forces and are decided in the struggle, for concessions are also a form of struggle, and are a continuation of the class struggle in another form, and in no circumstances are they a substitution of class peace for class war. Practice will determine the methods of struggle.

Compared with other forms of state capitalism within the Soviet system, concessions are perhaps the most simple and clear-cut form of state capitalism. It involves a formal written agreement with the most civilised, advanced, West-European capitalism. We know exactly what our gains and our losses, our rights and obligations are. We know exactly the term for which the concession is granted. We know the terms of redemption before the expiry of the agreement if it provides for such redemption. We pay a certain "tribute" to world capitalism; we "ransom"

ourselves under certain arrangements, thereby immediately consolidating the Soviet power and improving our economic conditions.

*V. I. Lenin, The Tax in Kind.
Collected Works, Vol. 32,
pp. 345-47*

The concessions policy, if successful, will give us a few model—compared with our own—large enterprises built on the level of modern advanced capitalism. After a few decades these enterprises will revert to us in their entirety.

*V. I. Lenin, The Tax in Kind.
Collected Works, Vol. 32,
p. 349*

In the first place *economically* state capitalism is immeasurably superior to our present economic system.

In the second place there is nothing terrible in it for the Soviet power, for the Soviet state is a state in which the power of the workers and the poor is assured. . . .

*V. I. Lenin, The Tax in Kind.
Collected Works, Vol. 32,
p. 333*

The state capitalism discussed in all books on economics is that which exists under the capitalist system, where the state brings under its direct control certain capitalist enterprises. But ours is a proletarian state; it rests on the proletariat; it gives the proletariat all political privileges; and through the medium of the proletariat it attracts to itself the lower ranks of the peasantry (you remember that we began this work through the Poor Peasants' Committees). That is why very many people are misled by the term state capitalism. To avoid this we must remember the fundamental thing that state capitalism in the form we have here is not dealt with in any theory, or in any books, for the simple reason that all the usual concepts

connected with this term are associated with bourgeois rule in capitalist society. Our society is one which has left the rails of capitalism, but has not yet got on to new rails. The state in this society is not ruled by the bourgeoisie, but by the proletariat. We refuse to understand that when we say "state" we mean ourselves, the proletariat, the vanguard of the working class. State capitalism is capitalism which we shall be able to restrain, and the limits of which we shall be able to fix. This state capitalism is connected with the state, and the state is the workers, the advanced section of the workers, the vanguard. We are the state.

*V. I. Lenin, Eleventh Congress
of the R.C.P.(B.).
Collected Works,
Vol. 33, p. 278*

Socialist Transformation of Agriculture

It is not the task of socialism to separate property from labour, but, on the contrary, to unite these two factors of all production by placing them in the same hands. As has already been pointed out, the latter in this general form is by no means the task of socialism. The latter's task is rather only to transfer the means of production to the producers as their *common possession*. As soon as we lose sight of this the above statement becomes directly misleading in that it implies that it is the mission of socialism to convert the present sham property of the small peasant in his fields into real property, that is to say, to convert the small tenant into an owner and the indebted owner into a debtless owner. Undoubtedly socialism is interested to see that the false semblance of peasant property should disappear, but not in this manner.

*F. Engels, The Peasant Question
in France and Germany. Marx and Engels,
Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962,
pp. 427-28*

We are economically certain that the big and middle peasant must likewise inevitably succumb to the competition of capitalist production and the cheap overseas corn, as is proved by the growing indebtedness and the everywhere evident decay of these peasants as well. We can do nothing against this decay except recommend here too the pooling of farms to form co-operative enterprises, in which the exploitation of wage-labour will be eliminated more and more, and their gradual transformation into branches of the great national producers' co-operative with each branch enjoying equal rights and duties can be instituted. If these peasants realise the inevitability of the doom of their present mode of production and draw the necessary conclusions they will come to us and it will be incumbent upon us to facilitate to the best of our ability also their transition to the changed mode of production. Otherwise we shall have to abandon them to their fate and address ourselves to their wage-workers, among whom we shall not fail to find sympathy. Most likely we shall be able to abstain here as well from resorting to forcible expropriation, and as for the rest to count on future economic developments making also these harder pates amenable to reason.

F. Engels, The Peasant Question in France and Germany. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 437-38

To begin with, the French programme is absolutely correct in stating: that we foresee the inevitable doom of the small peasant but that it is not our mission to hasten it by any interference on our part.

Secondly, it is just as evident that when we are in possession of state power we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (regardless of whether with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in the case of the big landowners. Our task relative to the small peasant consists, in the first place, in effecting a transition of his private enterprise and private possession

to co-operative ones, not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose.

F. Engels, The Peasant Question in France and Germany. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, p. 433.

The main point is and will be to make the peasants understand that we can save, preserve their houses and fields for them only by transforming them into co-operative property operated co-operatively. It is precisely the individual farming conditioned by individual ownership that drives the peasants to their doom. If they insist on individual operation they will inevitably be driven from house and home and their antiquated mode of production superseded by capitalist large-scale production.

F. Engels, The Peasant Question in France and Germany. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 434-35

The big landed estates which still exist will rather afford us a welcome basis for the carrying on of agriculture on a large scale—the only system of farming which can utilise all modern facilities, machinery, etc.—by associated workers and thus demonstrating to the small peasants the advantages of large-scale operation by means of association.

F. Engels, The Housing Question. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 632

We acknowledge the co-operative movement as one of the transforming forces of the present society based upon class antagonism. Its great merit is to practically show that the present pauperising and despotic system of the *subordination of labour* to capital can be superseded by the republican and beneficent system of *the association of free and equal producers*. . . .

To convert social production into one large and harmonious system of free and co-operative labour, *general social changes* are wanted, *changes of the general conditions of society*, never to be realised save by the transfer of the organised forces of society, viz., the state power, from capitalists and landlords to the producers themselves.

The General Council of the First International 1864-1866, Moscow, 1964, p. 346

Nationalisation (of the land.—*Ed.*) in Russia, as far as bourgeois democracy is concerned, is necessary. But it is also necessary for another reason—it deals a mighty blow at private ownership of the means of production. It is simply absurd to imagine that after the abolition of private property in land everything in Russia will remain as before.

V. I. Lenin, The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), Collected Works, Vol. 24, p. 284

Being the party of the proletariat . . . we are unquestionably in duty bound not only immediately to advance an agrarian (land) programme but also to advocate practical measures which can be immediately realised *in the interests* of the peasant agrarian revolution in Russia.

We must demand the nationalisation of *all* the land, i.e., that all the land in the state should become the property of the central state power. This power must fix the size, etc., of the resettlement land fund, pass legislation for the conservation of forests, for land improvement, etc., and absolutely prohibit any middlemen to interpose themselves between the owner of the land, i.e., the state, and the tenant, i.e., the tiller (prohibit all subletting of land). However, the *disposal* of the land, the determination of the *local regulations* governing ownership and tenure of land, must in no case be placed in the hands of bureaucrats

and officials, but wholly and exclusively in the hands of the regional and local *Soviets of Peasants' Deputies*.

In order to improve grain production techniques and increase output, and in order to develop rational cultivation on a large scale under public control, we must strive within the peasants' committees to secure the transformation of every confiscated landed estate into a large model farm controlled by the *Soviet of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies*.

V. I. Lenin, The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution. Collected Works, Vol. 24, pp. 71-72

The nationalisation of the land that has been effected in Russia by the proletarian dictatorship has best ensured the carrying of the bourgeois-democratic revolution to its conclusion—even in the event of a victory of the counter-revolution causing a reversion from land nationalisation to land division (I made a special examination of this possibility in my pamphlet on the agrarian programme of the Marxists in the 1905 Revolution). In addition, the nationalisation of the land has given the proletarian state the maximum opportunity of passing to socialism in agriculture.

V. I. Lenin, The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 315

He (Engels.—*Ed.*) stressed that socialists have no intention whatever of expropriating the small peasants, and that the advantages of mechanised socialist agriculture will be made clear to them only *by force of example*.

V. I. Lenin, From a Publicist's Diary. Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 280

Socialists do not intend to, cannot and will not expropriate the small peasant *even if there is a fully socialist revolution*.

V. I. Lenin, *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It. Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 344

The proletarian state must effect the transition to collective farming with extreme caution and only very gradually, by the force of example, without any coercion of the middle peasant.

V. I. Lenin, *Preliminary Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question. Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 157

Every politically conscious socialist says that socialism cannot be imposed upon the peasants by force and that we must count only on the power of example and on the mass of the peasants assimilating day-to-day experience. How would the peasants prefer to pass to socialism? This is the problem which now confronts the Russian peasants in practice. How can they support the socialist proletariat and begin the transition to socialism? The peasants have already tackled this transition, and we have complete confidence in them.

V. I. Lenin, *Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 458

There is no doubt that building socialism is a very difficult job in a peasant country like Russia. There is no doubt that it was comparatively easy to sweep away an enemy like tsarism, the power of the landowners, the landed estates. At the centre the job could be done in a few days; throughout the country it could be done in a few weeks. But, by its very nature, the task we are now tackling can be accomplished only by extremely persistent

and sustained effort. Here we shall have to fight our way step by step, inch by inch. We shall have to fight for every achievement to win a new, socialist Russia; we shall have to fight for collective farming.

It goes without saying that a revolution of this kind, the transition from small individual peasant farms to collective farming, will take some time and can certainly not be accomplished at one stroke.

We know very well that in countries where small peasant farming prevails the transition to socialism cannot be effected except by a series of gradual, preliminary stages. In the light of this, the first aim set by the October Revolution was merely to overthrow and destroy the landowners' power. The February fundamental law on the socialisation of the land,³⁹ which, as you know, was passed unanimously both by Communists and the non-communist partners of the Soviet government, was at the same time an expression of the conscious will of the vast majority of the peasants and proof that the working class, the workers' Communist Party, aware of their task, are persistently and patiently advancing towards the new socialist construction—advancing by a series of gradual measures, by awakening the working peasants, and forging ahead only in step with that awakening, only insofar as the peasants are independently organised.

We fully realise that such tremendous changes in the lives of tens of millions of people as the transition from small individual peasant farming to collective farming, affecting as they do the most deep-going roots of the peasants' way of life and their mores, can only be accomplished by long effort, and only when necessity compels people to reshape their lives.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech to the First All-Russia
Congress of Land
Departments, Poor Peasants'
Committees and Communes, December 11, 1918.
Collected Works, Vol. 28, pp. 341-42*

To be sure, joint cultivation is a difficult business and it would be madness of course for anybody to imagine that joint cultivation of the land can be decreed from above and imposed on people, because the centuries-old habit of farming on one's own cannot suddenly disappear, and because money will be needed for it and adaptation to the new mode of life. If this advice, this view, on the common cultivation of the land with commonly owned animals and implements to be used to the best purpose jointly with agronomists—if this advice were the invention of individual political parties, the case would be a bad one, because changes are not made in the life of a people on the advice of a party, because tens of millions of people do not make a revolution on the advice of a party, and such a change would be much more of a revolution than the overthrow of the weak-minded Nicholas Romanov. I repeat, tens of millions of people will not make a revolution to order, but will do so when driven to it by dire need, when their position is an impossible one, when the joint pressure and determination of tens of millions of people break down the old barriers and are actually capable of creating a new way of life. When we advise such a measure, and advise caution in the handling of it, saying that it is becoming necessary, we are not drawing that conclusion from our programme, from our socialist doctrine alone, but because we, as socialists, have come to this conclusion by studying the life of the West-European nations. We know that there have been many revolutions over there and that they have established democratic republics; we know that in America in 1865 the slave-owners were defeated and hundreds of millions of desiatines of land were distributed among the peasantry for nothing or next to nothing, and nevertheless capitalism dominates there more than anywhere else and oppresses the mass of the working people as badly as, if not worse than, in other countries. This is the socialist teaching, this is our study of other nations that firmly convinces us that without the common cultivation of the land by agricultural

labourers using the best machinery and guided by scientifically trained agronomists there is no escape from the yoke of capitalism. But if we were to be guided only by the experience of the West-European countries it would be very bad for Russia, because the Russian people in the mass are only capable of taking a serious step along that new path when the direst need arises. And we say to you: the time has now come when that dire need for the entire Russian people is knocking at the door. The dire need I speak of is precisely this—we cannot continue farming in the old way. If we continue as before on our small isolated farms, albeit as free citizens on free soil, we are still faced with imminent ruin. . . .

*V. I. Lenin, First All-Russia Congress
of Peasants' Deputies. Collected Works.
Vol. 24, pp. 502-04*

It will take generations to remould the small farmer, and recast his mentality and habits. The only way to solve this problem of the small farmer—to improve, so to speak, his mentality—is through the material basis, technical equipment, the extensive use of tractors and other farm machinery and electrification on a mass scale. This would remake the small farmer fundamentally and with tremendous speed. If I say this will take generations, it does not mean centuries. But you know perfectly well that to obtain tractors and other machinery and to electrify this vast country is a matter that may take decades in any case. Such is the objective situation.

*V. I. Lenin, Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).
Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 217*

If we construct scores of district electric power stations (we now know where and how these can and should be constructed), and transmit electric power to every village, if we obtain a sufficient number of electric motors and other machinery, we shall not need, or shall hardly need,

any transition stages or intermediary links between patriarchalism and socialism.

*V. I. Lenin, The Tax in Kind.
Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 350*

We must transfer our attention from the aim of suppressing the bourgeoisie to the aim of arranging the life of the middle peasant. We must live in peace with him. In a communist society the middle peasants will be on our side only when we alleviate and improve their economic conditions. If tomorrow we could supply one hundred thousand first-class tractors, provide them with fuel, provide them with drivers—you know very well that this at present is sheer fantasy—the middle peasant would say, “I am for the communia” (i.e., for communism).

*V. I. Lenin, Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).
Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 214*

It seems to me that not enough attention is being paid to the co-operative movement in our country. Not everyone understands that now, since the time of the October Revolution and quite apart from NEP (on the contrary, in this connection we must say—because of NEP), our co-operative movement has become one of great significance. There is a lot of fantasy in the dreams of the old co-operators. Often they are ridiculously fantastic. But why are they fantastic? Because people do not understand the fundamental, the rock-bottom significance of the working-class political struggle for the overthrow of the rule of the exploiters. We have overthrown the rule of the exploiters, and much that was fantastic, even romantic, even banal in the dreams of the old co-operators is now becoming unvarnished reality.

Indeed, since political power is in the hands of the working class, since this political power owns all the means of production, the only task, indeed, that remains for us is to organise the population in co-operative societies. With most of the population organised in co-operatives, the

socialism which in the past was legitimately treated with ridicule, scorn and contempt by those who were rightly convinced that it was necessary to wage the class struggle, the struggle for political power, etc., will achieve its aim automatically. But not all comrades realise how vastly, how infinitely important it is now to organise the population of Russia in co-operative societies.... Indeed, the power of the state over all large-scale means of production, political power in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured proletarian leadership of the peasantry, etc.—is this not all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society out of co-operatives, out of co-operatives alone, which we formerly ridiculed as huckstering and which from a certain aspect we have the right to treat as such now, under NEP? Is this not all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society? It is still not the building of socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for it. . . .

I now propose to discuss with the reader what can and must at once be done practically on the basis of this “co-operative” principle. By what means can we, and must we, start at once to develop this “co-operative” principle so that its socialist meaning may be clear to all?

Co-operation must be politically so organised that it will not only generally and always enjoy certain privileges, but that these privileges should be of a purely material nature (a favourable bank-rate, etc.). The co-operatives must be granted state loans that are greater, if only by a little, than the loans we grant to private enterprises, even to heavy industry, etc.

A social system emerges only if it has the financial backing of a definite class. There is no need to mention the hundreds of millions of rubles that the birth of “free” capitalism cost. At present we have to realise that the co-operative system is the social system we must now give more than ordinary assistance, and we must actually give that assistance. . . .

A number of economic, financial and banking privileges must be granted to the co-operatives—this is the way our socialist state must promote the new principle on which the population must be organised. But this is only the general outline of the task; it does not define and depict in detail the entire content of the practical task, i.e., we must find what form of “bonus” to give for joining the co-operatives (and the terms on which we should give it), the form of bonus by which we shall assist the co-operatives sufficiently, the form of bonus that will produce the civilised co-operator. And given social ownership of the means of production, given the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, the system of civilised co-operators is the system of socialism.

*V. I. Lenin, On Co-operation.
Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 467, 468, 469, 470-71*

Socialism means the abolition of classes.

In order to abolish classes it is necessary, first, to overthrow the landowners and capitalists. This part of our task has been accomplished, but it is only a part, and moreover, *not* the most difficult part. In order to abolish classes it is necessary, secondly, to abolish the difference between factory worker and peasant, to make *workers of all of them*. This cannot be done all at once. This task is incomparably more difficult and will of necessity take a long time. It is not a problem that can be solved by overthrowing a class. It can be solved only by the organisational reconstruction of the whole social economy, by a transition from individual, disunited, petty commodity production to large-scale social production. This transition must of necessity be extremely protracted. It may only be delayed and complicated by hasty and incautious administrative and legislative measures. It can be accelerated only by affording such assistance to the peasant as will enable him to effect

an immense improvement in his whole farming technique, to reform it radically.

*V. I. Lenin, Economics and Politics
in the Era of the Dictatorship of
the Proletariat. Collected Works,
Vol. 30, pp. 112-13*

Of course, from all the activities of the Soviet government you know what tremendous significance we attach to the communes, artels, and all organisations generally that aim at transforming and at gradually assisting the transformation of small, individual peasant farming into socialised, co-operative, or artel farming. You are aware that the Soviet government long ago allotted the sum of one thousand million rubles to assist efforts of this kind. The Statute on Socialist Agrarian Measures particularly stresses the significance of communes, artels, and all enterprises for the joint cultivation of the land, and the Soviet government is exerting every effort to ensure that this law shall not remain on paper only, but shall really produce the benefits it is intended to produce.

The importance of all enterprises of this kind is tremendous, because if the old, poverty-stricken peasant farming remains unchanged there can be no question of building up a stable socialist society. Only if we succeed in proving to the peasants in practice the advantages of common, collective, co-operative, artel cultivation of the soil, only if we succeed in helping the peasant by means of co-operative or artel farming, will the working class, which wields state power, be really able to convince the peasant that its policy is correct and thus secure the real and lasting following of the millions of peasants. It is therefore impossible to exaggerate the importance of every measure intended to encourage co-operative, artel forms of farming. We have millions of individual farms in our country, scattered and dispersed throughout remote rural districts. It would be absolutely absurd to attempt to reshape these farms in any rapid way, by issuing an order

or bringing pressure to bear from without. We fully realise that we can influence the millions of small peasant farms only gradually and cautiously and only by a successful practical example, for the peasants are far too practical and cling far too tenaciously to the old methods of farming to consent to any serious change merely on the basis of advice or book instructions. That is impossible, and it would be absurd. Only when it has been proved in practice, by experience comprehensible to the peasants, that the transition to the co-operative, artel form of farming is essential and possible, shall we be entitled to say that in this vast peasant country, Russia, an important step towards socialist agriculture has been taken. Consequently, the vast importance that attaches to communes, artels, and co-operative farms lays on all of you tremendous state and socialist obligations and naturally makes it imperative for the Soviet government and its representatives to treat this question with especial attention and caution.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech Delivered at
the First Congress of Agricultural
Communes and Agricultural Artels,
December 4, 1919. Collected Works,
Vol. 30, pp. 195-96*

It will still be necessary for the state to help the communes, and we would not be Communists and champions of socialist economy if we did not give state aid to every kind of collective agricultural enterprise. We must do so because it is in accordance with all our aims, and because we know perfectly well that these co-operatives, artels, and collective organisations are innovations, and if support is not given them by the working class in power they will not take root.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech Delivered at
the First Congress of Agricultural
Communes and Agricultural Artels,
December 4, 1919. Collected Works,
Vol. 30, p. 198*

Chapter Six

ELIMINATION OF THE ANTITHESIS BETWEEN TOWN AND COUNTRY

The Origin of the Antithesis Between Town and Country

The division of labour inside a nation leads at first to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural labour, and hence to the separation of *town* and *country* and to the conflict of their interests.

*Marx and Engels, The German
Ideology, Moscow, 1964, p. 32*

The foundation of every division of labour that is well developed, and brought about by the exchange of commodities, is the separation between town and country. It may be said that the whole economic history of society is summed up in the movement of this antithesis. . .

*K. Marx, Capital, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1965, p. 352*

It is clear that the progress of social production in general has, on the one hand, the effect of evening out differences arising from location as a cause of ground-rent, by creating local markets and improving locations by establishing communication and transportation facilities; on the other hand, it increases the differences in individual locations of plots of land by separating agriculture from manufacturing and forming large centres of production,

on the one hand, while relatively isolating agricultural districts, on the other.

*K. Marx, Capital, Vol. III,
Moscow, 1962, p. 635*

The greatest division of material and mental labour is the separation of town and country. The antagonism between town and country begins with the transition from barbarism to civilisation, from tribe to State, from locality to nation, and runs through the whole history of civilisation to the present day.

*Marx and Engels, The German
Ideology, Moscow, 1964, p. 64*

The Aggravation of the Antithesis Between Town and Country Under Capitalism

The desire for social changes, and the class antagonisms are brought to the same level in the country as in the towns. The irrational, old-fashioned methods of agriculture are replaced by scientific ones. Capitalist production completely tears asunder the old bond of union which held together agriculture and manufacture in their infancy. But at the same time it creates the material conditions for a higher synthesis in the future, viz., the union of agriculture and industry on the basis of the more perfected forms they have each acquired during their temporary separation. Capitalist production, by collecting the population in great centres, and causing an ever-increasing preponderance of town population, on the one hand concentrates the historical motive power of society; on the other hand, it disturbs the circulation of matter between man and the soil, i.e., prevents the return to the soil of its elements consumed by man in the form of food and clothing; it therefore violates the conditions necessary to lasting fertility of the soil. By this action it destroys at the same time the health of the town labourer and the intellectual life of the

rural labourer. . . . But while upsetting the naturally grown conditions for the maintenance of that circulation of matter, it imperiously calls for its restoration as a system, as a regulating law of social production, and under a form appropriate to the full development of the human race. In agriculture as in manufacture, the transformation of production under the sway of capital, means, at the same time, the martyrdom of the producer; the instrument of labour becomes the means of enslaving, exploiting, and impoverishing the labourer; the social combination and organisation of labour-processes is turned into an organised mode of crushing out the workman's individual vitality, freedom, and independence. The dispersion of the rural labourers over larger areas breaks their power of resistance while concentration increases that of the town operatives. In modern agriculture, as in the urban industries, the increased productiveness and quantity of the labour set in motion are bought at the cost of laying waste and consuming by disease labour-power itself. Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time, is a progress towards ruining the lasting sources of that fertility. The more a country starts its development on the foundation of modern industry, like the United States, for example, the more rapid is this process of destruction. . . . Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the labourer.

*K. Marx, Capital, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1965, pp. 505-07*

Capital liberated agriculture from feudalism and drew it into commodity circulation and thereby into world economic development, lifting it from medieval backwardness and patriarchal stagnation. But capital, instead of eliminating the oppression, exploitation and poverty of the

masses, produces these calamities in a new guise and restores their old forms on a "modern" basis. The contradiction between industry and agriculture, far from being eliminated by capitalism, is, on the contrary, further extended and sharpened by it. The oppression of capital, seen primarily in the sphere of trade and industry, weighs more and more heavily on agriculture.

V. I. Lenin, New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture. Collected Works, Vol. 22, pp. 94-95

The phenomenon we are now discussing is one of the most profound and most general of the contradictions of the capitalist system. The separation of town from country, their oppositeness, and the exploitation of the countryside by the town—these universal concomitants of developing capitalism. . . . Therefore, the predominance of the town over the countryside (economically, politically, intellectually, and in all other respects) is a universal and inevitable thing in all countries where there is commodity production and capitalism, including Russia. . . .

V. I. Lenin, A Characterisation of Economic Romanticism. Collected Works, Vol. 2, p. 229

We know that towns in all modern states and even in Russia grow more rapidly than villages, that the towns are centres of the economic, political and spiritual life of the people and are the chief vehicles of progress.

V. I. Lenin, Fresh Data on German Political Parties. Collected Works, Vol. 19, p. 270

Ways to Overcome the Antithesis Between Town and Country

The antagonism between town and country can only exist within the framework of private property. It is the most crass expression of the subjection of the individual

under the division of labour, under a definite activity forced upon him—a subjection which makes one man into a restricted town animal, the other into a restricted country animal, and daily creates anew the conflict between their interests. Labour is here again the chief thing, power over individuals, and as long as the latter exists, private property must exist. The abolition of the antagonism between town and country is one of the first conditions of communal life, a condition which again depends on a mass of material premises and which cannot be fulfilled by the mere will, as anyone can see at the first glance.

Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, Moscow, 1964, pp. 64-65

Abolition of the antithesis between town and country is not merely possible. It has become a direct necessity of industrial production itself, just as it has become a necessity of agricultural production and, besides, of public health. The present poisoning of the air, water and land can be put an end to only by the fusion of town and country; and only such fusion will change the situation of the masses now languishing in the towns, and enable their excrement to be used for the production of plants instead of for the production of disease. . . .

The abolition of the separation of town and country is . . . not utopian, also, in so far as it is conditioned on the most equal distribution possible of modern industry over the whole country. It is true that in the huge towns civilisation has bequeathed us a heritage which it will take much time and trouble to get rid of. But it must and will be got rid of, however protracted a process it may be.

F. Engels, Anti-Dühring, Moscow, 1962, pp. 407-08

Only as uniform a distribution as possible of the population over the whole country, only an intimate connection between industrial and agricultural production together

with the extension of the means of communication made necessary thereby—granted the abolition of the capitalist mode of production—will be able to deliver the rural population from the isolation and stupor in which it has vegetated almost unchanged for thousands of years.

*F. Engels, The Housing Question.
Marx and Engels: Selected Works,
Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 627-28*

On its own admission ... the bourgeois solution of the housing question has come to grief—it has come to grief owing to the *contrast between town and country*. And with this we have arrived at the kernel of the problem. The housing question can be solved only when society has been sufficiently transformed for a start to be made towards abolishing the contrast between town and country, which has been brought to its extreme point by present-day capitalist society. Far from being able to abolish this antithesis, capitalist society on the contrary is compelled to intensify it day by day. On the other hand, already the first modern Utopian Socialists, Owen and Fourier, correctly recognised this. In their model structures the contrast between town and country no longer exists. Consequently there takes place exactly the opposite of what Herr Sax contends: it is not that the solution of the housing question simultaneously solves the social question, but that only by the solution of the social question, that is, by the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, is the solution of the housing question made possible. To want to solve the housing question while at the same time desiring to maintain the modern big cities is an absurdity. The modern big cities, however, will be abolished only by the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, and when this is once set going there will be quite other issues than supplying each worker with a little house of his own.

In the beginning, however, each social revolution will have to take things as it finds them and do its best to get rid of the most crying evils with the means at its disposal.

And we have already seen that the housing *shortage* can be remedied immediately by expropriating a part of the luxury dwellings belonging to the propertied classes and by compulsory quartering in the remaining part.

*F. Engels, The Housing Question.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 588-89*

The town cannot be equal to the country. The country cannot be equal to the town under the historical conditions of this epoch. The town inevitably *leads* the country. The country inevitably *follows the town*. The only question is *which class*, of the "urban" classes, will succeed in leading the country, will cope with this task, and what forms will *leadership by the town* assume?

*V. I. Lenin, The Constituent Assembly
Elections and the Dictatorship of
the Proletariat. Collected Works,
Vol. 30, p. 257*

If the town necessarily gains itself a privileged position, leaving the village subordinate, undeveloped, helpless and downtrodden, only the influx of the village population into the towns, only this mingling and merging of the agricultural with the non-agricultural population, can lift the rural population out of its helplessness. Therefore, in reply to the reactionary complaints and lamentations of the romanticists, modern theory indicates exactly how this narrowing of the gap between the conditions of life of the agricultural and of the non-agricultural population creates the conditions for eliminating the antithesis between town and country.

*V. I. Lenin, A Characterisation of Economic
Romanticism. Collected Works, Vol. 2,
pp. 229-30*

Inasmuch as the antithesis between town and country is one of the root causes of the economic and cultural backwardness of the countryside, one which in a period of

so deep a crisis as the present confronts both town and country with the direct threat of ruin and collapse, the R.C.P. regards the eradication of this antithesis as one of the basic tasks of building communism and, alongside the above measures, considers it necessary extensively and systematically to enlist industrial workers for the communist development of agriculture, to promote the activities of the nation-wide Working Committee of Assistance⁴⁰ set up by the Soviet government with this aim in view, and so on.

*V. I. Lenin, Draft Programme
of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works,
Vol. 29, p. 139*

We must prove to the peasants that in place of the old separation of industry from agriculture, this very deep contradiction on which capitalism thrived and which sowed dissension between the industrial and agricultural workers, we set ourselves the task of returning to the peasant the loan we received from him in the form of grain, for we know that paper money, of course, is not the equivalent of bread. We must repay this loan by organising industry and supplying the peasants with its products. We must show the peasants that the organisation of industry on the basis of modern, advanced technology, on electrification which will provide a link between town and country, will put an end to the division between town and country, will make it possible to raise the level of culture in the countryside and to overcome, even in the most remote corners of the land, backwardness, ignorance, poverty, disease and barbarism.

*V. I. Lenin, Report on the Work
of the All-Russia Central Executive
Committee and the Council of
People's Commissars Delivered at
the First Session of the All-Russia
Central Executive Committee, Seventh
Convocation, February 2, 1920.
Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 335*

Here we have a fundamental political question—the relations between town and country—which is of decisive importance for the whole of our revolution. While the bourgeois state methodically concentrates all its efforts on doping the urban workers, adapting all the literature published at state expense and at the expense of the tsarist and bourgeois parties for this purpose, we can and must utilise our political power to make the urban worker an effective vehicle of communist ideas among the rural proletariat. . . .

Under capitalism the town introduced political, economic, moral, physical, etc., corruption into the countryside. In our case, towns are automatically beginning to introduce the very opposite of this into the countryside. But, I repeat, all this is going on automatically, spontaneously, and can be improved (and later increased a hundredfold) by doing it consciously, methodically and systematically.

*V. I. Lenin, Pages from a Diary.
Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 465, 466*

Chapter Seven

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The Relation of the Proletariat to Bourgeois Culture

Socialism cannot be built unless we utilise the heritage of capitalist culture. The only material we have to build communism with is what has been left us by capitalism.

*V. I. Lenin, Eighth Congress of the
R.C.P.(B.), Collected Works, Vol. 29,
p. 156*

Earlier revolutions perished because the workers were unable to retain power by means of a firm dictatorship and did not realise that they could not retain power by dictatorship, by force, by coercion alone; power can be maintained only by adopting the whole experience of cultured, technically equipped, progressive capitalism and by enlisting the services of all these people.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech Delivered at the
Third All-Russia Congress of Water
Transport Workers, March 15, 1920.
Collected Works, Vol. 30, pp. 429-30*

We have lagged behind with accounting and control because it has been very difficult to smash this resistance and bring the bourgeoisie and its technicians and bourgeois specialists into our service. But we need their knowledge, their experience and labour, without which it is impos-

sible, in fact, to gain possession of the culture that was created by the old social relations and has remained as the material basis of socialism.

*V. I. Lenin, Session of the All-Russia C.E.C.,
April 29, 1918. Collected Works,
Vol 27, p. 301*

The only socialism we can imagine is one based on all the lessons learned through large-scale capitalist culture. Socialism without postal and telegraph services, without machines is the emptiest of phrases. But it is impossible to sweep aside the bourgeois atmosphere and bourgeois habits all at once; it needs the kind of organisation on which all modern science and technology are based.

*V. I. Lenin, Session of the
All-Russia C.E.C., April 29, 1918.
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 310*

Socialism would be impossible if it did not make use of the technical knowledge, culture and the apparatus created by bourgeois, capitalist civilisation.

*V. I. Lenin, Report on the Work
of the All-Russia C.E.C.
and the Council of People's
Commissars Delivered at the First
Session of the All-Russia C.E.C.,
Seventh Convocation, February 2, 1920.
Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 328*

We must take the entire culture that capitalism left behind and build socialism with it. We must take all its science, technology, knowledge and art. Without these we shall be unable to build communist society. But this science, technology and art are in the hands and in the heads of the experts.

*V. I. Lenin, The Achievements and
Difficulties of the Soviet Government.
Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 70*

Everything that bourgeois culture has created for the purpose of deceiving the people and defending the capitalists we have taken from them in order to satisfy the political needs of the workers and peasants.

V. I. Lenin, Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 163

We know socialism can only be built from elements of large-scale capitalist culture, and the intellectuals are one of these elements.

V. I. Lenin, Moscow Party Workers' Meeting, November 27, 1918. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 213

We shall be unable to solve this problem unless we clearly realise that only a precise knowledge and transformation of the culture created by the entire development of mankind will enable us to create a proletarian culture. The latter is not clutched out of thin air; it is not an invention of those who call themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense. Proletarian culture must be the logical development of the store of knowledge mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist, landowner and bureaucratic society.

V. I. Lenin, The Tasks of the Youth Leagues. Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 287

Marxism has won its historic significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat because, far from rejecting the most valuable achievements of the bourgeois epoch, it has, on the contrary, assimilated and refashioned everything of value in the more than two thousand years of the development of human thought and culture. Only further work on this basis and in this direction, inspired by the practical experience of the proletarian dictatorship as the

final stage in the struggle against every form of exploitation, can be recognised as the development of a genuine proletarian culture.

*V. I. Lenin, On Proletarian Culture.
Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 317*

The Need for Raising the Educational and Cultural Level of the Masses

Nowhere are the masses of the people so interested in real culture as they are in our country; nowhere are the problems of this culture tackled so thoroughly and consistently as they are in our country; in no other country is state power in the hands of the working class which, in its mass, is fully aware of the deficiencies, I shall not say of its culture, but of its literacy; nowhere is the working class so ready to make, and nowhere is it actually making, such sacrifices to improve its position in this respect as in our country.

*V. I. Lenin, Pages from a Diary.
Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 463*

The working people are thirsting for knowledge because they need it to win. Nine out of ten of the working people have realised that knowledge is a weapon in their struggle for emancipation, that their failures are due to lack of education, and that now it is up to them really to give everyone access to education.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech at the First
All-Russia Congress on Education,
August 28, 1918.
Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 88*

Another condition for raising the productivity of labour is, firstly, the raising of the educational and cultural level of the mass of the population. This is now taking place extremely rapidly, a fact which those who are blinded by

bourgeois routine are unable to see; they are unable to understand what an urge towards enlightenment and initiative is now developing among the "lower ranks" of the people thanks to the Soviet form of organisation.

*V. I. Lenin, The Immediate Tasks
of the Soviet Government. Collected
Works, Vol. 27, pp. 257-58*

The Cultural Revolution and the Administration of the Socialist State and Economy

In order to renovate our state apparatus we must at all costs set out, first, to learn, secondly, to learn, and thirdly, to learn, and then to see to it that learning shall not remain a dead letter, or a fashionable catch-phrase (and we should admit in all frankness that this happens very often with us), that learning shall really become part of our very being, that it shall actually and fully become a constituent element of our social life.

*V. I. Lenin, Better Fewer, But Better.
Collected Works, Vol. 33, pp. 488-89*

We shall be fighting the evils of bureaucracy for many years to come, and whoever thinks otherwise is playing demagogue and cheating, because overcoming the evils of bureaucracy requires hundreds of measures, wholesale literacy, culture and participation in the activity of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.

*V. I. Lenin, The Second All-Russia Congress
of Miners. Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 68*

An illiterate person stands outside politics, he must first learn his ABC. Without that there can be no politics; without that there are rumours, gossip, fairy-tales and prejudices, but not politics.

*V. I. Lenin, The New Economic Policy
and the Tasks of the Political Education
Departments. Collected Works,
Vol. 33, p. 78*

The Cultural Revolution and the Peasants' Co-operation

Two main tasks confront us, which constitute the epoch—to reorganise our machinery of state, which is utterly useless, and which we took over in its entirety from the preceding epoch; during the past five years of struggle we did not, and could not, drastically reorganise it. Our second task is educational work among the peasants. And the economic object of this educational work among the peasants is to organise the latter in co-operative societies. If the whole of the peasantry had been organised in co-operatives, we would by now have been standing with both feet on the soil of socialism. But the organisation of the entire peasantry in co-operative societies presupposes a standard of culture among the peasants (precisely among the peasants as the overwhelming mass) that cannot, in fact, be achieved without a cultural revolution.

Our opponents told us repeatedly that we were rash in undertaking to implant socialism in an insufficiently cultured country. But they were misled by our having started from the opposite end to that prescribed by theory (the theory of pedants of all kinds), because in our country the political and social revolution preceded the cultural revolution, that very cultural revolution which nevertheless now confronts us.

This cultural revolution would now suffice to make our country a completely socialist country; but it presents immense difficulties of a purely cultural (for we are illiterate) and material character (for to be cultured we must achieve a certain development of the material means of production, must have a certain material base).

*V. I. Lenin, On Co-operation.
Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 474-75*

Strictly speaking, there is “only” one thing we have left to do and that is to make our people so “enlightened” that

they understand all the advantages of everybody participating in the work of the co-operatives, and organise this participation. "Only" that. There are now no other devices needed to advance to socialism. But to achieve this "only" there must be a veritable revolution—the entire people must go through a period of cultural development.

*V. I. Lenin, On Co-operation.
Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 469-70*

The Role of the Intelligentsia in the Cultural Revolution

Education workers, and the Communist Party as the vanguard in the struggle, should consider it their fundamental task to help enlighten and instruct the working masses, in order to cast off the old ways and habituated routine we have inherited from the old system, the private property habits the masses are thoroughly imbued with. This fundamental task of the entire socialist revolution should never be neglected during consideration of the particular problems that have demanded so much attention from the Party's Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech Delivered at
an All-Russia Conference
of Political Education Workers
of Gubernia and Uyezd Education
Departments, November 3, 1920.
Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 365*

We must overcome resistance from the capitalists in all its forms, not only in the military and the political spheres, but also ideological resistance, which is the most deep-seated and the strongest. It is the duty of our educational workers to accomplish the re-education of the masses. The interest, the thirst for education and knowledge of communism which are to be seen among them are a guarantee of our victory in this field too, although,

perhaps, not as rapid as at the front and only after great difficulties and at times even reverses. However, we shall ultimately win.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech Delivered at
an All-Russia Conference
of Political Education Workers
of Gubernia and Uyezd Education
Departments, November 3, 1920.
Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 370*

The army of teachers must set themselves tremendous tasks in the educational sphere, and above all must form the main army of socialist education. . . .

They must join forces with the entire body of the embattled working people. The task of the new pedagogics was to link up teaching activities with the socialist organisation of society.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech Delivered
at the First All-Russia Congress
of Internationalist Teachers, June 5,
1918. Collected Works, Vol. 27,
p. 445*

Chapter Eight

THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

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

*V. I. Lenin, A Caricature of Marxism
and Imperialist Economism.
Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 60*

Nations—the Inevitable Product of the Bourgeois Epoch

Nations are an inevitable product, an inevitable form, in the bourgeois epoch of social development. The working class could not grow strong, become mature and take shape without “constituting itself within the nation”, without being “national” (“though not in the bourgeois sense of the word”). The development of capitalism, however, breaks down national barriers more and more, does away with national seclusion, and substitutes class antagonisms for national antagonisms.

*V. I. Lenin, Karl Marx.
Collected Works, Vol. 21,
pp. 72-73*

Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated. Therein is the economic foundation of national movements. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity and unimpeded development of language are the most important conditions for genuinely free and extensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for a free and broad grouping of the population in all its various classes and, lastly, for the establishment of a close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big or little, and between seller and buyer.

Therefore, the tendency of every national movement is towards the formation of *national states*, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied. The most profound economic factors drive towards this goal, and, therefore, for the whole of Western Europe, nay, for the entire civilised world, the national state is *typical* and normal for the capitalist period.

*V. I. Lenin, The Right of Nations
to Self-Determination. Collected Works,
Vol. 20, pp. 396-97*

Two Historical Tendencies in the National Question

Developing capitalism knows two historical tendencies in the national question. The first is the awakening of national life and national movements, the struggle against all national oppression, and the creation of national states. The second is the development and growing frequency of international intercourse in every form, the break-down of national barriers, the creation of the international unity of

capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science, etc.

Both tendencies are a universal law of capitalism. The former predominates in the beginning of its development, the latter characterises a mature capitalism that is moving towards its transformation into socialist society. The Marxists' national programme takes both tendencies into account, and advocates, firstly, the equality of nations and languages and the impermissibility of all *privileges* in this respect (and also the right of nations to self-determination, with which we shall deal separately later); secondly, the principle of internationalism and uncompromising struggle against contamination of the proletariat with bourgeois nationalism, even of the most refined kind.

V. I. Lenin, Critical Remarks on the National Question. Collected Works, Vol. 20, p. 27

The categorical requirement of Marxist theory in investigating any social question is that it be examined within *definite* historical limits, and, if it refers to a particular country (e.g., the national programme for a given country), that account be taken of the specific features distinguishing that country from others in the same historical epoch.

What does this categorical requirement of Marxism imply in its application to the question under discussion?

First of all, it implies that a clear distinction must be drawn between the two periods of capitalism, which differ radically from each other as far as the national movement is concerned. On the one hand, there is the period of the collapse of feudalism and absolutism, the period of the formation of the bourgeois-democratic society and state, when the national movements for the first time become mass movements and in one way or another draw *all* classes of the population into politics through the press, participation in representative institutions, etc. On the other hand, there is the period of fully formed capitalist states with a long-established constitutional regime and a highly developed antagonism between the proletariat and the

bourgeoisie—a period that may be called the eve of capitalism's downfall.

The typical features of the first period are: the awakening of national movements and the drawing of the peasants, the most numerous and the most sluggish section of the population, into these movements, in connection with the struggle for political liberty in general, and for the rights of the nation in particular. Typical features of the second period are: the absence of mass bourgeois-democratic movements and the fact that developed capitalism, in bringing closer together nations that have already been fully drawn into commercial intercourse, and causing them to intermingle to an increasing degree, brings the antagonism between internationally united capital and the international working-class movement into the forefront.

*V. I. Lenin, The Right of Nations
to Self-Determination, Collected Works,
Vol. 20, pp. 400-01*

Bourgeois Nationalism and Proletarian Internationalism

The *chauvinism* of the bourgeoisie is but bare vanity that cloaks all its pretensions in a national mantle. It is a means of perpetuating international strife by standing armies, of subjugating the producers in every country by setting them against their brothers in all the other countries, a means of obstructing international co-operation of the working classes, which is the prime condition for their emancipation.

*K. Marx, Entwürfe zum "Bürgerkrieg
in Frankreich" [Erster Entwurf].
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 17, S. 558*

Reading the Russian newspapers one would think all Russia is enthused over the tsarist policy of conquest; that is all chauvinism, pan-Slavism, liberation of Christians

from the Turkish yoke and liberation of Slavs from the yoke of Germans and Magyars. But, firstly, everybody knows that the Russian press is shackled; secondly, the government has nourished chauvinism and pan-Slavism for years in all the schools, and, thirdly, this press, if it expresses any independent opinion at all, expresses nothing but the sentiment of the urban population, that is, the newly formed bourgeoisie, which naturally welcomes new conquests as an expansion of the Russian market.

*F. Engels, Die auswärtige Politik
des russischen Zarentums. Marx/Engels,
Werke, Bd. 22, S. 44*

Since the situation of the workers of all countries is the same, their interests the same, and their enemies the same, they must also fight together and confront the fraternity of the bourgeoisie of all nations with a fraternity of the workers of all nations.

*Marx/Engels, Reden über Polen.
Werke, Bd. 4, S. 418*

What previously the Bohemian workers of both nationalities only *sensed* they now *know*: they know that all national strife is only possible under the rule of the big landed feudal lords and capitalists; that it serves solely to perpetuate this rule; that Czech and German workers have the same common interests and that all causes for national discord will vanish as soon as the working class attains political power. Because the working class is international by its innermost nature and *will prove it again on the coming First of May*.

*F. Engels, Den tschechischen Genossen
zu ihrer Maifeier, eine Erinnerung
aus dem Jahr 1848. Marx/Engels, Werke,
Bd. 22, S. 403*

The International Working Men's Association and all societies and individuals adhering to it, will acknowledge

truth, justice, and morality, as the basis of their conduct towards each other, and towards all men, without regard to colour, creed, or nationality.

The General Council of the First International 1864-1866, Moscow, 1964, p. 346

Bourgeois nationalism and proletarian internationalism—these are the two irreconcilably hostile slogans that correspond to the two great class camps throughout the capitalist world, and express the *two* policies (nay, the two world outlooks) in the national question. In advocating the slogan of national culture and building up on it an entire plan and practical programme of what they call “cultural-national autonomy”, the Bundists⁴¹ are *in effect* instruments of bourgeois nationalism among the workers.

V. I. Lenin, Critical Remarks on the National Question. Collected Works, Vol. 20, p. 26

Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the “most just”, “purest”, most refined and civilised brand. In place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism, the amalgamation of all nations in the higher unity, a unity that is growing before our eyes with every mile of railway line that is built, with every international trust, and every workers’ association that is formed (an association that is international in its economic activities as well as in its ideas and aims).

The principle of nationality is historically inevitable in bourgeois society and, taking this society into due account, the Marxist fully recognises the historical legitimacy of national movements. But to prevent this recognition from becoming an apologia of nationalism, it must be strictly limited to what is progressive in such movements, in order that this recognition may not lead to bourgeois ideology obscuring proletarian consciousness.

The awakening of the masses from feudal lethargy, and their struggle against all national oppression, for the sovereignty of the people, of the nation, are progressive. Hence it is the Marxist's *bounden* duty to stand for the most resolute and consistent democratism on all aspects of the national question. This task is largely a negative one. But this is the limit the proletariat can go to in supporting nationalism, for beyond that begins the "positive" activity of the *bourgeoisie* striving to *fortify* nationalism.

To throw off the feudal yoke, all national oppression, and all privileges enjoyed by any particular nation or language, is the imperative duty of the proletariat as a democratic force, and is certainly in the interests of the proletarian class struggle, which is obscured and retarded by bickering on the national question. But to go *beyond* these strictly limited and definite historical limits in helping bourgeois nationalism means betraying the proletariat and siding with the bourgeoisie. There is a border-line here, which is often very slight and which the Bundists and Ukrainian nationalist-socialists completely lose sight of.

Combat all national oppression? Yes, of course! Fight *for* any kind of national development, *for* "national culture" in general? Of course not. The economic development of capitalist society presents us with examples of immature national movements all over the world, examples of the formation of big nations out of a number of small ones, or to the detriment of some of the small ones, and also examples of the assimilation of nations. The development of nationality in general is the principle of bourgeois nationalism; hence the exclusiveness of bourgeois nationalism, hence the endless national bickering. The proletariat, however, far from undertaking to uphold the national development of every nation, on the contrary, warns the masses against such illusions, stands for the fullest freedom of capitalist intercourse and welcomes every kind of assimilation of nations, except that which is founded on force or privilege.

Consolidating nationalism within a certain "justly" delimited sphere, "constitutionalising" nationalism, and securing the separation of all nations from one another by means of a special state institution—such is the ideological foundation and content of cultural-national autonomy. This idea is thoroughly bourgeois and thoroughly false. The proletariat cannot support any consecration of nationalism; on the contrary, it supports everything that helps to obliterate national distinctions and remove national barriers; it supports everything that makes the ties between nationalities closer and closer, or tends to merge nations. To act differently means siding with reactionary nationalist philistinism.

V. I. Lenin, Critical Remarks on the National Question. Collected Works, Vol. 20, pp. 34-36

All liberal-bourgeois nationalism sows the greatest corruption among the workers and does immense harm to the cause of freedom and the proletarian class struggle. This bourgeois (and bourgeois-feudalist) tendency is all the more dangerous for its *being concealed* behind the slogan of "national culture" It is under the guise of national culture—Great Russian, Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian, and so forth—that the Black Hundreds and the clericals, and also the bourgeoisie of *all* nations, are doing their dirty and reactionary work.

V. I. Lenin, Critical Remarks on the National Question. Collected Works, Vol. 20, p. 23

The class-conscious workers fight hard against *every* kind of nationalism, both the crude, violent, Black-Hundred nationalism, and that most refined nationalism which preaches the equality of nations *together* with ... the *splitting up* of the workers' cause, the workers' organisations and the working-class movement *according to* nationality. Unlike all the varieties of the nationalist

bourgeoisie, the class-conscious workers, carrying out the decisions of the recent (summer 1913⁴²) conference of the Marxists, stand, not only for the most complete, consistent and fully applied *equality* of nations and languages, but also for the *amalgamation* of the workers of the different nationalities in *united* proletarian organisations of every kind.

Herein lies the fundamental distinction between the national programme of Marxism and that of any bourgeoisie, be it the most "advanced".

V. I. Lenin, *Corrupting the Workers with Refined Nationalism. Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 289-90

The interests of the working class—as well as the interests of political liberty generally—require . . . the fullest equality of all the nationalities in the state without exception, and the elimination of every kind of barrier between the nations, the bringing together of children of all nations in the same schools, etc. Only by casting off every savage and foolish national prejudice, only by uniting the workers of all nations into one association, can the working class become a force, offer resistance to capitalism, and achieve a serious improvement in its living conditions.

Look at the capitalists! They try to inflame national strife among the "common people", while they themselves manage their business affairs remarkably well—Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, and Germans together in one and the same corporation. Against the workers the capitalists of all nations and religions are united, but they strive to divide and weaken the workers by national strife!

V. I. Lenin, *The Nationalisation of Jewish Schools. Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 308

The bourgeois nationalism of *any* oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed *against* oppression, and it is this content that we *unconditionally*

support. At the same time we strictly distinguish it from the tendency towards national exclusiveness; we fight against the tendency of the Polish bourgeois to oppress the Jews, etc., etc..

This is "unpractical" from the standpoint of the bourgeois and the philistine, but it is the only policy in the national question that is practical, based on principles, and really promotes democracy, liberty and proletarian unity.

V. I. Lenin, *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination. Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 412

The politically conscious worker feels and regards himself not only a member of the *Russian* Marxist family; he is aware that he is also a member of the *international* family of Marxists.

V. I. Lenin, *Russian Workers and the International. Collected Works*, Fifth Russian edition, Vol. 24, p. 201

Social-Democracy must give most emphatic warning to the proletariat and other working people of all nationalities against direct deception by the nationalistic slogans of "their own" bourgeoisie, who with their saccharine or fiery speeches about "our native land" try to *divide* the proletariat and *divert its attention* from their bourgeois intrigues while they enter into an economic and political alliance with the bourgeoisie of other nations and with the tsarist monarchy.

The proletariat cannot pursue its struggle for socialism and defend its everyday economic interests without the closest and fullest alliance of the workers of all nations in all working-class organisations without exception.

The proletariat cannot achieve freedom other than by revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy and its replacement by a democratic republic. The tsarist monarchy *precludes* liberty and equal rights

for nationalities, and is, furthermore, the bulwark of barbarity, brutality and reaction in both Europe and Asia. This monarchy can be overthrown only by the united proletariat of all the nations of Russia, which is giving the lead to consistently democratic elements capable of revolutionary struggle from among the working masses of all nations.

It follows, therefore, that workers who place political unity with "their own" bourgeoisie above complete unity with the proletariat of all nations, are acting against their own interests, against the interests of socialism and against the interests of democracy.

V. I. Lenin, Theses on the National Question. Collected Works, Vol. 19, p. 245

The Self-Determination and Equality of Nations

The relations of different nations among themselves depend upon the extent to which each has developed its productive forces, the division of labour and internal intercourse. This statement is generally recognised.

Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, Moscow, 1964, p. 32

Through the development of big industry in all countries, the bourgeois regime has in the last 45 years created a numerous, close-knit and strong proletariat or, to use the expression of the *Manifesto*, it has produced its own gravedigger. Neither the international unity of the proletariat nor peaceful and conscious co-operation of nations for the attainment of common goals are conceivable without the establishment of the independence and unity of every nation.

F. Engels, An den italienischen Leser (Vorwort zur italienischen Ausgabe (1893) des "Manifests der Kommunistischen Partei"). Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 22, S. 366

The right of the big national formations of Europe to political independence, recognised by the European democrats, had naturally to be equally and especially recognised by the working class. This was in effect nothing but a recognition of the same right to their own national existence for other big and doubtlessly viable nations that the workers of each country claimed for themselves.

F. Engels, Was hat die Arbeiterklasse mit Polen zu tun? Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 16, S. 157

What are the reasons for this special sympathy of the workers' party for the fate of Poland?

To begin with, there is the natural sympathy for an oppressed people that has proved its historical right to national independence and self-determination by its unintermittent and heroic struggle against its oppressors. It is by no means a paradox that the *international* workers' party favours the restoration of the Polish nation. On the contrary, it is only after Poland regains her independence, only after she can act again as an independent nation, that she can resume her internal development and participate in the social reconstruction of Europe as an independent factor. So long as a viable nation is held in chains by a foreign conqueror it necessarily concentrates all its strength, all its efforts, all its energies against the external enemy; so long as its internal life is thus paralysed, it is incapable of working for social emancipation. Ireland, and Russia under the Mongol yoke, etc., are striking proof of this fact.

F. Engels, Für Polen. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 18, S. 574

A nation cannot be free and at once continue to oppress other nations.

Marx/Engels, Reden über Polen. Werke, Bd. 4, S. 417

No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations.

*F. Engels, Flüchtlingsliteratur, I.
Eine polnische Proklamation.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 18, S. 527*

The nation that oppresses another nation forges its own chains. . . .

To say nothing of international justice, *the precondition for the emancipation of the English working class* is to convert the existing *forcible union*, that is, the enslavement of Ireland, into an *equal and free confederation* if such a thing is possible, or to achieve *complete separation* if such a thing is necessary.

*K. Marx, Konfidentielle Mitteilung.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 16. S. 417*

I have become more and more convinced—and the only question is to drive this conviction home to the English working class—that it can never do anything decisive here in England until it separates its policy with regard to Ireland most definitely from the policy of the ruling classes, until it not only makes common cause with the Irish but actually takes the initiative in dissolving the Union established in 1801 and replacing it by a free federal relationship. And this must be done, not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland but as a demand made in the interests of the English proletariat. If not, the English people will remain tied to the leading-strings of the ruling classes, because it will have to join with them in a common front against Ireland. Every one of its movements in England itself is crippled by the strife with the Irish, who form a very important section of the working class in England. *The prime condition* of emancipation here—the overthrow of the English landed oligarchy—remains impossible because its position here cannot be stormed so long as it maintains its strongly entrenched outposts in Ireland.

*K. Marx's Letter to L. Kugelmann,
November 29, 1869. Marx and Engels,
Selected Correspondence, Moscow, 1965,
p. 230*

After occupying myself with the Irish question for many years I have come to the conclusion that the decisive blow against the English ruling classes (and it will be decisive for the workers' movement all over the world) *cannot* be delivered *in England but only in Ireland*.

On January 1, 1870, the General Council issued a confidential circular drawn up by me in French (for the reaction upon England only the French, not the German, papers are important) on the relation of the Irish national struggle to the emancipation of the working class, and therefore on the attitude which the International Association should adopt in regard to the Irish question.

I shall give you here only quite briefly the decisive points.

Ireland is the bulwark of the *English landed aristocracy*. The exploitation of this country is not only one of the main sources of that aristocracy's material welfare; it is its greatest *moral* strength. It, in fact, represents the *domination of England over Ireland*. Ireland is therefore the great means by which the English aristocracy maintains *its domination in England* itself.

If, on the other hand, the English army and police were to withdraw from Ireland tomorrow, you would at once have an agrarian revolution there. But the overthrow of the English aristocracy in Ireland involves and has as a necessary consequence its overthrow in England. And this would fulfil the prerequisite for the proletarian revolution in England. The destruction of the English landed aristocracy in Ireland is an infinitely easier operation than in England itself, because in Ireland the *land question* has hitherto been the *exclusive form* of the social question, because it is a question of existence, of *life and death*, for the immense majority of the Irish people, and because it is at the same time inseparable from the *national* question. Quite apart from the Irish being more passionate and revolutionary in character than the English. . . .

And most important of all! Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class *divided* into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish

proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the *ruling* nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country *against Ireland*, thus strengthening their domination *over himself*. He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same as that of the "poor whites" to the "niggers" in the former slave states of the U.S.A. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and the stupid tool of the *English domination in Ireland*.

This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. *This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class*, despite their organisation. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. . . .

Hence it is the task of the International everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground, and everywhere to side openly with Ireland. And it is the special task of the Central Council in London to awaken a consciousness in the English workers that *for them the national emancipation of Ireland* is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment but *the first condition of their own social emancipation*.

*K. Marx's Letter to S. Meyer
and A. Vogt, April 9, 1870.
Marx and Engels, On Britain,
Moscow, 1962, pp. 550-53*

For the peoples to unite in earnest, they must have a common interest. For their interest to be common, the present property relations have got to be abolished, because they prompt the exploitation of one people by another. Yet to abolish the present property relations is the interest only of the working class. Only the working class has the means for it. Victory of the proletariat over the

bourgeoisie is at once a victory over the national and industrial conflicts that now nourish hostility among different peoples. Victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie is therefore at once the signal of liberation for all the oppressed nations.

*Marx/Engels, Reden über Polen.
Werke, Bd. 4, S. 416*

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No Marxist, without renouncing the principles of Marxism and of socialism generally, can deny that the interests of socialism are higher than the interests of the right of nations to self-determination.

*V. I. Lenin, On the History of the
Question of the Unfortunate Peace.
Collected Works, Vol. 26, p. 449*

While recognising equality and equal rights to a national state, it (the proletariat.—*Ed.*) values above all and places foremost the alliance of the proletarians of all nations, and assesses any national demand, any national separation, *from the angle* of the workers' class struggle.

*V. I. Lenin, The Right of Nations to
Self-Determination. Collected Works,
Vol. 20, p. 411*

The right of nations to self-determination (i.e., the constitutional guarantee of an absolutely free and democratic method of deciding the question of secession) must under no circumstances be confused with the expediency of a given nation's secession. The Social-Democratic Party must decide the latter question exclusively on its merits in each particular case in conformity with the interests of social development as a whole and with the interests of the proletarian class struggle for socialism.

*V. I. Lenin, Resolutions of the Summer,
1913, Joint Conference of the Central
Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. and Party
Officials. Collected Works, Vol. 19, p. 429*

The right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence in the political sense, the right to free political separation from the oppressor nation. Specifically, this demand for political democracy implies complete freedom to agitate for secession and for a referendum on secession by the seceding nation. This demand, therefore, is not the equivalent of a demand for separation, fragmentation and the formation of small states. It implies only a consistent expression of struggle against all national oppression. The closer a democratic state system is to complete freedom to secede the less frequent and less ardent will the desire for separation be in practice, because big states afford indisputable advantages, both from the standpoint of economic progress and from that of the interests of the masses and, furthermore, these advantages increase with the growth of capitalism. Recognition of self-determination is not synonymous with recognition of federation as a principle.

V. I. Lenin, The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination. Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 146

Consequently, if we want to grasp the meaning of self-determination of nations, not by juggling with legal definitions, or "inventing" abstract definitions, but by examining the historico-economic conditions of the national movements, we must inevitably reach the conclusion that the self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state.

V. I. Lenin, The Right of Nations to Self-Determination. Collected Works, Vol. 20, p. 397

What every bourgeoisie is out for in the national question is either privileges for its *own* nation, or exceptional advantages for it; this is called being "practical". The proletariat is opposed to all privileges, to all exclusiveness.

To demand that it should be "practical" means following the lead of the bourgeoisie, falling into opportunism.

The demand for a "yes" or "no" reply to the question of secession in the case of every nation may seem a very "practical" one. In reality it is absurd; it is metaphysical in theory, while in practice it leads to subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeoisie's policy. The bourgeoisie always places its national demands in the forefront, and does so in categorical fashion. With the proletariat, however, these demands are subordinated to the interests of the class struggle. Theoretically, you cannot say in advance whether the bourgeois-democratic revolution will end in a given nation seceding from another nation, or in its equality with the latter; *in either case*, the important thing for the proletariat is to ensure the development of its class. For the bourgeoisie it is important to hamper this development by pushing the aims of its "own" nation before those of the proletariat. That is why the proletariat confines itself, so to speak, to the negative demand for recognition of the *right* to self-determination, without giving guarantees to any nation, and without undertaking to give *anything at the expense* of another nation.

This may not be "practical", but it is in effect the best guarantee for the achievement of the most democratic of all possible solutions. The proletariat needs *only* such guarantees, whereas the bourgeoisie of every nation requires guarantees for *its own* interest, regardless of the position of (or the possible disadvantages to) other nations.

The bourgeoisie is most of all interested in the "feasibility" of a given demand—hence the invariable policy of coming to terms with the bourgeoisie of other nations, to the detriment of the proletariat. For the proletariat, however, the important thing is to strengthen its class against the bourgeoisie and to educate the masses in the spirit of consistent democracy and socialism.

V. I. Lenin, *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination, Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 409-10

Three Types of Countries with Reference to the Self-Determination of Nations

In this respect, countries must be divided into three main types.

First, the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and the United States. In these countries progressive bourgeois national movements came to an end long ago. Every one of these "great" nations oppresses other nations both in the colonies and at home. The tasks of the proletariat of these ruling nations are the same as those of the proletariat in England in the nineteenth century in relation to Ireland. . . .

Secondly, Eastern Europe: Austria, the Balkans and particularly Russia. Here it was the twentieth century that particularly developed the bourgeois-democratic national movements and intensified the national struggle. The tasks of the proletariat in these countries, both in completing their bourgeois-democratic reforms, and rendering assistance to the socialist revolution in other countries, cannot be carried out without championing the right of nations to self-determination. The most difficult and most important task in this is to unite the class struggle of the workers of the oppressor nations with that of the workers of the oppressed nations.

Thirdly, the semi-colonial countries, such as China, Persia and Turkey, and all the colonies, which have a combined population of 1,000 million. In these countries the bourgeois-democratic movements either have hardly begun, or have still a long way to go. Socialists must not only demand the unconditional and immediate liberation of the colonies without compensation—and this demand in its political expression signifies nothing else than the recognition of the right to self-determination; they must also render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national liberation in these countries and assist their uprising

—or revolutionary war, in the event of one—*against* the imperialist powers that oppress them.

V. I. Lenin, *The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination. Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 150-52

The demand for recognition of every nationality's right to self-determination simply implies that we, the party of the proletariat, must always and unconditionally *oppose any attempt* to influence national self-determination from without *by violence or injustice*. While at all times performing this negative duty of ours (to fight and protest against violence), we on our part concern ourselves with the self-determination of the *proletariat* in each nationality rather than with self-determination of peoples or nations. Thus, the general, basic and ever-binding programme of Russian Social-Democracy must consist only in the demand for equal rights for all citizens (irrespective of sex, language, creed, race, nationality, etc.) and for their right to free democratic self-determination. As to *support* of the demand for *national* autonomy, it is by no means a permanent and binding part of the programme of the proletariat. This support may become necessary for it only in isolated and exceptional cases.

V. I. Lenin, *On the Manifesto of the Armenian Social-Democrats. Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 329

The article of our programme (on the self-determination of nations) cannot be interpreted to mean anything but *political* self-determination, i.e., the right to secede and form a separate state. . . .

The Social-Democratic Party's recognition of the right of all nationalities to self-determination requires of Social-Democrats that they should

(a) be unconditionally hostile to the use of force in any form whatsoever by the dominant nation (or the nation

which constitutes the majority of the population) in respect of a nation that wishes to secede politically:

(b) demand the settlement of the question of such secession only on the basis of a universal, direct and equal vote of the population of the given territory by secret ballot;

(c) conduct an implacable struggle against both the Black-Hundred-Octobrist and the liberal-bourgeois (Progressist, Cadet, etc.) parties on every occasion when they defend or sanction national oppression in general or the denial of the right of nations to self-determination in particular....

The Social-Democratic Party's recognition of the right of all nationalities to self-determination most certainly does not mean that Social-Democrats reject an independent appraisal of the advisability of the state secession of any nation in each separate case. Social-Democracy should, on the contrary, give its independent appraisal, taking into consideration the conditions of capitalist development and the oppression of the proletarians of various nations by the united bourgeoisie of all nationalities, as well as the general tasks of democracy, first of all and most of all the interests of the proletarian class struggle for socialism....

Social-Democrats, in upholding a consistently democratic state system, demand unconditional equality for all nationalities and struggle against absolutely all privileges for one or several nationalities....

Social-Democrats demand the promulgation of a law, operative throughout the state, protecting the rights of every national minority in no matter what part of the state. This law should declare inoperative any measure by means of which the national majority might attempt to establish privileges for itself or restrict the rights of a national minority (in the sphere of education, in the use of any specific language, in budget affairs, etc.), and forbid the implementation of any such measure by making it a punishable offence.

V. I. Lenin, Theses on the National Question. Collected Works, Vol. 19, pp. 243-46

We are *in favour of autonomy for all* parts; we are in favour of the *right* to secession (and not *in favour* of everyone's *seceding!*). Autonomy is *our* plan for organising a democratic state. Secession is not what we plan at all. We do not advocate secession. In general, we are opposed to secession. But we stand for the *right* to secede owing to reactionary, Great-Russian nationalism, which has so besmirched the idea of national coexistence that sometimes *closer* ties will be established *after* free secession!

The right to self-determination is an *exception* to our general premise of centralisation. This exception is absolutely essential in view of reactionary Great-Russian nationalism; and any rejection of this exception is opportunism (as in the case of Rosa Luxemburg); it means foolishly playing into the hands of reactionary Great-Russian nationalism. But exceptions *must not be* too broadly interpreted. In this case there is *not*, and *must not be* anything more than the *right to secede*.

V. I. Lenin, *A Letter to S. G. Shahumyan*.
Collected Works, Vol. 19, pp. 500-01

In the internationalist education of the workers of the oppressor countries, emphasis must necessarily be laid on their advocating freedom for the oppressed countries to secede and their fighting for it. Without this there can be no internationalism. It is our right and duty to treat every Social-Democrat of an oppressor nation who *fails* to conduct such propaganda as a scoundrel and an imperialist. This is an absolute demand, even where the *chance* of secession being possible and "practicable" before the introduction of socialism is only one in a thousand.

It is our duty to teach the workers to be "indifferent" to national distinctions. There is no doubt about that. But it must not be the indifference of the *annexationists*. A member of an oppressor nation must be "indifferent" to whether small nations belong to *his* state or to a *neighbouring* state or to themselves, according to where their

sympathies lie: without such "indifference" he is *not* a Social-Democrat. To be an internationalist Social-Democrat one must *not* think only of one's own nation, but place *above it* the interests of all nations, their common liberty and equality. Everyone accepts this in "theory" but displays an annexationist indifference in practice. There is the root of the evil.

On the other hand, a Social-Democrat from a small nation must emphasise in his agitation the *second* word of our general formula: "voluntary *integration*" of nations. He may, without failing in his duties as an internationalist, be in favour of *both* the political independence of his nation and its integration with the neighbouring state of X, Y, Z, etc. But in all cases he must fight *against* small-nation narrow-mindedness, seclusion and isolation, consider the whole and the general, subordinate the particular to the general interest.

People who have not gone into the question thoroughly think that it is "contradictory" for the Social-Democrats of oppressor nations to insist on the "freedom to *secede*", while Social-Democrats of oppressed nations insist on the "freedom to *integrate*". However, a little reflection will show that there is not, and cannot be, any *other* road to internationalism and the amalgamation of nations, any other road *from the given* situation to this goal.

V. I. Lenin, *The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up*.
Collected Works, Vol. 22,
pp. 346-47

We stand and shall continue to stand for the closest association and merging of the class-conscious workers of the advanced countries with the workers, peasants and slaves of *all* the oppressed countries. We have always advised and shall continue to advise all the oppressed classes in all the oppressed countries, the colonies included, *not* to separate from us, but to form the closest possible ties and merge with us.

We demand from our governments that they quit the colonies, or, to put it in precise political terms rather than in agitational outcries—that they *grant* the colonies full *freedom* of secession, the genuine *right to self-determination*, and we ourselves are sure to implement this right, and grant this freedom, as soon as we capture power. We demand this from existing governments, and will *do* this when we are the government, *not* in order to “recommend” secession, but, on the contrary, in order to facilitate and accelerate the *democratic* association and merging of nations. . . .

If we demand freedom of secession for the Mongolians, Persians, Egyptians and *all* other oppressed and unequal nations without exception, we do so not because *we favour secession*, but *only* because we stand for *free, voluntary* association and merging as distinct from forcible association. That is the *only* reason.

*V. I. Lenin, A Caricature of Marxism
and Imperialist Economism.
Collected Works,
Vol. 23, p. 67*

The policy of national oppression, inherited from the autocracy and monarchy, is maintained by the landowners, capitalists, and petty bourgeoisie in order to protect their class privileges and to cause disunity among the workers of the various nationalities. Modern imperialism, which increases the tendency to subjugate weaker nations, is a new factor intensifying national oppression.

The elimination of national oppression, if at all achievable in capitalist society, is possible only under a consistently democratic republican system and state administration that guarantee complete equality for all nations and languages.

The right of all the nations forming part of Russia freely to secede and form independent states must be recognised. To deny them this right, or to fail to take measures guaranteeing its practical realisation, is equivalent to supporting a policy of seizure or annexation. Only the recognition

by the proletariat of the right of nations to secede can ensure complete solidarity among the workers of the various nations and help to bring the nations closer together on truly democratic lines.

The conflict which has arisen at the present time between Finland and the Russian Provisional Government strikingly demonstrates that denial of the right to free secession leads to a direct continuation of the policy of tsarism.

The right of nations freely to secede must not be confused with the advisability of secession by a given nation at a given moment. The party of the proletariat must decide the latter question quite independently in each particular case, having regard to the interests of social development as a whole and the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat for socialism.

The Party demands broad regional autonomy, the abolition of supervision from above, the abolition of a compulsory official language, and the fixing of the boundaries of the self-governing and autonomous regions in accordance with the economic and social conditions, the national composition of the population, and so forth, as assessed by the local population itself. . . .

The Party demands that a fundamental law be embodied in the constitution annulling all privileges enjoyed by any one nation and all infringements of the rights of national minorities.

The interests of the working class demand that the workers of all nationalities in Russia should have common proletarian organisations: political, trade union, co-operative educational institutions, and so forth. Only the merging of the workers of the various nationalities into such common organisations will make it possible for the proletariat to wage a successful struggle against international Capital and bourgeois nationalism.

*V. I. Lenin, The Seventh (April) All-Russia
Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.).
Collected Works, Vol. 24, pp. 302-03*

On the national question, the policy of the proletariat which has captured political power—unlike that of the bourgeois-democratic formal proclamation of equality of nations, which is impossible under imperialism—is persistently to bring about the real rapprochement and amalgamation of the workers and peasants of all nations in their revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. To achieve this object, the colonial and other nations which are oppressed, or whose rights are restricted, must be completely liberated and granted the right to secede as a guarantee that the sentiment inherited from capitalism, the distrust of the working people of the various nations and the wrath which the workers of the oppressed nations feel towards the workers of the oppressor nations, will be fully dispelled and replaced by a conscious and voluntary alliance. The workers of those nations which under capitalism were oppressor nations must take exceptional care not to hurt the national sentiments of the oppressed nations (for example, the attitude of the Great Russians, Ukrainians and Poles towards the Jews, the attitude of the Tatars towards the Bashkirs, and so forth) and must not only promote the actual equality, but also the development of the language and literature of the working people of the formerly oppressed nations so as to remove all traces of distrust and alienation inherited from the epoch of capitalism.

*V. I. Lenin, Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B.).
Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 127*

Our programme must not speak of the self-determination of the working people, because that would be wrong. It must speak of what actually exists. Since nations are at different stages on the road from medievalism to bourgeois democracy and from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy, this thesis of our programme is absolutely correct. With us there have been very many zigzags on this road. Every nation must obtain the right to self-

determination, and that will make the self-determination of the working people easier. In Finland the process of separation of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie is remarkably clear, forceful and deep. At any rate, things will not proceed there as they do in our country. If we were to declare that we do not recognise any Finnish nation, but only the working people, that would be sheer nonsense. We cannot refuse to recognise what actually exists; it will itself compel us to recognise it. The demarcation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is proceeding in different countries in their own specific ways. Here we must act with utmost caution. We must be particularly cautious with regard to the various nations, for there is nothing worse than lack of confidence on the part of a nation.

V. I. Lenin, Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 174

We want a *voluntary* union of nations—a union which precludes any coercion of one nation by another—a union founded on complete confidence, on a clear recognition of brotherly unity, on absolutely voluntary consent. Such a union cannot be effected at one stroke; we have to work towards it with the greatest patience and circumspection, so as not to spoil matters and not to arouse distrust, and so that the distrust inherited from centuries of landowner and capitalist oppression, centuries of private property and the enmity caused by its divisions and redivisions may have a chance to wear off.

We must, therefore, strive persistently for the unity of nations and ruthlessly suppress everything that tends to divide them. and in doing so we must be very cautious and patient, and make concessions to the survivals of national distrust. We must be adamant and uncompromising towards everything that affects the fundamental interests of labour in its fight for emancipation from the yoke of capital. The question of the demarcation of frontiers now, for the time being—for we are striving towards the com-

plete abolition of frontiers—is a minor one, it is not fundamental or important. In this matter we can afford to wait, and must wait, because the national distrust among the broad mass of peasants and small owners is often extremely tenacious, and haste might only intensify it, in other words, jeopardize the cause of complete and ultimate unity.

V. I. Lenin, *Letter to the Workers and Peasants of the Ukraine Apropos of the Victories Over Denikin*.
Collected Works, Vol. 30, pp. 293-94

Federation As a Structural Form of Multinational States

What is to take the place of present-day Germany? In my opinion, the proletariat can use only the form of an integral and indivisible republic. A federal republic is, by and large, still necessary in the vast territory of the United States, although it is already an impediment in the East. It would have been a step forward in Britain, where four nations inhabit the two islands and three legislative systems exist side by side despite the joint parliament. In little Switzerland it has long since become an impediment, tolerable only because Switzerland is content to be a purely passive member of the European system of states. The federalistic system of Switzerland would be an enormous retrogression for Germany. There are two things that distinguish a union state from an integral state: the fact that each allied state of the union, each canton, has its own civil and criminal legislation and its own judiciary system, and then the fact that a chamber of the states exists beside the popular chamber and that each canton, big or small, votes as such in the chamber of states. We have happily overcome the first of these and are not going to be childish enough to reinstitute it; we have the second in the *Bundesrat*, and can dispense with it splendidly, since, generally, our "Bundesstaat" already constitutes a transition to an integral state. And we need not turn back the revolution of

1866 and 1870, made from the top; what we have to do is give it the necessary consummation and improvement through a movement from below.

*F. Engels, Zur Kritik des sozialdemokratischen
Programmentwurfs 1891. Marx/Engels,
Werke, Bd. 22, S. 235-36*

Far from being indifferent to the forms of state, Engels, on the contrary, tried to analyse the transitional forms with the utmost thoroughness in order to establish, in accordance with the concrete historical peculiarities of each particular case, *from what and to what* the given transitional form is passing.

Approaching the matter from the standpoint of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution, Engels, like Marx, upheld democratic centralism, the republic—one and indivisible. He regarded the federal republic either as an exception and a hindrance to development, or as a transition from a monarchy to a centralised republic, as a “step forward” under certain special conditions. And among these special conditions, he puts the national question to the fore.

Although mercilessly criticising the reactionary nature of small states, and the screening of this by the national question in certain concrete cases, Engels, like Marx, never betrayed the slightest desire to brush aside the national question—a desire of which the Dutch and Polish Marxists, who proceed from their perfectly justified opposition to the narrow philistine nationalism of “their” little states, are often guilty.

Even in regard to Britain, where geographical conditions, a common language and the history of many centuries would seem to have “put an end” to the national question in the various small divisions of the country—even in regard to that country, Engels reckoned with the plain fact that the national question was not yet a thing of the past, and recognised in consequence that the establishment

of a federal republic would be a "step forward". Of course, there is not the slightest hint here of Engels abandoning the criticism of the shortcomings of a federal republic or renouncing the most determined advocacy of, and struggle for, a unified and centralised democratic republic.

But Engels did not at all mean democratic centralism in the bureaucratic sense in which this term is used by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologists, the anarchists among the latter. His idea of centralism did not in the least preclude such broad local self-government as would combine the voluntary defence of the unity of the state by the "communes" and districts, and the complete elimination of all bureaucratic practices and all "ordering" from above.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 446-47

Marxists are, of course, opposed to federation and decentralisation, for the simple reason that capitalism requires for its development the largest and most centralised possible states. *Other conditions being equal*, the class-conscious proletariat will always stand for the larger state. It will always fight against medieval particularism, and will always welcome the closest possible economic amalgamation of large territories in which the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie can develop on a broad basis.

Capitalism's broad and rapid development of the productive forces *calls for* large, politically compact and united territories, since only here can the bourgeois class—together with its inevitable antipode, the proletarian class—unite and sweep away all the old, medieval, caste, parochial, petty-national, religious and other barriers.

The right of nations to self-determination, i.e., the right to secede and form independent national states, will be dealt with elsewhere. But while, and insofar as, different nations constitute a single state, Marxists will never, under any circumstances, advocate either the federal principle

or decentralisation. The great centralised state is a tremendous historical step forward from medieval disunity to the future socialist unity of the whole world, and only *via* such a state (*inseparably* connected with capitalism), can there be any road to socialism.

It would, however, be inexcusable to forget that in advocating centralism we advocate exclusively *democratic* centralism. . . .

Far from precluding local self-government, with *autonomy* for regions having special economic and social conditions, a distinct national composition of the population, and so forth, democratic centralism necessarily demands *both*. In Russia centralism is constantly confused with tyranny and bureaucracy. This confusion has naturally arisen from the history of Russia, but even so it is quite inexcusable for a Marxist to yield to it.

V. I. Lenin, *Critical Remarks on the National Question. Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 45-46

Federation is a transitional form to the complete unity of the working people of different nations. The feasibility of federation has already been demonstrated in practice both by the relations between the R.S.F.S.R. and other Soviet Republics (the Hungarian, Finnish and Latvian in the past, and the Azerbaijan and Ukrainian at present), and by the relations within the R.S.F.S.R. in respect of nationalities which formerly enjoyed neither statehood nor autonomy (e.g., the Bashkir and Tatar autonomous republics in the R.S.F.S.R., founded in 1919 and 1920 respectively). . . .

In this respect, it is the task of the Communist International to further develop and also to study and test by experience these new federations, which are arising on the basis of the Soviet system and the Soviet movement. In recognising that federation is a transitional form to complete unity, it is necessary to strive for ever closer federal unity, bearing in mind, first, that the Soviet republics, surrounded as they are by the imperialist powers of the whole

world—which from the military standpoint are immeasurably stronger—cannot possibly continue to exist without the closest alliance; second, that a close economic alliance between the Soviet republics is necessary, otherwise the productive forces which have been ruined by imperialism cannot be restored and the well-being of the working people cannot be ensured; third, that there is a tendency towards the creation of a single world economy, regulated by the proletariat of all nations as an integral whole and according to a common plan. This tendency has already revealed itself quite clearly under capitalism and is bound to be further developed and consummated under socialism.

*V. I. Lenin, Preliminary Draft Theses
on the National and the Colonial Questions.
Collected Works, Vol. 31,
pp. 146-47*

We are for democratic centralism. And it must be clearly understood how vastly different democratic centralism is from bureaucratic centralism on the one hand, and from anarchism on the other. The opponents of centralism continually put forward autonomy and federation as a means of struggle against the uncertainties of centralism. As a matter of fact, democratic centralism in no way excludes autonomy, on the contrary, it presupposes the necessity of it. As a matter of fact, even federation, if carried out within limits that are rational from an economic point of view, if it is based on important national distinctions that give rise to a real need for a certain degree of state separateness—even federation is in no way in contradiction to democratic centralism. Under a really democratic system, and the more so with the Soviet organisation of the state, federation is very often merely a transitional step towards really democratic centralism.

*V. I. Lenin, Original Version of
the Article "The Immediate Tasks
of the Soviet Government".
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 207*

National Relations in Russia After the October Socialist Revolution

The Communist International's entire policy on the national and the colonial questions should rest primarily on a closer union of the proletarians and the working masses of all nations and countries for a joint revolutionary struggle to overthrow the landowners and the bourgeoisie. This union alone will guarantee victory over capitalism, without which the abolition of national oppression and inequality is impossible. . . .

Consequently, one cannot at present confine oneself to a bare recognition or proclamation of the need for closer union between the working people of the various nations; a policy must be pursued that will achieve the closest alliance, with Soviet Russia, of all the national and colonial liberation movements. The form of this alliance should be determined by the degree of development of the communist movement in the proletariat of each country, or of the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement of the workers and peasants in backward countries or among backward nationalities.

*V. I. Lenin, Preliminary Draft Theses
on the National and the Colonial
Questions. Collected Works,
Vol. 31, p. 146*

Proceeding from the interests of the unity and fraternal alliance of factory workers and the working and exploited masses in the struggle for socialism, and also from the recognition of these principles by numerous decisions of the organs of revolutionary democracy, the Soviets, and especially the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, the Council of People's Commissars—the Socialist Government of Russia—reaffirms that the right to self-determination belongs to all nations oppressed by tsarism and the Great Russian bourgeoisie, up to and including the right of these nations to secede from Russia.

Accordingly we, the Council of People's Commissars, recognise the People's Ukrainian Republic, and its right to secede from Russia or enter into a treaty with the Russian Republic on federal or similar relations between them.

We, the Council of People's Commissars, recognise at once, unconditionally and without reservations everything that pertains to the Ukrainian people's national rights and national independence.

We have not taken a single step, in the sense of restricting the Finnish people's national rights or national independence, against the bourgeois Finnish Republic, which still remains bourgeois, nor shall we take any steps restricting the national independence of any nation which had been—or desires to be—a part of the Russian Republic.

*V. I. Lenin, Manifesto to the Ukrainian
People with an Ultimatum
to the Ukrainian Rada. Collected Works,
Vol. 26, p. 361*

We are confident that, by systematically pursuing our policy of close alliance, we shall achieve greater success than before in our relations with the peoples of the East. And our success is already great. The Soviet Republic enjoys tremendous popularity among all the Eastern peoples for the same reason that made it possible for us to conclude a peace treaty with a small Western state,⁴³ because they see in us an unswerving fighter against imperialism, because ours is the only republic which is waging a war against imperialism and is capable of utilising every situation without the use of force, and which is also able to gain a victory by renouncing the use of force.

Needless to say, a far more perfected variety of this policy is being implemented in relation to the Ukrainian Republic. Here the problem has been simplified by the prior conclusion of an agreement between the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Central Executive Committee of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. On the basis of this agreement, which implies a close federation of both

republics in the struggle against the imperialist countries, we are building an ever closer alliance. As a result of their bitter experience of Denikin's rule, the mass of Ukrainian peasants and workers are becoming convinced that only the closest alliance between the Ukraine and the Russian Republic will be really invincible in the face of international imperialism, and that at the time of struggle against imperialism there is nothing to be gained by the separation of the Ukrainian state, since imperialism will take advantage of every division to crush Soviet power. Such a division is criminal.

V. I. Lenin, Report on the Work of All-Russia C.E.C. and the Council of People's Commissars Delivered at the First Session of the All-Russia C.E.C. Seventh Convocation, February 2, 1920. Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 326

I send my warmest greetings to the Soviet Republics of the Caucasus, and should like to express the hope that their close alliance will serve as a model of national peace, unprecedented under the bourgeoisie and impossible under the capitalist system.

But important as national peace among the workers and peasants of the Caucasian nationalities is, the maintenance and development of the Soviet power, as the transition to socialism, are even more important. The task is difficult, but fully feasible. The most important thing for its successful fulfilment is that the Communists of the Transcaucasus should be fully alive to the *singularity* of their position, and of the position of their Republics, as distinct from the position and conditions of the R.S.F.S.R.; that they should appreciate the need to refrain from copying our tactics, but thoughtfully vary them in adaptation to the differing concrete conditions.

V. I. Lenin, To the Comrades Communists of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Daghestan, and the Mountaineer Republic. Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 316

Chapter Nine
QUESTIONS OF WAR
PEACE AND THE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE
OF SOCIALIST AND CAPITALIST STATES

**War Is the Continuation of Politics
by Other Means**

We all know the dictum of Clausewitz, one of the most famous writers on the philosophy and history of war, which says: "War is the continuation of politics by other means". This dictum comes from a writer who reviewed the history of wars and drew philosophic lessons from it shortly after the period of the Napoleonic wars. This writer, whose basic views are now undoubtedly familiar to every thinking person, nearly eighty years ago challenged the ignorant man-in-the-street conception of war as being a thing apart from the policies of the governments and classes concerned, as being a simple attack that disturbs the peace, and is then followed by restoration of the peace thus disturbed, as much as to say: "They had a fight, then they made up!" This is a grossly ignorant view, one that was repudiated scores of years ago and is repudiated by any more or less careful analysis of any historical epoch of wars.

War is the continuation of politics by other means. All wars are inseparable from the political systems that engender them. The policy which a given state, a given class within that state, pursued for a long time before the war is inevitably continued by that same class during the war, the form of action alone being changed.

*V. I. Lenin, War and Revolution.
Collected Works, Vol. 24, pp. 399-400*

Every war is the continuation of politics by other means. The continuation of national liberation politics in the colonies will *inevitably* take the form of national wars *against* imperialism. Such wars *might* lead to an imperialist war of the present "great" imperialist powers, but on the other hand they might not. It will depend on many factors.

V. I. Lenin, *The Junius Pamphlet*.
Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 310

How, then, can we disclose and define the "substance" of a war? War is the continuation of policy. Consequently, we must examine the policy pursued prior to the war, the policy that led to and brought about the war. If it was an imperialist policy, i.e., one designed to safeguard the interests of finance capital and rob and oppress colonies and foreign countries, then the war stemming from that policy is imperialist. If it was a national liberation policy, i.e., one expressive of the mass movement against national oppression, then the war stemming from that policy is a war of national liberation.

The philistine does not realise that war is "the continuation of policy", and consequently limits himself to the formula that "the enemy has attacked us", "the enemy has invaded my country", without stopping to think *what issues* are at stake in the war, *which* classes are waging it, and with *what* political objects.

V. I. Lenin, *A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism*. *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 33

The imperialist war that was the continuation of the politics of the imperialists, of the ruling classes, of landowners and capitalists, brought forth the hostility of the masses of the people and was the best means of revolutionising them. Here in Russia the war helped overthrow the monarchy, helped abolish landed proprietorship and overthrow the bourgeoisie, all of which was done with

unparalleled ease only because the imperialist war was a continuation and an aggravation of imperialist politics that had become more insolent. And our war was a continuation of our communist politics, the politics of the proletariat:

*V. I. Lenin, Eighth All-Russia
Conference of the R.C.P.(B.).
Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 179*

Our war is the continuation of the politics of revolution, the politics of overthrowing the exploiters, capitalists and landowners. The workers and peasants are therefore drawn to our side despite the infinite gravity of our war. War is not only a continuation of politics, it is the epitome of politics; this unprecedentedly difficult war which the landowners and capitalists have brought down on us with the aid of the mighty Entente as political education. The workers and peasants have learned a great deal during this ordeal.

*V. I. Lenin, Seventh All-Russia Congress
of Soviets. Collected Works, Vol. 30,
p. 224*

War Is the Continuation of Politics by Other (I.E.: Violent) Means

This famous dictum was uttered by Clausewitz, one of the profoundest writers on the problems of war. Marxists have always rightly regarded this thesis as the theoretical basis of views on the significance of any war. It was from this viewpoint that Marx and Engels always regarded the various wars.

Apply this view to the present war. You will see that for decades, for almost half a century, the governments and the ruling classes of Britain and France, Germany and Italy, Austria and Russia have pursued a policy of plundering colonies, oppressing other nations, and suppressing the working-class movement. It is this, and only this, policy that is being continued in the present war. In partic-

ular, the policy of both Austria and Russia, in peace-time as well as in war-time, is a policy of enslaving nations, not of liberating them. In China, Persia, India and other dependent countries, on the contrary, we have seen during the past decades a policy of rousing tens and hundreds of millions of people to a national life, of their liberation from the reactionary "Great" Powers' oppression. A war waged on such a historical basis can even today be a bourgeois-progressive war of national liberation.

*V. I. Lenin, Socialism and War.
Collected Works, Vol. 21, p. 304*

The social character of the war, its true meaning, is not determined by the position of the enemy troops (as the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks think, stooping to the vulgarity of an ignorant yokel). What determines this character is the *policy* of which the war is the continuation ("war is the continuation of politics"), the *class* that is waging the war, and the aims for which it is waging this war.

*V. I. Lenin, The Impending Catastrophe
and How to Combat It. Collected Works,
Vol. 25, pp. 362-63*

No idea could be more erroneous or harmful than to separate foreign from home policy. The monstrous falsity of this separation becomes even more monstrous in war-time. Yet the bourgeoisie are doing everything possible and impossible to suggest and promote this idea.

*V. I. Lenin, The Foreign Policy of the Russian
Revolution. Collected Works,
Vol. 25, p. 85*

The character of a war and its success depend chiefly upon the internal regime of the country that goes to war . . . war is a reflection of the internal policy conducted

by the given country before the war. All this is inevitably reflected in the prosecution of a war.

V. I. Lenin, Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, November 22, 1919. Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 152

There are wars and wars. There are adventurist wars, fought to further dynastic interests, to satisfy the appetite of a band of freebooters, or to attain the objects of the knights of capitalist profit. And there is another kind of war—the only war that is *legitimate* in capitalist society—war against the people's oppressors and enslavers. Only utopians and philistines can condemn such a war on principle. Only the bourgeois betrayers of freedom can stand aloof from such a war in Russia today, the war for the people's freedom. The proletariat in Russia has started that great war of liberation, and it will go on with it, forming units of a revolutionary army, reinforcing the units of the soldiers or sailors that have come over to its side, enlisting the peasants. . . .

V. I. Lenin, The Revolutionary Army and the Revolutionary Government. Collected Works, Vol. 8, pp. 565-66

We regard all wars which are the result of the rapacious ambitions of kings and capitalists as criminal, because they are fatal to the labouring classes and bring rich spoils to the ruling bourgeoisie.

But there are wars which the working class must regard as the only just wars. These are wars for emancipation from slavery, from capitalist oppression. And such wars are bound to occur, for we cannot secure our emancipation without struggle.

V. I. Lenin, Speech at a Meeting in the Alexeyev People's House, August 23, 1918. Collected Works, Vol. 28, pp. 76-77

What are wars fought for? We know the majority of wars were fought in the interests of dynasties, and were called dynastic wars. But some wars were fought in the interests of the oppressed. Spartacus set off a war in defence of the enslaved class. Wars of this nature were waged in the period of colonial oppression continuing to this day, in the period of slavery, etc. These wars were just wars and must not be condemned.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech in Polytechnical Museum,
August 23, 1918. Collected Works, Vol. 28,
p. 79*

From the point of view of Marxism, that is, of modern scientific socialism, the main issue in any discussion by socialists on how to assess the war and what attitude to adopt towards it is this: what is the war being waged for, and what classes staged and directed it. We Marxists do not belong to that category of people who are unqualified opponents of all war. We say: our aim is to achieve a socialist system of society, which, by eliminating the division of mankind into classes, by eliminating all exploitation of man by man and nation by nation, will inevitably eliminate the very possibility of war. But in the war to win that socialist system of society we are bound to encounter conditions under which the class struggle within each given nation may come up against a war between the different nations, a war conditioned by this very class struggle. Therefore, we cannot rule out the possibility of revolutionary wars, i.e., wars arising from the class struggle, wars waged by revolutionary classes, wars which are of direct and immediate revolutionary significance. Still less can we rule this out when we remember that though the history of European revolutions during the last century, in the course of 125-135 years, say, gave us wars which were mostly reactionary, it also gave us revolutionary wars, such as the war of the French revolutionary masses against a united monarchist, backward, feudal and semi-feudal Europe. No deception of the masses is more wide-

spread today in Western Europe, and latterly here in Russia, too, than that which is practised by citing the example of revolutionary wars. There are wars and wars. We must be clear as to what historical conditions have given rise to the war, what classes are waging it, and for what ends. Unless we grasp this, all our talk about the war will necessarily be utterly futile, engendering more heat than light.

*V. I. Lenin, War and Revolution.
Collected Works, Vol. 24, pp. 398-99*

The Relation of Marxism to War

Socialists have always condemned wars between nations as barbarous and brutal. Our attitude towards war, however, is fundamentally different from that of the bourgeois pacifists (supporters and advocates of peace) and of the anarchists. We differ from the former in that we understand the inevitable connection between wars and the class struggle within a country; we understand that wars cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished and socialism is created; we also differ in that we regard civil wars, i.e., wars waged by an oppressed class against the oppressor class, by slaves against slave-holders, by serfs against landowners, and by wage-workers against the bourgeoisie, as fully legitimate, progressive and necessary. We Marxists differ from both pacifists and anarchists in that we deem it necessary to study each war historically (from the standpoint of Marx's dialectical materialism) and separately.

*V. I. Lenin, Socialism and War.
Collected Works, Vol. 21, p. 299*

For a Marxist clarifying the nature of the war is a necessary preliminary for deciding the question of his attitude to it. But for such a clarification it is essential, first and foremost, to establish the objective conditions and concrete circumstances of the war in question. It is necessary to

consider the war in the historical environment in which it is taking place, only then can one determine one's attitude to it. Otherwise, the resulting interpretation will be not materialist but eclectic.

Depending on the historical circumstances, the relationship of classes, etc., the attitude to war must be different at different times. It is absurd once and for all to renounce participation in war in principle. On the other hand, it is also absurd to divide wars into defensive and aggressive. In 1848, Marx hated Russia because at that time democracy in Germany could not win out and develop, or unite the country into a single national whole, so long as the reactionary hand of backward Russia hung heavy over her.

In order to clarify one's attitude to the present war, one must understand how it differs from previous wars, and what its peculiar features are.

*V. I. Lenin, Lecture on
"The Proletariat and the War",
October 1 (14) 1914. Collected Works,
Vol. 36, p. 297*

Socialists cannot be opposed to all war in general without ceasing to be socialists. We must not allow ourselves to be blinded by the present imperialist war. Such wars between "Great" Powers are typical of the imperialist epoch; but democratic wars and rebellions, for instance, of oppressed nations against their oppressors to free themselves from oppression, are by no means impossible. Civil wars of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie for socialism are inevitable.

*V. I. Lenin, The "Disarmament" Slogan.
Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 95*

A Marxist cannot regard civil war, or guerilla warfare, which is one of its forms, as abnormal and demoralising *in general*. A Marxist bases himself on the class struggle, and not social peace. In certain periods of acute economic and political crises the class struggle ripens into a direct

civil war, i.e., into an armed struggle between two sections of the people. In such periods a Marxist is *obliged* to take the stand of civil war. Any moral condemnation of civil war would be absolutely impermissible from the standpoint of Marxism.

In a period of civil war the ideal party of the proletariat is a *fighting party*. This is absolutely incontrovertible.

V. I. Lenin, *Guerilla Warfare*.
Collected Works, Vol. 11,
pp. 219-20

The "Defence of the Fatherland" Slogan

To recognise defence of the fatherland means recognising the legitimacy and justice of war. Legitimacy and justice from what point of view? Only from the point of view of the socialist proletariat and its struggle for its emancipation. We do not recognise any other point of view. If war is waged by the exploiting class with the object of strengthening its rule as a class, such a war is a criminal war, and "defencism" in *such* a war is a base betrayal of socialism. If war is waged by the proletariat after it has conquered the bourgeoisie in its own country, and is waged with the object of strengthening and developing socialism, such a war is legitimate and "holy".

We have been "defencists" since October 25, 1917.

V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Childishness
and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality.
Collected Works, Vol. 27, pp. 331-32

We have always said—and revolutions bear it out—that when the foundations of the exploiters' economic power are at stake, their property, which places the labour of tens of millions of workers and peasants at their disposal and enables the landowners and capitalists to enrich themselves, when, I repeat, the private property of the capitalists and landowners is at stake, they forget all talk about love for one's country and independence.... When their class

profits are at stake, the bourgeoisie will sell their country and strike a bargain with any foreigner against their own people. This truth has time and again been borne out by the history of the Russian revolution, after the history of revolution over a hundred years had shown that that is the law of the class interests, of the class policy of the bourgeoisie, at all times and in all countries.

V. I. Lenin, *Speech at a Joint Session of the All-Russia C.E.C., the Moscow Soviet, Factory Committees and Trade Unions of Moscow, July 29, 1918. Collected Works, Vol. 28, pp. 25-26*

The war is being waged for the partitioning of colonies and for the plunder of other lands; thieves have fallen out, and it is a brazen bourgeois lie to claim that, at this particular moment, some thief is getting the worse of it; to do so is to present the thieves' interests as those of the people or the fatherland. We must speak the *truth* to the "people", who are suffering from the war; that truth is that no defence can be put up against calamities of war-time unless the government and the bourgeoisie of every belligerent country are overthrown.

V. I. Lenin, *The Social-Chauvinists' Sophisms. Collected Works, Vol. 21, p. 185*

From the point of view of the proletariat, recognising "defence of the fatherland" means justifying the present war, admitting that it is legitimate. And since the war remains an imperialist war (both under a monarchy and under a republic), irrespective of the country—mine or some other country—in which the enemy troops are stationed at the given moment, recognising defence of the fatherland means, *in fact*, supporting the imperialist, predatory bourgeoisie, and completely betraying socialism. In Russia, even under Kerensky, under the bourgeois-democratic republic, the war continued to be an imperialist

war, for it was being waged by the bourgeoisie as a ruling class....

V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. Collected Works, Vol. 28, pp. 281-82

The present imperialist war stems from the general conditions of the imperialist era and is not accidental, not an exception, not a deviation from the general and typical. Talk of defence of the fatherland is therefore a deception of the people, for this war is *not* a national war. In a *genuinely* national war the words "defence of the fatherland" are *not* a deception and *we are not opposed to it*.

V. I. Lenin, *A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism*. Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 31

NB ||| We are not at all against "defence of the fatherland" in general, not against "defensive wars" in general. You will never find that nonsense in a single resolution (or in any of my articles). We are against defence of the fatherland and a defensive position in the *imperialist war* of 1914-16 and in other *imperialist* wars, typical of the imperialist *epoch*. But in the imperialist *epoch* there *may* be also "just", "defensive", revolutionary wars [[namely: 1) national, 2) civil, 3) socialist and *suchlike*]].

V. I. Lenin, *Letter to G. Y. Zinoviev*. Collected Works, Vol. 35, p. 329.

I am not at all opposed to wars waged in defence of democracy or against national oppression, nor do I fear such words as "defence of the fatherland" in reference to these wars or to insurrections. Socialists always side with the oppressed and, consequently, cannot be opposed to wars whose purpose is democratic or socialist struggle against oppression.

V. I. Lenin, *An Open Letter to Boris Souvarine*. Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 196

Since October 25, 1917, we have been defencists. We are for "defence of the fatherland"; but that patriotic war towards which we are moving is a war for a socialist fatherland, for socialism as a fatherland, for the Soviet Republic as a *contingent* of the world army of socialism.

V. I. Lenin, *The Chief Task of Our Day*. Collected Works, Vol. 27, pp. 162-63

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Imperialist Wars

The European and world war has the clearly defined character of a bourgeois, imperialist and dynastic war. A struggle for markets and for freedom to loot foreign countries, a striving to suppress the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and democracy in the individual countries, a desire to deceive, disunite, and slaughter the proletarians of all countries by setting the wage-slaves of one nation against those of another so as to benefit the bourgeoisie—these are the only real content and significance of the war.

V. I. Lenin, *The Tasks of Revolutionary Social-Democracy in the European War*. Collected Works, Vol. 21, pp. 15-16.

The essence of the imperialist war, i.e., a war waged for the interests of the capitalists, consists, not only in the war being waged with the aim of oppressing new nations, of carving up the colonies, but also in its being waged primarily by the advanced nations, which *oppress* a number of other peoples comprising the *majority* of the earth's population.

V. I. Lenin, *The Question of Peace*. Collected Works, Vol. 21, p. 291

Imperialist wars also occurred in the period of slavery (the war between Rome and Carthage was on both sides an imperialist war), as well as in the Middle Ages and in

the epoch of mercantile capitalism. A war is certainly imperialist if *both* warring sides oppress foreign countries or nationalities, and are fighting for their share of the loot and for the right to "oppress and rob" more than the others.

If we were to say that only modern capitalism, only imperialism, has brought imperialist wars in its wake, it would be correct, for the *preceding* stage of capitalism, the stage of free competition, or the stage of pre-monopoly capitalism, was characterised in Western Europe mainly by *national* wars. But if we were to say that in the preceding stage there were no imperialist wars at all, it would be incorrect. It would mean that we had forgotten the "colonial" wars, which are *also* imperialist.

V. I. Lenin, *Revision of the Party Programme. Collected Works, Vol. 26, p. 162.*

From the standpoint of progress, from the standpoint of the progressive class, the imperialist bourgeois war, the war of highly developed capitalism, can, *objectively*, be opposed only with a war *against* the bourgeoisie, i.e., primarily civil war for power between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; for *unless* such a war is waged, serious progress is *impossible*; this may be followed—only under certain special conditions—by a war to defend the socialist state against bourgeois states.

V. I. Lenin, *The Junius Pamphlet. Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 316*

Imperialist war is the eve of socialist revolution. And this not only because the horrors of the war give rise to proletarian revolt—no revolt can bring about socialism unless the economic conditions for socialism are ripe—but because 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.*

V. I. Lenin, The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It. Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 359

The Distinctive Features of Civil War

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Civil war is the sharpest form of the class struggle, it is that point in the class struggle when clashes and battles, economic and political, repeating themselves, growing, broadening, becoming acute, turn into an armed struggle of one class against another.

V. I. Lenin, The Russian Revolution and Civil War. Collected Works, Vol. 26, p. 29

But civil war differs from ordinary war by its immeasurably greater complexity, by the fact that the belligerents are unknown and unknowable—because of desertions from one camp to another (Octobrists⁴⁴ go over to the side of the government, a section of the armed forces go over to the side of the people), and because it is impossible to draw a hard and fast line between “combatants” and “non-combatants”. When the government “goes on strike”, when the police pauses waiting and “stands rigid”, the war goes on just the same, precisely because it is a civil war, because among the population itself there are those who are interested in defending the old regime and those who are fighting for freedom.

V. I. Lenin, A New Upswing. Collected Works, Vol. 10, p. 388

Civil war is just as much a war as any other. He who accepts the class struggle cannot fail to accept civil wars, which in every class society are the natural, and under certain conditions inevitable, continuation, development

and intensification of the class struggle. That has been confirmed by every great revolution. To repudiate civil war, or to forget about it, is to fall into extreme opportunism and renounce the socialist revolution.

*V. I. Lenin, The Military Programme
of the Proletarian Revolution.
Collected Works, Vol. 23, pp. 78-79*

The Transformation of Imperialist War Into Civil War

No socialist, whatever his nationality, can desire the military triumph of either the present-day German government or the French bourgeois republic, and least of all that of the tsar, which would be tantamount to the enslavement of Europe. This is why socialists in all countries stand for peace. However, if a war should break out, one thing is certain: this war, in which fifteen to twenty million armed men will slaughter each other and lay all Europe waste as never before—this war must either bring about the immediate victory of socialism or wreak such havoc with the old order of things, and leave behind such wreckage, that the old capitalist society would become more impossible than ever; the social revolution, though put off by it for ten or fifteen years, would then win all the more quickly and conclusively.

*F. Engels, Der Sozialismus in
Deutschland. Marx/Engels, Werke,
Bd. 22, S. 256*

The conversion of the present imperialist war into a civil war is the only correct proletarian slogan, one that follows from the experience of the Commune, and outlined in the Basle resolution⁴⁵ (1912); it has been dictated by all the conditions of an imperialist war between highly developed bourgeois countries. However difficult that transformation may seem at any given moment, socialists will

never relinquish systematic, persistent and undeviating preparatory work in this direction now that war has become a fact.

It is only along this path that the proletariat will be able to shake off its dependence on the chauvinist bourgeoisie, and, in one form or another and more or less rapidly, take decisive steps towards genuine freedom for the nations and towards socialism.

V. I. Lenin, The War and Russian Social-Democracy. Collected Works, Vol. 21, p. 34

The flower of the people's forces went to form the army during the imperialist war; the opportunist scoundrels of the Second International (not only the social-chauvinists, i.e., the Scheidemanns and Renaudels who directly went over to the side of "defence of the fatherland", but also the Centrists) by their words and deeds strengthened the subordination of the armed forces to the leadership of the imperialist robbers of both the German and Anglo-French groups, but the real proletarian revolutionaries never forgot what Marx said in 1870: "The bourgeoisie will give the proletariat practice in arms!" Only the Austro-German and Anglo-Franco-Russian betrayers of socialism could talk about "defence of the fatherland" in the imperialist war, i.e., a war that was predatory on both sides; the proletarian revolutionaries, however (from August 1914 onwards), turned all their attention to revolutionising the armed forces, to utilising them *against* the imperialist robber bourgeoisie, to converting the unjust and predatory war between the two groups of imperialist predators into a just and legitimate war of the proletarians and oppressed working people in each country against "their own", "national" bourgeoisie.

V. I. Lenin, The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Collected Works. Vol. 30, p. 260

The Possibility of National Wars Under Imperialism

That all dividing lines, both in nature and society, are conventional and dynamic, and that *every* phenomenon might, under certain conditions, be transformed into its opposite, is, of course, a basic proposition of Marxist dialectics. A national war *might* be transformed into an imperialist war *and vice versa*. Here is an example: the wars of the Great French Revolution began as national wars and indeed were such. They were revolutionary wars—the defence of the great revolution against a coalition of counter-revolutionary monarchies. But when Napoleon founded the French Empire and subjugated a number of big, viable and long-established national European states, these national wars of the French became imperialist wars and *in turn* led to wars of national liberation *against* Napoleonic imperialism.

Only a sophist can disregard the difference between an imperialist and a national war on the grounds that one *might* develop into the other. Not infrequently have dialectics served—and the history of Greek philosophy is an example—as a bridge to sophistry. But we remain dialecticians and we combat sophistry not by denying the possibility of all transformations in general, but by analysing the *given* phenomenon in its concrete setting and development.

V. I. Lenin, *The Junius Pamphlet*.
Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 309

National wars *against* the imperialist powers are not only possible and probable; they are inevitable, *progressive* and *revolutionary though* of course, to be *successful*, they require either the concerted effort of huge numbers of people in the oppressed countries (hundreds of millions in our example of India and China), or a *particularly* favourable conjuncture of international conditions (e.g., the fact that the imperialist powers cannot interfere, being

paralysed by exhaustion, by war, by their antagonism, etc.), or the *simultaneous* uprising of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in one of the big powers (this latter eventuality holds first place as the most desirable and favourable for the victory of the proletariat).

V. I. Lenin, *The Junius Pamphlet*.
Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 312

To deny all possibility of national wars under imperialism is wrong in theory, obviously mistaken historically, and tantamount to European chauvinism in practice: we who belong to nations that oppress hundreds of millions in Europe, Africa, Asia, etc., are invited to tell the oppressed peoples that it is "impossible" for them to wage war against "our" nations!

V. I. Lenin, *The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 78

The problem is to give a *correct* definition of the relationship of the *epoch* to the *present* war. This has been done both in the resolutions and in my articles: "the *present* imperialist war is *not an exception*, but a typical phenomenon in the imperialist *epoch*." [[The typical is not the unique.]]

One cannot understand the present war without understanding the epoch.

When people say this about the epoch, this is not just a phrase. It is correct. And your quotations from my old articles say *only* that. *They are correct*.

But when people draw from this the conclusion, *as they have begun to do*, that "in the epoch of imperialism there *cannot* be national wars", that is nonsense. It is an obvious error—historical and political and *logical* (for an epoch is a sum of varied phenomena, in which in addition to the typical there is *always* something else).

V. I. Lenin, *Letter to G. Y. Zinoviev*.
Collected Works, Vol. 35, pp. 228-29

Conditions in Which Wars Will Disappear

War=terribly profitable proposition
=immediate and inevitable product of capitalism.

*V. I. Lenin, May Day and War.
Collected Works, Fifth Russian
edition, Vol. 26, p. 378*

Wars are rooted in the very essence of capitalism; they will end only when the capitalist system ceases to exist, or when the immensity of human and financial sacrifice caused by the development of military technique, and the indignation which armaments arouse in the people, lead to the elimination of the system.

*V. I. Lenin, Bellicose Militarism
and the Anti-Militarist Tactics
of Social-Democracy. Collected
Works, Vol. 15, p. 193*

The victory of socialism in one country does not at one stroke eliminate all war in general. On the contrary, it presupposes wars. The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in different countries. It cannot be otherwise under commodity production. From this it follows irrefutably that socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously in *all* countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois. This is bound to create not only friction, but a direct attempt on the part of the bourgeoisie of other countries to crush the socialist state's victorious proletariat. In such cases a war on our part would be a legitimate and just war. It would be a war for socialism, for the liberation of other nations from the bourgeoisie. Engels was perfectly right when, in his letter to Kautsky of September 12, 1882, he clearly stated that it was possible for *already victorious* socialism to wage "defensive wars". What he had in mind was defence

of the victorious proletariat against the bourgeoisie of other countries.

Only after we have overthrown, finally vanquished and expropriated the bourgeoisie of the whole world, and not merely of one country, will wars become impossible. And from a scientific point of view it would be utterly wrong—and utterly unrevolutionary—for us to evade or gloss over the most important thing: crushing the resistance of the bourgeoisie—the most difficult task, and one demanding the greatest amount of fighting, in the *transition* to socialism.

V. I. Lenin, *The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution.*
Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 79

The Russian revolution of February-March 1917 was the beginning of the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war. This revolution took the *first* step towards ending the war; but it requires a *second* step, namely, the transfer of state power to the proletariat, to make the end of the war a *certainty*. This will be the beginning of a “break-through” on a world-wide scale, a break-through in the front of capitalist interests; and only by breaking through *this* front can the proletariat save mankind from the horrors of war and endow it with the blessings of peace.

It is directly to such a “break-through” in the front of capitalism that the Russian revolution has *already* brought the Russian proletariat by creating the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies.

V. I. Lenin, *The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution.*
Collected Works, Vol. 24, p. 67

We say: our aim is to achieve a socialist system of society, which, by eliminating the division of mankind into classes, by eliminating all exploitation of man by man and

nation by nation, will inevitably eliminate the very possibility of war.

*V. I. Lenin, War and Revolution.
Collected Works, Vol. 24, pp. 398-99*

We have started a resolute struggle against the war brought on by the clash of robbers over their spoils. Until now all parties have spoken of this struggle but have not gone beyond words and hypocrisy. Now the struggle for peace is on. It is a difficult struggle. It is highly naïve to think that peace can be easily attained, and that the bourgeoisie will hand it to us on a platter as soon as we mention it. Those who ascribed this view to the Bolsheviks were cheating. The capitalists are embroiled in a life-and-death struggle over the share-out of the booty. One thing is clear: to kill war is to defeat capital, and Soviet power has started the struggle to that end.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech at the First
All-Russia Congress of the Navy,
November 22 (December 5), 1917.
Collected Works, Vol. 26, p. 345*

An end to wars, peace among the nations, the cessation of pillaging and violence—such is our ideal.

*V. I. Lenin, The Question of Peace.
Collected Works, Vol. 21, p. 293*

If socialism is not victorious, peace between the capitalist states will be only a truce, an interlude, a time of preparation for a fresh slaughter of the peoples.

*V. I. Lenin, For Bread and Peace.
Collected Works, Vol. 26, p. 386*

The question of peace as an immediate programme of action for the socialists, and in this connection the question of peace terms, presents a universal interest....

The peace slogan can be advanced either in connection with definite peace terms, or without any conditions at all, as a struggle, not for a definite kind of peace, but for peace in general (*Frieden ohne weiters*). In the latter case, we obviously have a slogan that is not only non-socialist but entirely devoid of meaning and content. Most people are definitely in favour of peace in general, including even Kitchener, Joffre, Hindenburg, and Nicholas—the Blood-stained, for *each* of them wants an end to the war. The trouble is that every one of them advances peace terms that are imperialist (i.e., predatory and oppressive, towards other peoples), and to the advantage of his “own” nation. Slogans must be brought forward so as to enable the masses, through propaganda and agitation, to see the unbridgeable distinction between socialism and capitalism (imperialism), and *not* for the purpose of *reconciling* two hostile classes and two hostile political lines, with the aid of a formula that “unites” the most different things.

V. I. Lenin, *The Question of Peace*.
Collected Works, Vol. 21, pp. 290-91

On Peace and Peaceful Coexistence

Decree on Peace

The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just, democratic peace.

By a just or democratic peace, for which the overwhelming majority of the working class and other working people of all the belligerent countries, exhausted, tormented and racked by the war, are craving—a peace that has been most definitely and insistently demanded by the Russian workers and peasants ever since the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy—by such a peace the government means an immediate peace without annexations (i.e., without the

seizure of foreign lands, without the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and without indemnities.

The Government of Russia proposes that this kind of peace be immediately concluded by all the belligerent nations, and expresses its readiness to take all the resolute measures now, without the least delay, pending the final ratification of all the terms of such a peace by authoritative assemblies of the people's representatives of all countries and all nations. . . .

The government considers it the greatest of crimes against humanity to continue this war over the issue of how to divide among the strong and rich nations the weak nationalities they have conquered, and solemnly announces its determination immediately to sign terms of peace to stop this war on the terms indicated, which are equally just for all nationalities without exception. . . .

While addressing this proposal for peace to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia appeals in particular also to the class-conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind and the largest states participating in the present war, namely, Great Britain, France and Germany. The workers of these countries have made the greatest contributions to the cause of progress and socialism: they have furnished the great examples of the Chartist movement in England, a number of revolutions of historic importance effected by the French proletariat, and, finally, the heroic struggle against the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany and the prolonged, persistent and disciplined work of creating mass proletarian organisations in Germany, a work which serves as a model to the workers of the whole world. All these examples of proletarian heroism and historical creative work are a pledge that the workers of the countries mentioned will understand the duty that now faces them of saving mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences, that these workers, by comprehensive, determined, and supremely vigorous action, will help us to conclude

peace successfully, and at the same time emancipate the labouring and exploited masses of our population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.

*V. I. Lenin, Second All-Russia Congress
of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.
Collected Works, Vol. 26, pp. 249-52*

It must be remembered that all over the world there has been an inordinate amount of pacifist talk, an unusual number of pacifist phrases and assurances, and even vows against war and against peace,* although there is usually little preparedness on the part of the majority of states, especially on the part of the modern civilised states, to take any realistic steps, even the most simple, to ensure peace. On this, and on similar questions, we should like to see a minimum of general assurances, solemn promises and grandiloquent formulas, and the greatest possible number of the simplest and most obvious decisions and measures that would certainly lead to peace, if not to the complete elimination of the war danger.

*V. I. Lenin, Interview Given to M. Farbman,
"Observer" and "Manchester Guardian"
Correspondent. Collected Works,
Vol. 33, p. 386*

The working class, which is the principal supplier of soldiers, and which bears the brunt of the material sacrifices, is in particular the natural enemy of wars, because wars contradict the aim it pursues, namely, the creation of an economic system founded on socialist principles, which in practice will give effect to the solidarity of peoples. . . .

*V. I. Lenin, Bellicose Militarism
and the Anti-Militarist Tactics
of Social-Democracy. Collected Works,
Vol. 15, p. 193*

* Reference is to the Peace Treaty of Versailles.—Ed.

We are confident that, by continuing our peace policy and by making concessions (and we must do so if we wish to avoid war), the basic line of our policy and the fundamental interests which stem from the very nature of imperialist policy will come into their own and will make it more and more imperative for the R.S.F.S.R. to establish closer relations with a growing number of neighbouring states, despite the intrigues and machinations of the imperialists, who, of course, are always capable of provoking a quarrel between us and some other state.

*V. I. Lenin, The Eighth All-Russia
Congress of Soviets. Collected Works,
Vol. 31, p. 491*

We have before us a highly unstable equilibrium but one that is, nevertheless, certain, obvious, indisputable. I do not know whether this is for long, and I do not think that anyone can know. That is why, for our part, we must display the utmost caution. And the first precept of our policy, the first lesson that emerges from our governmental activities for the past year, the lesson which must be learned by all workers and peasants, is to be on the alert, to remember that we are surrounded by people, classes, governments which openly express the utmost hatred for us. We must remember that we are always a hair's breadth away from invasion. We shall do all in our power to prevent this misfortune. It is doubtful that any nation has experienced such a burden of the imperialist war as we have. Then we bore the burden of the Civil War forced on us by the ruling classes, who fought for the Russia of the émigrés, the Russia of the landowners, the Russia of the capitalists. We know, we know only too well, the incredible misfortunes that war brings to the workers and peasants. For that reason our attitude to this question must be most cautious and circumspect. We are ready to make the greatest concessions and sacrifices in order to preserve the peace for which we have paid such a high

price. We are ready to make huge concessions and sacrifices, but not any kind and not for ever.

V. I. Lenin, Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 148

True equality of the two property systems—if only as a temporary state, until such time as the entire world abandons private property and the economic chaos and wars engendered by it for the higher property system.

V. I. Lenin, Draft Decision of the All-Russia C.E.C. on the Report of the Delegation to the Genoa Conference. Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 357

There is a force more powerful than the wishes, the will and the decisions of any of the governments or classes that are hostile to us. That force is world general economic relations, which compel them to make contact with us.

V. I. Lenin, Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 155

We shall not permit peace treaties to be flouted. We shall not permit attempts to interfere in our peaceful work. On no account shall we permit this, and we shall rise to a man to defend our existence.

V. I. Lenin, Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 149

Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution forbid making any peace at all with imperialists? This opinion was expressed by some of the opponents of peace at one of the Petrograd meetings, but only an insignificant minority of those who objected to a separate peace⁴⁶ supported it. It is clear that this opinion would lead to a denial of the expediency of the Brest negotiations and to a rejection of peace, "even" if accompanied by the return of Poland, Latvia and Courland. The incorrectness of this view (which was rejected, for example, by a majority of the Petrograd opponents of peace)

is as clear as day. A socialist republic surrounded by imperialist powers could not, from this point of view, conclude any economic treaties, and could not exist at all, without flying to the moon.

*V. I. Lenin, Strange and Monstrous,
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 71*

1. "Do we intend to attack Poland and Rumania?"

No. We have declared most emphatically and officially, in the name of the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, our peaceful intentions. It is very much to be regretted that the French capitalist government is instigating Poland (and presumably Rumania, too) to attack us. This is even mentioned by a number of American radios from Lyons.

2. "What are our plans in Asia?"

They are the same as in Europe: peaceful coexistence with all peoples; with the workers and peasants of all nations awakening to a new life—a life without exploiters, without landowners, without capitalists, without merchants. The imperialist war of 1914-18, the war of the capitalists of the Anglo-French (and Russian) group against the German-Austrian capitalist group for the partition of the world, has awakened Asia and has strengthened there, as everywhere else, the urge towards freedom, towards peaceful labour and against possible future wars.

3. "What would be the basis of peace with America?"

Let the American capitalists leave us alone. We shall not touch them. We are even ready to pay them in gold for any machinery, tools, etc., useful to our transport and industries. We are ready to pay not only in gold, but in raw materials too.

4. "What are the obstacles to such a peace?"

None on our part; imperialism on the part of the American (and of any other) capitalists. . . .

...6. "What possibilities are there of an economic alliance between Russia and Germany?"

Unfortunately, they are not great. The Scheidemanns are bad allies. We stand for an alliance with all countries without exception.

7. "What are our views upon the allied demand for the extradition of war criminals?"

If we are to speak seriously on this matter of war guilt, the guilty ones are the capitalists of all countries. Hand over to us all your landed proprietors owning more than a hundred hectares and capitalists having a capital of more than 100,000 francs, and we shall educate them to useful labour and make them break with the shameful, base and bloody role of exploiters and instigators of wars for the partition of colonies. Wars will then soon become absolutely impossible.

8. "What would be the influence of peace with Russia upon the economic conditions in Europe?"

Exchange of machinery for grain, flax and other raw materials—I ask, can this be disadvantageous for Europe? Clearly, it cannot be anything but beneficial....

...10. "Has Russia still to fear counter-revolution from without?"

Unfortunately, it has, for the capitalists are stupid, greedy people. They have made a number of such stupid, greedy attempts at intervention and one has to fear repetitions until the workers and peasants of all countries thoroughly *re-educate* their own capitalists.

11. "Is Russia ready to enter into business relations with America?"

Of course she is ready to do so, and with all other countries. Peace with Estonia,⁴⁷ to whom we have conceded a great deal, has proved our readiness, for the sake of

business relations, to give even industrial concessions on certain conditions.

*V. I. Lenin, In Reply to Questions Put by Karl Wiegand,
Berlin Correspondent of Universal Service,
Collected Works, Vol. 30, pp. 365-67*

I am often asked whether those American opponents of the war against Russia—not only workers, but mainly bourgeois—are right, who expect from us, after peace is concluded, not only resumption of trade relations, but also the possibility of receiving concessions in Russia. I repeat once more that they are right. A durable peace would be such a relief to the working people of Russia that they would undoubtedly agree to certain concessions being granted. The granting of concessions under reasonable terms is desirable also for us, as one of the means of attracting into Russia, during the period of the coexistence side by side of socialist and capitalist states, the technical help of the countries which are more advanced in this respect.

*V. I. Lenin, To the American Workers.
Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 39*

We must . . . exercise our communist counter-influence at every step. That too is a kind of war, a duel between two methods, two political and economic systems—the communist and the capitalist. We shall prove that we are the stronger. We are told: “Very good, you have held your own on the external front; well, start construction, go ahead and build, and we shall see who wins. . . .” Of course, the task is a difficult one, but we have said, and still say, that socialism has the force of example. Coercion is effective against those who want to restore their rule. But at this stage the significance of force ends, and after that only influence and example are effective. We must show the significance of communism in practice, by example.

*V. I. Lenin, A Meeting of Activists of the Moscow
Organisation of the R.C.P.(B.), December 6, 1920,
Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 456*

Chapter Ten

THE COMMUNIST SOCIAL-ECONOMIC FORMATION

The Two Phases of Communist Society

Within the co-operative society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products; just as little does the labour employed on the products appear here *as the value* of these products, as a material quality possessed by them, since now, in contrast to capitalist society, individual labour no longer exists in an indirect fashion but directly as a component part of the total labour. The phrase "proceeds of labour", objectionable also today on account of its ambiguity, thus loses all meaning.

What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is, therefore, in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birth-marks of the old society from whose womb it comes. Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society—after the deductions have been made—exactly what he gives to it. What he has given to it is his individual quantum of labour. For example, the social working day consists of the sum of the individual hours of work; the individual labour time of the individual producer is the part of the social working day contributed by him, his share in it. He receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such and such an amount of labour (after deducting his labour

for the common funds), and with this certificate he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as costs the same amount of labour. The same amount of labour which he has given to society in one form he receives back in another.

Here obviously the same principle prevails as that which regulates the exchange of commodities, as far as this is exchange of equal values. Content and form are changed, because under the altered circumstances no one can give anything except his labour, and because, on the other hand, nothing can pass to the ownership of individuals except individual means of consumption. But, as far as the distribution of the latter among the individual producers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity-equivalents: a given amount of labour in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labour in another form.

Hence, *equal right* here is still in principle—*bourgeois right*, although principle and practice are no longer at loggerheads, while the exchange of equivalents in commodity exchange only exists *on the average* and not in the individual case.

In spite of this advance, this *equal right* is still constantly stigmatised by a bourgeois limitation. The right of the producers is *proportional* to the labour they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an *equal standard*, labour.

But one man is superior to another physically or mentally and so supplies more labour in the same time, or can labour for a longer time; and labour, to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity, otherwise it ceases to be a standard of measurement. This *equal right* is an unequal right for unequal labour. It recognises no class differences, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognises unequal individual endowment and thus productive capacity as natural privileges. *It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right.*

Right by its very nature can consist only in the application of an equal standard; but unequal individuals (and they would not be different individuals if they were not unequal) are measurable only by an equal standard in so far as they are brought under an equal point of view, are taken from one *definite* side only, for instance, in the present case, are regarded *only as workers* and nothing more is seen in them, everything else being ignored. Further, one worker is married, another not; one has more children than another, and so on and so forth. Thus, with an equal performance of labour, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right would have to be unequal rather than equal.

But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged, after prolonged birth-pangs, from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby.

In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and with it also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished, after labour has become not only a livelihood but life's prime want, after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!

*K. Marx, Critique of the Gotha Programme.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II,
pp. 22-24*

Politically, the distinction between the first, or lower, and the higher phase of communism will in time, probably, be tremendous. But it would be ridiculous to recognise this

distinction now, under capitalism, and only individual anarchists, perhaps, could invest it with primary importance (if there still are people among the anarchists who have learned nothing from the "Plekhanov" conversion of the Kropotkins, of Grave, Cornelissen and other "stars" of anarchism into social-chauvinists or "anarcho-trenchists", as Ghe, one of the few anarchists who have still preserved a sense of honour and a conscience, has put it).

But the scientific distinction between socialism and communism is clear. What is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the "first", or lower, phase of communist society. Insofar as the means of production become *common* property, the word "communism" is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is *not* complete communism. The great significance of Marx's explanations is that here, too, he consistently applies materialist dialectics, the theory of development, and regards communism as something which develops *out of* capitalism. Instead of scholastically invented, "concocted" definitions and fruitless disputes over words (What is socialism? What is communism?), Marx gives an analysis of what might be called the stages of the economic maturity of communism.

In its first phase, or first stage, communism *cannot* as yet be fully mature economically and entirely free from traditions or vestiges of capitalism. Hence the interesting phenomenon that communism in its first phase retains "the narrow horizon of *bourgeois* right". Of course, bourgeois right in regard to the distribution of *consumer* goods inevitably presupposes the existence of the *bourgeois state*, for right is nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* the observance of the standards of right.

It follows that under communism there remains for a time not only bourgeois right, but even the bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie!

This may sound like a paradox or simply a dialectical conundrum, of which Marxism is often accused by people

who have not taken the slightest trouble to study its extraordinarily profound content.

But in fact, remnants of the old, surviving in the new, confront us in life at every step, both in nature and in society. And Marx did not arbitrarily insert a scrap of "bourgeois" right into communism, but indicated what is economically and politically inevitable in a society emerging *out of the womb* of capitalism.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 470-71

In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx goes into detail to disprove Lassalle's idea that under socialism the worker will receive the "undiminished" or "full product of his labour". Marx shows that from the whole of the social labour of society there must be deducted a reserve fund, a fund for the expansion of production, a fund for the replacement of the "wear and tear" of machinery, and so on. Then, from the means of consumption must be deducted a fund for administrative expenses, for schools, hospitals, old people's homes, and so on.

Instead of Lassalle's hazy, obscure, general phrase ("the full product of his labour to the worker"), Marx makes a sober estimate of exactly how socialist society will have to manage its affairs. Marx proceeds to make a *concrete* analysis of the conditions of life of a society in which there will be no capitalism, and says:

"What we have to deal with here [in analysing the programme of the workers' party] is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is, therefore, in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birth-marks of the old society from whose womb it comes."

It is this communist society, which has just emerged into the light of day out of the womb of capitalism and which is in every respect stamped with the birth-marks of

the old society, that Marx terms the "first", or lower, phase of communist society.

The means of production are no longer the private property of individuals. The means of production belong to the whole of society. Every member of society, performing a certain part of the socially necessary work, receives a certificate from society to the effect that he has done a certain amount of work. And with this certificate he receives from the public store of consumer goods a corresponding quantity of products. After a deduction is made of the amount of labour which goes to the public fund, every worker, therefore, receives from society as much as he has given to it.

"Equality" apparently reigns supreme.

But when Lassalle, having in view such a social order (usually called socialism, but termed by Marx the first phase of communism), says that this is "equitable distribution", that this is "the equal right of all to an equal product of labour", Lassalle is mistaken and Marx exposes the mistake.

"Equal right", says Marx, we certainly do have here; but it is *still* a "bourgeois right", which, like every right, *implies inequality*. Every right is an application of an *equal* measure to *different* people who in fact are not alike, are not equal to one another. That is why "equal right" is a violation of equality and an injustice. In fact, everyone, having performed as much social labour as another, receives an equal share of the social product (after the above-mentioned deductions).

But people are not alike: one is strong, another is weak; one is married, another is not; one has more children, another has less, and so on. And the conclusion Marx draws is:

"With an equal performance of labour, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right would have to be unequal rather than equal"....

The first phase of communism, therefore, cannot yet provide justice and equality: differences, and unjust differences, in wealth will still persist, but the *exploitation* of man by man will have become impossible because it will be impossible to seize the *means of production*—the factories, machines, land, etc.—and make them private property. In smashing Lassalle's petty-bourgeois, vague phrases about "equality" and "justice" *in general*, Marx shows the *course of development* of communist society, which is *compelled* to abolish at first *only* the "injustice" of the means of production seized by individuals, and which is *unable* at once to eliminate the other injustice, which consists in the distribution of consumer goods "according to the amount of labour performed" (and not according to needs).

The vulgar economists, including the bourgeois professors and "our" Tugan, constantly reproach the socialists with forgetting the inequality of people and with "dreaming" of eliminating this inequality. Such a reproach, as we see, only proves the extreme ignorance of the bourgeois ideologists.

Marx not only most scrupulously takes account of the inevitable inequality of men, but he also takes into account the fact that the mere conversion of the means of production into the common property of the whole of society (commonly called "socialism") *does not remove* the defects of distribution and the inequality of "bourgeois right", which *continues to prevail* so long as products are divided "according to the amount of labour performed". Continuing, Marx says:

"But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged, after prolonged birth-pangs, from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby". . . .

And so, in the first phase of communist society (usually called socialism) "bourgeois right" is *not* abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained, i.e., only in respect of the means of production. "Bourgeois right" recognises them as the private property of individuals. Socialism converts them into *common* property. *To that extent*—and to that extent alone—"bourgeois right" disappears.

However, it persists as far as its other part is concerned: it persists in the capacity of regulator (determining factor) in the distribution of products and the allotment of labour among the members of society. The socialist principle, "He who does not work shall not eat", is *already* realised.... But this is not yet communism, and it does not yet abolish "bourgeois right", which gives unequal individuals, in return for unequal (really unequal) amounts of labour, equal amounts of products.

This is a "defect", says Marx, but it is unavoidable in the first phase of communism; for if we are not to indulge in utopianism, we must not think that having overthrown capitalism people will at once learn to work for society *without any standard of right*. Besides, the abolition of capitalism *does not immediately create* the economic prerequisites for *such* a change.

Now, there is no other standard than that of "bourgeois right". To this extent, therefore, there still remains the need for a state, which, while safeguarding the common ownership of the means of production, would safeguard equality in labour and in the distribution of products.

The state withers away insofar as there are no longer any capitalists, any classes, and, consequently, no *class* can be *suppressed*.

But the state has not yet completely withered away, since there still remains the safeguarding of "bourgeois right", which sanctifies actual inequality. For the state to wither away completely, complete communism is necessary.

*V. I. Lenin, The State and Revolution.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 464-68*

The Basic Features of Socialism as the First Phase of Communist Society

In making itself the master of all the means of production to use them in accordance with a social plan, society puts an end to the former subjection of men to their own means of production. It goes without saying that society cannot free itself unless every individual is freed. The old mode of production must therefore be revolutionised from top to bottom, and in particular the former division of labour must disappear. Its place must be taken by an organisation of production in which, on the one hand, no individual can throw on the shoulders of others his share in productive labour, this natural condition of human existence; and in which, on the other hand, productive labour, instead of being a means of subjugating men, will become a means of their emancipation, by offering each individual the opportunity to develop all his faculties, physical and mental, in all directions and exercise them to the full—in which, therefore, productive labour will become a pleasure instead of being a burden.

Today this is no longer a fantasy, no longer a pious wish. With the present development of the productive forces, the increase in production that will follow from the very fact of the socialisation of the productive forces, coupled with the abolition of the barriers and disturbances, and of the waste of products and means of production, resulting from the capitalist mode of production, will suffice, with everybody doing his share of work, to reduce the time required for labour to a point which, measured by our present conceptions, will be small indeed.

Nor is the abolition of the old division of labour a demand which could only be carried through to the detriment of the productivity of labour. On the contrary. Thanks to modern industry it has become a condition of production itself.

In a society of private producers, private individuals or their families pay the costs of training the qualified worker; hence the higher price paid for qualified labour-power accrues first of all to private individuals: the skilful slave is sold for a higher price, and the skilful wage-earner is paid higher wages. In a socialistically organised society, these costs are borne by society, and to it therefore belong the fruits, the greater values produced by compound labour.

*F. Engels, Anti-Dühring,
Moscow, 1962, pp. 277-78*

And given social ownership of the means of production, given the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, the system of civilised co-operators is the system of socialism.

*V. I. Lenin, On Co-operation.
Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 471*

Capitalism deliberately splits the population. This split must disappear once and for all, and the whole of society must become a single workers' co-operative. There can and must be no question of any kind of independence for individual groups.

To establish this type of co-operative I was speaking about just now is the condition for the victory of socialism.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech to the Third
Workers' Co-operative Congress,
December 9, 1918. Collected Works,
Vol. 28, p. 333*

Socialism is merely the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly. Or, in other words, socialism is merely state-capitalist monopoly *which is made to serve the interests of the whole people* and has to that extent ceased to be capitalist monopoly.

*V. I. Lenin, The Impending
Catastrophe and How to Combat
It. Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 358*

The economic *essence* and foundation of socialism is neither appropriation nor tax, but exchange of the products of large-scale ("socialised") industry for peasant produce.

V. I. Lenin, *Plan of the Pamphlet*
"The Tax in Kind", *Collected Works*,
Vol. 32, p. 321

We want to achieve a new and better order of society: in this new and better society there must be neither rich nor poor; all will have to work. Not a handful of rich people, but all the working people must enjoy the fruits of their common labour. Machines and other improvements must serve to ease the work of all and not to enable a few to grow rich at the expense of millions and tens of millions of people. This new and better society is called *socialist society*.

V. I. Lenin, *To the Rural Poor*.
Collected Works, Vol. 6, p. 366

The only way to put an end to the poverty of the people is to change the existing order from top to bottom, throughout the country, and to establish a *socialist order*, in other words, to take the estates from the big landowners, the factories from the factory owners, and money capital from the bankers, to abolish their *private property* and turn it over to the whole working people throughout the country. When that is done the workers' labour will be made use of not by rich people living on the labour of others, but by the workers themselves and by those elected by them. The fruits of common labour and the advantages from all improvements and machinery will then benefit all the working people, all the workers. Wealth will then grow at a still faster rate because the workers will work better for themselves than they did for the capitalists; the working day will be shorter; the workers' standard of

living will be higher; all their conditions of life will be completely changed.

*V. I. Lenin, To the Rural Poor.
Collected Works, Vol. 6, pp. 375-76*

The entire increase in wealth resulting from the combined labour of the masses of workers or from improvements in production goes to the capitalist class, while the workers, who toil from generation to generation, remain propertyless proletarians. That is why there is only one way of ending the exploitation of labour by capital, and that is to abolish the private ownership of the instruments of labour, to hand over all the factories, mills, mines, and also all the big estates, etc., to the whole of society and to conduct socialist production in common, directed by the workers themselves. The articles produced by labour in common will then go to benefit the working people themselves, while the surplus they produce over and above their keep will serve to satisfy the needs of the workers themselves, to secure the full development of all their capabilities and equal rights to enjoy all the achievements of science and art.

*V. I. Lenin, Draft and Explanation
of a Programme for the Social-Democratic
Party. Collected Works, Vol. 2, p. 108*

In socialist society, liberty and equality will no longer be a sham; the working people will no longer be divided by working in small, isolated, private enterprises; the wealth accumulated by common labour will serve the mass of the people and not oppress them; the rule of the workers will abolish all oppression of one nation, religion or sex by another.

*V. I. Lenin, Draft Election Address.
Collected Works, Vol. 11, p. 304*

Genuine freedom and equality will be embodied in the system which the Communists are building, and in which there will be no opportunity for amassing wealth at the expense of others, no objective opportunities for putting the press under the direct or indirect power of money, and no impediments in the way of any working man (or groups of working men, in any numbers) for enjoying and practising equal rights in the use of public printing-presses and public stocks of paper.

V. I. Lenin, First Congress of the Communist International. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 461

As I was coming in through your hall just now, I saw a placard with this inscription: "The reign of the workers and peasants will last for ever." When I read this odd placard, which, it is true, was not up in the usual place, but stood in a corner—perhaps it had occurred to someone that it was not very apt and he had moved it out of the way—when I read this strange placard, I thought to myself: there you have some of the fundamental and elementary things we are still confused about. Indeed, if the reign of the workers and peasants would last for ever, we should never have socialism, for it implies the abolition of classes; and as long as there are workers and peasants, there will be different classes and, therefore, no full socialism.

V. I. Lenin, Speech Delivered at the All-Russia Congress of Transport Workers, March 27, 1921. Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 272

Keep regular and honest accounts of money, manage economically, do not be lazy, do not steal, observe the strictest labour discipline—it is these slogans, justly scorned by the revolutionary proletariat when the bourgeoisie used them to conceal its rule as an exploiting class, that are now, since the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, becoming the immediate and the principal slogans of the

moment... the practical application of these slogans by the *Soviet* state, by *its* methods, on the basis of *its* laws, is a necessary and *sufficient* condition for the final victory of socialism.

*V. I. Lenin, The Immediate Tasks
of the Soviet Government,
Collected Works, Vol. 27,
pp. 243-44*

"He who does not work, neither shall he eat"—every toiler understands that. Every worker, every poor and even middle peasant, everybody who has suffered need in his lifetime, everybody who has ever lived by his own labour, is in agreement with this. Nine-tenths of the population of Russia are in agreement with this truth. In this simple, elementary and perfectly obvious truth lies the basis of socialism, the indefeasible source of its strength, the indestructible pledge of its final victory.

*V. I. Lenin, On the Famine.
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 392*

In no circumstances must we forget what we have occasion to see very often, namely, the socialist attitude of workers at state factories, who collect fuel, raw materials and food, or try to arrange a proper distribution of manufactured goods among the peasants and to deliver them with their own transport facilities. That is socialism....

*V. I. Lenin, Report on the Tax
in Kind Delivered at a Meeting
of Secretaries and Responsible
Representatives of R.C.P.(B.)
Cells of Moscow and Moscow
Gubernia, April 9, 1921.
Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 296*

Socialism which, by abolishing classes, and, consequently, by abolishing the enslavement of the people, for the first time opens the way for competition on a really mass scale. And it is precisely the Soviet form of organisation, by

ensuring transition from the formal democracy of the bourgeois republic to real participation of the mass of working people in *administration*, that for the first time puts competition on a broad basis.

V. I. Lenin, *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*.
Collected Works, Vol. 27,
pp. 259-60

Far from extinguishing competition, socialism, on the contrary, for the first time creates the opportunity for employing it on a really *wide* and on a really *mass* scale, for actually drawing the majority of working people into a field of labour in which they can display their abilities, develop the capacities, and reveal those talents, so abundant among the people whom capitalism crushed, suppressed and strangled in thousands and millions.

V. I. Lenin, *How to Organise Competition?* *Collected Works*,
Vol. 26, p. 404

The feudal organisation of social labour rested on the discipline of the bludgeon, while the working people, robbed and tyrannised by a handful of landowners, were utterly ignorant and downtrodden. The capitalist organisation of social labour rested on the discipline of hunger, and, notwithstanding all the progress of bourgeois culture and bourgeois democracy, the vast mass of the working people in the most advanced, civilised and democratic republics remained an ignorant and downtrodden mass of wage-slaves or oppressed peasants, robbed and tyrannised by a handful of capitalists. The communist organisation of social labour, the first step towards which is socialism, rests, and will do so more and more as time goes on, on the free and conscious discipline of the working people themselves who have thrown off the yoke both of the landowners and capitalists.

V. I. Lenin, *A Great Beginning*.
Collected Works, Vol. 29,
pp. 419-20

If we re-read the works of those socialists who have observed the development of capitalism during the last half-century, and who have again and again come to the conclusion that socialism is inevitable, we shall find that all of them without exception have pointed out that socialism alone will liberate science from its bourgeois fetters, from its enslavement to capital, from its slavery to the interests of dirty capitalist greed. Socialism alone will make possible the wide expansion of social production and distribution on scientific lines and their actual subordination to the aim of easing the lives of the working people and of improving their welfare as much as possible. Socialism alone can achieve this.

V. I. Lenin, Speech at the First Congress of Economic Councils, May 26, 1918. Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 411

An ideal future society cannot be conceived without the combination of education with the productive labour of the younger generation: neither training and education without productive labour, nor productive labour without parallel training and education could be raised to the degree required by the present level of technology and the state of scientific knowledge. . . .

If universal productive labour is to be combined with universal education, then obviously the duty of sharing in productive labour should be laid upon *all*.

V. I. Lenin, Gems of Narodnik Project-Mongering. Collected Works, Vol. 2, pp. 472-73

How infinitely mendacious is the ordinary bourgeois conception of socialism as something lifeless, rigid, fixed once and for all, whereas in reality *only* socialism will be the beginning of a rapid, genuine, truly mass forward move-

ment, embracing first the *majority* and then the whole of the population, in all spheres of public and private life.

*V. I. Lenin, The State and Revolution.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 472*

The Material and Technical Basis of Socialism

Large-scale machine industry and its extension to agriculture is the only possible economic basis for socialism, the only possible basis for a successful struggle to deliver mankind from the yoke of capital, to save mankind from the slaughter and mutilation of tens of millions of people in order to decide whether the British or German, the Japanese or American, etc., vultures are to have the advantage in dividing up the world.

*V. I. Lenin, To the Presidium of
the Eighth All-Russia Congress of
Electrical Engineers. Collected Works,
Vol. 33, p. 49*

A large-scale machine industry capable of reorganising agriculture is the only material basis that is possible for socialism. But we cannot confine ourselves to this general thesis. It must be made more concrete. Large-scale industry based on the latest achievements of technology and capable of reorganising agriculture implies the electrification of the whole country.

*V. I. Lenin, Third Congress of
the Communist International.
Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 459*

Socialism is inconceivable without large-scale capitalist engineering based on the latest discoveries of modern science. It is inconceivable without planned state organisation which keeps tens of millions of people to the strictest observance of a unified standard in production and distribution.

*V. I. Lenin, The Tax in Kind.
Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 334*

Large-scale industry is the one and only real basis upon which we can multiply our resources and build a socialist society. Without large factories, such as capitalism has created, without highly developed large-scale industry, socialism is impossible anywhere. . . .

*V. I. Lenin, Tenth All-Russia
Conference of the R.C.P.(B.).
Collected Works, Vol. 32, p. 408*

The victory of socialism over capitalism and the consolidation of socialism may be regarded as ensured only when the proletarian state power, having completely suppressed all resistance by the exploiters and assured itself complete subordination and stability, has reorganised the whole of industry on the lines of large-scale collective production and on a modern technical basis (founded on the electrification of the entire economy).

*V. I. Lenin, Preliminary Draft
Theses on the Agrarian Question.
Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 161*

Socialism calls for a conscious mass advance to greater productivity of labour compared with capitalism, and on the basis achieved by capitalism. Socialism must achieve this advance *in its own way*, by its own methods—or, to put it more concretely, by *Soviet* methods.

*V. I. Lenin, The Immediate Tasks
of the Soviet Government.
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 248*

Proletarian socialism sees its ideal, not in the equality of small proprietors, but in large-scale socialised production.

*V. I. Lenin, The Fifth Congress
of the R.S.D.L.P. Collected Works,
Vol. 12, p. 464*

Large-scale industry, which is the basis of the transition to socialism and—in the light of the state of the productive forces, that is, the touchstone of social development—is the basis of socialist economic organisation, for it unites the advanced industrial workers, the class which is exercising the dictatorship of the proletariat.

*V. I. Lenin, Tenth Congress of
the R.C.P.(B.), Collected Works,
Vol. 32, p. 235*

Socialism and Popular Accounting and Control of Production and Consumption

The decisive thing is the organisation of the strictest and country-wide accounting and control of production and distribution of goods. And yet, we have *not yet* introduced accounting and control in those enterprises and in those branches and fields of economy which we have taken away from the bourgeoisie; and without this there can be no thought of achieving the second and equally essential material condition for introducing socialism, namely, raising the productivity of labour on a national scale.

*V. I. Lenin, The Immediate Tasks
of the Soviet Government.
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 245*

Workers and peasants, working and exploited people! The land, the banks and the factories have now become the property of the entire people! You *yourselves* must set to work to take account of and control the production and distribution of products—this, and this *alone* is the road to the victory of socialism, the only guarantee of its victory, the guarantee of victory over all exploitation, over all poverty and want! For there is enough bread, iron, timber, wool, cotton and flax in Russia to satisfy the needs of everyone, if only labour and its products are properly distributed, if only a *business-like, practical* control over this

distribution by the entire people is established, provided only we can defeat the enemies of the people: the rich and their hangers-on, and the rogues, the idlers and the rowdies, *not only* in politics, but also in *everyday economic* life.

V. I. Lenin, *How to Organise Competition? Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 410-11

Accounting and control—that is *mainly* what is needed for the “smooth working”, for the proper functioning, of the *first phase* of communist society. *All* citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers. *All* citizens become employees and workers of a *single* country-wide state “syndicate”. All that is required is that they should work equally, do their proper share of work, and get equal pay. The accounting and control necessary for this have been *simplified* by capitalism to the utmost and reduced to the extraordinarily simple operations—which any literate person can perform—of supervising and recording, knowledge of the four rules of arithmetic, and issuing appropriate receipts.*

When the *majority* of the people begin independently and everywhere to keep such accounts and exercise such control over the capitalists (now converted into employees) and over the intellectual gentry who preserve their capitalist habits, this control will really become universal, general and popular; and there will be no getting away from it, there will be “nowhere to go”.

The whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labour and pay.

But this “factory” discipline, which the proletariat, after defeating the capitalists, after overthrowing the exploiters, will extend to the whole of society, is by no means our ideal, or our ultimate goal. It is only a necessary *step* for

* When the more important functions of the state are reduced to such accounting and control by the workers themselves, it will cease to be a “political state” and “public functions will lose their political character and become mere administrative functions”....

thoroughly cleaning society of all the infamies and abominations of capitalist exploitation, *and for further progress. . . .*

For when *all* have learned to administer and actually do independently administer social production, independently keep accounts and exercise control over the parasites, the sons of the wealthy, the swindlers and other "guardians of capitalist traditions", the escape from this popular accounting and control will inevitably become so incredibly difficult, such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed workers are practical men and not sentimental intellectuals, and they will scarcely allow anyone to trifle with them), that the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of the community will very soon become a *habit*.

Then the door will be thrown wide open for the transition from the first phase of communist society to its higher phase, and with it to the complete withering away of the state.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 473-74

Until the "higher" phase of communism arrives, the socialists demand the *strictest* control by society *and by the state* over the measure of labour and the measure of consumption; but this control must *start* with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, and must be exercised not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of *armed workers*.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 470

Only the painstaking establishment of accounting and control, only the strictest organisation and labour discipline, will lead us to socialism. Without this there is no socialism.

V. I. Lenin, *Session of the All-Russia C.E.C., April 29, 1918*. *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 297

And when I express my dissent to those people who claim to be socialists and who promise the workers they shall enjoy as much as they like and whatever they like, I say that communism presupposes a productivity of labour that we do not have at present. Our productivity is too low, that is a fact. Capitalism leaves us as a heritage, especially in a backward country, a host of customs through which all state property, all public property, is regarded as something that may be maliciously spoilt. The psychology of the petty-bourgeois mass is felt at every step, and the struggle in this sphere is a very difficult one. Only the organised proletariat can endure everything. I wrote: "Until the higher phase of communism arrives, the socialists demand the strictest control by society and by the state".⁴⁸

*V. I. Lenin, Session of the All-Russia
C.E.C., April 29, 1918. Collected Works,
Vol. 27, pp. 303-04*

The Basic Features of the Higher Phase of Communist Society

If we conceive society as being not capitalistic but communistic, there will be no money-capital at all in the first place, nor the disguises cloaking the transactions arising on account of it. The question then comes down to the need of society to calculate beforehand how much labour, means of production, and means of subsistence it can invest, without detriment, in such lines of business as for instance the building of railways, which do not furnish any means of production or subsistence, nor produce any useful effect for a long time, a year or more, while they extract labour, means of production and means of subsistence from the total annual production. In capitalist society however where social reason always asserts itself only *post festum* great disturbances may and must constantly occur.

*K. Marx, Capital, Vol. II,
Moscow, 1962, p. 315*

Communism as the positive transcendence of private property, as human self-estrangement, and therefore as the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man; communism therefore as the complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e., human) being—a return become conscious, and accomplished within the entire wealth of previous development. This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism: it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man—the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution.

K. Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, Moscow, 1959, p. 102

Communism deprives no man of the power to appropriate the products of society; all that it does is to deprive him of the power to subjugate the labour of others by means of such appropriation.

Marx and Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party. Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 49

Only conscious organisation of social production, in which production and distribution are carried on in a planned way, can lift mankind above the rest of the animal world as regards the social aspect, in the same way that production in general has done this for mankind in the specifically biological aspect. Historical evolution makes such an organisation daily more indispensable, but also with every day more possible. From it will date a new epoch of history, in which mankind itself, and with mankind all branches of its activity, and particularly natural

science, will experience an advance that will put everything preceding it in the deepest shade.

*F. Engels, Dialectics of Nature,
Moscow, 1964, p. 36*

It is only in an order of things in which there are no more classes and class antagonisms that *social evolutions* will cease to be *political revolutions*.

*K. Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy,
Moscow, 1962, p. 168*

What is a Communist? Communist is a Latin word. *Communis* is the Latin for "common". Communist society is a society in which all things—the land, the factories—are owned in common and the people work in common. That is communism.

*V. I. Lenin, The Tasks of the
Youth Leagues. Collected Works,
Vol. 31, pp. 295-96*

The only scientific distinction between socialism and communism is that the first term implies the first stage of the new society arising out of capitalism, while the second implies the next and higher stage.

*V. I. Lenin, A Great Beginning.
Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 420*

Notwithstanding all the laws emancipating woman, she continues to be a *domestic slave*, because *petty housework* crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and the nursery, and she wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real *emancipation of women*, real communism, will begin only where and when an all-out struggle begins (led by the proletariat wielding the state

power) against this petty housekeeping, or rather when its *wholesale transformation* into a large-scale socialist economy begins.

*V. I. Lenin, A Great Beginning.
Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 429*

Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country. Otherwise the country will remain a small-peasant country, and we must clearly realise that. We are weaker than capitalism, not only on the world scale, but also within the country. That is common knowledge. We have realised it, and we shall see to it that the economic basis is transformed from a small-peasant basis into a large-scale industrial basis. Only when the country has been electrified, and industry, agriculture and transport have been placed on the technical basis of modern large-scale industry, only then shall we be fully victorious.

*V. I. Lenin, The Eighth All-Russia
Congress of Soviets, Collected Works,
Vol. 31, p. 516*

Communism implies Soviet power as a political organ, enabling the mass of the oppressed to run all state affairs—without that, communism is unthinkable. We see proof of this throughout the world, because the idea of Soviet power and its programme are undoubtedly becoming victorious throughout the world. We see this in every phase of the struggle against the Second International, which is living on support from the police, the church and the old bourgeois functionaries in the working-class movement.

This guarantees political success. Economic success, however, can be assured only when the Russian proletarian state effectively controls a huge industrial machine built on up-to-date technology; that means electrification. For this, we must know the basic conditions of the application of electricity, and accordingly understand both industry and agriculture. This is an enormous task, to accomplish which

will require a far longer period than was needed to defend our right to existence against invasion.

V. I. Lenin, Our Foreign and Domestic Position and the Tasks of the Party. Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 420

Labour as a Prime and Vital Need

Communism is the highest stage in the development of socialism, when people work because they realise the necessity of working for the common good.

V. I. Lenin, Speech Delivered at the First Congress of Agricultural Communes and Agricultural Artels, December 4, 1919. Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 202

Communism, if you take that word in its strict meaning, is voluntary unpaid work for the common good that does not depend on individual differences, that wipes out all memories of everyday prejudices, wipes out stagnation, tradition, differences between branches of work, differences in the rate of pay for labour, etc.

V. I. Lenin, Eighth All-Russia Conference of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 186

We give the name of communism to the system under which people form the habit of performing their social duties without any special apparatus for coercion, and when unpaid work for the public good becomes a general phenomenon.

V. I. Lenin, Report on Subbotniks Delivered to a Moscow City Conference of the R.C.P.(B.), December 20, 1919. Collected Works, Vol. 30, pp. 284-85

The "communist" begins when subbotniks (i.e., unpaid labour with no quota set by any authority or any state) make their appearance; they constitute the labour of individuals on an extensive scale for the public good. This is not helping one's neighbour in the way that has always been customary in the countryside; it is work done to meet the needs of the country as a whole, and it is organised on a broad scale and is unpaid.

*V. I. Lenin, Report on Subbotniks
Delivered to a Moscow City
Conference of the R.C.P.(B.).
December 20, 1919. Collected Works,
Vol. 30, p. 286*

Communist labour in the narrower and stricter sense of the term is labour performed gratis for the benefit of society, labour performed not as a definite duty, not for the purpose of obtaining a right to certain products, not according to previously established and legally fixed quotas, but voluntary labour, irrespective of quotas; it is labour performed without expectation of reward, without reward as a condition, labour performed because it has become a habit to work for the common good, and because of a conscious realisation (that has become a habit) of the necessity of working for the common good--labour as the requirement of a healthy organism.

*V. I. Lenin, From the Destruction
of the Old Social System to the
Creation of the New. Collected Works,
Vol. 30, p. 517*

From Each According to His Abilities, to Each According to His Needs

One of the most vital principles of communism, a principle which distinguishes it from all reactionary socialism, is its empiric view, based on a knowledge of man's nature, that differences of *brain* and of intellectual capacity do not imply any differences whatsoever in the nature of the

stomach and of physical needs; therefore the false tenet, based upon existing circumstances, "to each according to his abilities", must be changed, insofar as it relates to enjoyment in its narrower sense, into the tenet, "*to each according to his needs*"; in other words, a *different form* of activity, of labour, does not justify *inequality*, confers no *privileges* in respect of possession and enjoyment.

Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, Moscow, 1964, p. 593

From capitalism mankind can pass directly only to socialism, i.e., to the social ownership of the means of production and the distribution of products according to the amount of work performed by each individual. Our Party looks farther ahead: socialism must inevitably evolve gradually into communism, upon the banner of which is inscribed the motto, "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs".

V. I. Lenin, The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution. Collected Works, Vol. 24, pp. 84-85

As we begin socialist reforms we must have a clear conception of the goal towards which these reforms are in the final analysis directed, that is, the creation of a communist society that does not limit itself to the expropriation of factories, the land and the means of production, does not confine itself to strict accounting for, and control of, production and distribution of products, but goes farther towards implementing the principle "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs".

V. I. Lenin, Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 127

The name of our Party indicates sufficiently clearly that we are advancing towards complete communism, that we

are putting forward such abstract propositions as that each of us will work according to his abilities and will receive according to his needs, without any military control and compulsion.

*V. I. Lenin, Extraordinary Seventh
Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 148*

We shall work to do away with the accursed maxim: "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost", the habit of looking upon work merely as a duty, and of considering rightful only that work which is paid for at certain rates. We shall work to inculcate in people's minds, turn into a habit, and bring into the day-by-day life of the masses, the rule: "All for each and each for all"; the rule: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs"; we shall work for the gradual but steady introduction of communist discipline and communist labour.

*V. I. Lenin, From the First Subbotnik
on the Moscow-Kazan Railway to the
All-Russia May Day Subbotnik.
Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 124*

Communism and the All-Round Development of the Individual

Only in community [with others] has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; only in the community, therefore, is personal freedom possible. In the previous substitutes for the community, in the State, etc., personal freedom has existed only for the individuals who developed within the relationships of the ruling class, and only insofar as they were individuals of this class. The illusory community, in which individuals have up till now combined, always took on an independent existence in relation to them, and was at the same time, since it was the combination of one class over against another, not only a completely illusory community, but a new fetter as well.

In the real community the individuals obtain their freedom in and through their association.

It follows from all we have been saying up till now that the communal relationship into which the individuals of a class entered, and which was determined by their common interests over against a third party, was always a community to which these individuals belonged only as average individuals, only insofar as they lived within the conditions of existence of their class—a relationship in which they participated not as individuals but as members of a class. With the community of revolutionary proletarians, on the other hand, who take their conditions of existence and those of all members of society under their control, it is just the reverse; it is as individuals that the individuals participate in it. It is just this combination of individuals (assuming the advanced stage of modern productive forces, of course) which puts the conditions of the free development and movement of individuals under their control—conditions which were previously abandoned to chance and had won an independent existence over against the separate individuals just because of their separation as individuals, and because of the necessity of their combination which had been determined by the division of labour, and through their separation had become a bond alien to them.

*Marx and Engels, The German
Ideology, Moscow, 1962, pp. 91-92*

The division of labour offers us the first example of how, as long as man remains in natural society, that is, as long as a cleavage exists between the particular and the common interest, as long, therefore, as activity is not voluntarily, but naturally, divided, man's own deed becomes an alien power opposed to him, which enslaves him instead of being controlled by him. For as soon as the distribution of labour comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman,

a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic. . . .

Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, Moscow, 1962, pp. 44-45

Production in common cannot be conducted by people like the present, of whom each is attached to some specific branch of production, chained to it, exploited by it, of whom each develops only *one* of his abilities at the expense of all the others and knows only *one* branch, or only the branch of a branch, of production as a whole. Even present-day industry finds less and less employment for such people. Industry jointly conducted by the whole of society according to a plan calls for people whose abilities are developed in a versatile way and who have scope enough to grasp the aggregate system of production. . . . Education will enable young people to quickly gain proficiency in the entire system of production and to go from one production branch to another, depending on the needs of society or their own inclination. It will therefore relieve them of the one-sided character imparted by the present division of labour. It is thus that communistically organised society will offer its members an opportunity to apply their versatile abilities in a versatile way.

F. Engels, Grundsätze des Kommunismus. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 4, S. 376

Communism is the position as the negation of the negation, and is hence the *actual* phase necessary for the next

stage of historical development in the process of human emancipation and recovery. *Communism* is the necessary pattern and the dynamic principle of the immediate future.

K. Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, Moscow, 1959, p. 114

The development of the capacities of the *human* species, although at first it takes place at the cost of the majority of human individuals and even classes, in the end breaks through this antagonism and coincides with the development of the individual.

K. Marx, Theories of Surplus-Value. Marx and Engels, Collected Works, Vol. 26, Part II, Russian edition, p. 123

Capitalism inevitably leaves socialism the legacy, on the one hand, of the old trade and craft distinctions among the workers, distinctions evolved in the course of centuries; on the other hand, trade unions, which only very slowly, in the course of years and years, can and will develop into broader industrial unions with less of the craft union about them (embracing entire industries, and not only crafts, trades and occupations), and later proceed, through these industrial unions, to eliminate the division of labour among people, to educate and school people, give them *all-round development and an all-round training*, so that they *are able to do everything*. Communism is advancing and must advance towards that goal, and *will reach* it, but only after very many years. To attempt in practice, today, to anticipate this future result of a fully developed, fully stabilised and constituted, fully comprehensive and mature communism would be like trying to teach higher mathematics to a child of four.

V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder. Collected Works, Vol. 31, pp. 49-50

Communism and the Withering Away of Classes

Abolition of classes is our basic demand. Without it, the abolition of class domination is sheer nonsense economically.

F. Engels, Zur Kritik des sozial-demokratischen Programmentwurfs 1891. Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 22, S. 232

Since the historical appearance of the capitalist mode of production, the appropriation by society of all the means of production has often been dreamed of, more or less vaguely, by individuals, as well as by sects, as the ideal of the future. But it could become possible, could become a historical necessity, only when the actual conditions for its realisation were there. Like every other social advance, it becomes practicable, not by men understanding that the existence of classes is in contradiction to justice, equality, etc., not by the mere willingness to abolish these classes, but by virtue of certain new economic conditions. The separation of society into an exploiting and an exploited class, a ruling and an oppressed class, was the necessary consequence of the deficient and restricted development of production in former times. So long as the total social labour only yields a produce which but slightly exceeds that barely necessary for the existence of all; so long, therefore, as labour engages all or almost all the time of the great majority of the members of society—so long, of necessity, this society is divided into classes. Side by side with the great majority, exclusively bond slaves to labour, arises a class freed from directly productive labour, which looks after the general affairs of society: the direction of labour, state business, law, science, art, etc. It is, therefore, the law of division of labour that lies at the basis of the division into classes. But this does not prevent this division into classes from being carried out by means of violence and robbery,

trickery and fraud. It does not prevent the ruling class, once having the upper hand, from consolidating its power at the expense of the working class, from turning its social leadership into an intensified exploitation of the masses.

But if, upon this showing, division into classes has a certain historical justification, it has this only for a given period, only under given social conditions. It was based upon the insufficiency of production. It will be swept away by the complete development of modern productive forces. And, in fact, the abolition of classes in society presupposes a degree of historical evolution at which the existence, not simply of this or that particular ruling class, but of any ruling class at all, and, therefore, the existence of class distinction itself has become an obsolete anachronism. It presupposes, therefore, the development of production carried out to a degree at which appropriation of the means of production and of the products, and, with this, of political domination, of the monopoly of culture, and of intellectual leadership by a particular class of society, has become not only superfluous but economically, politically, intellectually, a hindrance to development. This point is now reached. Their political and intellectual bankruptcy is scarcely any longer a secret to the bourgeoisie themselves. Their economic bankruptcy recurs regularly every ten years. In every crisis, society is suffocated beneath the weight of its own productive forces and products, which it cannot use, and stands helpless, face to face with the absurd contradiction that the producers have nothing to consume, because consumers are wanting.

*F. Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. II, Moscow, 1962,
pp. 151-52*

Society will produce enough products to so arrange distribution as to satisfy the needs of all its members. The division of society into different and hostile classes will

thus become redundant. Not only will it be redundant, but even incompatible with the new social system.

*F. Engels, Grundsätze des Kommunismus.
Marx/Engels, Werke, Bd. 4, S. 375*

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.

*Marx and Engels, Manifesto
of the Communist Party.
Selected Works, Vol. I,
Moscow, 1962, p. 54*

"The elimination of all social and political inequality" is also a very questionable phrase in place of "the abolition of all class distinctions". Between one country and another, one province and another and even one locality and another there will always exist a *certain* inequality in the conditions of life, which it will be possible to reduce to a minimum but never entirely remove. Alpine dwellers will always have different conditions of life from those of people living on plains. The idea of socialist society as the realm of *equality* is a one-sided French idea resting upon

the old "liberty, equality, fraternity"—an idea which was justified as a *stage of development* in its own time and place but which, like all the one-sided ideas of the earlier socialist schools, should now be overcome, for it only produces confusion in people's heads and more precise modes of presentation of the matter have been found.

*F. Engels's Letter to A. Bebel,
March 18-28, 1875. Marx and Engels,
Selected Correspondence, Moscow,
1965, p. 294*

By introducing social in place of private ownership of the means of production and exchange, by introducing planned organisation of social production to ensure the well-being and many-sided development of all the members of society, the proletarian social revolution will do away with the division of society into classes and thereby emancipate the whole of oppressed humanity, for it will put an end to all forms of exploitation of one section of society by another.

*V. I. Lenin, Materials Relating to
the Revision of the Party Programme.
Collected Works, Vol. 24, p. 468*

Socialism means the abolition of classes.

In order to abolish classes it is necessary, first, to overthrow the landowners and capitalists. This part of our task has been accomplished, but it is only a part, and moreover, *not* the most difficult part. In order to abolish classes it is necessary, secondly, to abolish the difference between factory worker and peasant, to make *workers of all of them*. This cannot be done all at once. This task is incomparably more difficult and will of necessity take a long time. It is not a problem that can be solved by overthrowing a class. It can be solved only by the organisational reconstruction of the whole social economy, by a transi-

tion from individual, disunited, petty-commodity production to large-scale social production. This transition must of necessity be extremely protracted.

V. I. Lenin, *Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 112

The abolition of classes means placing *all* citizens on an *equal* footing with regard to the *means of production* belonging to society as a whole. It means giving all citizens *equal* opportunities of working on the publicly-owned means of production, on the publicly-owned land, at the publicly-owned factories, and so forth....

In brief, when socialists speak of equality they always mean *social* equality, equality of social status, and not by any means the physical and mental equality of individuals.

V. I. Lenin, *A Liberal Professor on Equality. Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 146

By political equality Social-Democrats mean *equal rights*, and by economic equality, as we have already said, they mean the *abolition of classes*.

V. I. Lenin, *A Liberal Professor on Equality. Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 145

Our goal is equality, and by that we mean the abolition of classes. Then the class distinction between workers and peasants should be abolished. That is exactly our object. A society in which the class distinction between workers and peasants still exists is neither a communist society nor a socialist society. True, if the word socialism is interpreted in a certain sense, it might be called a socialist society, but that would be mere sophistry, an argument about words. Socialism is the first stage of communism; but it is not worth while arguing about words. One thing is clear,

and that is, that as long as the class distinction between workers and peasants exists, it is no use talking about equality, unless we want to bring grist to the mill of the bourgeoisie.

*V. I. Lenin, First All-Russia Congress
on Adult Education. Collected Works,
Vol. 29, pp. 358-59*

Engels was a thousand times right when he said that the concept of equality is a most absurd and stupid prejudice *if it does not imply* the abolition of classes. Bourgeois professors attempted to use the concept equality as grounds for accusing us of wanting all men to be alike. They themselves invented this absurdity and wanted to ascribe it to the socialists. But in their ignorance they did not know that the socialists—and precisely the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels—had said: equality is an empty phrase if it does not imply the abolition of classes. We want to abolish classes, and in this sense we are for equality. But the claim that we want all men to be alike is just nonsense, the silly invention. . . .

*V. I. Lenin, First All-Russia Congress
on Adult Education. Collected Works,
Vol. 29, p. 358*

Once society (communist—*Ed.*) is rid of classes, only the producers remain, without any division into workers and peasants. And we know perfectly well from all the works of Marx and Engels that they drew a very clear distinction between the period in which classes still exist and that in which they no longer do. Marx and Engels used to ridicule the idea that classes could disappear before communism, and said that communism alone meant their abolition.

*V. I. Lenin, Tenth Congress of the
R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 32,
p. 250*

Communism and the Withering Away of the State

Abolition of the state is visualised by Communists solely as the necessary result of the abolition of classes, after which the need for the organised power of one class to suppress another disappears of itself.

Marx/Engels, Rezensionen aus der
"Neuen Rheinischen Zeitung.
Politisch-ökonomische Revue".
Viertes Heft, April 1850. Werke,
Bd. 7, S. 288

The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into state property. But, in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, abolishes also the state as state. Society thus far, based upon class antagonisms, had need of the state. That is, of an organisation of the particular class which was *pro tempore* the exploiting class, an organisation for the purpose of preventing any interference from without with the existing conditions of production, and, therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited classes in the condition of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom, wage-labour). The state was the official representative of society as a whole; the gathering of it together into a visible embodiment. But it was this only in so far as it was the state of that class which itself represented, for the time being, society as a whole: in ancient times, the state of slave-owning citizens; in the Middle Ages, the feudal lords; in our own time, the bourgeoisie. When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class-rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a

special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary. The first act by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not “abolished”. *It dies out.*

F. Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. II, Moscow, 1962,
pp. 150-51

The state, then, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies that did without it, that had no idea of the state and state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the split of society into classes, the state became a necessity owing to this split. We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes not only will have ceased to be a necessity, but will become a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage. Along with them the state will inevitably fall. Society which will reorganise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning-wheel and the bronze axe.

F. Engels, The Origin of the Family,
Private Property and the State.
Marx and Engels, Selected Works,
Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, p. 322

The concepts of “freedom” and “democracy” are usually considered identical, and one is often used in place of the

other. Vulgar Marxists (notably Kautsky and Plekhanov & Co.) deal with them in that manner. In fact, however, democracy excludes freedom. The dialectics (or course) of development is as follows: from absolutism to bourgeois democracy; from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy; from proletarian democracy to no democracy at all.

V. I. Lenin, *Preparatory Material for the Book "The State and Revolution". Collected Works, Fifth Russian edition, Vol. 33, p. 170*

To sum up, dictatorship of the proletariat is a "political transition period"; obviously, the *state of this period* is also a transition from state to non-state, that is, to "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word". Marx and Engels, therefore, do not contradict each other on this point.

But further on, Marx refers to the "future state in communist society"! Hence, even "*communist society*" will have state! Is this contradictory or not?

No, it is not:

the bourgeoisie needs
the state

I—in capitalist society
the state in the proper
sense of the word

the proletariat needs
the state

II—transition (dictator-
ship of the proletar-
iat): state of the tran-
sitional type (not a
state in the proper
sense of the word)

the state
is not needed; it
withers away

III—communist society:
withering away of the
state.

Completely consistent and clear!

In other words:

- | | |
|---|--|
| I—democracy for the rich only and for a small section of the proletariat. [The poor have no time for it!] | I—democracy merely by way of an exception, never complete.... |
| II—democracy for the poor, for 9/10 of the population, forcible suppression of the resistance of the rich | II—democracy almost complete, restricted only by the <i>suppression</i> of the resistance of the bourgeoisie |
| III—democracy complete, habitual, hence expiring, giving way to the principle: "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs".... | III—truly complete democracy, habitual, hence expiring.... Complete democracy equals no democracy at all. This is no paradox; it is a fact!" |

V. I. Lenin, *Preparatory Material for the Book "The State and Revolution"*,
Collected Works, Fifth Russian edition,
Vol. 33, pp. 179-80

In the usual arguments about the state, the mistake is constantly made against which Engels warned and which we have in passing indicated above, namely, it is constantly forgotten that the abolition of the state means also the abolition of democracy: that the withering away of the state means the withering away of democracy.

At first sight this assertion seems exceedingly strange and incomprehensible; indeed, someone may even suspect us of expecting the advent of a system of society in which the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed—for democracy means the recognition of this very principle.

No, 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*.

In order to emphasise this element of habit, Engels speaks of a new *generation*, "reared in new, free social conditions", which will "be able to discard the entire lumber of the state"—of any state, including the democratic-republican state. . . .

From a superficial comparison of Marx's letter to Bracke of May 5, 1875, with Engels's letter to Bebel of March 28, 1875, which we examined above, it might appear that Marx was much more of a "champion of the state" than Engels, and that the difference of opinion between the two writers on the question of the state was very considerable.

Engels suggested to Bebel that all chatter about the state be dropped altogether, that the word "state" be eliminated from the programme altogether and the word "community" substituted for it. Engels even declared that the Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. Yet Marx even spoke of the "future state in

communist society", i.e., he would seem to recognise the need for the state even under communism.

But such a view would be fundamentally wrong. A closer examination shows that Marx's and Engels's views on the state and its withering away were completely identical, and that Marx's expression quoted above refers to the state in the process of *withering away*.

Clearly there can be no question of specifying the moment of the *future* "withering away", the more so since it will obviously be a lengthy process. The apparent difference between Marx and Engels is due to the fact that they dealt with different subjects and pursued different aims. Engels set out to show Bebel graphically, sharply and in broad outline the utter absurdity of the current prejudices concerning the state (shared to no small degree by Lassalle). Marx only touched upon *this* question in passing, being interested in another subject, namely, the *development* of communist society.

The whole theory of Marx is the application of the theory of development—in its most consistent, complete, considered and pithy form—to modern capitalism. Naturally, Marx was faced with the problem of applying this theory both to the *forthcoming* collapse of capitalism and to the *future* development of *future* communism.

On the basis of what *facts*, then, can the question of the future development of future communism be dealt with?

On the basis of the fact that it *has its origin* in capitalism, that it develops historically from capitalism, that it is the result of the action of a social force to which capitalism *gave birth*. There is no trace of an attempt on Marx's part to make up a utopia, to indulge in idle guess-work about what cannot be known. Marx treated the question of communism in the same way as a naturalist would treat the question of the development of, say, a new biological variety, once he knew that it had originated in such and

such a way and was changing in such and such a definite direction.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 455-58

The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state is such a high stage of development of communism at which the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears, at which there consequently disappears one of the principal sources of modern *social* inequality—a source, moreover, which cannot on any account be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists.

This expropriation will make it *possible* for the productive forces to develop to a tremendous extent. And when we see how incredibly capitalism is already *retarding* this development, when we see how much progress could be achieved on the basis of the level of technique already attained, we are entitled to say with the fullest confidence that the expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in an enormous development of the productive forces of human society. But how rapidly this development will proceed, how soon it will reach the point of breaking away from the division of labour, of doing away with the antithesis between mental and physical labour, of transforming labour into “life’s prime want”—we do not and *cannot* know.

That is why we are entitled to speak only of the inevitable withering away of the state, emphasising the protracted nature of this process and its dependence upon the rapidity of development of the *higher phase* of communism, and leaving the question of the time required for, or the concrete forms of, the withering away quite open, because there is *no* material for answering these questions.

The state will be able to wither away completely when society adopts the rule: “From each according to his

abilities, to each according to his needs", i.e., when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of social intercourse and when their labour has become so productive that they will voluntarily work *according to their abilities*. "The narrow horizon of bourgeois right", which compels one to calculate with the heartlessness of a Shylock whether one has not worked half an hour more than somebody else, whether one is not getting less pay than somebody else—this narrow horizon will then be crossed. There will then be no need for society, in distributing products, to regulate the quantity to be received by each; each will take freely "according to his needs".

From the bourgeois point of view, it is easy to declare that such a social order is "sheer utopia" and to sneer at the socialists for promising everyone the right to receive from society, without any control over the labour of the individual citizen, any quantity of truffles, cars, pianos, etc. Even to this day, most bourgeois "savants" confine themselves to sneering in this way, thereby betraying both their ignorance and their selfish defence of capitalism.

Ignorance—for it has never entered the head of any socialist to "promise" that the higher phase of the development of communism will arrive; as for the great socialists' *forecast* that it will arrive, it presupposes not the present productivity of labour and *not the present* ordinary run of people, who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's stories,⁴⁹ are capable of damaging the stocks of public wealth "just for fun", and of demanding the impossible.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 468-70

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely crushed, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., when there is no distinction between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production),

only then "the state . . . ceases to exist", and "*it becomes possible to speak of freedom*". Only then will a truly complete democracy become possible and be realised, a democracy without any exceptions whatever. And only then will democracy begin to *wither away*, owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, *without the special apparatus* for coercion called the state.

The expression "the state *withers away*" is very well chosen, for it indicates both the gradual and the spontaneous nature of the process. Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect; for we see around us on millions of occasions how readily people become accustomed to observing the necessary rules of social intercourse when there is no exploitation, when there is nothing that arouses indignation, evokes protest and revolt, and creates the need for *suppression*.

And so in capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false, a democracy only for the rich, for the minority. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will for the first time create democracy for the people, for the majority, along with the necessary suppression of the exploiters, of the minority. Communism alone is capable of providing really complete democracy, and the more complete it is, the sooner it will become unnecessary and wither away of its own accord.

In other words, under capitalism we have the state in the proper sense of the word, that is, a special machine for the suppression of one class by another, and, what is more, of the majority by the minority. Naturally, to be successful, such an undertaking as the systematic suppres-

sion of the exploited majority by the exploiting minority calls for the utmost ferocity and savagery in the matter of suppressing, it calls for seas of blood, through which mankind is actually wading its way in slavery, serfdom and wage-labour.

Furthermore, during the *transition* from capitalism to communism suppression is *still* necessary, but it is now the suppression of the exploiting minority by the exploited majority. A special apparatus, a special machine for suppression, the "state", is *still* necessary, but this is now a transitional state. It is no longer a state in the proper sense of the word; for the suppression of the minority of exploiters by the majority of the wage-slaves of *yesterday* is comparatively so easy, simple and natural a task that it will entail far less bloodshed than the suppression of the risings of slaves, serfs or wage-labourers, and it will cost mankind far less. And it is compatible with the extension of democracy to such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a *special machine* of suppression will begin to disappear. Naturally, the exploiters are unable to suppress the people without a highly complex machine for performing this task, but *the people* can suppress the exploiters even with a very simple "machine", almost without a "machine", without a special apparatus, by the simple *organisation of the armed people* (such as the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, we would remark, running ahead).

Lastly, only communism makes the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is *nobody* to be suppressed—"nobody" in the sense of a *class*, of a systematic struggle against a definite section of the population. We are not utopians, and do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, or the need to stop *such* excesses. In the first place, however, no special machine, no special apparatus of suppression, is needed for this; this will be done by the armed people themselves, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilised people, even in modern society, interferes to

put a stop to a scuffle or to prevent a woman from being assaulted. And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses, which consist in the violation of the rules of social intercourse, is the exploitation of the people, their want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to "*wither away*". We do not know how quickly and in what succession, but we do know they will wither away. With their withering away the state will also *wither away*.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 462-64

Transition *through* the Soviet state to the gradual abolition of the state by systematically drawing an ever greater number of citizens, and subsequently *each and every* citizen, into direct and *daily* performance of their share of the burdens of administering the state.

V. I. Lenin, *Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)*.
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 156

The democratic principle of organisation—in its highest form, in which the Soviets put into effect proposals and demands for the active participation of the masses not only in discussing general rules, decisions and laws, and in controlling their fulfilment, but also directly in their implementation—implies that every representative of the masses, every citizen, must be put in such conditions that he can participate in the discussion of state laws, in the choice of his representatives and in the implementation of state laws. But it does not at all follow from this that we shall permit the slightest chaos or disorder as regards who is responsible in each individual case for definite executive functions, for carrying out definite orders, for controlling a definite joint labour process during a certain period of time. The masses must have the right to choose responsible leaders for them-

selves. They must have the right to replace them, the right to know and check each smallest step of their activity. They must have the right to put forward any worker without exception for administrative functions.

*V. I. Lenin, Original Version
of the Article "The Immediate
Tasks of the Soviet Government".
Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 212*

The continuation of the struggle against the bureaucracy ... is absolutely necessary, is imperative, to ensure the success of future socialist development....

Work in this field is closely connected with the implementation of the chief historical purpose of Soviet power, i.e., to advance towards the final abolition of the state, and should consist of the following. First, every member of a Soviet must, without fail, do a certain job of state administration; secondly, these jobs must be consistently changed so that they embrace all aspects of government, all its branches; and, thirdly, literally all the working population must be drawn into independent participation in state administration by means of a series of gradual measures that are carefully selected and unfailingly implemented.

*V. I. Lenin, Draft Programme of
the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works,
Vol. 29, p. 109*

Abolishing the bureaucracy at once, everywhere and completely, is out of the question. It is a utopia. But to *smash* the old bureaucratic machine at once and to begin immediately to construct a new one that will make possible the gradual abolition of all bureaucracy—this is *not* a utopia, it is the experience of the Commune, the direct and immediate task of the revolutionary proletariat.

Capitalism simplifies the functions of "state" administration; it makes it possible to cast "bossing" aside and to confine the whole matter to the organisation of the proletarians (as the ruling class), which will hire "workers,

foremen and accountants" in the name of the whole of society.

We are not utopians, we do not "dream" of dispensing *at once* with all administration, with all subordination. These anarchist dreams, based upon incomprehension of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, are totally alien to Marxism, and, as a matter of fact, serve only to postpone the socialist revolution until people are different. No, we want the socialist revolution with people as they are now, with people who cannot dispense with subordination, control and "foremen and accountants".

The subordination, however, must be to the armed vanguard of all the exploited and working people, i.e., to the proletariat. A beginning can and must be made at once, overnight, to replace the specific "bossing" of state officials by the simple functions of "foremen and accountants", functions which are already fully within the ability of the average town dweller and can well be performed for "workmen's wages".

We, the workers, shall organise large-scale production on the basis of what capitalism has already created, relying on our own experience as workers, establishing strict, iron discipline backed up by the state power of the armed workers. We shall reduce the role of state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, revocable, modestly paid "foremen and accountants" (of course, with the aid of technicians of all sorts, types and degrees). This is *our* proletarian task, this is what we can and must *start* with in accomplishing the proletarian revolution. Such a beginning, on the basis of large-scale production, will of itself lead to the gradual "withering away" of all bureaucracy, to the gradual creation of an order—an order without inverted commas, an order bearing no similarity to wage-slavery—an order under which the functions of control and accounting, becoming more and more simple, will be performed by each in turn, will then become a habit and will finally die out as the *special* functions of a special section of the population.

A witty German Social-Democrat of the seventies of the last century called the *postal service* an example of the socialist economic system. This is very true. At present the postal service is a business organised on the lines of a state-capitalist monopoly. Imperialism is gradually transforming all trusts into organisations of a similar type, in which, standing over the "common" people, who are overworked and starved, one has the same bourgeois bureaucracy. But the mechanism of social management is here already to hand. Once we have overthrown the capitalists, crushed the resistance of these exploiters with the iron hand of the armed workers, and smashed the bureaucratic machine of the modern state, we shall have a splendidly equipped mechanism, freed from the "parasite", a mechanism which can very well be set going by the united workers themselves, who will hire technicians, foremen and accountants, and pay them *all*, as indeed *all* "state" officials in general, workmen's wages. Here is a concrete, practical task which can immediately be fulfilled in relation to all trusts, a task whose fulfilment will rid the working people of exploitation, a task which takes account of what the Commune had already begun to practice (particularly in building up the state).

To organise the *whole* economy on the lines of the postal service so that the technicians, foremen and accountants, as well as *all* officials, shall receive salaries no higher than "a workman's wage", all under the control and leadership of the armed proletariat—this is our immediate aim. This is the state and this is the economic foundation we need. This is what will bring about the abolition of parliamentarism and the preservation of representative institutions. This is what will rid the labouring classes of the bourgeoisie's prostitution of these institutions.

V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 425-27

The more firmly the socialist revolution's gains become established and the socialist system becomes consolidated,

the greater and higher will become the role of the Economic Councils, which alone of all the state institutions are to endure. And their position will become all the more durable the closer we approach the establishment of the socialist system and the less need there will be for a purely administrative apparatus, for an apparatus which is solely engaged in administration. After the resistance of the exploiters has been finally broken, after the working people have learned to organise socialist production, this apparatus of administration in the proper, strict, narrow sense of the word, this apparatus of the old state, is doomed to die; while the apparatus of the type of the Supreme Economic Council is destined to grow, to develop and become strong, performing all the main activities of organised society.

V. I. Lenin, Speech at the First Congress of Economic Councils, May 26, 1918. Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 408

It is precisely at the present time that we can say that we really have an organisation of power which clearly indicates the transition to the complete abolition of any power, of any state. This will be possible when every trace of exploitation has been abolished, that is, in socialist society.

V. I. Lenin, Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. Collected Works, Vol. 26, p. 466

Just when will the state wither away? We shall have managed to convene more than two congresses before the time comes to say: see how our state is withering away. It is too early for that. To proclaim the withering away of the state prematurely would distort the historical perspective.

V. I. Lenin, Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 148

Communism and the Disappearance of Nations and National Distinctions

The aim of socialism is not only to end the division of mankind into tiny states and the isolation of nations in any form, it is not only to bring the nations closer together but to integrate them.

V. I. Lenin, *The Socialist Revolution
and the Right of Nations to Self-
Determination. Collected Works,*
Vol. 22, p. 146

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.

V. I. Lenin, *"Left-Wing" Communism—
an Infantile Disorder. Collected Works,*
Vol. 31, p. 92

Socialism, by organising production *without* class oppression, by ensuring the well-being of *all* members of the state, gives *full play* to the "sympathies" of the population, thereby promoting and greatly accelerating the drawing together and fusion of the nations.

*V. I. Lenin, The Discussion on
Self-Determination Summed Up.
Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 324*

The socialist movement cannot triumph within the old framework of the fatherland. It creates new and superior forms of human society, in which the legitimate needs and progressive aspirations of the working masses of *each* nationality will, for the first time, be met through international unity, provided existing national partitions are removed.

*V. I. Lenin, The Position and Tasks
of the Socialist International.
Collected Works, Vol. 21, pp. 33-39*

Chapter Eleven

CRITIQUE OF REVISIONISM, REFORMISM AND DOGMATISM

Critique of Revisionism and Opportunism

This oblivion of the big issues in face of the momentary interests of the day, this chase and struggle for momentary successes in disregard of later consequences, this sacrificing of the future of the movement for the present of the movement may be "sincere", but it is, and remains, rank opportunism, and "sincere" opportunism is probably the most dangerous of all.

*F. Engels, Zur Kritik des sozialdemokratischen
Programmentwurfs 1891. Marx/Engels,
Werke, Bd. 22, S. 234-35*

Opportunism means sacrificing fundamental interests so as to gain temporary and partial advantages. That is the gist of the matter, if we consider the theoretical definition of opportunism.

*V. I. Lenin, Speech at a Meeting of Activists
of the Moscow Organisation
of the R.C.P.(B.), December 6, 1920.
Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 440*

Every opportunist is distinguished for his adaptability (but not all adaptability is opportunism).

*V. I. Lenin, Purging the Party.
Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 40*

Advocacy of class collaboration; abandonment of the idea of socialist revolution and revolutionary methods of struggle; adaptation to bourgeois nationalism; losing sight of the fact that the borderlines of nationality and country are historically transient; making a fetish of bourgeois legality; renunciation of the class viewpoint and the class struggle, for fear of repelling the "broad masses of the population" (meaning the petty bourgeoisie)—such, doubtlessly, are the ideological foundations of opportunism.

*V. I. Lenin, The Position and Tasks
of the Socialist International.
Collected Works, Vol. 21, p. 35*

Pre-Marxist socialism has been defeated. It is continuing the struggle, no longer on its own independent ground, but on the general ground of Marxism, as revisionism. Let us, then, examine the ideological content of revisionism.

In the sphere of philosophy revisionism followed in the wake of bourgeois professorial "science". The professors went "back to Kant"—and revisionism dragged along after the neo-Kantians. The professors repeated the platitudes that priests have uttered a thousand times against philosophical materialism—and the revisionists, smiling indulgently, mumbled (word for word after the latest *Handbuch*) that materialism had been "refuted" long ago. The professors treated Hegel as a "dead dog", and while themselves preaching idealism, only an idealism a thousand times more petty and banal than Hegel's, contemptuously shrugged their shoulders at dialectics—and the revisionists floundered after them into the swamp of philosophical vulgarisation of science, replacing "artful" (and revolutionary) dialectics by "simple" (and tranquil) "evolution". The professors earned their official salaries by adjusting both their idealist and their "critical" systems to the dominant medieval "philosophy" (i.e., to theology)—and the revisionists drew close to them, trying to make religion a "private affair", not in relation to the modern state, but in relation to the party of the advanced class....

Passing to political economy, it must be noted first of all that in this sphere the "amendments" of the revisionists were much more comprehensive and circumstantial; attempts were made to influence the public by "new data on economic development". It was said that concentration and the ousting of small-scale production by large-scale production do not occur in agriculture at all, while they proceed very slowly in commerce and industry. It was said that crises had now become rarer and weaker, and that cartels and trusts would probably enable capital to eliminate them altogether. It was said that the "theory of collapse" to which capitalism is heading was unsound, owing to the tendency of class antagonisms to become milder and less acute.

*V. I. Lenin, Marxism and Revisionism.
Collected Works, Vol. 15, pp. 33-34*

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....

A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its attitude to the ultimate aim of the socialist movement. "The movement is everything, the ultimate aim is nothing"—this catch-phrase of Bernstein's expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long disquisitions. To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the chopping and changing of petty politics, to forget the primary interests of the proletariat and the

basic features of the whole capitalist system, of all capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these primary interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment—such is the policy of revisionism. And it patently follows from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less “new” question, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it change the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the briefest period, will always inevitably give rise to one variety of revisionism or another.

V. I. Lenin, *Marxism and Revisionism*.
Collected Works, Vol. 15, pp. 36-38

The dialectics of history were such that the theoretical victory of Marxism compelled its enemies to *disguise themselves* as Marxists. Liberalism, rotten within, tried to revive itself in the form of socialist *opportunism*. They interpreted the period of preparing the forces for great battles as renunciation of these battles. Improvement of the conditions of the slaves to fight against wage-slavery they took to mean the sale by the slaves of their right to liberty for a few pence. They cravenly preached “social peace” (i.e., peace with the slave-owners), renunciation of the class struggle, etc.

V. I. Lenin, *The Historical Destiny
of the Doctrine of Karl Marx*.
Collected Works, Vol. 18, p. 584

In reality, the opportunists’ formal membership in workers’ parties by no means disproves their objectively being a political detachment of the bourgeoisie, conductors of its influence, and its agents in the labour movement.

V. I. Lenin, *The Collapse of the Second
International*. *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 247

The problem of imperialism and of *its connection* with opportunism in the labour movement, with the betrayal of the workers' cause by labour leaders, was raised long ago, very long ago.

For a period of *forty* years, from 1852 to 1892, Marx and Engels constantly pointed to the fact that the upper stratum of the British working class was becoming increasingly *bourgeois* as a consequence of the country's peculiar economic conditions (colonies, monopoly of the world market, etc.). In the seventies of last century Marx won himself the honourable hatred of the despicable heroes of the Berne International trend of those days, of the opportunists and reformists, for branding many of the British trade union leaders as men who had sold themselves to the bourgeoisie or were in its pay for services rendered to *its class from within* the labour movement.

V. I. Lenin, The Tasks of the Third International. Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 501

Opportunism in the upper ranks of the working-class movement is bourgeois socialism, not proletarian socialism. It has been shown in practice that working-class activists who follow the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie than the bourgeois themselves. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not remain in power.

V. I. Lenin, The Second Congress of the Communist International. Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 231

By exposing the fact that the opportunists and social-chauvinists are in reality betraying and selling the interests of the masses, that they are defending the temporary privileges of a minority of the workers, that they are the vehicles of bourgeois ideas and influences, that they are really allies and agents of the bourgeoisie, we teach the masses to appreciate their true political interests, to fight

for socialism and for the revolution through all the long and painful vicissitudes of imperialist wars and imperialist armistices.

V. I. Lenin, Imperialism and the Split in Socialism. Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 120

The crisis created by the great war has torn away all coverings, swept away conventions, exposed an abscess that has long come to a head, and revealed opportunism in its true role of ally of the bourgeoisie.

V. I. Lenin, The Collapse of the Second International. Collected Works, Vol. 21, p. 257

The opportunists and social-chauvinists, being servants of the bourgeoisie, are real class enemies of the proletariat.

V. I. Lenin, Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B.) Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 104

Opportunism, or reformism, inevitably had to grow into a phenomenon of world-wide importance, *socialist imperialism*, or social-chauvinism, because imperialism brought to the fore a handful of very rich, advanced nations, engaged in plundering the whole world, and thereby enabled the bourgeoisie of those countries, out of their monopolist superprofits (imperialism is monopoly capitalism), *to bribe the upper strata of the working class*.

V. I. Lenin, The Tasks of the Third International. Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 502

The collapse of the Second International is the collapse of opportunism, which developed from the features of a new bygone (and so-called "peaceful") period of history, and in recent years has come practically to dominate the

International. The opportunists have long been preparing the ground for this collapse by denying the socialist revolution and substituting bourgeois reformism in its stead; by rejecting the class struggle with its inevitable conversion at certain moments into civil war, and by preaching class collaboration; by preaching bourgeois chauvinism under the guise of patriotism and the defence of the fatherland, and ignoring or rejecting the fundamental truth of socialism, long ago set forth in the *Communist Manifesto*, that the working-men have no country; by confining themselves, in the struggle against militarism, to a sentimental, philistine point of view, instead of recognising the need for a revolutionary war by the proletarians of all countries, against the bourgeoisie of all countries; by making a fetish of the necessary utilisation of bourgeois parliamentarism and bourgeois legality, and forgetting that illegal forms of organisation and propaganda are imperative at times of crises. The natural "appendage" to opportunism—one that is just as bourgeois and hostile to the proletarian, i.e., the Marxist, point of view—namely, the anarcho-syndicalist trend, has been marked by a no less shamefully smug reiteration of the slogans of chauvinism, during the present crisis.

The aims of socialism at the present time cannot be fulfilled, and real international unity of the workers cannot be achieved, without a decisive break with opportunism, and without explaining its inevitable fiasco to the masses.

*V. I. Lenin, The War and the
Russian Social-Democracy,
Collected Works, Vol. 21,
pp. 31-32*

The betrayal of socialism by most leaders of the Second International (1889-1914) signifies the ideological and political bankruptcy of the International. This collapse has been mainly caused by the actual prevalence in it of petty-bourgeois opportunism, the bourgeois nature and the danger of

which have long been indicated by the finest representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of all countries.

V. I. Lenin, The Tasks of Revolutionary Social-Democracy in the European War. Collected Works, Vol. 21, p. 16

It is now essential that Communists of every country should quite consciously take into account both the fundamental objectives of the struggle against opportunism and "Left" doctrinairism, and the *concrete features* which this struggle assumes and must inevitably assume in each country, in conformity with the specific character of its economics, politics, culture, and national composition (Ireland, etc.), its colonies, religious divisions, and so on and so forth.

V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder. Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 91

The *whole* struggle of our Party (and of the working-class movement in Europe generally) must be directed against opportunism. The latter is not a current of opinion, not a tendency; it (opportunism) has now become the organised tool of the bourgeoisie within the working-class movement.

V. I. Lenin, Letter to David Wijnkoop. Collected Works, Vol. 35, p. 197

One of the necessary conditions for preparing the proletariat for its victory is a long, stubborn and ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism, 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, i.e., the opportunists, reformists, social-chauvinists, and ruthlessly expel them from the party of the proletarian vanguard.

V. I. Lenin, The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Collected Works, Vol. 30, p. 275

Social-Chauvinism as a Variety of Opportunism

By social-chauvinism we mean acceptance of the idea of the defence of the fatherland in the present imperialist war, justification of an alliance between Socialists and the bourgeoisie and the governments of their "own" countries in this war, a refusal to propagate and support proletarian-revolutionary action against one's "own" bourgeoisie, etc. It is perfectly obvious that social-chauvinism's basic ideological and political content fully coincides with the foundations of opportunism. It is *one and the same* tendency. In the conditions of the war of 1914-15, opportunism leads to social-chauvinism. The idea of class collaboration is opportunism's main feature. The war has brought this idea to its logical conclusion, and has augmented its usual factors and stimuli with a number of extraordinary ones; through the operation of special threats and coercion it has compelled the philistine and disunited masses to collaborate with the bourgeoisie. This circumstance has naturally multiplied adherents of opportunism and fully explains why many radicals of yesterday have deserted to that camp.

Opportunism means sacrificing the fundamental interests of the masses to the temporary interests of an insignificant minority of the workers or, in other words, an alliance between a section of the workers and the bourgeoisie, directed against the mass of the proletariat. The

war has made such an alliance particularly conspicuous and inescapable. Opportunism was engendered in the course of decades by the special features in the period of the development of capitalism, when the comparatively peaceful and cultured life of a stratum of privileged working-men "bourgeoisified" them, gave them crumbs from the table of their national capitalists, and isolated them from the suffering, misery and revolutionary temper of the impoverished and ruined masses. The imperialist war is the direct continuation and culmination of this state of affairs, because this is a war for the *privileges* of the Great Power nations, for the repartition of colonies, and domination over other nations. To defend and strengthen their privileged position as a petty-bourgeois "upper stratum" or aristocracy (and bureaucracy) of the working class—such is the natural war-time continuation of petty-bourgeois opportunist hopes and the corresponding tactics, such is the economic foundation of present-day social-imperialism. . . . And, of course, the force of habit, the routine of relatively "peaceful" evolution, national prejudices, a fear of sharp turns and a disbelief in them—all these were additional circumstances which enhanced both opportunism and a hypocritical and a craven reconciliation with opportunism—ostensibly only for a time and only because of extraordinary causes and motives. The war has changed this opportunism, which had been fostered for decades, raised it to a higher stage, increased the number and the variety of its shades, augmented the ranks of its adherents, enriched their arguments with a multitude of new sophisms, and has merged, so to say, many new streams and rivulets with the mainstream of opportunism. However, the mainstream has not disappeared. Quite the reverse.

Social-chauvinism is an opportunism which has matured to such a degree that the *continued* existence of this bourgeois abscess within the socialist parties has become impossible. . . .

Firstly, chauvinism and opportunism in the labour movement have the same economic basis: the alliance between

a numerically small upper stratum of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie—who get but morsels of the privileges of their “own” national capital—against the masses of the proletarians, the masses of the toilers and the oppressed in general. Secondly, the two trends have the same ideological and political content. Thirdly, the old division of socialists into an opportunist trend and a revolutionary, which was characteristic of the period of the Second International (1889-1914), *corresponds*, by and large, to the new division into chauvinists and internationalists.

V. I. Lenin, The Collapse of the Second International. Collected Works, Vol. 21, pp. 242-44

If the crisis of the whole movement is to be explained, an examination must be made, firstly, of the economic significance of the present policy; secondly, its underlying ideas; and thirdly, its connection with the history of the various trends in the socialist movement.

What is the economic substance of defencism in the war of 1914-15? The bourgeoisie of *all* the big powers are waging the war to divide and exploit the world, and oppress other nations. A few crumbs of the bourgeoisie's huge profits may come the way of the small group of labour bureaucrats, labour aristocrats, and petty-bourgeois fellow-travellers. Social-chauvinism and opportunism have the same class basis, namely, the alliance of a small section of privileged workers with “their” national bourgeoisie *against* the working-class masses; the alliance between the lackeys of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie *against* the class the latter is exploiting.

Opportunism and social-chauvinism have the same political content, namely, class collaboration, repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, repudiation of revolutionary action, unconditional acceptance of bourgeois legality, confidence in the bourgeoisie and lack of confidence in the proletariat. Social-chauvinism is the direct continua-

tion and consummation of British liberal-labour politics, of Millerandism⁵⁰ and Bernsteinism.⁵¹

V. I. Lenin, *Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International. Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 112

By and large, if we take the trends and tendencies, we must admit that it was the opportunist wing of European socialism that betrayed socialism and deserted to chauvinism. What is the source of its strength and its seeming omnipotence within the official parties?...

The immense strength of the opportunists and the chauvinists stems from *their alliance* with the bourgeoisie, with the governments and the General Staffs.

V. I. Lenin, *The Collapse of the Second International. Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 246

Social-chauvinism is opportunism in its finished form. It is quite ripe for an open, frequently vulgar, alliance with the bourgeoisie and the General Staffs. It is this alliance that gives it great power and a monopoly of the legal press and of deceiving the masses.

V. I. Lenin, *Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International. Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 113

Social-chauvinism is an opportunism which has matured to such a degree, grown so strong and brazen during the long period of comparatively "peaceful" capitalism, so definite in its political ideology, and so closely associated with the bourgeoisie and the governments, that the existence of *such a trend within* the Social-Democratic workers' parties cannot be tolerated.

V. I. Lenin, *The Collapse of the Second International. Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 249

Opportunism is rotten-ripe; it has been transformed into social-chauvinism and has definitely deserted to the bourgeois camp. It has severed its spiritual and political ties with Social-Democracy. It will also break off its organisational ties.

V. I. Lenin, Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International. Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 120

Critique of Reformism

Not liberalism versus socialism, but reformism versus socialist revolution—is the formula of the modern, “advanced”, educated bourgeoisie. And the higher the development of capitalism in a given country, the more undiluted the rule of the bourgeoisie, and the greater the political liberty, the more extensive is the application of the “most up-to-date” bourgeois slogan: reform *versus* revolution, the partial patching up of the doomed regime with the object of dividing and weakening the working class, and of maintaining the rule of the bourgeoisie, *versus* the revolutionary overthrow of that rule.

V. I. Lenin, Reformism in the Russian Social-Democratic Movement. Collected Works, Vol. 17, p. 229

Reformism, even when quite sincere, in practice becomes a weapon by means of which the bourgeoisie corrupt and weaken the workers. The experience of all countries shows that the workers who put their trust in the reformists are always fooled.

V. I. Lenin, Marxism and Reformism. Collected Works, Vol. 19, p. 372

The Socialists teach that revolution is inevitable, and that the proletariat must take advantage of *all* the contradictions in society, of every weakness of its enemies or of

the intermediate classes, to prepare for a new revolutionary struggle, to repeat the revolution in a broader arena, with a more developed population. The bourgeoisie and the liberals teach that revolutions are unnecessary and even harmful to the workers, that they must not "shove" toward revolution, but, like good little boys, work modestly for reforms.

V. I. Lenin, Reformism in the Russian Social-Democratic Movement. Collected Works, Vol. 17, p. 234

Historical science tells us that the distinction between a reformist and a non-reformist change in a given political form is, generally speaking, that in the former case the old ruling class retains power, while in the latter case power is transferred from the old class to a new one.

V. I. Lenin, An Increasing Discrepancy. Collected Works, Vol. 18, p. 566

The governmental programme of the Soviet Government was not a reformist, but a revolutionary one. Reforms are concessions obtained from a ruling class that retains its rule. Revolution is the overthrow of the ruling class. Reformist programmes, therefore, usually consist of many items of partial significance. Our revolutionary programme consisted properly of one general item—removal of the yoke of the landowners and capitalists, the overthrow of their power and the emancipation of the working people from those exploiters. This programme we have never changed.

V. I. Lenin, Answers to an American Journalist's Questions. Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 515

We must increase revolutionary agitation among the masses; we must give wider scope to our full-fledged, uncurtailed slogans; we must develop them clearly—in

this way we shall at best bring nearer the full victory of the revolution, and at worst we shall capture some half-concessions (such as a Duma ministry, universal, but indirect, suffrage, etc.) and give ourselves the possibility of turning them into a weapon of the revolution. Reforms are *a by-product* of the class struggle of the revolutionary proletariat. To make it "our own" business to obtain this by-product would mean lapsing into liberal bourgeois reformism.

V. I. Lenin, How Not to Write Resolutions. Collected Works, Vol. 12, p. 239

Partial improvements can be (and always have been in history) merely a by-product of revolutionary class struggle.

V. I. Lenin, What to Fight For? Collected Works, Vol. 16, p. 170

Understanding that where capitalism continues to exist reforms cannot be either enduring or far-reaching, the workers fight for better conditions and use them to intensify the fight against wage-slavery. The reformists try to divide and deceive the workers, to divert them from the class struggle by petty concessions. But the workers, having seen through the falsity of reformism, utilise reforms to develop and broaden their class struggle.

The stronger reformist influence is among the workers the weaker they are, the greater their dependence on the bourgeoisie, and the easier it is for the bourgeoisie to nullify reforms by various subterfuges. The more independent the working-class movement, the deeper and broader its aims, and the freer it is from reformist narrowness the easier it is for the workers to retain and utilise improvements.

There are reformists in all countries, for everywhere the bourgeoisie seek, in one way or another, to corrupt the

workers and turn them into contented slaves who have given up all thought of doing away with slavery.

*V. I. Lenin, Marxism and Reformism.
Collected Works, Vol. 19, pp. 372-73*

Reformism is absolutely irreconcilable with revolutionary Marxism, the duty of which is to take the utmost possible advantage of the present revolutionary situation in Europe in order openly to urge revolution, the overthrow of the bourgeois governments, the conquest of power by the armed proletariat, while at the same time not renouncing, and not refusing to utilise reforms in developing the revolutionary struggle and in the course of that struggle.

*V. I. Lenin, Bourgeois Pacifism and Socialist Pacifism. Collected Works,
Vol. 23, p. 194*

Socialists must centre their activity on the struggle against reformism, which has always corrupted the revolutionary labour movement by injecting bourgeois ideas, and has now assumed a somewhat special form, namely: "reliance" on the reforms the bourgeoisie is supposed to carry out after the war! Reformists argue that in urging, popularising and preparing the socialist revolution of the proletariat, we are "losing sight" of the "practical" aspect, "forfeiting" our chances to win reforms. . . .

Only bourgeois reformism, which *in substance* is the position of Kautsky, Turati and Merrheim, poses the question thus: *either* renunciation of revolution and that means reforms, *or* no reforms at all.

Yet all the experience of world history, like the experience of the 1905 Russian revolution, teaches us the very opposite: *either* revolutionary class struggle, of which reforms are *always* a by-product (when the revolution is not completely successful), *or* no reforms at all.

*V. I. Lenin, Theses for an Appeal
to the International Socialist
Committee and All Socialist Parties.
Collected Works, Vol. 23, pp. 212-13*

Who does not know that we Social-Democrats are *not* against the struggle for reforms, that, unlike the social-patriots, unlike the opportunists and reformists, *we do not confine ourselves* to the struggle for reforms, but *subordinate* it to the struggle for revolution?

V. I. Lenin, *An Open Letter to Charles Naine. Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 224

It would be absolutely wrong to believe that immediate struggle for socialist revolution implies that we can, or should, abandon the fight for reforms. Not at all. We cannot know beforehand how soon we shall achieve success, how soon the objective conditions will make the rise of *this* revolution possible. We should support every improvement, every real economic and political improvement in the position of the masses. The difference between us and the reformists (i.e., the Grütlians⁵² in Switzerland) is not that we oppose reforms while they favour them. Nothing of the kind. They confine themselves to reforms and as a result stoop—in the apt expression of one (rare!) revolutionary writer... to the role of “hospital orderly for capitalism”. We tell the workers: vote for proportional representation, etc., but don't stop at that. Make it your prime duty systematically to spread the idea of immediate socialist revolution, prepare for this revolution and radically reconstruct every aspect of party activity.

V. I. Lenin, *Principles Involved in the War Issue. Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 158-59

Reforms do not, of course, exclude revolution. But that is not the point at issue. The point is that revolutionaries must not exclude *themselves*, not give way to reformism, i.e., that socialists should not substitute reformist work for their revolutionary work.

V. I. Lenin, *Bourgeois Pacifism and Socialist Pacifism. Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 193

Unlike the anarchists, the Marxists recognise struggle for reforms, i.e., for measures that improve the conditions of the working people without destroying the power of the ruling class. At the same time, however, the Marxists wage a most resolute struggle against the reformists, who, directly or indirectly, restrict the aims and activities of the working class to the winning of reforms. Reformism is bourgeois deception of the workers, who, despite individual improvements, will always remain wage-slaves, as long as there is the domination of capital.

*V. I. Lenin, Marxism and Reformism.
Collected Works, Vol. 19, p. 372*

The Marxists are working tirelessly, not missing a single "possibility" of winning and using reforms, and not condemning, but supporting, painstakingly developing every step beyond reformism in propaganda, agitation, mass economic struggle, etc.

*V. I. Lenin, Marxism and Reformism.
Collected Works, Vol. 19, p. 374*

The reformists are betraying the working-class movement when they restrict its great scope by reformist slogans (as do our liquidators). The opponents of reformism, however, not only prove loyal to the uncurtailed slogans of the proletariat, but also turn out to be the better "practical workers", for it is precisely broad scope and uncurtailed slogans that ensure the strength which yields, as a by-product, either a concession or a reform, or an extension of bounds, or at least a temporary necessity for the upper ranks to tolerate a disagreeable increase in the activity of the lower ranks.

*V. I. Lenin, Results of the Elections.
Collected Works, Vol. 18,
p. 517*

Wherein lies, its (revisionism—*Ed.*) inevitability in capitalist society? Why is it more profound than the

differences of national peculiarities and of degrees of capitalist development? Because in every capitalist country, side by side with the proletariat, there are always broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie, small proprietors. 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.

*V. I. Lenin, Marxism and Revisionism.
Collected Works, Vol. 15, p. 39*

The intensification of the struggle of reformism against revolutionary Social-Democracy *within* the working-class movement is an absolutely inevitable result of the changes in the entire economic and political situation throughout the civilised world. The growth of the working-class movement necessarily attracts to its ranks a certain number of petty-bourgeois elements, people who are under the spell of bourgeois ideology, who find it difficult to rid themselves of that ideology and continually lapse back into it, . . .

In Russia the position is fundamentally the same; only here matters are more complicated, obscured, and modified, because we are lagging behind Europe (and even behind the advanced part of Asia), and we are still passing through the era of bourgeois revolutions. Owing to this,

Russian reformism is distinguished by its particular stubbornness; it represents, as it were, a more pernicious malady, and it is much more harmful to the cause of the proletariat and of the revolution. In our country reformism emanates from two sources simultaneously. In the first place, Russia is much more a petty-bourgeois country than the countries of Western Europe. Our country, therefore, more frequently produces individuals, groups and trends distinguished by their contradictory, unstable, vacillating attitude to socialism (an attitude veering between "ardent love" and base treachery) characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie in general. Secondly, the petty-bourgeois masses in our country are more prone to lose heart and to succumb to renegade moods at the failure of any one phase of our bourgeois revolution; they are more ready to renounce the aim of a complete democratic revolution which would entirely rid Russia of all survivals of medievalism and serfdom.

V. I. Lenin, Reformism in the Russian Social-Democratic Movements. Collected Works, Vol. 17, pp. 230-31

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.

V. I. Lenin, Differences in the European Labour Movement. Collected Works, Vol. 16, pp. 347-48

Why does England's monopoly explain the (temporary) victory of opportunism in England? Because monopoly yields *superprofits*, i.e., a surplus of profits over and above the capitalist profits that are normal and customary all over the world. The capitalists *can* devote a part (and not a small one, at that!) of these superprofits to bribe *their own* workers, to create something like an alliance (recall the celebrated "alliances" described by the Webbs of English trade unions and employers) between the workers of the given nation and their capitalists *against* the other countries.

*V. I. Lenin, Imperialism and the Split
in Socialism. Collected Works,
Vol. 23, p. 114*

The zigzags of bourgeois tactics intensify revisionism within the labour movement and not infrequently bring the differences within the labour movement to the point of an outright split.

*V. I. Lenin, Differences in the European
Labour Movement. Collected Works,
Vol. 16, p. 351*

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

V. I. Lenin, Differences in the European Labour Movement. Collected Works, Vol. 16, p. 350

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.

V. I. Lenin, Differences in the European Labour Movement. Collected Works, Vol. 16, p. 349

Opportunism is no chance occurrence, sin, slip, or treachery on the part of individuals, but a social product of an entire period of history.... Opportunism has been nurtured by legalism.

V. I. Lenin, The Collapse of the Second International. Collected Works, Vol. 21, p. 247

The relatively "peaceful" character of the period between 1871 and 1914 served to foster opportunism first as a *mood*, then as a *trend*, until finally it formed a *group or stratum* among the labour bureaucracy and petty-bourgeois fellow-travellers.

V. I. Lenin, Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International. Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 111

Sectarianism in the Communist Parties

I was infinitely surprised to learn that the German section No. 1 suspects the General Council of partiality for bourgeois philanthropists and sectarian or dilletante groups. The very reverse is true.

The *International* was founded in order to replace the socialist or semi-socialist sects by a real organisation of the working class for the struggle. The original Rules and the Inaugural Address show this at the first glance. On the other hand, the International could not have maintained itself if the course of history had not already smashed the sectarian system. The development of the system of social-

ist sects and that of the real workers' movement are always inversely proportional to each other. So long as the sects are (historically) justified, the working class is not yet ripe for an independent historic movement. As soon as it has attained this maturity all sects are essentially reactionary. Nevertheless what history has shown everywhere was repeated in the history of the International. The antiquated attempts to re-establish itself and maintain its position within the newly achieved form.

And the history of the International was a *continual struggle on the part of the General Council* against the sects and amateur experiments which tried to maintain their position within the International itself against the real movement of the working class. This struggle was conducted at the *Congresses*, but far more in the private dealings of the General Council with the individual sections.

In Paris, as the Proudhonists (Mutualists⁵³) were co-founders of the Association, they naturally had the reins in their hands there for the first few years. Later, of course, collectivist, positivist, etc., groups were formed there in opposition to them.

In Germany—the Lassalle clique. I myself went on corresponding for two years with the notorious Schweitzer and proved irrefutably to him that Lassalle's organisation is nothing but a sectarian organisation and as such hostile to the organisation of the *real* workers' movement striven for by the International. He had his "reasons" for not understanding this.

At the end of 1868 the Russian Bakunin entered the *International* with the aim of forming inside it a *second International* called the "*Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste*", with himself as leader. He—a man devoid of all theoretical knowledge—put forward the pretension of representing in this separate body the *scientific* propaganda of the International, and of making it the specialty of this *second International within the International*.

His programme was a hash superficially scraped together

from right and left—**Equality of Classes** (!), *abolition of the right of inheritance* as the *starting-point* of the social movement (Saint-Simonistic nonsense), *atheism* as a *dogma* to be dictated to the members, etc., and as the main dogma (*Proudhonist*) *abstention from the political movement*.

This fable for children found favour in (and still has a certain hold on) Italy and Spain, where the real conditions of the workers' movement are as yet little developed, and among a few vain, ambitious and empty doctrinaires in Latin Switzerland and in Belgium.

For M. Bakunin, doctrine (the assembled rubbish he has begged from Proudhon, Saint-Simon, etc.) was and is a secondary affair—merely a means to his personal self-assertion. While he is a nonentity as a theoretician, he is in his element as an intriguer.

For years the General Council had to fight against this conspiracy (supported up to a certain point by the French Proudhonists, especially in the *south of France*). At last, by means of Conference resolutions 1, 2 and 3, IX and XVI, and XVII, it delivered its long prepared blow.

Obviously the General Council does not support in America what it combats in Europe. Resolutions 1, 2, 3 and IX now give the New York committee legal weapons with which to put an end to all sectarian formations and amateur groups, and if necessary to expel them....

*K. Marx's Letter to F. Bolte,
November 23, 1871. Marx and
Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II,
Moscow, 1962, pp. 465-66*

One must not allow oneself to be misled by the cry for "unity". Those who have this word most often on their lips are the ones who sow the most dissension, just as at present the Jura Bakuninists in Switzerland, who have provoked all the splits, clamour for nothing so much as for unity. These unity fanatics are either people of limited intelligence who want to stir everything into one nondescript

brew, which, the moment it is left to settle, throws up the differences again but in much sharper contrast because they will then be all in one pot (in Germany you have a fine example of this in the people who preach reconciliation of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie)—or else they are people who unconsciously (like Mühlberger, for instance) or consciously want to adulterate the movement. For this reason the biggest sectarians and the biggest brawlers and rogues at times shout loudest for unity. Nobody in our lifetime has given us more trouble and been more treacherous than the shouters for unity.

Naturally every party leadership wants to see successes, and this is quite a good thing. But there are circumstances in which one must have the courage to sacrifice *momentary* success for more important things. Especially for a party like ours, whose ultimate success is so absolutely certain, and which has developed so enormously in our own lifetime and before our own eyes, momentary success is by no means always and absolutely necessary. Take the International, for instance. After the Commune it had a colossal success. The bourgeois, struck all of a heap, ascribed omnipotence to it. The great mass of the membership believed things would stay like that for all eternity. We knew very well that the bubble *must* burst. All the riff-raff attached themselves to it. The sectarians within it became arrogant and misused the International in the hope that the meanest and most stupid actions would be permitted them. We did not allow that. Knowing well that the bubble must burst some time our concern was not to delay the catastrophe but to take care that the International emerged from it pure and unadulterated. The bubble burst at the Hague and you know that the majority of the Congress members went home sick with disappointment. And yet nearly all these disappointed people, who imagined they would find the ideal of universal brotherhood and reconciliation in the International, had far more bitter quarrels at home than those which broke out at the Hague. Now the sectarian quarrel-mongers are preaching

reconciliation and decrying us as being cantankerous and dictators! And if we had come out in a conciliatory way at the Hague, if we had hushed up the breaking out of the split—what would have been the result? The sectarians, especially the Bakuninists, would have got another year in which to perpetrate, in the name of the International even much greater stupidities and infamies; the workers of the most developed countries would have turned away in disgust; the bubble would not have burst but, pierced by pinpricks, would have slowly collapsed, and the next congress, which would have been bound to bring the crisis anyhow, would have turned into the lowest kind of personal row, because *principles* would already have been sacrificed at the Hague. Then the International would indeed have gone to pieces—gone to pieces through “unity”! Instead of this we have now got rid of the rotten elements with honour to ourselves—the members of the Commune who were present at the last and decisive session say that no session of the Commune left such a terrible impression upon them as this session of the tribunal which passed judgement on the traitors to the European proletariat. For ten months we let them expend all their energies on lies, slander and intrigue—and where are they? They, the alleged representatives of the great majority of the International, now themselves announce that they do not dare to come to the next congress. (More details in an article which is being sent off to the *Volksstaat* with this letter.) And if we had to do it again we should not, taking it all together, act any differently—tactical mistakes are always made, of course.

In any case, I think the efficient elements among the Lassalleans will fall to you of themselves in the course of time and it would, therefore, be unwise to break off the fruit before it is ripe, as the unity crowd wants to.

*F. Engels's Letter to A. Bebel,
June 20, 1873. Marx and Engels,
Selected Correspondence, Moscow,
1965, pp. 283-85*

The history of revolutionary epochs provides many, all too many, instances of tremendous harm caused by hasty and half-baked experiments in "fighting unity" that sought to lump together the most heterogeneous elements in the committees of the revolutionary people, but managed thereby to achieve *mutual friction and bitter disappointment*.

We want to profit by this lesson of history. Marxism, which to you seems a narrow dogma, is to us the quintessence of this historical lesson and guidance. We see in the *independent*, uncompromisingly Marxist party of the revolutionary proletariat the sole pledge of socialism's victory and the road to victory that is most free from vacillations. We shall never, therefore, not even at the most revolutionary moments, forego the complete independence of the Social-Democratic Party or the complete intransigence of our ideology.

V. I. Lenin, *A Militant Agreement for the Uprising*, Collected Works, Vol. 8, p. 159

On Dogmatism

Marxism requires of us a strictly exact and objectively verifiable analysis of the relations of classes and of the concrete features peculiar to each historical situation. We Bolsheviks have always tried to meet this requirement, which is absolutely essential for giving a scientific foundation to policy.

"Our theory is not a dogma, but a guide to action," Marx and Engels always said, rightly ridiculing the mere memorising and repetition of "formulas", that at best are capable only of marking out *general* tasks, which are necessarily modifiable by the *concrete* economic and political conditions of each particular *period* of the historical process.

V. I. Lenin, *Letters on Tactics*, Collected Works, Vol. 24, p. 43

Marxism is not a lifeless dogma, not a completed, ready-made, immutable doctrine, but a living guide to action, ... it was bound to reflect the astonishingly abrupt change in the conditions of social life. That change was reflected in profound disintegration and disunity, in every manner of vacillation, in short, in a very serious *internal* crisis of Marxism. Resolute resistance to this disintegration, a resolute and persistent struggle to uphold the *fundamentals* of Marxism, was again placed on the order of the day. In the preceding period, extremely wide sections of the classes that cannot avoid Marxism in formulating their aims had assimilated that doctrine in an extremely one-sided and mutilated fashion. They had learnt by rote certain "slogans", certain answers to tactical questions, *without having understood* the Marxist criteria for these answers. The "revaluation of all values" in the various spheres of social life led to a "revision" of the most abstract and general philosophical fundamentals of Marxism. The influence of bourgeois philosophy in its diverse idealist shades found expression in the Machist⁵⁴ epidemic that broke out among the Marxists. The repetition of "slogans" learnt by rote but not understood and not thought out led to the widespread prevalence of empty phrase-mongering. The practical expression of this were such absolutely un-Marxist, petty-bourgeois trends as frank or shamefaced "otzovism",⁵⁵ or the recognition of otzovism as a "legal shade" of Marxism.

V. I. Lenin, Certain Features of the Historical Development of Marxism. Collected Works, Vol. 17, pp. 42-43

To accept anything on trust, to preclude critical application and development, is a grievous sin; and in order to apply and develop, "simple interpretation" is obviously not enough.

V. I. Lenin, Uncritical Criticism. Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 630

We have no need of cramming, but we do need to develop and perfect the mind of every student with a knowledge of fundamental facts. Communism will become an empty word, a mere signboard, and a Communist a mere boaster, if all the knowledge he has acquired is not digested in his mind. You should not merely assimilate this knowledge, but assimilate it critically, so as not to cram your mind with useless lumber, but enrich it with all those facts that are indispensable to the well-educated man of today. If a Communist took it into his head to boast about his communism because of the cut-and-dried conclusions he had acquired, without putting in a great deal of serious and hard work and without understanding facts he should examine critically, he would be a deplorable Communist indeed. Such superficiality would be decidedly fatal.

V. I. Lenin, *The Tasks of the Youth Leagues. Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 287-88

Opportunists of all sorts like to tell us: learn from life. Unfortunately, what they mean by life is only the standing water of peaceful periods, of times of stagnation, when life makes scarcely any progress whatever. These blind people always *lag behind* the lessons of *revolutionary* life. Their dead doctrines always fall behind the stormy torrent of revolution, which expresses the most far-reaching demands of life, those involving the most vital interests of the masses.

V. I. Lenin, *The Black Hundreds and the Organisation of an Uprising. Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 202

The special feature of Russian opportunism in Marxism, i.e., of Menshevism in our time, is that it is associated with a doctrinaire simplification, vulgarisation and distortion of the letter of Marxism, and a betrayal of its spirit (such was the case with both *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ism and

Struvism⁵⁶). While fighting Narodism as a wrong doctrine of *socialism*, the Mensheviks, in a doctrinaire fashion, overlooked the historically real and progressive historical *content* of Narodism as a theory of the mass *petty-bourgeois* struggle of democratic capitalism against liberal-landlord capitalism, of "American" capitalism against "Prussian" capitalism. Hence their monstrous, idiotic, renegade idea . . . that the peasant *movement* is reactionary. . . .

V. I. Lenin, *Letter to*
I. I. Skvortsov-Stepanov.
Collected Works, Vol. 16,
p. 119

Notes

- ¹ *Anabaptists*—members of a plebeian religious sect and their followers in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands at the time of the Reformation. They denied the validity of infant baptism and insisted on rebaptism, denied church hierarchy and stood for the community of goods. The anabaptists were prominent in the anti-feudal Peasant War of 1525 in Germany. In 1534-35 they established a commune in Münster (Westphalia) proclaiming it a "new Zion". Municipal land was distributed among individual owners, money was abolished, valuables were confiscated and articles of consumption were distributed according to the equalitarian principle. Münster fell after a fourteen-months' siege by feudal troops. p. 9
- ² Engels refers to true Levellers or Diggers who stood on the extreme Left of the English 17th-century bourgeois revolution. The Diggers spoke for the urban and rural poor demanding abolition of private landownership and preached primitive equalitarian communism. They made an attempt to put it into practice by collective cultivation of common land. p. 9
- ³ Engels refers first and foremost to More's *Utopia* (1516) and Campanella's *Civitas Solis* (The City of the Sun) (1623). p. 9
- ⁴ According to Rousseau's theory, all men were equal at the stage of their natural existence. The emergence of private property and the consequent material inequality led to political inequality. This inequality, Rousseau held, could be abolished by a rational state based on a new *Contrat Social*.
By the *terror* Engels means the reign of terror instituted by the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the Jacobins (June 1793-July 1794) in response to the counter-revolutionary terror of the Girondists and Royalists. p. 11
- ⁵ *Directorate* consisted of five directors, one of whom was successively re-elected every year. It was the supreme executive body in France set up under the Constitution of 1795, adopted after the fall in 1794 of the Jacobin dictatorship. Its reign of terror against the democratic forces in behalf of the big bourgeoisie lasted until Napoleon's coup d'état of 1799. p. 11

- ⁶ Engels refers to the slogan of the 18th-century French Revolution—"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity". p. 11
- ⁷ *New Lanark*—a cotton mill and workers' settlement near Lanark in Scotland, founded in 1784. p. 12
- ⁸ The reference is to the short-lived restoration of the Napoleonic empire, which lasted from Napoleon's return from Elba to Paris on March 20, 1815 until his second abdication on June 22, 1815, following his defeat at Waterloo. p. 15
- ⁹ In the battle of Waterloo on June 18, 1815, Napoleon's army was defeated by Anglo-Dutch troops under the Duke of Wellington and Prussian troops under Blücher. The battle determined the outcome of the 1815 campaign and the final victory of the seventh anti-French coalition, consisting of Britain, Russia, Austria, Prussia, Sweden, Spain and other states. It spelled the doom of the Napoleonic empire. p. 15
- ¹⁰ Followers of Gracchus Babeuf, participants in the revolutionary movement in France whose aim was to establish a "Republic of Equals", that is, a nation-wide commune administered from one centre. p. 22
- ¹¹ The quotation is taken from Engels's preface to the first German edition of *The Poverty of Philosophy* (K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 12-13). p. 30
- ¹² Lenin refers to the utopian theories of the Narodniks and Trudoviks.
Narodniks—petty-bourgeois peasant democrats in Russia; they maintained that the petty peasant economy was incompatible with capitalism, denied economic and class differentiation among the peasants and preached utopian socialism.
Trudoviks—a group of petty-bourgeois democrats formed in 1906 by peasant deputies and intellectuals of Narodnik persuasion in the State Duma. Their programme was based on the Narodnik principle of equalitarian land tenure. p. 30
- ¹³ *Proudhonism*—a petty-bourgeois socialist trend named after its ideologist Proudhon (1809-65). While he criticised capitalism, Proudhon maintained that it was possible to "improve" capitalist social relations, "rid" them of their inherent contradictions and thus create an ideal society of small commodity producers, in which anarchy would reign supreme. p. 32
- ¹⁴ A commercial credit society founded in Prussia in 1772. It had a number of important privileges granted by the state and loaned large sums to the government, acting in effect as its banker and financial broker. p. 61
- ¹⁵ The battle cry of the two rival medieval political parties, one of them supporting the Welf dynasty and the other the Hohenstaufen (or Weibling, after the name of their family castle and the town). p. 121

- ¹⁶ This Lassalleian proposition was included in the programme of the German Social-Democratic Party adopted at its congress in Gotha between May 22 and 27, 1875. The relevant clause in the programme read as follows: "The emancipation of labour must be the work of the working class, relative to which all other classes are only one reactionary mass" (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, p. 25). Criticism of this Lassalleian thesis is to be found in Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. p. 121
- ¹⁷ The name of traders and the assortment of private businessmen who operated in the first years of the New Economic Policy (NEP). NEP was introduced in 1921, with the purpose of building socialism by means of money-commodity relations, and by temporarily allowing limited freedom to private capital.
Private trade and small-scale capitalist establishments did not threaten socialist construction, with the proletarian state occupying the key positions in industry and trade. Money-commodity relations between town and country were vital to strengthen the alliance of the working class and the peasantry and rehabilitate the economy ravaged by seven years of war. p. 134
- ¹⁸ The official document issued in 1899 by the Economists, the opportunist trend among Russian Social-Democrats at the turn of the century. The Economists maintained that the workers must restrict themselves to economic struggle only, i.e., struggle to improve their working conditions, secure higher wages, etc. They denied the leading role of the Party and the importance of revolutionary theory for the working-class movement, maintaining that this movement should be allowed to follow its natural course. p. 151
- ¹⁹ Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 42-43). p. 157
- ²⁰ The liquidators represented a trend among the Menshevik, opportunist wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party which took shape after the defeat of the Russian revolution of 1905-07. They insisted on liquidating the illegal revolutionary party of the working class and advocated its replacement by a legal opportunist organisation to engage in activities approved by the tsarist government. However, they failed to win the support of the workers. In 1912, the liquidators were expelled from the R.S.D.L.P. p. 158
- ²¹ *Rabocheye Dyelo* (The Workers' Cause)—publication of the Economists, appeared irregularly in Geneva between April 1899 and February 1902 as the organ of the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad. p. 169
- ²² The *Independent Labour Party* was founded in 1893, at the time of a revival of the strike struggle and the mounting drive of the working class for independence from bourgeois parties. The ILP was a reformist bourgeois movement and favoured parliamentary deals with the Liberal Party.
Fabian Society—English reformist organisation founded in 1884; derived its name from Fabius Maximus, named the Cunctator (the

Delayer) for his dilatory tactics and avoidance of decisive engagements with Hannibal.

The Fabians denied the need for the proletariat to wage the class struggle and carry out a socialist revolution, because, they claimed, the transition from capitalism to socialism could be effected only by petty reforms and by the gradual transformation of society.

p. 176

- ²³ The Menshevik opportunist wing of the R.S.D.L.P. After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in 1903 the Mensheviks took over the newspaper *Iskra* which had been founded by Lenin in December 1900. *Iskra* was the first illegal all-Russia Marxist newspaper which played a decisive role in the establishment of the R.S.D.L.P. After the Menshevik takeover, *Iskra* changed its colours and became the mouthpiece of the opportunists. To distinguish it from the old, Leninist *Iskra*, it was called *New Iskra* and the Mensheviks, the *New Iskra* group.

p. 185

- ²⁴ *Vperyod* (Forward)—an illegal Bolshevik weekly newspaper published in Geneva in 1904 and 1905 under the editorship of Lenin.

p. 185

- ²⁵ *Socialist-Revolutionaries*—a petty-bourgeois party in Russia formed at the end of 1901 and the beginning of 1902. They did not see the class distinctions between the proletariat and the petty proprietors, and slurred over the class differentiation and contradictions among the peasants. They insisted on the abolition of private landownership and urged the transfer of the land to the village commune, calling it "socialisation of the land". Actually, their programme was a far cry from socialism because, with commodity production and private economy left intact, capital would retain its domination and the masses would be exploited and ruined as before.

p. 192

- ²⁶ Suzdal daubing denotes crude and inept icon painting (from Suzdal Uyezd, Vladimir Gubernia, where icon painting was common among peasant craftsmen before the October Socialist Revolution).

p. 196

- ²⁷ The *Anti-Socialist Law* was introduced by the Bismarck cabinet in 1878. It banned all Social-Democratic organisations and the workers' press. The law was repealed in 1890 under pressure of the mounting working-class movement.

p. 204

- ²⁸ Lenin means the sponsors of the resolution adopted on February 24, 1918, by the Moscow Regional Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., most of whose members were "Left Communists". The resolution expressed lack of confidence in the Central Committee for favouring the signing of the Brest Peace.

p. 205

- ²⁹ The reference is to the counter-revolutionary revolt of the bourgeoisie and landowners in August 1917 led by Kornilov, tsarist general and Supreme Commander.

The revolt was aimed at smashing the Bolshevik Party, disbanding the Soviets, establishing military dictatorship and, subsequently, restoring the monarchy. Kornilov attempted to seize Petrograd, but was defeated by the Red Guards.

p. 207

- ³⁰ Following the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution, dual power was established in Russia—the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through the Provisional Government and the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

The events of July 3-4 (16-17 new style) sparked off a profound political crisis in the country. The offensive launched by the Provisional Government in June ended in a failure, unemployment grew as a result of the closure of factories by the capitalists, prices soared and foodstuffs were scarce. On July 3 (16) spontaneous demonstrations began. On July 4 (17) more than 500,000 people came out into the streets. The Provisional Government crushed the demonstration by armed force, closed the Bolshevik newspapers, disarmed the workers, made arrests and house searches. Full power in the country was thus assumed by the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government.

p. 208

- ³¹ *Man in a muffler*—a character in Chekhov's story of the same name, personifying a hidebound philistine who is afraid of novelty and initiative.

p. 214

- ³² K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Engels's letter to A. Bebel of March 18-28, 1875 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, p. 42).

p. 256

- ³³ Lenin refers to the plot of surrendering Petrograd, hatched by the counter-revolutionary "National Centre", which directed the activities of a number of anti-Soviet groups and an espionage net. On June 13, 1919, the plotters started a revolt at three military forts near Petrograd. It was suppressed in two days.

p. 266

- ³⁴ *The Black Hundreds* was the name given to monarchist gangs organised by the tsarist police to fight the revolutionary movement. They murdered revolutionaries, terrorised progressive intellectuals and instigated pogroms.

p. 266

- ³⁵ *Cadets*—members of the Constitutional-Democratic Party, the leading party of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie in Russia founded in October 1905. After the February 1917 Revolution the Cadets assumed key posts in the Provisional Government, pursuing an anti-popular counter-revolutionary policy.

After the October Socialist Revolution they were implacable enemies of Soviet power.

p. 266

- ³⁶ F. Engels's Introduction to K. Marx's *The Civil War in France* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 484).

p. 293

- ³⁷ K. Marx, *The Civil War in France. Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the Civil War in France, 1871*. (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 522.)

p. 298

- ³⁸ *Workers' Opposition*—an anti-Party factional group which took shape in 1920-21. Its views were an anarcho-syndicalist deviation in the Russian Communist Party. They regarded the trade unions and

not the Party as the highest form of working-class organisation. The Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) recognised propaganda of ideas spread by the "Workers' Opposition" to be incompatible with Party membership and demanded the immediate dissolution of all factional groups. The organisational defeat of the Opposition was completed in 1922 at the Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).

p. 312

- ³⁹ This law was approved by the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets on January 18 (31), 1918. The final draft of the law was endorsed at a meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on January 27 (February 9).

The law formalised the abolition of the private ownership of land and put it at the disposal of Soviet power. One of the clauses stipulated that Soviet power should promote collective farming with a view to passing over to socialism. Though the Bolsheviks were opposed to the Socialist-Revolutionary slogan of equalitarian land tenure, they met the peasants half-way by introducing the relevant clause. "This is not our idea," Lenin wrote. "We do not agree with this slogan, but we think it our duty to enforce it, because this is the demand of the overwhelming majority of the peasants. And the idea and demands of the majority of the working people are things that the working people must *discard of their own accord*: such demands cannot be either 'abolished' or 'skipped over'. We Bolsheviks shall *help* the peasants to discard petty-bourgeois slogans, to *pass* from them as quickly and as easily as possible to socialist slogans" (V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 309).

p. 345

- ⁴⁰ *The Committee* was set up in February 1919 at the People's Commissariat of Agriculture for the purpose of assisting the organisation of socialist farming. The committee was responsible for sending experienced organisers from among the workers to gubernia and district state-farm boards and to individual state farms, arranging for the technical equipment of agriculture, helping organise trade unions for farm workers, etc. The committee consisted of representatives of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture and the All-Russia Council of Trade Unions.

p. 360

- ⁴¹ *Bundists*—members of the Bund (The General Jewish Workers' Union of Lithuania, Poland and Russia), which came into being in 1897 and consisted mainly of semi-proletarian Jewish artisans of Western regions of Russia. The Bund was a vehicle of nationalist and separatist ideas in Russia's working-class movement.

p. 375

- ⁴² Lenin refers to the joint conference of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. and Party functionaries (it was called a "summer" conference for the sake of secrecy). The conference met in Poronin (near Cracow), where Lenin resided at the time, between September 23 and October 1 (October 6 and 14), 1913.

One of the main items on the agenda was the national question, which had come into prominence in Russia's social life.

The conference unanimously rejected the opportunist demand

of the Mensheviks and Bundists for "national-cultural autonomy" and approved Lenin's programme on the national question. p. 378

- ⁴³ Lenin refers to the peace treaty between the Russian Federation and Estonia, signed on February 2, 1920. The treaty recognised Estonia's independence and was the first step towards peaceful relations between the Soviet state and the capitalist countries.

p. 403

- ⁴⁴ *Octobrists*—members of the Union of October Seventeenth, a counter-revolutionary party of the big industrial bourgeoisie and the big landlords using capitalist methods of farming. It arose after the tsar, frightened by the revolution, published a manifesto on October 17, 1905, promising to introduce a constitution, "grant" freedom of speech, assembly, the press, etc. The Octobrists supported the home and foreign policy of the tsarist government.

p. 419

- ⁴⁵ Lenin refers to the manifesto on war adopted by the Extraordinary International Socialist Congress held in Basle on November 24 and 25, 1912. The manifesto warned the peoples against the impending imperialist world war and called on the workers of all countries to work for peace and "to pit against the might of capitalist imperialism the international solidarity of the working class". The manifesto contained a clause from the resolution of the Stuttgart Congress (1907), formulated by Lenin, to the effect that in the event of an imperialist war the socialists should take advantage of the economic and political crisis precipitated by the war to accelerate the fall of capitalist class domination and fight for a socialist revolution.

p. 420

- ⁴⁶ The reference is to the voting on the question of peace with Germany at a conference of representatives of the different trends in the Party called by the Central Committee on January 21 (February 3), 1918. Only two "Left Communists" voted against the idea that it was permissible for a socialist state to conclude peace with imperialist countries. Most of the "Left Communists" occupied an ambivalent position, acceding to the above idea, but at the same time voting against the immediate signing of peace with Germany. See Note 28.

p. 431

- ⁴⁷ See Note 43.

p. 433

- ⁴⁸ V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 470).

p. 456

- ⁴⁹ The reference is to the pupils of a seminary who won notoriety by their extreme ignorance and barbarous customs. They were vividly portrayed by N. G. Pomyalovsky, a Russian author.

p. 480

- ⁵⁰ *Millerandism* ("socialist" ministerialism)—opportunist socialist tactics of participation in reactionary bourgeois governments, called after the French Socialist Millerand, who entered the reactionary government headed by Waldeck-Rousseau. Lenin described socialist ministerialism as revisionism and renegacy. He stressed that social-reformists who entered a bourgeois government invariably turned

out to be cat's paws in the hands of the capitalists and a tool which that government used for deceiving the masses. p. 501

- 51 *Bernsteinism*—an opportunist anti-Marxist trend in the German and international socialist movement named after Eduard Bernstein, an outspoken exponent of revisionism. Bernstein renounced the fundamental Marxist tenets on the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. He urged the Social-Democrats to renounce revolutionary struggle and fight for partial reforms within the framework of the capitalist system. p. 501

- 52 The reference is to members of the *Grütli-Verein*, a reformist bourgeois organisation. In 1901-16 it was part of the Swiss Social-Democratic Party, but retained its organisational independence. The Union pursued a bourgeois-nationalist policy. p. 506

- 53 The reference is to the Proudhonists who advanced the slogan of "mutual aid". p. 513

- 54 *Machism*—a subjective idealist trend in philosophy widely current in Western Europe at the turn of the century. Its founders were the Austrian physicist and philosopher Ernst Mach and the German philosopher Richard Avenarius.

Machism pretended to oppose idealism and base its stand on natural science, which tended to give it a scientific semblance. During the period of reaction in Russia which set in after the defeat of the revolution of 1905-07 a section of the Social-Democrat intellectuals fell under the influence of Machism. In his book *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* Lenin exposed the reactionary essence of Machism, defended Marxist philosophy against the revisionists and developed dialectical and historical materialism in the new historical conditions. p. 518

- 55 *Otzovism* (from the word *otozvat*, to recall)—a Left opportunist trend among the Bolsheviks which arose in 1908. Under cover of revolutionary phrase-mongering the otzovists demanded that the Social-Democrat deputies should be recalled from the Third Duma and that the Social-Democrats should discontinue their work in legal organisations, insisting that only illegal work could be conducted in the conditions of reaction. p. 518

- 56 *Struvism*—a liberal bourgeois distortion of Marxism, derived its name from P. B. Struve, the leading exponent of "legal Marxism" in Russia. "Legal Marxism" arose as a socio-political trend among Russian liberal-bourgeois intellectuals in the 1890s. The "legal Marxists" with Struve at their head attempted to adapt Marxism to the interests of the bourgeoisie. Lenin pointed out that Struvism accepted in Marxism all that suited the liberal bourgeoisie, renouncing the essence of Marxism, its revolutionary theory, its doctrine of the inevitable downfall of capitalism, the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. p. 520

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Bismarck, Otto Eduard von (1815-1898): statesman of Prussia and Germany, representative of Prussian Junkerdom, Chancellor of German empire (1871-1890). Carried through unification of Germany via counter-revolution; sworn enemy of the working-class movement—61, 173.

Bolte, Friedrich: active in American working-class movement, member of the General Council of the First International (1872-1874). In 1874 expelled from the International for advocating an erroneous line—152, 514.

Bonaparte, Louis: see Napoleon III.

Bracke, Wilhelm (1842-1880): German Social-Democrat, close associate of Marx and Engels; opposed opportunist elements in the Social-Democratic Party though not consistently enough—477.

C

Cabet, Etienne (1788-1856): French publicist, representative of "peaceful utopian communism", author of *Voyage to Icaria*—22, 26.

Castro, Carlo (1846-1892): active in Italian working-class movement, member of the First International; from 1872 one of the leaders of Italian anarchist organisations, at the end of the seventies withdrew from anarchism—74.

Carlyle, Thomas (1795-1881): English writer, historian, idealist philosopher, advocated the cult of the hero; criticised the English bourgeoisie from reactionary romanticist position—11.

Chernyshevsky, N. G. (1828-1889): Russian revolutionary democrat, materialist philosopher, writer and literary critic—29.

Clausewitz, Karl (1780-1831): Prussian general, famous bourgeois military theoretician—406, 408.

Cornelissen, Christian: Dutch anarchist, follower of P. A. Kropotkin—438.

D

Danielson, N. F. (pseudonym—Nikolai—on) (1844-1918): Russian writer, economist, one of the Narodnik ideologists in the eighties and nineties. For a number of years he corresponded with Marx and Engels—219.

Danton, Georges-Jacques (1759-1794): outstanding figure in the French bourgeois revolution of the late eighteenth century, leader of the Right-wing Jacobins—228.

Denikin, A. I. (1872-1947): tsarist general; during the civil war one of the leaders of the whiteguard movement; after the rout of his armies by Soviet troops fled abroad—209, 309, 397.

Dezamy, Theodore (1803-1850): French publicist, representative of the revolutionary trend of utopian communism—23.

Disraeli, Benjamin (1804-1881): English statesman and writer, leader of the Conservative Party, Prime Minister—149.

Domela-Neuvenhuis, Ferdinand (1846-1919): founder of the Dutch Social-Democratic Party, later one of the anarchist leaders—202.

E

Engels, Frederick (1820-1895): 27, 30, 40, 43, 92, 116, 165, 237, 238, 256, 257, 293, 297, 309, 343, 398, 399, 408, 424, 472, 475, 476, 477, 478, 494, 517.

Erstrup, Jakob (1825-1913): Danish statesman, Conservative—173.

F

Farbman, M. S. (b. 1880): from 1920 Moscow correspondent of several American and English newspapers—429.

Favre, Jules (1809-1880): French lawyer and politician, hangman of the Paris Commune—156.

Frederick-William III (1770-1840): King of Prussia (1797-1840)—61.

Fourier, Charles (1772-1837): French utopian socialist—9, 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22, 32, 55, 358.

G

Gay, Jules (1807-after 1876): French utopian communist—23.

Ghe, A. Y. (d. 1919): Russian anarchist. After the October Revolution supported Soviet power—438.

Gladstone, William Ewart (1809-1898): English statesman, Conservative, in the second half of the nineteenth century leader of the Liberal Party; Prime Minister—149, 152.

Grave, Jean (1854-1939): French petty-bourgeois socialist, one of the theoreticians of anarchism—438.

Guchkov, A. I. (1862-1936): one of the leaders of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in Russia—129.

Gusev, S. I. (Drabkin, Y. D.) (1874-1933): active member of the Bolshevik Party. After the October Revolution worked in Red Army political bodies, since 1925 head of the Press Department of the C.C. C.P.S.U.(B.). From 1928-33 candidate member of the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Comintern—151.

H

Hegel, George Wilhelm Friedrich (1770-1831): outstanding German philosopher, objective idealist, who elaborated idealistic dialectics—16, 32, 35, 491.

Heinzen, Karl (1809-1880): German radical publicist, petty-bourgeois republican—38.

Helvetius, Claude-Adrien (1715-1771): French materialist philosopher, atheist, one of the ideologists of the French revolutionary bourgeoisie—22.

Herzen, Alexander Ivanovich (1812-1870): Russian revolutionary democrat, materialist philosopher, writer and publicist—29, 30.

Hindenburg, Paul (1847-1934): German military and political figure, general, Field Marshal, representative of reactionary and chauvinistic elements of German imperialism—427.

J

Joffre, Joseph Jacques Césaire (1852-1931): Marshal, representative of French imperialist militarism. Took part in French colonial conquests in Eastern Asia and Africa. At the beginning of World War I Commander-in-chief of the French army. One of the organisers of foreign military intervention against Soviet Russia—427.

Junius: see Luxemburg, Rosa.

K

Kant, Immanuel (1724-1804): father of German classical philosophy, idealist, ideologist of the German bourgeoisie—16, 491.

Kautsky, Karl (1854-1938): one of the leaders of German Social-Democracy and the Second International. At first Marxist, later renegade to Marxism, ideologist of the most dangerous and harmful variety of opportunism-Centrism (Kautskyism)—121, 147, 193, 205, 255, 257, 258, 265, 274, 285, 294, 307, 343, 416, 424, 505.

Kerensky, A. F. (b. 1881): Minister-President of the bourgeois counter-revolutionary Provisional Government in Russia in 1917; in 1918 fled abroad, where he continues to fight against the Soviet state—415.

Kitchener, Horatio Herbert (1850-1916): Field Marshal, one of the rabid colonialists and representatives of British militarism. Was in command of colonial troops in Africa and India, where he brutally suppressed the liberation movement. During World War I—War Minister—427.

Kolchak, A. V. (1873-1920): tsarist admiral, one of the chief leaders of Russian counter-revolution. Under the blows of the Red Army and guerillas the Kolchak army was routed in the Urals, Siberia and the Far East—209.

Kropotkin, P. A. (1842-1921): one of the chief leaders and theoreticians of anarchism, scientist, geographer. In 1920 recognised the October Revolution and opposed military intervention in Russia—241, 438.

Kugelmann, Ludwig (1830-1902): Hanoverian physician, member of the First International; corresponded with Marx—236, 238, 382.

L

Lassalle, Ferdinand (1825-1864): German petty-bourgeois socialist, one of the founders of the General Association of German Workers, initiator of the opportunist trend in the German working-class movement—439, 440, 441, 478, 513.

Lloyd, George David (1863-1945): English politician. After the October Revolution in Russia one of the inspirers and organisers of the military intervention and blockade against the Soviet state—209.

Longuet, Jean (1876-1938): one of the leaders of the French Socialist Party and the Second International where he occupied Centrist position. Opposed the foundation of the French Communist Party. In the thirties advocated unity of action by Socialists and Communists against fascism—274.

Luxemburg, Rosa (1871-1919): prominent figure of the international working-class movement, one of the founders of the German Communist Party. Lenin thought highly of R. Luxemburg, but at the same time criticised her mistakes—49, 391, 407, 418, 422, 423.

M

Mably, Gabriel (1709-1785): French sociologist, representative of equalitarian utopian communism—9.

MacDonald, James Ramsay (1866-1937): one of the leaders of the British Labour Party. Prime Minister (1924, 1929-1931), pursued imperialist policy—274.

Marx, Karl (1818-1883): 19, 26, 27, 33, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 43, 50, 56, 77, 78, 79, 89, 92, 112, 127, 157, 158, 172, 200, 213, 219, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 245, 246, 248, 255, 257, 259, 260, 262, 291, 292, 298, 305, 309, 330, 398, 408, 412, 413, 421, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 472, 475, 477, 478, 494, 517.

Merrheim, Alfonse (1881-1925): French trade unionist leader. At the beginning of World War I opposed social-chauvinism, but owing to his vacillations in 1918 he began openly to advocate social-chauvinism and reformism. Was hostile to the U.S.S.R.—505.

Metternich, Clemens, Prince (1773-1859): Austrian statesman and diplomat; one of the organisers of the Holy Alliance—61.

Meyer, Sigfried (c. 1840-1872): active in the German and American working-class movement, socialist, fought against Lassallean influence in the German working-class movement; follower of Marx and Engels—384.

Mikhailovsky, N. K. (1842-1904): theoretician of liberal Narodism, publicist, positivist philosopher, literary critic. Fought fiercely against Marxism. In his book *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How they Fight Social-Democracy*, Lenin criticised Mikhailovsky's views—28.

Millerand, Alexandre Etienne (1859-1943): French politician. In the nineties headed opportunist trend in the French socialist movement. In 1899 entered reactionary bourgeois government, where he collaborated with the hangman of the Paris Commune—General Galliffet. V. I. Lenin exposed Millerandism as a betrayal of the proletariat's interests, as a practical expression of revisionism—209.

Milyukov, P. N. (1859-1943): leader of the Constitutional-Democratic Party, ideologist of the Russian imperialist bourgeoisie, historian and

publicist. After the October Revolution active leader of whiteguard emigrants—129.

Morelly (XVIII c.): representative of French equalitarian utopian communism—9.

Mühlberger, Arthur (1847-1907): German physician, follower of Proudhon, author of the article "The Housing Question", which Engels subjected to severe criticism—515.

Münzer, Thomas (1490-1525): German revolutionary, leader and ideologist of peasant-plebeian camp in the period of the Reformation and Peasant War of 1525—9, 64.

N

Naine, Charles (1874-1926): one of the leaders of the Swiss Social-Democratic Party. From the beginning of World War I sided with the internationalists; in 1917 became Centrist, and later joined the Right-wing of the Social-Democratic Party—506.

Napoleon I Bonaparte (1769-1821): French emperor (1804-1814, 1815)—14, 61, 422.

Napoleon III (Louis Napoleon Bonaparte) (1808-1873): nephew of Napoleon I, President of the Second Republic (1848-1851), French emperor (1852-1870)—82, 97, 124, 125, 236.

Nicholas II (Romanov) (1868-1918): the last Russian emperor—346, 427.

O

Owen, Robert (1771-1858): English utopian socialist—9, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 28, 32, 358.

P

Plekhanov, G. V. (1856-1918): prominent figure in the Russian and international working-class movement, first propagandist of Marxism in Russia. After 1903 he sided with the Mensheviks. Lenin highly valued Plekhanov's philosophical works, but at the same time criticised him for his deviations from Marxism and his gross political mistakes—475.

Pomyalovsky, N. G. (1835-1863): Russian writer, democrat, author of well-known "Stories of Seminary Life"—480.

Proudhon, Pierre Joseph (1809-1865): French economist and sociologist, petty-bourgeois ideologist, one of the founders of anarchism—34, 514.

Pyatakov, G. L. (Pyatakov, Y., Kievsky, P.) (1890-1937): member of the Bolshevik Party from 1910. During World War I occupied anti-Leninist position on a number of important political questions of the Party policy. After the October Revolution held several responsible posts. Was at the head of the anti-Party "Left-Communist" group in

the Ukraine. In 1927 was expelled from the Party as active leader of Trotskyite opposition. In 1928 was re-admitted to the Party, and in 1930 again expelled for anti-Party activities—252, 321.

Pyat, Felix (1810-1889): French publicist, playwright and politician, petty-bourgeois democrat. Waged a slandering campaign against Marx in the International. Member of the Paris Commune, after its suppression emigrated to England—156.

R

Rakitnikov, N. I. (b. 1864): Narodnik, afterwards Socialist-Revolutionary, journalist. After the October Revolution participated in the counter-revolutionary Committee of the Constituent Assembly Members in Samara. In 1919 left the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party and recognised Soviet government. Later withdrew from political life—28.

Renaudel, Pierre (1871-1935): one of the leaders of the French Socialist Party. During World War I social-chauvinist. Waged fierce struggle against the French Communist Party and the U.S.S.R.—421.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1712-1778): philosopher of the French Enlightenment, democrat, petty-bourgeois ideologist—11.

S

Saint-Simon, Henri (1760-1825): French utopian socialist—9, 12, 14, 15, 19, 20, 32, 514.

Sax, Emile (1845-1927): Austrian bourgeois economist—358.

Scheidemann, Philipp (1865-1939): one of the leaders of the extreme Right-wing of German Social-Democracy. In February-June 1919 headed the Weimar Republican Government; one of the organisers of the bloody suppression of the German working-class movement in 1918-1921—421, 433.

Shahumyan, S. G. (1878-1918): prominent figure of the Communist Party and the Soviet state. Shot by the British interventionists with the assistance of Socialist-Revolutionaries on September 20, 1918. One of the 26 Baku commissars who were shot—391.

Schweitzer, Johann Baptist (1833-1875): one of the prominent representatives of Lassalleism in Germany; supported Bismarck's policy of unifying Germany "from above" under the hegemony of Prussia; fought against the Social-Democratic Workers' Party—513.

Skvortsov-Stepanov, I. I. (1870-1928): prominent figure of the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet state, author of many books on economic, historical and anti-religious questions, translator and editor of three volumes of K. Marx's *Capital*. Party member from 1896—520.

Sorokin, P. A. (b. 1889): Socialist-Revolutionary. Till 1922 was sociology lecturer in Petrograd, deported for counter-revolutionary activ-

ities. Since 1923 lives in the U.S.A., professor at Harvard University—90, 132.

Souvarine, Boris: French socialist. During World War I Centrist, Trotsky's follower. In 1921 was admitted to the French Communist Party, then expelled in 1924 for his Trotskyite activities. At present in articles, which he contributes to bourgeois press, attacks the communist movement and the Soviet state—416.

Spartacus (d. 71 B. C.): leader of the greatest slave uprising in Ancient Rome in 73-71 B. C.—411.

Struve, P. B. (1870-1944): Russian bourgeois economist and publicist, in the nineties of the last century one of the leading representatives of "legal Marxism"—94, 95, 101.

Sukhanov, N. (Himmer, N. N.) (b. 1882): economist and publicist, Menshevik. After the October Revolution worked in Soviet economic organisations. In 1931 was condemned as leader of the underground Menshevik group—213.

Symons, Jelinger Cookson (1809-1860): English liberal publicist, member of Child Labour Inquiry Commission (1841)—136.

T

Trier, Gerson: Danish Social-Democrat; during World War I internationalist—173, 199.

Tugan (Tugan-Baranovsky, M. I.) (1865-1919): Russian bourgeois economist. In the nineties prominent representative of "legal Marxism"—441.

Turati, Filippo (1857-1932): one of the organisers of the Italian Socialist Party, leader of its Right, reformist wing—505.

V

Vogt, August (c. 1830-c. 1883): active in the German and American working-class movement, socialist, member of the First International, follower of Marx and Engels—384.

Vollmar, Georg Heinrich (1850-1922): German Social-Democrat, member of the Reichstag, from nineties one of the ideologists of reformism—121.

W

Webb, Beatrice (1858-1943): English political figure—510.

Webb, Sydney James (1859-1947): English political figure, reformist. He and his wife Beatrice Webb wrote a number of books on the history of the British labour movement, one of the founders of the reformist Fabian Society—510.

Weitling, Wilhelm (1808-1871): active in the working-class movement in Germany; one of the theoreticians of equalitarian utopian communism; tailor—24, 26, 33.

Wijnkoop, David (1877-1941): Dutch Social-Democrat, later Communist. During World War I internationalist. Later one of the leaders of the Dutch Communist Party, occupied ultra-Left, sectarian position. In 1926 was expelled from the Party for opposition to a number of Comintern decisions. In 1930 he recognised his mistakes and was re-admitted to the Party—497.

Weydemeyer, Joseph (1818-1868): active in the German and American working-class movement, took part in the 1848-1849 Revolution in Germany; after the defeat of the revolution emigrated to the U.S.A.; friend and close associate of Marx and Engels—245.

Wilson, Woodrow (1856-1924): President of the U.S.A. in 1913-1921, one of the organisers of imperialist military intervention against Soviet Russia—209.

Y

Yudenich, N. N. (1862-1933): tsarist general. During the civil war commander of the whiteguard North-Western Army. In 1919 twice attempted to capture Petrograd, but was unsuccessful. Defeated by the Red Army, retreated to Estonia. Later fled to England—209, 309.

Z

Zassulich, V. I. (1851-1919): participated in the Narodnik and later the Social-Democratic movement in Russia; in the eighties went over to Marxist positions; in 1903 became one of the Menshevik leaders—66.

Zhukovsky, Y. G. (1822-1907): Russian bourgeois economist and publicist. In his works combined eclectically various economic theories—219.

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