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# Lenin.

by John Pepper

A mimeographed release of the Workers Party Press Service to the party press, circa late January 1924.  
Copy in the Comintern Archive, f. 515, op. 1, d. 214, ll. 73-74

The leader of the world revolution is dead.

The world revolution marches on. Lenin discovered the inner laws of the world crisis and the world revolution. He gave to the working class the revolutionary strategy and mapped out for the working class the revolutionary tactics in the final, the imperialist period of capitalism. Marxism, applied to our present epoch, became Leninism. Marx transformed a world; he developed Socialism from utopia to science. Lenin again reshaped a world; he developed socialism from science to action.

Our greatest leader is dead. But the international working class has learned Leninism. The vanguard of the working class, the world party of the Communists, has learned from Lenin that its historic mission is to make the revolution, and has learned from Lenin the methods, the strategy and tactics of the revolution. Marx said once: The philosophers have interpreted the world but the question is to reshape the world. Lenin has carried out completely the Marxist program. We can say that since Napoleon, the sword and will of the great French bourgeois revolution, no other single man has so thoroughly transformed the world as Lenin, the brains and will of the great Russian proletarian revolution.

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Marx discovered in historical materialism the laws of development of human history. In the surplus value theory Marx discovered the special laws of development of capitalism. Marx saw clearly for the first time that the revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, follows as an iron inevitability from the inner contradictions of capitalist society itself.



But Lenin was the first who forged the steel weapon of the revolution: the centralized Communist Party, the conscious minority which seizes the initiative, but never loses contact with the masses. Lenin coined the historical parallel: a Bolshevik is nothing else than a Jacobin who unites with the working class. Lenin was the first who took up the

fight against the Menshevik intellectuals who did not want to accept the underground discipline of the illegal party. Lenin formulated for the first time the conception that the leaders of the working class must be professional revolutionaries.

Lenin for the first time discovered the central role of state power. The Marxian decadents of the Second International have simply forgotten the state power for decades.

Lenin for the first time saw clearly the revolutionary significance of the general strike. The

reformists of the Second International declared: "General strike is general idiocy."

Lenin was the first who recognized the necessity of turning the general strike into an armed uprising. After the defeat of the first Russian revolution in 1905, Plekhanov declared: "It was a mistake to take up arms." But Lenin drew a different, and a great, lesson from the defeat: "The revolution must be thoroughly organized."

Lenin was the first who discovered how fundamentally opportunistic the Second International was, and he founded the Third International. Lenin replaced international phrase with international action.

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Lenin once said that every leader makes mistakes, but a good leader makes no big mistakes and quickly corrects his little mistakes. Everyone who knows the history of the Russian revolution must recognize that Lenin did not make a single big mistake. He was not only a reliable adviser, but a calculating and successful adviser of the working class. The secret which enabled Lenin to avoid making too great mistakes was not because he was too cautious. On the contrary, Lenin made no big mistakes because he analyzed the facts correctly and because he had the revolutionary courage to act with audacity in the decisive moment. Danton, the leader of the French Revolution, said that three things are necessary in a revolution, "Audacity, more audacity, always audacity!" Marx called Danton the greatest strategist of revolutionary tactics. Lenin is the greatest realist, the coolest analyzer of facts; but the basis of his strategy at the same time was always the slogan of Danton: Audacity, more audacity, always audacity!"

Lenin always had the mental courage and determination to advance or to retreat in a given moment. On November 7, 1917, Lenin had the audacity to seize power for the working class. A capitalist universe laughed at the Bolsheviks, and

even his own party wavered; the best and oldest revolutionaries, Zinoviev and Kamenev, recoiled from the terrible responsibility. But Lenin stood like a rock of iron and led the Russian workers to power and to lasting victory.

Then later came the question of the peace of Brest-Litovsk. The whole of international Menshevism accused the Bolsheviks of betraying the revolution in concluding peace with the German imperialist Kaiserdom. And even the party of the Bolsheviks again wavered. Such keen-minded Marxists as Radek and Bukharin could not understand the necessity of the retreat. But Lenin did not waver for a moment. He led his Party with an iron hand to Brest-Litovsk, in order to gain a breathing spell for the revolution. And Lenin was again right: "German Kaiserdom collapsed miserably a year later.

Then the third great turn in the history of the revolution: the New Economic Policy. The capitalists proclaimed with great joy: the rule of Communism in Russia is at an end. International Menshevism again accused the Bolsheviks of betraying the workers in favor of the peasants. And the party of the Bolsheviks itself wavered once more. A mighty opposition lifted its head within the Party. But Lenin did not waver: he convinced the Party that concessions must be given to the farmers in order to save the rule of the working class, and they must be given immediately and without delay: "Kronstadt is in mutiny, and Tambov is aflame with peasant uprisings." And Lenin was again right. He saved the Russian revolution and thereby the world revolution.

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Leninism is Marxism applied to the present, the final period of capitalism. Lenin's most basic and profound thought was his understanding and analyzing the revolution as a uniform process. Lenin was the first who saw clearly that the revolution cannot be the achievement of a single class,

but that it can succeed, but only if on the one hand, not only the working class, but all other non-capitalist strata are revolutionized, and if on the other hand, the capitalist class itself is no longer in a position to rule. Against the guild socialism of the Second International, which represented only the narrow class interests of the industrial workers within capitalist society, Lenin emphasized the general interests of the working class as the class of the revolution. Lenin recognized that to reject the idea of an alliance with the farmers is not revolutionary [refusal to] compromise, but an opportunism which is afraid of victory. Lenin did not only recognize that an isolated Communist Party without the laboring masses cannot be victorious, but he also recognized that the working class alone, without the farmers as allies, can neither be victorious nor retain permanent victory.

And Lenin recognized that the proletarian revolution in the highly-developed capitalist countries must form an alliance with the oppressed small nations and with the enormous masses of the exploited colonies against ruling imperialism.

Lenin knew that only the working class can bring about its own salvation. But he also knew what the Second International did not know, that the working class cannot bring about its own salvation if it does not become the leader of all the oppressed and exploited of the earth.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

*Photo: 1924 Soviet postage stamp commemorating death of Lenin (3 kopek imperforate).*

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