

THE PROLETARIAN'S POCKETBOOK





If you ain't angry, you ain't paying attention.

Mumia Abu-Jamal

For the People

Edition 1

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Table of Contents

Socialism&Communism, Marxism, Leninism	008
The Party	017
Class Struggle	023
Contradictions	029
Revolution	032
The State	042
Capitalism	048
Colonialism.....	057
Imperialism.....	062
Fascism.....	069
Liberalism.....	077

Organization	084
The People.....	089
Freedom.....	094
Democracy	099
Race&Racism.....	105
The Gender Struggle	115
Internationalism	128
Art & Culture	133
Criticism/Self-Criticism.....	141
Education, Study& Knowledge	145
The Environment	151
Dedication to Win/Discipline.....	156
War.....	164

The Revolutionary Mind	169
Violence/Self-Defense	175
Prisons	181

SOCIALISM & COMMUNISM, MARXISM-LENINISM

Socialism is the people. If you're afraid of socialism, you're afraid of yourself.

Fred Hampton

I'm more and more convinced it's only through communism that we can become human.

Frida Kahlo

The cause of Communism is the greatest cause in the history of mankind because it seeks to remove from society all forms of oppression and exploitation, to liberate mankind and to ensure peace and prosperity to all.

*Nelson Mandela, How to be a
Good Communist (1986)*

Communism is at once a complete system of proletarian ideology and a new social system. It is different from any other ideological and social system, and is the most complete, progressive revolutionary and rational system in human history. The ideological and social system of feudalism has a place only in the museum of history. The ideological and social system of capitalism has also resembles “a dying person who is sinking fast, like the sun setting beyond the western hills”, and will soon be relegated to the museum. The communist ideological and social system alone is full of youth and vitality, sweeping the world with the momentum of an avalanche and the force of a thunderbolt.

Mao, On New Democracy (1940)

Marx said that the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat lies between capitalism and communism.

Lenin, The ‘Disarmament’ Slogan (1916)

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.

Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific (1891)

Communism is the doctrine of the conditions of the liberation of the proletariat.

Engels, Principles of Communism (1847)

The Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism has two outstanding characteristics. One is its class nature: it openly avows that dialectical materialism is in

the service of the proletariat. The other is its practicality: it emphasizes the dependence of theory on practice, emphasizes that theory is based on practice and in turn serves practice.

Mao, On Practice (1937)

Marxist philosophy holds that the most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws actively to change the world.

Ibid.

Marxism comprises many principles, but in the final analysis they can all be brought back to a single sentence: it is right to rebel.

Mao (1939)

Marxist philosophy holds that the law of the unity of opposites is the fundamental law of the universe. This law operates universally, whether in the

natural world, in human society, or in man's thinking. Between the opposites in a contradiction there is at once unity and struggle, and it is this that impels things to move and change. Contradictions exist everywhere, but they differ in accordance with the different nature of different things. In any given phenomenon or thing, the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and transitory, and hence relative, whereas the struggle of opposites is absolute.

*Mao, On the Correct Handling
of Contradictions Among the
People (1957)*

Everything moves, everything changes; we must know how to adapt our theory, our politics and our struggle to the specific circumstances in which we live. As Lenin taught us, it is necessary to stride forward toward the future, getting rid of everything that divides us, everything that life has discarded, advancing toward our chosen goal, socialism and

peace.

Dolores Ibárruri (1983)

Contrary to idealism, which regards the world as the embodiment of an “absolute idea,” a “universal spirit,” “consciousness,” Marx’s philosophical materialism holds that the world is by its very nature material, that the multi-fold phenomena of the world constitute different forms of matter in motion, that interconnection and interdependence of phenomena as established by the dialectical method, are a law of the development of moving matter, and that the world develops in accordance with the laws of movement of matter and stands in no need of a “universal spirit.”

Stalin, Dialectical and Historical Materialism (1938)

Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian

revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular. Marx and Engels pursued their activities in the pre-revolutionary period (we have the proletarian revolution in mind), when developed imperialism did not yet exist, in the period of the proletarians' preparation for revolution, in the period when the proletarian revolution was not yet an immediate practical inevitability. But Lenin, the disciple of Marx and Engels, pursued his activities in the period of developed imperialism, in the period of the unfolding proletarian revolution, when the proletarian revolution had already triumphed in one country, had smashed bourgeois democracy and had ushered in the era of proletarian democracy, the era of the Soviets.

Stalin, The Foundations of Leninism (1924)

Marxism-Leninism is the ideology of the working class, the most complete political doctrine, the most accurate ex-

planation of social and historical problems.

Fidel Castro (1972)

The strength and vitality of Marxism-Leninism lies in the fact that it does base its practical activity on the needs of the development of the material life of society and never divorces itself from the real life of society.

Stalin, Dialectical and Historical Materialism (1938)

Marxism-Leninism is the denial of the exploitation of man by man, that has been precisely the source of crimes, wars, oppressions and calamities that humanity has suffered over millennia.

Fidel Castro (1972)

Marxism-Leninism is the richest doctrine in ideas of justice, freedom, equality, fraternity among men.

Fidel Castro (1991)

Our comrades must understand that we study Marxism-Leninism not for display, nor because there is any mystery about it, but solely because it is the science which leads the revolutionary cause of the proletariat to victory.

*Mao, Rectify the Party's Style
of Work (1942)*

THE PARTY

No political party can possibly lead a great revolutionary movement to victory unless it possesses revolutionary theory and a knowledge of history and has a profound grasp of the practical movement.

Mao, The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War (1938)

The main function of the party is to awaken the people and to teach them the strategic method of resisting the power structure, which is prepared... to combat the resistance of the people with massive brutality...

Huey P Newton, The Correct Handling of a Revolution (1967)

Why must there be a revolutionary party? There must be a revolutionary party because the world contains enemies who oppress the people and the people want to throw off enemy oppression. In the era of capitalism and imperialism, just such a revolutionary party as the Communist Party is needed. Without such a party it is simply impossible for the people to throw off enemy oppression. We are Communists, we want to lead the people in overthrowing the enemy, and so we must keep our ranks in good order, we must march in step, our troops must be picked troops and our weapons good weapons. Without these conditions the enemy cannot be overthrown.

*Mao, Rectify the Party's Style
of Work (1942)*

The Party must be, first of all, the advanced detachment of the working class. The Party must absorb all the best elements of the working class, their experience, their revolutionary spirit,

their selfless devotion to the cause of the proletariat. But in order that it may really be the armed detachment, the Party must be armed with revolutionary theory, with a knowledge of the laws of the movement, with a knowledge of the laws of revolution. Without this it will be incapable of directing the struggle of the proletariat, of leading the proletariat.

Stalin, The Foundations of Leninism (1924)

A party is the vanguard of a class, and its duty is to lead the masses and not merely to reflect the average political level of the masses.

Lenin, Speech On The Agrarian Question (1917)

The vanguard party is never underground in the beginning of its existence, because this would limit its effectiveness and educational processes. How can you teach people if the people do not know and respect you? The par-

ty must exist above ground as long as the dog power structure will allow, and hopefully when the party is forced to go underground the message of the party will already have been put across to the people. The vanguard party's activities on the surface will necessarily be short lived.

Huey P Newton, The Correct Handling of a Revolution (1967)

A well-disciplined Party armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, using the method of self-criticism and linked with the masses of the people; an army under the leadership of such a Party; a united front of all revolutionary classes and all revolutionary groups under the leadership of such a Party - these are the three main weapons with which we have defeated the enemy.

Mao, On the People's Democratic Dictatorship (1949)

So what should we do if we're the

vanguard? What is it right to do? Is it right for the leadership of that struggle to go faster than the followers of that struggle can go? NO! We're not going to be dealing in commandism, we're not going to be dealing in no tailism. We say that just as fast as the people can possibly go, that's just as fast as we can take it.

Fred Hampton, You Can Murder a Liberator but You Can't Murder Liberation (1969)

Proletarian parties develop and become strong by purging themselves of opportunists and reformists, social-imperialists and social-chauvinists, social-patriots and social-pacifists.

Stalin, The Foundations of Leninism (1924)

The liberalist slogan 'you can't get ahead of the people' is meaningless. From what other position can one lead? From the rear? Rearguard leadership?!! A typical Yankee innovation... In all the

successful class struggles and colonial wars of liberation, the vanguard elements did get ahead of the people and pull. There is no other way in forward mass movement ... I'm not implying that the vanguard party act out the people's role. I'm not implying a 'society superior to society.' We must never forget that it is the people who change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating. 'Going among the people, learning from the people, and serving the people' is really stating that we must find out exactly what the people need and organize them around those needs.

*George Jackson, Blood In My
Eye (1971)*

CLASS STRUGGLE

In class society, everyone lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a class.

Mao, On Practice (1937)

The proletariat is that class in society which lives entirely from the sale of its labor and does not draw profit from any kind of capital; whose weal and woe, whose life and death, whose sole existence depends on the demand for labor.

Engels, Principles of Communism (1847)

Classes struggle, some classes triumph, others are eliminated. Such is history, such is the history of civilization

for thousands of years. To interpret history from this viewpoint is historical materialism; standing in opposition to this viewpoint is historical idealism.

*Mao, Cast Away Illusions,
Prepare for Struggle (1949)*

The history of all... existing society is the history of class struggles.

Marx, The Communist Manifesto (1848)

The principal contradiction within capitalism from the outset was that between the capitalists and the workers. To keep their system going, the capitalists had constantly to step up the rate of exploitation of their workers. At the same time, European workers were gaining increasing mastery over the means of production in the factories and mines, and they were learning to work collectively in big enterprises and within their own trade union structures. If the bourgeoisie continued to deprive them of the ma-

gor part of the fruits of their own labor and to oppress them socially and politically, then those two classes were set on a collision path. Ever since the mid-nineteenth century, Marx had predicted class collision would come in the form of revolution in which workers would emerge victorious. The capitalists were terribly afraid of that possibility, knowing full well that they themselves had seized power from the feudal landlord class by means of revolution.

*Walter Rodney, How Europe
Underdeveloped Africa (1972)*

Racism abounds in the writings of white feminists, reinforcing white supremacy and negating the possibility that women will bond politically across ethnic and racial boundaries. Past feminist refusal to draw attention to and attack racial hierarchies suppressed the link between race and class. Yet class structure in American society has been shaped by the racial politic of white su-

premac; it is only by analyzing racism and its function in capitalist society that a thorough understanding of class relationships can emerge. Class struggle is inextricably bound to the struggle to end racism.

*bell hooks, Feminist Theory:
From Margin to Center (1984)*

...The liberation of all oppressed peoples necessitates the destruction of the political-economic systems of capitalism and imperialism as well as patriarchy. We are socialists because we believe that work must be organized for the collective benefit of those who do the work and create the products, and not for the profit of the bosses... We are not convinced, however, that a socialist revolution that is not also a feminist and anti-racist revolution will guarantee our liberation.

*Combahee River Collective,
The Combahee River Collec-
tive Statement (1977)*

Strikes, boycott, parliamentarism, meetings and demonstrations are all good forms of struggle as means for preparing and organizing the proletariat. But not one of these means is capable of abolishing existing inequality. All these means must be concentrated in one principal and decisive means; the proletariat must rise and launch a determined attack upon the bourgeoisie in order to destroy capitalism to its foundations. This principal and decisive means is the socialist revolution.

Stalin, Anarchism or Socialism? (1908)

The proletariat should not ignore peaceful methods of struggle — they serve its ordinary, day-to-day interests, they are necessary in periods of preparation for revolution — but it must never forget that in certain conditions the class struggle assumes the form of armed conflict and civil war; there are times when the interests of the proletariat call for

ruthless extermination of its enemies in open armed clashes.

Lenin, Lessons of the Commune (1908)

CONTRADICTIONS

The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing. This internal contradiction exists in every single thing, hence its motion and development. Contradictoriness within a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its interrelations and interactions with other things are secondary causes.

Mao, On Contradiction (1937)

If in any process there are a number of contradictions, one of them must be the principal contradiction playing the leading and decisive role, while the rest occupy a secondary and subordinate position. Therefore, in studying any complex process in which there are two or

more contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved.

Ibid.

Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society, that is, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and the contradiction between the old and the new; it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the suppression of the old society by the new.

Ibid.

Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, but the methods of resolving contradictions, that is, the forms of struggle, differ according to the differences in the nature of the contra-

dictions. Some contradictions are characterized by open antagonism and others are not. In accordance with the concrete development of things, some contradictions, which were originally non-antagonistic, develop into antagonistic ones, while others which were originally antagonistic develop into non-antagonistic ones.

Ibid.

REVOLUTION

The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.

*Marx, Theses On Feuerbach:
Thesis 11 (1845)*

If there is to be any proving of our humanity it must be through revolutionary means.

*Walter Rodney, The Ground-
ings with my Brothers (1969)*

The revolution is not an apple that falls when it is ripe. You have to make it fall.

Che (1965)

Revolution means action. It means

a change brought about deliberately by an organized and systematic work, as opposed to sudden and unorganized or spontaneous change or breakdown.

Bhagat Singh (1931)

The oppressor must be harassed until his doom. He must have no peace by day or by night. The slaves have always outnumbered the slave-masters. The power of the oppressor rests upon the submission of the people.

Huey P Newton, To Die For the People (1972)

A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery. It cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.

Mao, Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan (1927)

You have to be logical. You know? If I know that in this hotel room they have food every day, and I'm knocking on the door every day to eat, and they open the door, let me see the party, let me see them throwing salami all over, I mean, just throwing food around, but they're telling me there's no food. Every day, I'm standing outside trying to sing my way in: We are hungry, please let us in. We are hungry, please let us in. After about a week that song is gonna change to: We hungry, we need some food. After two, three weeks, it's like: Give me the food Or I'm breaking down the door. After a year you're just like: I'm picking the lock. Coming through the door blasting. It's like, you hungry, you reached your level. We asked ten years ago. We was asking with the Panthers. We was asking with them, the Civil Rights Movement. We was asking. Those people that asked are dead and in jail. So now what do you think we're gonna do? Ask?

Tupac Shakur (1994)

You have to understand that people have to pay the price for peace. If you dare to struggle, you dare to win. If you dare not to struggle then god damn it, you don't deserve to win. Let me say peace to you, if you're willing to fight for it.

*Fred Hampton, Why Don't You
Die For the People?*

We realized at a very early point in our development that revolution is a process. It is not a particular action, nor is it a conclusion. It is a process.

*Huey P Newton, On the De-
fection of Eldridge Cleaver
from the Black Panther Party
and the Defection of the Black
Panther Party from the Black
Community (1971)*

If we are going to rise out of our oppression, our poverty, if we are going to cease being the targets of the racist-minded mentality of racist policemen, we will have to destroy the American

capitalist system. We will have to obliterate a system in which a few wealthy capitalists are guaranteed the privilege of becoming richer and richer, whereas the people who are forced to work for the rich, and especially Black people, never take any significant step forward.

Angela Davis, I Am A Revolutionary Black Woman (1970)

A lot of people get the word revolution mixed up and they think revolutions a bad word. Revolution is nothing but like having a sore on your body and then you put something on that sore to cure that infection. And Im telling you that were living in an infectious society right now. Im telling you that were living in a sick society. And anybody that endorses integrating into this sick society before its cleaned up is a man who's committing a crime against the people.

Fred Hampton, Power Anywhere Where Theres People!
(1969)

Revolutions and revolutionary wars are inevitable in class society, and without them it is impossible to accomplish any leap in social development and to overthrow the reactionary ruling classes and therefore impossible for the people to win political power.

Mao, On Contradiction (1937)

I have declared war on the rich who prosper on our poverty, the politicians who lie to us with smiling faces, and all the mindless, heartless, robots who protect them and their property.

Assata Shakur, Assata: An Autobiography (1987)

You don't have a revolution in which you love your enemy, and you don't have a revolution in which you are begging the system of exploitation to integrate you into it. Revolutions overturn systems. Revolutions destroy systems.

Malcolm X (1964)

Revolution is the sense of the historical moment; it is changing everything that must be changed; it is full equality and freedom; it is being treated and treating others like human beings; it is emancipating ourselves, by ourselves and with our very own efforts; it is challenging the dominant powerful forces within and outside of the social and national arena; it is defending the values one believes in at the cost of any sacrifice; it is modesty, selflessness, altruism, solidarity and heroism; it is fighting with audacity, intelligence and realism; it is never telling a lie or violating ethical principles; it is the profound conviction that there is no force on earth that can crush truth and ideas. Revolution is unity, it is independence, it is fighting for our dreams of justice for Cuba and the world that is the basis of our patriotism, our socialism and our internationalism.

Fidel Castro (2000)

Revolutionary change means the

seizure of all that is held by the 1 percent, and the transference of these holdings into the hands of the remaining 99 percent. If the 1 percent are simply replaced by another 1 percent, revolutionary change has not taken place.

*George Jackson, Blood In My
Eye (1971)*

A time will come when the people will understand their power and the pigs' machinery will be unable to accommodate their demands. That is when the people, black people and poor white people and oppressed people all over America will rise up like mighty tide and clean this beachfront of capitalism and racism, and make the revolution.

*Elaine Brown, A Taste of Power:
A Black Woman's Story
(1992)*

Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fight-

ing to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children.

*Amilcar Cabral, Tell no Lies,
Claim no easy Victories...*

(1969)

The revolutionary war is a war of the masses; it can be waged only by mobilizing the masses and relying on them.

*Mao, Be Concerned with the
Well-Being of the Masses, Pay
Attention to Methods of Work*

(1934)

Collectively and of our free will we can choose to put down this predacious system a few profiting at all our expense, and build in its place a new mass-oriented socialist system of mutual cooperation, fair and equal distribution, and respect for nature, to all our benefit. Or we can continue being fools' agents, and stand by idly and ostrich-like (with our

heads in the sand) as many did yesterday, while this system continues devouring, defiling and wasting land, resources, people, and the planet.

Rashid, Against Capitalism: To Exist We Must Resist (2012)

Everything depends on the conditions, time and place.

Stalin, Dialectical and Historical Materialism (1938)

The spirit of Revolution should always permeate the soul of humanity, so that the reactionary forces may not accumulate to check its eternal onward march. Old order should change, always and ever, yielding place to new, so that one “good” order may not corrupt the world. It is in this sense that we raise the shout “Long Live Revolution.”

Bhagat Singh (1929)

THE STATE

The state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another; it creates “order,” which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the collision between the classes.

Lenin, State and Revolution
(1917)

“Don’t you want to abolish state power?” Yes, we do, but not right now; we cannot do it yet. Why? Because imperialism still exists, because domestic reaction still exists, because classes still exist in our country.

Mao, On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship (1949)

The proletariat needs state power,

a centralized organization of force, an organization 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 organizing a socialist economy.

Lenin, State and Revolution
(1917)

The dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the organization 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.

Ibid.

The substitution of the proletarian state for the bourgeois 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”.

Ibid.

For the state to wither away completely, complete communism is necessary.

Ibid.

We are in favor of the withering away of the state, and at the same time we stand for the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which represents the most powerful and mighty of all forms of the state which have existed up to the present day. The highest development of the power of the state, with the object of preparing the conditions of the withering away of the state: that is the Marxist formula. Is it “contradictory”? Yes, it is “contradictory.” But this

contradiction is a living thing and wholly reflects the Marxist dialectic.

Stalin (1930)

The people's state protects the people. Only when the people have such a state can they educate and remold themselves by democratic methods on a country-wide scale, with everyone taking part, and shake off the influence of domestic and foreign reactionaries...rid themselves of the bad habits and ideas acquired in the old society, not allow themselves to be led astray by the reactionaries, and continue to advance- to advance towards a socialist and communist society.

Mao, On the People's Democratic Dictatorship (1949)

The people's democratic dictatorship uses two methods. Towards the enemy, it uses the method of dictatorship, that is, for as long a period of time as is necessary it does not let them take part in

political activities and competes them to obey the law of the People's Government and to engage in labor and, through labor, transform themselves into new men. Towards the people, on the contrary, it uses the method not of compulsion but of democracy, that is, it must necessarily let them take part in political activities and does not compel them to do this or that, but uses the method of democracy in educating and persuading them.

Mao, Closing Speech at the Second Session of the First National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (1950)

The organs of state must practice democratic centralism, they must rely on the masses and their personnel must serve the people.

Mao, On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (1957)

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.

Lenin, State and Revolution
(1917)

Revolution alone can “put an end” to the bourgeois state. The state in general, i.e., the most complete democracy, can only “wither away”.

Ibid.

CAPITALISM

Capitalism is a development by refinement from feudalism just as feudalism is a development by refinement from slavery. Capitalism is but the gentleman's method of slavery.

Kwame Nkrumah (1968)

Under a capitalist system, the means of production is owned and controlled by very few people. A very few, few people. By means of production, I mean anything necessary - machinery, money, resources - to build and produce things which can be sold on the market. Only a few people own and control the means of production... These capitalists exploit everybody, because everybody works for them. Everyone sells their labor to them. It is by selling your labor to

a capitalist that he is really able to exploit you.

Kwame Ture, Who is a Capitalist? (1973)

We have to understand very clearly that there's a man in our community called a capitalist. Sometimes he's black and sometimes he's white. But that man has to be driven out of our community, because anybody who comes into the community to make profit off the people by exploiting them can be defined as a capitalist. And we don't care how many programs they have, how long a dashiki they have. Because political power does not flow from the sleeve of a dashiki; political power flows from the barrel of a gun. It flows from the barrel of a gun!

Fred Hampton, Power Anywhere Where There's People! (1969)

The whole thing boiled down to a simple equation: anything that has any kind of value is made, mined, grown, pro-

duced, and processed by working people. So why shouldn't working people collectively own that wealth? Why shouldn't working people own and control their own resources? Capitalism meant that rich businessmen owned the wealth, while socialism meant that the people who made the wealth owned it.

Assata Shakur, Assata: An Autobiography (1987)

It is impossible for capitalism to survive, primarily because the system of capitalism needs some blood to suck. Capitalism used to be like an eagle, but now it's more like a vulture. It used to be strong enough to go and suck anybody's blood whether they were strong or not. But now it has become more cowardly, like the vulture, and it can only suck the blood of the helpless. As the nations of the world free themselves, capitalism has less victims, less to suck, and it becomes weaker and weaker.

Malcolm X (1965)

[A] racist social structure...is inseparable from capitalist economic development. For race is inextricably linked with class exploitation; in a racist-capitalist power structure, capitalist exploitation and race oppression are complementary; the removal of one ensures the removal of the other...

*Kwame Nkrumah, Class
Struggle in Africa (1970)*

The economic nature of racism is not simply an aside... Racism is a fundamental characteristic of monopoly capitalism.

*George Jackson, Blood In My
Eye (1971)*

Capitalism has created its own irrationalities such as a vicious white racism, the tremendous waste associated with advertising, and the irrationality of incredible poverty in the midst of wealth and wastage even inside the biggest capitalist economies, such as that of the Unit-

ed States of America.

*Walter Rodney, How Europe
Underdeveloped Africa (1972)*

When you are poor you don't have any social respect or social worth because everything is defined in terms of money and how much of it you have. This is what capitalism does. It turns all values into commercial values, even the value of life itself.

*Rashid, Defying the Tomb
(2010)*

You're taught that from school, everywhere, big business, if you want to be successful? You wanna be like Trump? Give me, give me, give me - push, push, push, push - step, step, step - crush, crush, crush... Can you imagine somebody having \$32 million dollars and this person has nothing? And you can sleep?? And then these are the type of people who get humanitarian awards- how can they be humanitarians by the fact that they're

millionaires?! And there's so many poor people shows how un-humane they are. There's no way that these people should own planes and there's people who down have houses, apartments, shacks, drawers, pants! And everybody is smart enough to know that, I mean, we've been slighted and we want ours. For us to be on our own two feet, 'us' meaning youth or 'us' meaning Black people, whatever you wanna take it for... I think there is a way it just takes to be revolutionary and it takes to do something out of the ordinary.

Tupac Shakur (1992)

It's impossible for a white person to believe in capitalism and not believe in racism. You can't have capitalism without racism.

Malcolm X (1964)

The more the people understand, the more watchful they become, and the more they come to realize that finally

everything depends on them and their salvation lies in their own cohesion, in the true understanding of their interests, and in knowing who their enemies are. The people come to understand that wealth is not the fruit of labor but the result of organized, protected robbery.

Frantz Fanon, Wretched of the Earth (1961)

It is really impressive what a filth system capitalism is, that can't guarantee its own people employment, nor health, nor adequate education; that cannot prevent youth from being corrupted by drugs, gamble, and all kind of vices.

Fidel Castro (1991)

America represents more than just an economic system; it is an entire cultural and social order, a plutocracy, a system of rule that is mostly by and for the rich. Most universities and colleges, publishing houses, mass circulation magazines, newspapers, television

and radio stations, professional sports teams, foundations, churches, private museums, charity organizations, and hospitals are organized as corporations, ruled by boards of trustees (or directors or regents) composed overwhelmingly of affluent business people. These boards exercise final judgement over all institutional matters.

*Michael Parenti, Democracy
for the Few (2010)*

The existing system of capitalist imperialism is rigged up to allow a tiny group of people who don't perform any meaningful labor to control the institutions of political power and the global system of production and distribution, so that they are able to hoard a vast amount of social wealth for themselves and prevent any meaningful challenge to their power from everyone else. Consequently, access to needed resources falls unevenly on everyone else, causing immense poverty and suffering to over

half the world's people, and insecurity and uncertainty for everyone, especially workers.

Rashid, Revolutionizing The Masses In Three Stages: The Revolutionary Intercommunal Black Panther Party and its Intermediate and Mass Organizations (2021)

There are no good aspects of monopoly capital, so no reservations need be recognized in its destruction. Monopoly capital is the enemy. It crushes the life force of all of the people. It must be completely destroyed, as quickly as possible, utterly, totally, ruthlessly, relentlessly destroyed.

George Jackson, Blood In My Eye (1971)

COLONIALISM

...A colonial economy is established on bases that are in part artificial and foreign, subordinate to the interests of the colonizer. Its normal development depends on the colonizer's ability either to adapt himself to local conditions or to change them.

José Mariátegui, Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality (1928)

For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity.

Frantz Fanon, Wretched of the Earth (1961)

The settler makes history and is conscious of making it. And because he constantly refers to the history of his mother country, he clearly indicates that he himself is the extension of that mother-country. Thus the history which he writes is not the history of the country which he plunders but the history of his own nation in regard to all that she skims off, all that she violates and starves.

Ibid.

Colonialism hardly ever exploits the whole of a country. It contents itself with bringing to light the natural resources, which it extracts, and exports to meet the needs of the mother country's industries, thereby allowing certain sectors of the colony to become relatively rich. But the rest of the colony follows its path of under-development and poverty, or at all events sinks into it more deeply.

Ibid.

In the colonial countries... the po-

liceman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force.

Ibid.

The native must realize that colonialism never gives anything away for nothing.

Ibid.

In the colonies the economic infrastructure is also a superstructure. The cause is effect: you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich.

Ibid.

The methods of neo-colonialists are subtle and varied. They operate not only in the economic field, but also in the political, religious, ideological and cultural spheres. Faced with the militant peo-

ples of the ex-colonial territories in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, imperialism simply switches tactics. Without a qualm it dispenses with its flags, and even with certain of its more hated expatriate officials. This means, so it claims, that it is 'giving' independence to its former subjects, to be followed by 'aid' for their development. Under cover of such phrases, however, it devises innumerable ways to accomplish objectives formerly achieved by naked colonialism. It is this sum total of these modern attempts to perpetuate colonialism while at the same time talking about 'freedom', which has come to be known as neo-colonialism.

Kwame Nkrumah, Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism (1965)

The four essential components of neo-colonialism are:

1. Economic exploitation
2. Puppet governments and client states
3. Military as-

sistance 4. Economic “aid.”

*Kwame Nkrumah, Handbook
of Revolutionary Warfare
(1968)*

A state can be said to be a neo-colonialist or client state if it is independent de jure and dependent de facto. It is a state where political power lies in the conservative forces of the former colony and where economic power remains under the control of international finance capital.

*Kwame Nkrumah, Handbook
of Revolutionary Warfare
(1968)*

IMPERIALISM

Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the domination of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the partition of all the territories of the globe among the great capitalist powers has been completed.

Lenin, Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism (1917)

Imperialism is a system of exploitation that occurs not only in the brutal form of those who come with guns to conquer territory. Imperialism often occurs in more subtle forms, a loan, food aid, blackmail . We are fighting this

system that allows a handful of men on Earth to rule all of humanity.

Thomas Sankara

Imperialism is the product of aggression and plunder, and it has grown fat on ceaseless aggression and plunder. Since the emergence of imperialism mankind has suffered disasters of recurrent aggression and war, and has been deprived of immeasurable amounts of property, wealth and the fruit of labour.

Kim Il-sung, For the Development of the Non-Aligned Movement (1986)

Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom.

Lenin, Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism (1917)

A further important indicator of the character of imperialism can be

seen from the fact that the high cost of manufactured products and machinery, the refusal to enter into reasonable and just commodity agreements, the stonewalling of attempts to agree on a new international economic order, the refusal to accept that an international regime should be created to exploit the resources of the deep sea for the benefit of all mankind and not just for a few multinational corporations can all be placed at the doorstep of the Imperialist World.

Maurice Bishop (1979)

...More and more countries in the Third World as a whole have been focusing their attention on the struggle against imperialism. Our concern increasingly has been concentrated on the fight to regain control over our natural and national resources from the grips of the rapacious multi-national corporations backed by their power governments of the imperialists worldwide. This has led more and more Third World countries to recognize

that imperialism is the greatest enemy of mankind and that the perpetrators of this rape of our resources are to be found in the imperialist world.

Maurice Bishop (1979)

Imperialism will never give up its rule over colonial and dependent countries before it is kicked out. It is in the nature of imperialism to perpetrate aggression and plunder. If there ever is imperialism which is not aggressive, it is no longer imperialism. Imperialism will not change its aggressive nature before it dies.

Kim Il-sung, Great Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Cause of Asian, African and Latin American Peoples is Invincible (1968)

Imperialism is capitalism is colonialism.

Rashid, On the Questions of Race and Racism: Revolutionary National Liberation and

*Building the United Front
Against Imperialism (2006)*

The present distribution of world economic power, wealth and living standards is manifestly unjust. It derives from the long history of imperialist expansion and control of the third world. We seek to change this order and to substitute for it a New International Economic Order.

Maurice Bishop (1979)

Any community seriously concerned with its own freedom has to be concerned about other peoples' freedom as well. The victory of oppressed people anywhere in the world is a victory for Black people. Each time one of imperialism's tentacles is cut off we are closer to liberation."

*Assata Shakur, Assata: An
Autobiography (1987)*

We must bear in mind that impe-

rialism is a world system, the last stage of capitalism — and it must be defeated in a world confrontation. The strategic end of this struggle should be the destruction of imperialism. Our share, the responsibility of the exploited and underdeveloped of the world is to eliminate the foundations of imperialism: our oppressed nations, from where they extract capitals, raw materials, technicians and cheap labor, and to which they export new capitals — instruments of domination — arms and all kinds of articles; thus submerging us in an absolute dependence.

Che, Message to the Tricontinental (1967)

We are not going to eliminate imperialism by shouting insults at it.

Amilcar Cabral, The Weapon of Theory (1966)

World imperialism headed by its aggressive detachment, U.S. imperialism, is directing the course of its economy to-

wards preparations for war... It has set up and perfected aggressive military organizations, it has established and continues to establish military bases all around the socialist camp. It is accumulating stocks of nuclear weapons and refuses to disarm, to stop testing nuclear weapons, and is feverishly engaged in inventing new means of mass extermination. Why is it doing all this? To go to a wedding party? No, to go to war against us, to do away with socialism and communism, to put the peoples under bondage.

Enver Hoxha (1960)

This is a huge nation [Amerika] dominated by the most reactionary and violent ruling class in the history of the world, where the majority of the people just simply cannot understand that they are existing on the misery and discomfort of the world.

*George Jackson, Blood In My
Eye (1971)*

FASCISM

Fascism was a monster born of capitalist parents. Fascism came as the end-product of centuries of capitalist bestiality, exploitation, domination, and racism—mainly exercised outside Europe.

Walter Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (1972)

Fascism is the bourgeoisie's fighting organization that relies on the active support of Social-Democracy. Social-Democracy is objectively the moderate wing of fascism.

Stalin, Concerning the International Situation, 1. The Period of Bourgeois-Democratic "Pacifism" (1924)

Fascism must be seen as an episodically logical stage in the socio-economic development of capitalism in a state of crisis. It is the result of a revolutionary thrust that was weak and mis-carried — a consciousness that was compromised.

George Jackson (1971)

Capitalist and imperialist countries created the conditions for the rise of fascism in the world; and the whole fascist campaign, since its first appearance in Europe, was based on anti-communism, on communists' slaughter and on the destruction of the Soviet Union.

Fidel Castro (1975)

Fascism is a deformity of capitalism. It heightens the imperialist tendency towards domination which is inherent in capitalism, and it safeguards the principle of private property. At the same time, fascism immeasurably strengthens the institutional racism already bred by

capitalism, whether it be against Jews (as in Hitler's case) or against African peoples (as in the ideology of Portugal's Salazar and the leaders of South Africa). Fascism reverses the political gains of the bourgeois democratic system such as free elections, equality before the law, parliaments; and it also extolls authoritarianism and the reactionary union of the church with the state. In Portugal and Spain, it was the Catholic church—in South Africa, it was the Dutch Reformed church.

*Walter Rodney, How Europe
Underdeveloped Africa (1972)*

Fascism historically has been used to secure the interests of large capitalist interests against the demands of popular democracy. Then and now, fascism has made irrational mass appeals in order to secure the rational ends of class domination.

*Michael Parenti, Blackshirts
and Reds (1997)*

No, fascism is not a power standing above class, nor government of the petty bourgeoisie or the lumpen-proletariat over finance capital. Fascism is the power of finance capital itself.

Dimitrov, The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle of the Working Class against Fascism (1935)

Fascism, with its violence, gets rid of everything: it attacks universities, it closes them and crushes them; it attacks intellectuals, represses them and persecutes them; it attacks political parties; it attacks trade union organizations; it attacks all mass and cultural organizations. Therefore, nothing is more violent, more retrograde and more illegal than fascism.

Fidel Castro (1971)

After the fascists have succeeded in crushing the vanguard elements and

the threat they pose is removed, the ruling class goes on about the business of making profits as usual. The significance of the “new fascist arrangement” lies in the fact that this business-as-usual is accompanied by concessions to the degenerate segment of the working class, with the aim of creating a buffer zone between the ruling class and the still potentially revolutionary segments of the lower classes.

*George Jackson, Blood In My
Eye (1971)*

What was fascism in Italy, in Germany? The exaltation of racial prejudices. Instead of fighting racial prejudice, which is what a revolution does, fascism exalts prejudice and turns it into hatred.

Fidel Castro (1978)

What is the source of the influence of fascism over the masses? Fascism is able to attract the masses because it demagogically appeals to their most ur-

gent needs and demands. Fascism not only inflames prejudices that are deeply ingrained in the masses, but also plays on the better sentiments of the masses, on their sense of justice and sometimes even on their revolutionary traditions. Why do the German fascists, those lackeys of the bourgeoisie and mortal enemies of socialism, represent themselves to the masses as “Socialists,” and depict their accession to power as a “revolution”? Because they try to exploit the faith in revolution and the urge towards socialism that lives in the hearts of the mass of working people in Germany.

Dimitrov, The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle of the Working Class against Fascism (1935)

Fascism is a false revolution. It cultivates the appearance of popular politics and a revolutionary aura without offering a genuine revolutionary class con-

tent. It propagates a “New Order” while serving the same old moneyed interests. Its leaders are not guilty of confusion but of deception. That they work hard to mislead the public does not mean they themselves are misled.

*Michael Parenti, Blackshirts
and Reds (1997)*

Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of our situation, understand that fascism is already here, that people are already dying who could be saved, that generations more will live poor butchered half-lives if you fail to act. Do what must be done, discover your humanity and your love in revolution.

*George Jackson, Blood In My
Eye (1971)*

The fascist arrangement tolerates the existence of no valid revolutionary activity. It has programmed into its very nature a massive, complex and automatic defense mechanism for all our old

methods for raising the consciousness of a potentially revolutionary class of people. The essence of a U.S.A. totalitarian socio-political capitalism is concealed behind the illusion of a mass participatory society. We must rip away its mask. Then the debate can end, and we can enter a new phase of struggle based on the development of an armed revolutionary culture that will triumph.

*George Jackson, Blood In My
Eye (1971)*

LIBERALISM

As far as I'm concerned, 'liberal' is the most meaningless word in the dictionary. History has shown me that as long as some white middle-class people can live high on the hog, take vacations to Europe, send their children to private schools, and reap the benefits of their white skin privilege, then they are 'liberal'. But when times get hard and money gets tight, they pull off that liberal mask and you think you're talking to Adolf Hitler. They feel sorry for the so-called underprivileged just as long as they can maintain their own privileges.

Assata Shakur, Assata: An Autobiography (1987)

What the liberal really wants is to bring about change which will not in

any way endanger his position. the liberal says, 'it is a fact that you are poor, and it is a fact that some people are rich; but we can make you rich without affecting those people who are rich.

*Kwame Ture, Stokely Speaks:
From Black Power to Pan-Afri-
canism (1969)*

The liberal is so preoccupied with stopping confrontation that he usually finds himself defending and calling for law and order of the oppressor... The reason the liberal seeks to stop confrontation... is that his role, regardless of what he says, is really to maintain the status quo, rather than to change it... [H]e hopes to bring about justice and economic stability for everyone through reform, that somehow the society will be able to keep expanding without the redistributing the wealth.

*Kwame Ture, Stokely Speaks:
From Black Power to Pan-Afri-
canism (1969)*

We stand for active ideological struggle because it is the weapon for ensuring unity within the Party and the revolutionary organizations in the interest of our fight. Every Communist and revolutionary should take up this weapon. But liberalism rejects the ideological struggle and stands for unprincipled peace, thus giving rise to a decadent, philistine attitude and bringing about political degeneration in certain units and individuals in the Party and the revolutionary organizations.

Mao, Combat Liberalism
(1937)

Liberalism is extremely harmful in a revolutionary collective. It is a corrosive which eats away unity, undermines cohesion causes apathy and creates dissension. It robs the revolutionary ranks of compact organization and strict discipline, prevents policies from being carried through and alienates the Party organization from the masses which the

Party leads. It is an extremely bad tendency.

Ibid.

All loyal, honest, active and upright Communists must unite to oppose the liberal tendencies shown by certain people among us, and set them on the right path. This is one of the tasks on our ideological front.

Ibid.

The white conservatives aren't friends of the Negro either, but they at least don't try to hide it. They are like wolves; they show their teeth in a snarl that keeps the Negro always aware of where he stands with them. But the white liberals are foxes, who also show their teeth to the Negro but pretend that they are smiling. The white liberals are more dangerous than the conservatives; they lure the Negro, and as the Negro runs from the growling wolf, he flees into the open jaws of the "smiling" fox. One

is the wolf, the other is a fox. No matter what, they'll both eat you.

*Malcolm X, White Liberals
and Conservatives (1963)*

Liberalism has the following weaknesses:

1. It focuses on the individual rights rather than collective rights.

2. It is ahistorical. It does not have a comprehensive understanding of women's role in history nor has it any analysis for the subordination (subjugation) of women.

3. It tends to be mechanical in its support for formal equality without a concrete understanding of the condition of different sections/classes of women and their specific problems. Hence it was able to express the demands of the middle classes (white women from middle classes in the US and upper class, upper caste women in India) but not those of women

from various oppressed ethnic groups, castes and the working, laboring classes.

4. It is restricted to changes in the law, educational and employment opportunities, welfare measures etc and does not question the economic and political structures of the society which give rise to patriarchal discrimination. Hence it is reformist in its orientation, both in theory and in practice.

5. It believes that the state is neutral and can be made to intervene in favor of women when in fact the bourgeois state in the capitalist countries and the semi-colonial and semi-feudal Indian state are patriarchal and will not support women's struggle for emancipation. The State is defending the interests of the ruling classes who benefit from the subordination and devalued status of women.

6. Since it focuses on changes in the law, and state schemes for women, it has

emphasized lobbying and petitioning as means to get their demands. The liberal trend most often has restricted its activity to meetings and conventions and mobilizing petitions calling for changes. It has rarely mobilized the strength of the mass of women and is in fact afraid of the militant mobilization of poor women in large numbers.

Anuradha Ghandy, Philosophical Trends in the Feminist Movement (2006)

ORGANIZATION

We believe that the most pressing political necessity is the consolidation of a United Front joining together all sections of the revolutionary, radical and democratic movements. Only a united front—led in the first place by the national liberation movements and the working people—can decisively counter, theoretically, ideologically and practically, the increasingly fascist and genocidal posture of the present ruling clique.

*Angela Davis, If They Come
In The Morning (1971)*

We ain't gonna fight no reactionary pigs who run up and down the street being reactionary; we're gonna organize and dedicate ourselves to revolutionary political power and teach ourselves the

specific needs of resisting the power structure, arm ourselves, and we're gonna fight reactionary pigs with INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION. That's what it has to be. The people have to have the power: it belongs to the people.

Fred Hampton, Power Anywhere Where There's People! (1969)

For the revolutionary movements developing today in every country, the great contribution of Lenin was the clarity with which he put forward and acted upon his fundamental convictions regarding the vanguard party: 1) that the purpose of a revolutionary party is to take absolute power in order to revolutionize the economic and social systems as the only way of resolving fundamental popular grievances; 2) that it is absolutely essential to build a revolutionary vanguard party if you are not just playing with the phrase; and 3) that a revo-

lutionary party can only be built by a) unceasing ideological struggle, b) strict discipline, c) organized activity of every member, and d) merciless self-criticism.

*James and Grace Lee Boggs,
The Role of the Vanguard Party (1970)*

We are quite obviously faced with a need to organize some small defenses to the more flagrant abuses of the system now. ... While we await the precise moment when all of capitalism's victims will indignantly rise to destroy the system, we are being devoured. ... Some of us are going to have to take our courage in hand and build a hard revolutionary cadre for selective retaliatory violence.

*Jonathan Jackson, Featured in
Blood In My Eye (1971)*

I repeat: realistic, day-to-day needs should be the basis of organizing people and making them conscious of revolution-- that the world, the universe,

must revolve-- that it will stop, stagnate, and die for no man's privilege.

*George Jackson, Blood In My
Eye (1971)*

Any organizing must begin with an analysis of the classes within imperialist and colonized societies, to determine who are actual and potential friends, and who are actual and potential enemies of revolution. The organizers must determine what contributions each sector is capable of making and must push them in the direction of allied class struggle within their actual and potential means.

*Rashid, A Practical Approach to Strategic Organizing for Popular Struggle
(2005)*

Focusing on the most oppressed sectors of the empire's population means that organizing and resources should be channeled in the very places that are now neglected, viz. amongst prisoners,

the poor, and communities of people of color... At mass gatherings and demonstrations, cadre should work the crowds, collecting names and needs of people of various social backgrounds and those with resources, skills, talents, etc., to determine the needs of various communities and those people willing and able to contribute work, resources and organizing to meet those needs. Another imperative will be arming the people and training them in the use of arms.

*Rashid, A Practical Approach
to Strategic Organizing for
Popular Struggle (2005)*

THE PEOPLE

The leaders come and go, but the people remain. Only the people are immortal, everything else is ephemeral. That is why it is necessary to appreciate the full value of the confidence of the people.

Stalin (1937)

In the long run, the people are our only appeal. The only ones who can free us are ourselves.

Assata Shakur, Assata: An Autobiography (1987)

The people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history.

Mao, On Coalition Government (1945)

No movement can survive unless it is constantly growing and changing with the times. If it isn't growing, if it's stagnant, and without the support of the people, no movement for liberation can exist, no matter how correct its analysis of the situation is. That's why political work and organizing are so important. Unless you are addressing the issues people are concerned about and contributing positive direction, they'll never support you. The first thing the enemy tries to do is isolate revolutionaries from the masses of people, making us horrible and hideous monsters so that our people will hate us.

Assata Shakur, Assata: An Autobiography (1987)

Every comrade must be helped to understand that as long as we rely on the people, believe firmly in the inexhaustible creative power of the masses and hence trust and identify ourselves with them, we can surmount any difficul-

ty, and no enemy can crush us while we can crush any enemy.

Mao, On Coalition Government (1945)

If you want to help the “masses” and win the sympathy and support of the “masses,” you should not fear difficulties, or pinpricks, chicanery, insults and persecution from the “leaders,” but must absolutely work wherever the masses are to be found.

Lenin, Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder (1920)

My God is none other than the people. Only the popular masses are omniscient and omnipotent and almighty on earth. Therefore my lifetime motto is: “The people are my God.”

Kim Il-sung (1936)

The people are the masters of the revolution in each country. It is like putting a cart before the horse that foreign-

ers carry out the revolution for them. The revolution can neither be exported nor imported.

Kim Il-sung (1976)

In a nutshell, the idea of Juche means that the masters of the revolution and the work of construction are the masses of the people and that they are also the motive force of the revolution and the work of construction. In other words, one is responsible for one's own destiny and one has also the capacity for hewing out one's own destiny.

*Kim Il-sung, Mainichi Shim-
bun (1972)*

Revolutionaries, believe in the people and rely on them at all times and you shall always emerge victorious; if you are forsaken by them, you will always fail. Let this be your maxim in your life and struggle.

*Kim Il-sung, With the Century
Vol.1 (1992)*

As fish cannot live without water,
so guerrillas cannot live without the people.

Kim Il-sung, With the Century

Vol.5 (1992)

FREEDOM

The idea of freedom is inspiring. But what does it mean? If you are free in a political sense but have no food, what's that? The freedom to starve?

Angela Davis (2008)

Nobody in the world, nobody in history, has ever gotten their freedom by appealing to the moral sense of the people who were oppressing them.

Assata Shakur, Assata: In Her Own Words (1998)

It is difficult for me to imagine what “personal liberty” is enjoyed by an unemployed person, who goes about hungry, and cannot find employment. Real liberty can exist only where exploitation has been abolished, where there is no op-

pression of some by others, where there is no unemployment and poverty, where a man is not haunted by the fear of being tomorrow deprived of work, of home and of bread. Only in such a society is real, and not paper, personal and every other liberty possible.

Stalin (1936)

For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom (1995)

Freedom only comes through persistent revolt, through persistent agitation, through persistently rising up against the system of evil.

Martin Luther King, Jr., The Birth of a New Nation (1957)

The capitalists often boast that their constitutions guarantee the rights

of the individual, democratic liberties and the interests of all citizens. But in reality, only the bourgeoisie enjoy the rights recorded in these constitutions. The working people do not really enjoy democratic freedoms; they are exploited all their life and have to bear heavy burdens in the service of the exploiting class.

*Ho Chi Minh, Report on the
Draft Amended Constitution
(1959)*

Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.

*Frederick Douglass, West India
Emancipation (1857)*

Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was

in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave-owners.

Lenin, State and Revolution
(1917)

The only difference as compared with the old, outspoken slavery is this, that the worker of today seems to be free because he is not sold once for all, but piecemeal by the day, the week, the year, and because no one owner sells him to another, but he is forced to sell himself in this way instead, being the slave of no particular person, but of the whole property-holding class.

Friedrich Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England (1845)

If you're not ready to die for it, take the word "freedom" out of your vocabulary.

Malcolm X (1962)

Freedom is like the morning.

There are those who wait for it asleep,
and there are others that stay awake and
walk through the night to reach it

*Sub. Marcos, La Revuelta de la
Memoria (1999)*

A fox and a wolf are both canine,
both belong to the dog family. Now you
take your choice. You going to choose a
Northern dog or a Southern dog? Because
either dog you choose, I guarantee you'll
still be in the dog house. This is why I say
it's the ballot or the bullet. It's liberty or
it's death. It's freedom for everybody or
freedom for nobody.

Malcolm X (1964)

DEMOCRACY

Democracy is a form of the state, it represents, on the one hand, the organized, systematic use of force against persons; but, on the other hand, it signifies the formal recognition of equality of citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure of, and to administer, the state.

Lenin, State and Revolution
(1917)

Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich — that is the democracy of capitalist society.

Ibid.

Democracy means equality. The great significance of the proletariat's struggle for equality and of equality as a

slogan will be clear if we correctly interpret it as meaning the abolition of classes. But democracy means only formal equality. And as soon as equality is achieved for all members of society in relation to ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labor and wages, humanity will inevitably be confronted with the question of advancing father, from formal equality to actual equality, i.e., to the operation of the rule “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs”.

Ibid.

Democracy cannot consist solely of elections that are nearly always fictitious and managed by rich landowners and professional politicians.

Che, On Growth and Imperialism (1961)

A ballot is like a bullet. You don't throw your ballots until you see a target, and if that target is not within your

reach, keep your ballot in your pocket.

*Malcolm X, The Ballot or the
Bullet (1964)*

Bourgeois democracy is democracy of pompous phrases, solemn words, exuberant promises and the high-sounding slogans of freedom and equality. But, in fact, it screens the non-freedom and inferiority of women, the non-freedom and inferiority of the toilers and exploited.

*Lenin, Soviet Power and the
Status of Women (1919)*

Marx grasped this essence of capitalist democracy splendidly when, in analyzing the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament!

*Lenin, State and Revolution
(1917)*

The state system, a joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes and the system of government, democratic centralism--these constitute the politics of New Democracy.

Mao, On New Democracy
(1940)

The state structure of New Democracy should be based on democratic centralism, with the people's congresses at various levels determining the major policies and electing the government. It is at once democratic and centralized, i.e. centralized on the basis of democracy and democratic under centralized guidance.

Mao, On Coalition Government (1945)

Democracy is not compatible with financial oligarchy, with discrimination against Blacks and outrages by the Ku Klux Klan...

Che, On Growth and Imperialism (1961)

We must practice revolutionary democracy in every aspect of our Party life. Every responsible member must have the courage of his responsibilities, exacting from others a proper respect for his work and properly respecting the work of others. Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories...

Amilcar Cabral, Tell no Lies, Claim no easy Victories... (1969)

The basic principles of [Democratic Centralism] are expressed in V.I. Lenin's slogan, "freedom to criticize, unity of action." I repeat, "freedom to criticize, unity of action." The Democratic component of DC means all Party members are free to criticize, debate and discuss internal matters of Party decisions, policy and direction in open sessions, and final decisions on such matters are reached by

majority vote of all Party members. The Centralism component of DC means that once decisions are reached by majority vote, all members must uphold that decision. Those who disagree with the decisions must still abide by them, they must reserve their personal opinions, but they are free at the next session to raise the issues again and struggle to change the Party's views and vote on the matters... Furthermore, no individual Party member has unqualified power. Indeed, all Party members must answer to the Party itself and to the public criticism of the masses.

Rashid, On the Roles and Characteristics of the Panther Vanguard Party and Mass Organizations (2006)

It is not Socialism that subverts democracy, but democracy that subverts capitalism.

Michael Parenti, Democracy for the Few (2010)

RACE & RACISM

The blood, sweat, tears, and suffering of Black people are the foundations of the wealth and power of the United States of America. We were forced to build America, and if forced to, we will tear it down. The immediate result of this destruction will be suffering and bloodshed. But the end result will be the perpetual peace for all mankind.

*Huey P Newton, In Defense of
Self-defense (1967)*

As we search as a nation for constructive ways to challenge racism and white supremacy, it is absolutely essential that progressive female voices gain a hearing.

*bell hooks, Killing Rage: Ending
Racism (1995)*

The pivotal struggle which must be waged in the ranks of the working class is consequently the open, unreserved battle against entrenched racism. The white worker must become conscious of the threads which bind him to a James Johnson, Black auto worker, member of UAW, and a political prisoner presently facing charges for the killings of two foremen and a job setter. The merciless proliferation of the power of monopoly capital may ultimately push him inexorably down the very same path of desperation. No potential victim of the fascist terror should be without the knowledge that the greatest menace to racism and fascism is unity!

*Angela Davis, If They Come In
The Morning (1971)*

A non-racial society can only be achieved by socialist revolutionary action of the masses. It will never come as a gift from the minority ruling class. For it is impossible to separate race relations

from the capitalist class relationships in which they have their roots.

*Kwame Nkrumah, Class
Struggle in Africa (1970)*

We don't think you fight fire with fire best; we think you fight fire with water best. We're going to fight racism not with racism, but we're going to fight with solidarity. We say we're not going to fight capitalism with black capitalism, but we're going to fight it with socialism.

*Fred Hampton, We Have to
Protect Our Leaders (1969)*

Racist oppression invades the lives of Black people on an infinite variety of levels. Blacks are imprisoned in a world where our labor and toil hardly allow us to eke out a decent existence, if we are able to find jobs at all. When the economy begins to falter, we are forever the first victims, always the most deeply wounded. When the economy is on its feet, we continue to live in a de-

pressed state. Unemployment is generally twice as high in the ghettos as it is in the country as a whole and even higher among Black women and youth. The unemployment rate among Black youth has presently skyrocketed to 30 per cent. If one-third of America's white youth were without a means of livelihood, we would either be in the thick of revolution or else under the iron rule of fascism. Substandard schools, medical care hardly fit for animals, overpriced, dilapidated housing, a welfare system based on a policy of skimpy concessions, designed to degrade and divide (and even this may soon be cancelled)—this is only the beginning of the list of props in the overall scenery of oppression which, for the mass of Blacks, is the universe.

*Angela Davis, If They Come In
The Morning (1971)*

Racism and ethnic differences allow the power structure to exploit the masses of workers in this country, be-

cause that's the key by which they maintain their control. To divide the people and conquer them is the objective of the power structure. It's the ruling class, the very small minority, the few avaricious, demagogic hogs and rats who control and infest the government. The ruling class and their running dogs, their lackeys, their bootlickers, their Toms and their black racists, their cultural nationalists - they're all the running dogs of the ruling class. These are the ones who help to maintain and aid the power structure by perpetuating their racist attitudes and using racism as a means to divide the people. But it's really the small, minority ruling class that is dominating, exploiting, and oppressing the working and laboring people.

Bobby Seale, Seize the Time
(1970)

[The] association of wealth with whites and poverty with blacks is not accidental. It is the nature of the imperialist

relationship that enriches the metropolis at the expense of the colony i.e. it makes the whites richer and the blacks poorer.

Walter Rodney, The Groundings with my Brothers (1969)

It is only the ending of capitalism, colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism and the attainment of world communism that can provide the conditions under which the race question can finally be abolished and eliminated.

Kwame Nkrumah, Class Struggle in Africa (1970)

It is because of America's racism that black people and colored people around the world are oppressed. Throughout history black people who spoke out against America and her racism have been subjected to exile, assassination, murder, or imprisonment. So what happened to me is nothing new or different. Justice is a joke in this country for black people, and it stinks of its

hypocrisy. Justice in this country means “just-us white folks.” Black people must understand that there is no redress of grievances in the courts but only in the streets, through armed guerrilla action.

Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin

In combating racism we do not make progress if we combat the people themselves. We have to combat the causes of racism. If a bandit comes to my house and I have a gun, I cannot shoot the shadow of the bandit; I have to shoot the bandit. Many people lose energy and effort , and make sacrifices combating shadows. We have to combat the material reality that produces the shadow.

Amilcar Cabral, Return to the Source (1973)

Racial discrimination in the United States is a product of the colonialist and imperialist system. The contradiction between the Black masses in the United States and the U.S. ruling circles

is a class contradiction. Only by overthrowing the reactionary rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class and destroying the colonialist and imperialist system can the Black people in the United States win complete emancipation.

Mao, A New Storm Against Imperialism (1968)

The concept of inferior races was useful to the white man's West for purposes of expansion and conquest.

José Mariátegui, Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality (1928)

National and racial chauvinism is a vestige of the misanthropic customs characteristic of the period of cannibalism.

Stalin (1931)

When the Israelis pick up guns, or the Poles, or the Irish, or any white man in the world says "give me liberty,

or give me death,” the entire white world applauds. When a black man says exactly the same thing, word for word, he is judged a criminal and treated like one and everything possible is done to make an example of this bad n***** so there won't be any more like him.

James Baldwin (1968)

We had seen that the Black liberation struggle would be, as it had always been, a spark, a catalyst pushing forward the whole working-class and people's struggle in the U.S. Far from being simply a struggle for reforms, as the revisionists claimed, it was, as Chairman Mao called it, a clarion call to all oppressed peoples throughout the world to rise up and defeat imperialism.

Harry Haywood (1977)

We say All Power to the People—
Black Power to Black People and Brown
Power to Brown People, Red Power to
Red People and Yellow Power to Yellow

People. We say White Power to White
People EVEN.

*Fred Hampton, You Can Murder
a Liberator but You Can't
Murder Liberation (1969)*

THE GENDER STRUGGLE

No pride for some of us without liberation for all of us.

Marsha P Johnson

There will be no mass-based feminist movement as long as feminist ideas are understood only by a well-educated few.

*bell hooks, Feminist Theory:
From Margin to Center (1984)*

The struggle for women's liberation cannot be successful in isolation from the struggle to overthrow the imperialist system itself.

Anuradha Ghandy, Philosophical Trends in the Feminist Movement (2006)

The worldwide movement for democracy and socialism has been enriched by the women's movement.

Ibid.

Marxist-Leninists fight to free women from household drudgery, they fight to win equality for women in all spheres, they recognize that one cannot adequately deal with the woman question or win women for progressive participation unless one takes up the special problems, needs and aspirations of women as women

*Claudia Jones, We Seek Full
Equality for Women (1949)*

Women's freedom is the sign of social freedom.

*Rosa Luxemburg, Women's
Suffrage and Class Struggle
(1912)*

A developing consciousness on the woman question today, therefore,

must not fail to recognize that the Negro question in the United States is prior to, and not equal to, the woman question; that only to the extent that we fight all chauvinist expressions and actions as regards the Negro people and fight for the full equality of the Negro people, can women as a whole advance their struggle for equal rights. For the progressive women's movement, the Negro woman, who combines in her status the worker, the Negro, and the woman, is the vital link to this heightened political consciousness.

Claudia Jones, An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman (1949)

I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own.

Audre Lorde, The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism (1981)

Today, it is the proletarian woman's turn to make the capitalist state conscious of her maturity. This is done through a constant, powerful mass movement which has to use all the means of proletarian struggle and pressure.

*Rosa Luxemburg, Women's
Suffrage and Class Struggle
(1912)*

An ideological consequence of industrial capitalism was the shaping of a more rigorous notion of female inferiority. It seemed, in fact, that the more women's domestic duties shrank under the impact of industrialization, the more rigid became the assertion that "woman's place is in the home.

*Angela Davis, Women, Race
and Class (1983)*

The struggle against racism must be an ongoing theme of the anti-rape movement, which must not only defend women of color, but the many victims of

the racist manipulation of the rape charge as well. The crisis dimensions of sexual violence constitute one of the facets of a deep and ongoing crisis of capitalism. As the violent face of sexism, the threat of rape will continue to exist as long as the overall oppression of women remains an essential crutch for capitalism.

Ibid.

Like racism, sexism is one of the great justifications for high female unemployment rates. Many women are “just housewives” because in reality they are unemployed workers. Cannot, therefore, the “just housewife” role be most effectively challenged by demanding jobs for women on a level of equality with men and by pressing for the social services (child care, for example) and job benefits (maternity leaves, etc.) which will allow more women to work outside the home?

Ibid.

The struggle to end sexist op-

pression that focuses on destroying the cultural basis for such domination strengthens other liberation struggles. Individuals who fight for the eradication of sexism without struggles to end racism or classism undermine their own efforts. Individuals who fight for the eradication of racism or classism while supporting sexist oppression are helping to maintain the cultural basis of all forms of group oppression.

*bell hooks, Feminist Theory:
From Margin to Center (1984)*

Birth control - individual choice, safe contraceptive methods, as well as abortions when necessary - is a fundamental prerequisite for the emancipation of women.

*Angela Davis, Women, Race
and Class (1983)*

Like racism and all forms of prejudice, bigotry against transgendered people is a deadly carcinogen. We are pitted

against each other in order to keep us from seeing each other as allies. Genuine bonds of solidarity can be forged between people who respect each other's differences and are willing to fight their enemy together. We are the class that does the work of the world, and can revolutionize it. We can win true liberation.

Les Feinberg, Trans Liberation (1998)

Trans liberation is not a threat to any lesbian woman or gay man or bisexual person. Yes, trans liberation is shaking up old patterns of thoughts or beliefs. Good! Because most of those thoughts and beliefs that we are challenging were imposed on us from above, were rotten to the core and were backed up by bigoted laws. But we're not taking away your identity. No one's sex reassignment or fluidity of gender threatens your right to self-identify and self-expression. On the contrary, our struggle bolsters your right to your identity. My right to be me

is tied with a thousand threads to your right to be you.

Ibid.

The wage structure of society must change, women's role must change, compulsory heterosexuality must end, the care of children must become a collective enterprise and all this is not possible within the capitalist system.

Anuradha Ghandy, Philosophical Trends in the Feminist Movement (2006)

We have not always been forced to pass, to go underground, in order to work and live. We have a right to live openly and proudly...when our lives are suppressed, everyone is denied an understanding of the rich diversity of sex and gender expression and experience that exist in human society.

Les Feinberg, Transgender Warriors (1996)

The part that the woman can play in the development of a revolutionary process is of extraordinary importance. It is well to emphasize this, since in all our countries, with their colonial mentality, there is a certain underestimation of the woman which becomes a real discrimination against her. The woman is capable of performing the most difficult tasks, of fighting beside the men...

Che, Guerrilla Warfare (1961)

My Marxist outlook pointed out to me with an illuminating clarity that women's liberation could take place only as the result of the victory of a new social order and a different economic system.

Alexandra Kollontai, The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman (1926)

The women of the property-owning classes will always fanatically defend the exploitation and enslavement of the

working people by which they indirectly receive the means for their socially useless existence.

Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Suffrage and Class Struggle (1912)

I wanted to be free. I wanted to express desires on my own, to shape my own little life.

Alexandra Kollontai, The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman (1926)

I have learned that a woman can be a fighter, a freedom fighter, a political activist, and that she can fall in love, and be loved, she can be married, have children, be a mother... Revolution must mean life also; every aspect of life.

Leila Khaled (2001)

Women hold up half the sky!

Mao

In the family, he is the bourgeois, the woman represents the proletariat.

Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State (1884)

A revolutionary woman can't have no reactionary man.

Assata Shakur, Assata: An Autobiography (1987)

Monogamy was the first form of the family not founded on natural, but on economic conditions, viz.: the victory of private property over primitive and natural collectivism.

Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State (1884)

Comrades, there is no true social revolution without the liberation of women. May my eyes never see and my feet never take me to a society where half the people are held in silence. I hear the roar

of women's silence. I sense the rumble of their storm and feel the fury of their revolt.

Thomas Sankara, Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle (1990)

The only difference between the woman who sells her body through prostitution and she who sells herself in marriage is the price and duration of the contract.

Thomas Sankara, Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle (1990)

We want to see all gay people have a chance at equal rights, as straight people in America. We believe in picking up a gun, and starting a revolutionary if necessary.

Marsha P Johnson

The first act of violence that patriarchy demands of males is not violence

toward women. Instead patriarchy demands of all males that they engage in acts of psychic self-mutilation, that they kill off the emotional parts of themselves. If an individual is not successful in emotionally crippling himself, he can count on patriarchal men to enact rituals of power that will assault his self-esteem.

*bell hooks, The Will to Change:
Men, Masculinity, and Love
(2004)*

INTERNATIONALISM

The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

Marx, the Communist Manifesto (1848)

International unity of the workers is more important than the national.

Lenin (1916)

Nationalism cannot flower if it does not grow in the garden of internationalism.

Sukarno

The interests of the working class and of its struggle against capitalism demand complete solidarity and the clos-

est unity of the workers of all nations; they demand resistance to the nationalist policy of the bourgeoisie of every nationalist.

*Lenin, Right of Nations to
Self-Determination (1904)*

Though frontiers and mountains stand between us, Proletarians of the whole world come together as one family.

Ho Chi Minh (1960)

The unity of the people throughout the world and cooperation among them are the guarantee for the victory of their common cause of creating a new world.

*Kim Il-sung, For a Free and
Peaceful New World (1991)*

All countries and nations are equal members of the international community and as such have the right to independence and equality. No privilege

and no arbitrariness should be tolerated in international relations; friendship and cooperation among countries must be fully developed on the principles of mutual respect, non-interference in the affairs of other countries, equality and mutual benefit.

Kim Il-sung, For a Free and Peaceful New World (1991)

What kind of spirit is this that makes a foreigner selflessly adopt the cause of the Chinese people's liberation as his own? It is the spirit of internationalism, the spirit of communism, from which every Chinese Communist must learn.... We must unite with the proletariat of all the capitalist countries, with the proletariat of Japan, Britain, the United States, Germany, Italy and all other capitalist countries, before it is possible to overthrow imperialism, to liberate our nation and people, and to liberate the other nations and peoples of the world. This is our internationalism, the inter-

nationalism with which we oppose both narrow nationalism and narrow patriotism.

*Mao, In Memory of Norman
Bethune (1939)*

So long as imperialism exists on the globe and oppresses and plunders the people, the people cannot leave off the anti-imperialist struggle even a moment. The struggle must continue till all shades of colonialism are wiped off the face of the earth once and for all, till all the oppressed and humiliated nations build their independent states and achieve social progress and national-prosperity.

*Kim Il-sung, Great Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Cause of Asian, African and Latin American Peoples is Invincible
(1968)*

Marxism-Leninism is ultimately deeply internationalist and, at the same

time, deeply patriotic.

Fidel Castro (1976)

It is not the Jews who are the enemies of the working people. The enemies of the workers are the capitalists of all countries. Long live the fraternal trust and fighting alliance of the workers of all nations in the struggle to overthrow capital.

*Lenin, Anti-Jewish Pogroms
(1919)*

ART & CULTURE

A people's art is the genesis of their freedom.

Claudia Jones

The best art is political and you ought to be able to make it unquestionably political and irrevocably beautiful at the same time.

Toni Morrison

All good art is political! There is none that isn't. And the ones that try hard not to be political are political by saying, "We love the Status Quo."

Toni Morrison

The artist's role is to raise the consciousness of the people. To make them understand life, the world and

themselves more completely. That's how I see it. Otherwise, I don't know why you do it.

Amiri Baraka (2007)

I want to remind us all that art is dangerous. I want to remind you of the history of artists who have been murdered, slaughtered, imprisoned, chopped up, refused entrance. The history of art, whether it's in music or written or what have you, has always been bloody because dictators and people in office and people who want to control and deceive know exactly the people who will disturb their plans- and those people are artists.

Toni Morrison (2016)

All art is a kind of confession, more or less oblique. All artists, if they are to survive, are forced, at last, to tell the whole story, to vomit the anguish up.

James Baldwin (1960)

Art makes knowledge accessible

across class, race, gender, educational and state boundaries.

Rashid, Interview with Comrade Rashid: On the Present State of New Afrikan/Black Crisis in America; Revolutionary Art; the United Panther Movement; and Communism vs. Anarchism (2010)

In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes, art that is detached from or independent of politics.

Mao, Talks at the Yen'an Forum on Literature and Art (1942)

[Our purpose is] to ensure that literature and art fit well into the whole revolutionary machine as a component part, that they operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the en-

emy, and that they help the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind.

Ibid.

The artist must elect to fight for freedom or slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative. The history of the capitalist era is characterized by the degradation of my people: despoiled of their lands, their true culture destroyed... denied equal protection of the law, and deprived their rightful place in the respect of their fellows.

Paul Robeson

Our aim is to stop the life cycle of the enemy culture and replace it with our own revolutionary culture. This can be done only by creating perfect disorder within the cycle of the enemy culture's life process and leaving a power vacuum to be filled by our building revolutionary culture.

*George Jackson, Blood In My
Eye (1971)*

The fault of many of our artists and intellectuals lies in their original sin: they are not true revolutionaries. We can try to graft the elm tree so that it will bear pears, but at the same time we must plant pear trees. New generations will come that will be free of original sin.

*Che, Man and Socialism in
Cuba (1965)*

It's an artist's duty to reflect the times in which we live.

Nina Simone

Revolutionary culture is a powerful revolutionary weapon for the broad masses of the people. It prepares the ground ideologically before the revolution comes and is an important, indeed essential, fighting front in the general revolutionary front during the revolution.

*Mao, On New Democracy
(1940)*

Proletarian art will not be that which describes the episodes of the revolutionary struggle, but rather that which describes the life that emanates from the revolution, its creations, and its fruits. It is not a question, therefore, of speaking of a new art. Art, like the new social order, is passing through a period of trial and error. "The revolution will kind its image in art when it is no longer a cataclysm foreign to the artist." The new art will be produced by a new type of humanity.

José Mariátegui, Trotsky
(1924)

A culture is a total way of life. It embraces what people ate and what they wore; the way they walked and the way they talked; the manner in which they treated death and greeted the newborn.

Walter Rodney, How Europe
Underdeveloped Africa (1972)

A major front in this struggle... is the cultural front. This front - which

relates directly to raising the consciousness and resolve of the masses - must directly challenge and counter the dominant bourgeois culture, which reflects and promotes the corrupt values of capitalism and conceals and stifles mass culture.

Rashid, Interview with Comrade Rashid: On the Present State of New Afrikan/Black Crisis in America; Revolutionary Art; the United Panther Movement; and Communism vs. Anarchism (2010)

The white fathers told us, I think therefore I am; and the black mothers in each of us-the poet-whispers in our dreams, I feel therefore I can be free. Poetry coins the language to express and charter this revolutionary awareness and demand, the implementation of that freedom.

Audre Lorde, Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches (1984)

Progressive art can assist people to learn not only about the objective forces at work in the society in which they live, but also about the intensely social character of their interior lives. Ultimately, it can propel people toward social emancipation.

Angela Davis, For A People's Culture (1995)

Let a hundred flowers bloom; let a hundred schools of thought contend” is the policy for promoting progress in the arts and the sciences and a flourishing socialist culture in our land.

Mao (1956)

CRITICISM/ SELF-CRITICISM

Constructive criticism and self-criticism are extremely important for any revolutionary organization. Without them, people tend to drown in their mistakes, not learn from them.

Assata Shakur, Assata: An Autobiography (1987)

You grow, we all grow, we're made to grow. You either evolve or disappear.

Tupac Shakur

Conscientious practice of self-criticism is still another hallmark distinguishing our Party from all other political parties. As we say, dust will accumulate if a room is not cleaned regularly, our fac-

es will get dirty if they are not washed regularly. Our comrades' minds and our Party's work may also collect dust, and also need sweeping and washing. The proverb "Running water is never stale and a door-hinge is never worm-eaten" means that constant motion prevents the inroads of germs and other organisms. To check up regularly on our work and in the process develop a democratic style of work, to fear neither criticism nor self-criticism, and to apply such good popular Chinese maxims as "Say all you know and say it without reserve", "Blame not the speaker but be warned by his words" and "Correct mistakes if you have committed them and guard against them if you have not" - this is the only effective way to prevent all kinds of political dust and germs from contaminating the minds of our comrades and the body of our Party.

Mao, On Coalition Government (1945)

If we have shortcomings, we are not afraid to have them pointed out and criticized, because we serve the people. Anyone, no matter who, may point our shortcomings. If he is right, we will correct them. If what he proposes will benefit the people, we will act upon it.

Mao, Serve the People (1941)

[The] democratic method of resolving contradictions among the people was epitomized in 1942 in the formula “unity, criticism, unity”. To elaborate, it means starting from the desire for unity, resolving contradictions through criticism or struggle and arriving at a new unity on a new basis. In our experience this is the correct method of resolving contradictions among the people.

*Mao, On the Correct Handling
of Contradictions Among the
People (1957)*

Marxists should not be afraid of criticism from any quarter. Quite the

contrary, they need to temper and develop themselves and win new positions in the teeth of criticism and in the storm and stress of struggle. Fighting against wrong ideas is like being vaccinated -- a man develops greater immunity from disease as a result of vaccination. Plants raised in hothouses are unlikely to be hardy. Carrying out the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend will not weaken, but strengthen, the leading position of Marxism in the ideological field.

Ibid.

Self-criticism, cruel, unsparing criticism that goes to the very root of the evil, is life and breath for the proletarian movement.

Rosa Luxemburg

EDUCATION, STUDY, & KNOWLEDGE

Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.

Lenin, What Is To Be Done?
(1902)

Theory is important to those of us who are struggling to transform society because it offers distilled experience so we don't have to repeat mistakes. A scientific materialist view of theory and history gives working and oppressed peoples a roadmap to find the path toward liberation.

Les Feinberg, Trans Liberation
(1998)

No one is going to give you the education you need to overthrow them. No-

body is going to teach you your true history, teach you your true heroes, if they know that that knowledge will help set you free.

Assata Shakur, Assata: An Autobiography (1987)

Not theory and theory alone, but theory and practice. The two go together. We not only thought about the Marxist-Leninist theory—we put it into practice.

Fred Hampton, You Can Murder a Liberator but You Can't Murder Liberation (1969)

There are basically three ways one can learn: through study, through observation, and through actual experience.

Huey P Newton, The Correct Handling of a Revolution (1967)

Knowledge begins with practice, and theoretical knowledge, which is ac-

quired through practice, must then return to practice. The active function of knowledge manifests itself not only in the active leap from perceptual to rational knowledge, but - and this is more important - it must manifest itself in the leap from rational knowledge to revolutionary practice.

Mao, On Practice (1937)

Whoever wants to know a thing has no way of doing so except by coming into contact with it, that is, by living (practicing) in its environment. ... If you want knowledge, you must take part in the practice of changing reality. If you want to know the taste of a pear, you must change the pear by eating it yourself.... If you want to know the theory and methods of revolution, you must take part in revolution. All genuine knowledge originates in direct experience.

Ibid.

Discover the truth through prac-

tice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing.

Ibid.

Education is a weapon whose effects depend on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed.

Stalin (1937)

When we look at a thing, we must examine its essence and treat its appear-

ance merely as an usher at the threshold, and once we cross the threshold, we must grasp the essence of the thing; this is the only reliable and scientific method of analysis.

*Mao, A Single Spark Can Start
A Prairie Fire (1930)*

To educate the masses politically does not mean, cannot mean, making a political speech. What it means is to try, relentlessly and passionately, to teach the masses that everything depends on them; that if we stagnate it is their responsibility, and that if we go forward it is due to them too, that there is no such thing as a demiurge, that there is no famous man who will take the responsibility for everything, but that the demiurge is the people themselves and the magic hands are finally only the hands of the people.

*Frantz Fanon, Wretched of
the Earth (1961)*

Communists must use the democratic method of persuasion and education when working among the laboring people and must on no account resort to commandism or coercion.

*Mao, On the Correct Handling
of Contradictions Among the
People (1957)*

THE ENVIRONMENT

The Earth does not belong to man,
man belongs to the Earth.

Chief Seattle (1854)

There is no substitute for the ecological environment, without which one can hardly live.

Xi Jinping

We can pay the ecological debt by changing economic models, and by giving up luxury consumption, setting aside selfishness and individualism, and thinking about the people and the planet Earth.

Evo Morales (2008)

Ecology without class struggle is just gardening.

Chico Mendes

The only solution to pollution is a people's humane revolution.

Bobby Seale (1971)

They have poisoned the seas and the rivers. They have polluted the air. They have weakened and perforated the ozone layer. They have saturated the atmosphere with gases, altering climatic conditions with the catastrophic effects we are already beginning to suffer. The forests are disappearing. The deserts are expanding. Billions of tons of fertile soil are washed every year into the sea. Numerous species are becoming extinct. Population pressures and poverty lead to desperate efforts to survive, even at the expense of nature. Third World countries, yesterday's colonies and today nations, exploited and plundered by an unjust international economic order, cannot be blamed for all this... If we want to save humanity from this self-destruction, there must be a better distribution of the wealth and technologies available

on the planet.

Fidel Castro (1992)

An ever-expanding capitalism and a fragile, finite ecology are on a calamitous collision course. It is not true that the ruling politico-economic interests are in a state of denial about this. Far worse than denial, they are in a state of utter antagonism toward those who think the planet is more important than corporate profits.

*Michael Parenti, Blackshirts
and Reds (1997)*

Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology...only by sapping the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the worker.

Marx, Das Kapital (1867)

If we want to save the planet earth, to save life and humanity, we have a duty to put an end to the capitalist system. Unless we put an end to the capi-

talist system, it is impossible to imagine that there will be equality and justice on this planet earth. This is why I believe that it is important to put an end to the exploitation of human beings and to the pillage of natural resources, to put an end to destructive wars for markets and raw materials, to the plundering of energy, particularly fossil fuels, to the excessive consumption of goods and to the accumulation of waste. The capitalist system only allows us to heap up waste.

Evo Morales (2008)

We shall protect ecosystems as precious as we protect our eyes, and cherish them as dearly as we cherish our lives.

Xi Jinping

Recognizing that “our solutions are in Nature,” we could strive to find development opportunities while preserving Nature, and achieve win-win in both ecological conservation and high-quality

development.

Xi Jinping (2020)

We can not have equilibrium in this world with the current inequality and destruction of Mother Earth. Capitalism is what is causing this problem and it needs to end.

Evo Morales

DEDICATION TO WIN/ DISCIPLINE

The life of a single human being is worth a million times more than all the property of the richest man on earth.

Che (1960)

I don't think you and I are very closely related, however, if you are capable of trembling with indignation each time that an injustice is committed anywhere in the world, we are comrades, and that is more important.

Che (1964)

At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality... We must strive

every day so that this love of living humanity will be transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force.

*Che, Man and Socialism in
Cuba (1965)*

If you get yourself involved in a revolutionary struggle then you've got to be serious. You got to know what you're doing. You got to already have practiced some type of theory. That's the reason we ask people to follow the leadership of the vanguard party. Because we all theorizing and we all practicing. We make mistakes, but we're always correcting them and we're always getting better.

*Fred Hampton, You Can Murder a Liberator but You Can't
Murder Liberation (1969)*

Everything in this world can be robbed and stolen, except one thing; this one thing is the love that emanates from a human being towards a solid commit-

ment to a conviction or cause.

Ghassan Kanafani

I had spent many years pursuing excellence... Now it was dedicated to freedom, and that was far more important.

Nina Simone

It is not difficult to be a revolutionary when revolution has already broken out and is in spate, when all people are joining the revolution just because they are carried away, because it is the vogue, and sometimes even from careerist motives. It is far more difficult—and far more precious—to be a revolutionary when the conditions for direct, open, really mass and really revolutionary struggle do not yet exist.

*Lenin, Left-Wing Communism:
An Infantile Disorder (1920)*

True courage consists in being strong enough to master and overcome

oneself and subordinate one's will to the will of the collective, the will of the higher party body.

Stalin (1929)

Communists must at all times stand up for the truth, because truth is in the interests of the people and Communists must be ready at all times to correct their mistakes, because mistakes are against the interests of the people.

Mao, On Coalition Government (1957)

Patience has its limits. Take it too far and it's cowardice.

George Jackson, Soledad Brother (1965/1970)

Conventional wisdom would have one believe that it is insane to resist this, the mightiest of empires, but what history really shows is that today's empire is tomorrow's ashes; that nothing lasts forever, and that to not resist is to acqui-

esce in your own oppression. The greatest form of sanity that anyone can exercise is to resist that force that is trying to repress, oppress, and fight down the human spirit.

Mumia Abu-Jamal

Be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory.

*Mao, The Foolish Old Man
Who Removed the Mountains
(1945)*

We cannot wait around for any one else to come and do it. Why are we waiting for someone else to come and fix things? Why aren't we doing it ourselves? I would like to send my heartfelt greetings to the congress. I am convinced Socialism is the only answer and I urge all comrades to take this struggle to a victorious conclusion. Only this will free us from the chains of bigotry and exploitation.

Malala Yousafzai (2013)

Now if we do wanna live the thug life and the gangsta' life and all that, OK, so stop being cowards and let's have a revolution. But we don't wanna do that, dudes just wanna live "character", they wanna be "cartoons", but if they really wanted to do something, they was that tuff, alright, let's start our own country, let's start a revolution, let's get outta' here, let's do something.

Tupac Shakur (1995)

How is the discipline of the proletariat's revolutionary party maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced? First, by the class-consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its tenacity, self-sacrifice and heroism. Second, by its ability to link up, maintain the closest contact, and—if you wish—merge, in certain measure, with the broadest masses of the working people—primarily with the proletariat, but also with the non-proletarian masses of working people. Third,

by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard, by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided the broad masses have seen, from their own experience, that they are correct.

*Lenin, Left-Wing Communism:
An Infantile Disorder (1920)*

I have nothing and therefore nothing to lose. I have conditioned myself for every conceivable shock and strain – physically, mentally, and emotionally. I fear nothing. No threat or prospect of danger deters me; I've faced them all, continuously and by choice. I am willing to suffer with those who suffer, to die with those who die, and to struggle in the most extreme manner for their liberation. I've lived the past decade with no pleasures, no amenities, and no entertainment. I've conditioned myself for every extreme. This is the level of commitment that our struggle demands, and the level of commitment that I have, and

those who share this commitment have
my complete loyalty.

Rashid, Defying the Tomb
(2010)

WAR

We are advocates of the abolition of war, we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war, and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun.

Mao, Problems of War and Strategy (1938)

Warfare is a means and not an end. Warfare is a tool of revolutionaries. The important thing is the revolution! The important thing is the revolutionary cause, revolutionary ideas, revolutionary objectives, revolutionary sentiments, revolutionary virtues!

Fidel Castro (1967)

Weapons are an important factor in war, but not the decisive factor; it is

people, not things that are decisive. The contest of strength is not only a contest of military and economic power, but also a contest of human power and morale. People necessarily wield military and economic power.

Mao, On Protracted Warfare
(1938)

War is not only a contest of strength, but also a test of morality and ethics.

Kim Il-sung, With the Century
Vol.3 (1992)

Mass struggle was utilized throughout the war by the Vietnamese communist party. It was used, first of all, because guerrilla warfare is one expression of the mass struggle. One cannot conceive of guerrilla war when it is isolated from the people. The guerrilla group is the numerically inferior vanguard of the great majority of the people, who have no weapons

but express themselves through the vanguard.

*Che, People's War People's
Army (1964)*

Either we concentrate our forces for a decisive armed struggle to achieve our objectives, or we will each fall one by one to the blows of imperialism in its present stage of open and desperate offensive.

*Kwame Nkrumah, Handbook
of Revolutionary Warfare
(1968)*

Without preparedness superiority is not real superiority and there can be no initiative either. Having grasped this point, a force which is inferior but prepared, can often defeat a superior enemy by surprise attack.

*Mao, On Protracted Warfare
(1938)*

Any army which does not train to use all the weapons, all the means and methods of warfare that the enemy possesses, or may possess, is behaving in an unwise or even criminal manner. This applies to politics even more than it does to the art of war.

*Lenin, Left-Wing Communism:
An Infantile Disorder (1920)*

Why does the guerrilla fighter fight? We must come to the inevitable conclusion that the guerrilla fighter is a social reformer, that he takes up arms responding to the angry protest of the people against their oppressors, and that he fights in order to change the social system that keeps all his unarmed brothers in ignominy and misery.

Che, Guerrilla Warfare (1961)

One of the permanent concerns of the urban guerrilla is his identification with popular causes to win public support. Where government actions become

inept and corrupt, the urban guerrilla should not hesitate to step in and show that he opposes the government, and thus gain popular sympathy... The urban guerrilla is engaged in revolutionary action for the people, and with them seeks the participation of the people in the struggle against the dictatorship and the liberation of the country. Beginning with the city and the support of the people, the rural guerrilla war develops rapidly, establishing its infrastructure carefully while the urban area continues the rebellion.

*Carlos Marighella, Mini-
manual of the Urban Guerrilla
(1969)*

THE REVOLUTIONARY MIND

My fear was not of death itself, but a death without meaning. I wanted my death to be something the people could relate to, a basis for further mobilization of the community.

*Huey P Newton, Revolutionary
Suicide (1973)*

The first lesson a revolutionary must learn is that he is a doomed man.

Ibid.

I have no doubt that the revolution will triumph. The people of the world will prevail, seize power, seize the means of production, wipe out racism, capitalism.

Ibid.

I do not think that life will change for the better without an assault on the Establishment, which goes on exploiting the wretched of the earth. This belief lies at the heart of the concept of revolutionary suicide. Thus it is better to oppose the forces that would drive me to self-murder than to endure them. Although I risk the likelihood of death, there is at least the possibility, if not the probability, of changing intolerable conditions. This possibility is important, because much in human existence is based upon hope without any real understanding of the odds. Indeed, we are all—Black and white alike—ill in the same way, mortally ill. But before we die, how shall we live? I say with hope and dignity; and if premature death is the result, that death has a meaning reactionary suicide can never have. It is the price of self-respect.

Ibid.

Revolutionary suicide does not mean that I and my comrades have a

death wish; it means just the opposite. We have such a strong desire to live with hope and human dignity that existence without them is impossible. When reactionary forces crush us, we must move against these forces, even at the risk of death.

Ibid.

Revolutionary morality consists, in whatever circumstances, in resolutely struggling against all enemies, maintaining one's vigilance, standing ready to fight, and refusing to submit, to bow one's head. Only by so doing can we defeat the enemy, and fulfill our revolutionary tasks.

Ho Chi Minh, On Revolutionary Morality (1958)

Revolutionary morality consists in uniting with the masses in one body, trusting them and paying attention to their opinion. By their words and deeds.

Ibid.

Revolutionary morality does not fall from the sky. It is developed and consolidated through persevering daily struggle and effort. Like jade, the more it is polished the more it shines. Like gold, it grows ever purer as it goes into the melting pot.

Ibid.

Some see our struggle as a symbol of the trend toward suicide among Blacks. Scholars and academics, in particular, have been quick to make this accusation. They fail to perceive differences. Jumping off a bridge is not the same as moving to wipe out the overwhelming force of an oppressive army. When scholars call our actions suicidal, they should be logically consistent and describe all historical revolutionary movements in the same way. Thus the American colonialists, the French of the late eighteenth century, the Russians of 1917, the Jews of Warsaw, the Cubans, the NLF, the North Vietnamese—any people who struggle

against a brutal and powerful force—are suicidal.

*Huey P Newton, Revolutionary
Suicide (1973)*

It is better to oppose the forces that would drive me to self-murder than to endure them.

Ibid.

Whoever sides with the revolutionary people is a revolutionary. Whoever sides with imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism is a counter-revolutionary. Whoever sides with the revolutionary people in words only but acts otherwise is a revolutionary in speech. Whoever sides with revolutionary people in deed as well as in word is a revolutionary in the full sense.

*Mao, Closing Speech at the
Second Session of the First
National Committee of the
Chinese People's Political Con-
sultive Conference (1950)*

By having no family,
I inherited the family of humanity.
By having no possessions,
I have possessed all.
By rejecting the love of one,
I have received the love of all.
By surrendering my life to the revolution,
I found eternal life.
Revolutionary Suicide.

*Huey P Newton, Revolutionary
Suicide (1973)*

VIOLENCE / SELF-DEFENSE

In order for nonviolence to work, your opponent must have a conscience. The United States has none.

Kwame Ture (1967)

Can the hungry go on a hunger strike? Non-violence is a piece of theatre. You need an audience. What can you do when you have no audience? People have the right to resist annihilation.

Arundhati Roy (2011)

Is it not violent for a child to go to bed hungry in the richest country in the world? I think it is violent. But that type of violence is so institutionalized that it becomes a part of our way of life.

Not only do we accept poverty, we even find it normal. And that again is because the oppressor makes his violence a part of the functioning society.

*Kwame Ture, Stokely Speaks:
From Black Power to Pan-Afri-
canism (1969)*

We were told that violence in itself is evil, and that, whatever the cause, it is unjustified morally. By what standard of morality can the violence used by a slave to break his chains be considered the same as the violence of a slave master? By what standards can we equate the violence of blacks who have been oppressed, suppressed, depressed and repressed for four centuries with the violence of white fascists. Violence aimed at the recovery of human dignity and at equality cannot be judged by the same yardstick as violence aimed at maintenance of discrimination and oppression.

*Walter Rodney, The Ground-
ings with my Brothers (1969)*

If violence is wrong in America, violence is wrong abroad. If it is wrong to be violent defending black women and black children and black babies and black men, then it is wrong for America to draft us and make us violent abroad in defense of her. And if it is right for America to draft us, and teach us how to be violent in defense of her, then it is right for you and me to do whatever is necessary to defend our own people right here in this country.

*Malcolm X, Message to the
Grass Roots (1963)*

For the oppressors, it is always the oppressed who are disaffected, who are 'violent' 'barbaric' 'wicked' or 'ferocious' when they react to the violence of the oppressors.

*Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the
Oppressed (1968)*

With the establishment of a relationship of oppression, violence has

already begun. Never in history has violence been initiated by the oppressed. How could they be the initiators, if they themselves are the result of violence?

Ibid.

Non-violence is backed by the theory of soul-force in which suffering is courted in the hope of ultimately winning over the opponent. But what happens when such an attempt fail to achieve the object? It is here that soul-force has to be combined with physical force so as not to remain at the mercy of tyrannical and ruthless enemy.

Bhagat Singh

...Because of the way this society is organized, because of the violence that exists on the surface everywhere, you have to expect that there are going to be such explosions, you have to expect things like that as reactions... When someone asks me about violence... I find it incredible. Because what it means is

that the person asking that question has absolutely no idea what Black people have gone through, what Black people have experienced in this country since the time the first Black person was kidnapped from the shores of Africa.

Angela Davis (1972)

The oppressor is only opposed to violence when the oppressed talk about using violence against the oppressor... The way the oppressor tries to stop the oppressed from using violence as a means to attain liberation is to raise ethical or moral questions about violence. I want to state emphatically here that violence in any society is neither moral nor is it ethical. It is neither right nor is it wrong. It is just simply a question of who has the power to legalize violence.

*Kwame Ture, Stokely Speaks:
From Black Power to Pan-Africanism (1969)*

I'm nonviolent with those who are

nonviolent with me. But when you drop that violence on me, then you've made me go insane, and I'm not responsible for what I do.

Malcolm X, the Ballot or the Bullet (1964)

There's new thinking coming in. There's new strategy coming in. It'll be Molotov cocktails this month, hand grenades next month, and something else next month. It'll be ballots, or it'll be bullets. It'll be liberty, or it will be death. The only difference about this kind of death—it'll be reciprocal.

Ibid.

Kill the slave-master, destroy him utterly, move against him with implacable fortitude. Break his oppressive power by any means necessary.

Huey P Newton, In Defense of Self-Defense (1967)

PRISONS

Prisons do not disappear problems, they disappear human beings. And the practice of disappearing vast numbers of people from poor, immigrant and racially marginalized communities has literally become big business.

*Angela Davis, Masked Racism
(1998)*

It is said that ‘the degree of civilization in a society can be judged by visiting its prison.’ By that criterion, America is without a doubt the most barbaric nation in the world today, bar none.

*Sundiata Acoli, Look for Me in
the Whirlwind: From the Pan-
ther 21 to 21st-Century Revolu-
tions (2017)*

The prison has become a black hole into which the detritus of contemporary capitalism is deposited. Mass imprisonment generates profits as it devours social wealth, and thus it tends to reproduce the very conditions that lead people to prison. There are thus real and often quite complicated connections between the deindustrialization of the economy—a process that reached its peak during the 1980s—and the rise of mass imprisonment, which also began to spiral during the Reagan-Bush era.

Angela Davis, Are Prisons Obsolete? (2003)

The massive prison-building project that began in the 1980s created the means of concentrating and managing what the capitalist system had implicitly declared to be a human surplus. In the meantime, elected officials and the dominant media justified the new draconian sentencing practices, sending more and more people to prison in the frenzied

drive to build more and more prisons by arguing that this was the only way to make our communities safe from murderers, rapists, and robbers.

Ibid.

Once U.S. prisons are recognized to be a system of enslavement, and the lie is exposed that slavery in Amerika was ever abolished, the abusive conditions that pervades them makes perfect sense.

Rashid, Razor Wire Plantations (2014)

The majority of people who are in prison are there because society has failed them.

Angela Davis, Freedom is a Constant Struggle (2015)

The process through which imprisonment developed into the primary mode of state-inflicted punishment was very much related to the rise of capital-

ism and to the appearance of a new set of ideological conditions.

Angela Davis

Prison kills your spirit, straight up. It kills your spirit. There is no creativity, there's none of that.

Tupac Shakur (1995)

The political prisoner's words or deeds have in one form or another embodied political protests against the established order and have consequently brought him into acute conflict with the state. In light of the political content of his act, the "crime" (which may or may not have been committed) assumes a minor importance. In this country, however, where the special category of political prisoners is not officially acknowledged, the political prisoner inevitably stands trial for a specific criminal offense, not for a political act.

Angela Davis, If They Come in the Morning (1971)

Most people don't quite relate US prisons to government sponsored torture. We can thank the mainstream corporate media and politicians for this. Since the 1960s and 1970s they've persistently projected the false image of US prisons as resorts where criminal predators eat chips, lift weights, and watch videos all day, much like the images given of slavery as an experience that Black folks actually enjoyed. These false images are sustainable because the real world of prisons is a hidden one, concealed behind walls and razor wire, inaccessible to the public.

*Rashid, Amerikan Prisons Are
Government-Sponsored Tor-
ture (2007)*

Prison is a second-by-second assault on the soul, a day-to-day degradation of the self, an oppressive steel and brick umbrella that transforms seconds into hours and hours into days.

Mumia Abu-Jamal

It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.

Nelson Mandela

When the prison doors are open, the real dragon will fly out.

Ho Chi Minh

