



**Centennial of Lenin's death, Jan. 20-21, 2024**

# Int'l Assembly Against Imperialism

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Workers World Party invites you to mark the 100th anniversary of the death of Vladimir Lenin on Jan. 21, 2024, with an International Assembly Against Imperialism. We encourage all those who view this as an important occasion to join us in building this assembly. Our hope is to devote this occasion to advancing the struggle against imperialism and for revolution.

The U.S.- and NATO-instigated war in Ukraine, and the growing danger of the extension of the war into Asia, will be high on the agenda of this anti-imperialist assembly. However, this is just a starting point. All the struggles that are linked together by the global class struggle will be on the assembly's agenda.

This includes the Palestinian liberation struggle, the defense of Cuba, the climate crisis, the struggle to free Puerto Rico, the struggles against racism and fascism, and struggles for the liberation of people with disabilities, women and gender-oppressed and LGBTQIA2S+ people. It includes the struggle of the global working class against capitalist exploitation.

## **Lenin's legacy**

Lenin is most widely known as the principal leader of the Russian revolution. Those who are more familiar with Lenin's contributions know that, among other things, he analyzed the laws governing imperialism (the highest stage of capitalism), clarified the nature and purpose of the state, and developed both in theory and practice the kind of professional organization of revolutionaries that is necessary if the objective is revolution.

## **Lenin and the struggle against racism**

For many, Lenin's most meaningful contribution was elevating the question of colonialism in the working-class movement, advancing the struggle for national

liberation and self-determination as critical to the global class struggle – and forging the solidarity necessary to unite the workers and the oppressed of the world to defeat imperialism and capitalism.

Lenin regarded racism and white supremacy, the ideological products of colonialism and neo-colonialism, as posing the most dangerous threats to the working class.

What's often not entirely understood, even by some who consider themselves adherents of Leninism, is that Lenin's thinking about imperialism was fundamentally centered on its impact on the working class. Lenin understood that the growth of imperialism afforded the ruling classes – especially in the most advanced imperialist countries – the means to divide and stratify the working class on the basis of living standard, race and gender. This ability to divide the working class is one of the main pillars of imperialism.

This is why the struggle against imperialism is, in effect, the struggle against all of the stratification, chauvinism and backwardness that capitalism relies upon to render the working class hopelessly divided. The building of a new international revolutionary workers' movement, based on unconditional solidarity with the struggle of oppressed people for self-determination, was one of the goals to which Lenin devoted his final years.

The essence of Lenin was the search for the means, the strategies and the organizations that the working class requires to make revolution – and the commitment



to struggle against having any lesser ultimate goal, as he understood that capitalism could not be reformed.

## **Crisis of system will only get worse**

The capitalist ruling class is seldom, if ever, honest with itself – even in private, much less in public. Often the closest it gets to honesty is at exclusive gatherings, like the World Economic Summit in Davos, Switzerland. The official report issued at the end of the last Davos meeting, in January 2023, stated: "As 2023 begins, the world is facing a set of risks that feel both

wholly new and eerily familiar.

"We have seen a return of 'older' risks – inflation, unsustainable levels of debt, trade wars, capital outflows from emerging markets, widespread social unrest, geopolitical confrontation, ecological crisis and the specter of nuclear warfare – which few of this generation's business leaders and public policy-makers have experienced." ([tinyurl.com/yup2ru8j](https://tinyurl.com/yup2ru8j))

This was written a month before the collapse of a handful of important banks, marking the beginning of a new crisis of the global financial system which could evolve into something even more catastrophic than the collapse of 2008. In every way that dangerous developments can be measured – be they war, the economy, the pandemic or the climate – at present, the magnitude of these combined crises which are feeding off each other is without historical precedent.

Capitalism and imperialism are headed in the direction of greater explosions, greater violence, steeper cliffs to fall off of, and bottomless plunges. The world and all forms of life are at the mercy of a dying capitalist system that refuses to go quickly and quietly, instead insisting on torturing society – and threatening its existence until capitalism is forced into the dustbin

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of history.

When a system is no longer able to take social development further, it starts to go backward. In one sense, this is the context in which to understand the attack on abortion rights, the white supremacist offensive against voting rights, the assault on LGBTQIA2S+ rights and the threat of fascism.

### **The problem in the struggle against imperialism**

In its desperation to hold on to its waning hegemony, U.S. imperialism and its allies have turned Ukraine into a battlefield. In Asia, U.S. imperialism's drive to contain and diminish China has catalyzed an enormous arms buildup and preparations for war. The imperialist war drive must be exposed and fought.

From a Leninist perspective, there is a profound contradiction in the way that imperialist war is being fought. As it stands, the world is dependent on China principally, but also on Russia and Iran, along with other countries – such as Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Venezuela and Nicaragua – to prevent U.S. imperialism from reestablishing its global empire.

This state of affairs – the existence of a bloc of allied, anti-imperialist countries – can only be a temporary solution in fighting U.S. imperialism. Ultimately, the working-class movement, as part of its development into a global class aware of its own class interests, must become the dominant social force that is battling capitalism and imperialism on a world scale.

To some this may seem totally inconceivable, but it is not. It is no more inconceivable than the idea, and the necessity, for socialist revolution. Both battles are inextricably linked, and pivotal to the evolution of the global class struggle. We contend that it is only the working class that is capable of defeating war and fascism and making real change – i.e., making revolution.

### **Central to fixing the problem: the development of the working class**

In general, the main problem that is holding back the working class, particularly

in the U.S., is that it has yet to develop a mass movement that is class-conscious, organized, radicalized, oriented to class struggle, and independent of the capitalist political parties. Whatever obstacles stand in the way of such a development, however uneven the process of such a development may be, this development is the necessary next phase for the working class, the phase that will change history.

The capitalist ruling class has waged war, not only on the living standards of the working class, but also a war on the prospect of the working class developing into the most potent enemy of the capitalist system, capable of smashing it and opening a new chapter of human history.

In the wake of new technology and the digital economy, the capitalist class has even tried to cast doubt on the existence of the working class, always referring to it as the “middle class.” The labor bureaucracy has embraced this flawed terminology and even some “Marxists” dismiss the revolutionary potential of the working class.

The contemporary global working class is without a doubt more socially complex, more atomized, more politically divided, and most importantly, in a state of ever-increasing, constant and rapid transformation. This state, however, does not negate that objectively, the working class is not disappearing or shrinking. To the contrary, it is growing as more and more of society is forced out of what are considered the privileged strata and propelled into the majority of society, which capitalism openly disdains, exploits, oppresses and mercilessly discards.

Does the working class remain the social agent of revolution? We must critically pose this question and help to produce some of the answers that can affirm the role of the working class.

In the U.S., the main purpose that the Democratic Party serves, and to an extent the Republican Party as well, is to prevent the independent development of the working class and to keep it tethered to capitalism and imperialism. Lenin wrote in “What Is to Be Done” that “The greatest hindrance to the development of the class consciousness of the proletariat was the tendency to subordinate the proletariat to the bourgeois.”

For too long, much of the leadership

of the organized labor movement has been allowed to limit everything that the working class must break free of in order to develop. Once again, in the upcoming 2024 presidential elections, the organized labor movement will curtail whatever class struggles and worker organizing it's involved in to focus on reelecting Democratic Party politicians.

Workers should not be relying on a capitalist party. It is a dangerous dead end and must be broken.

### **Working class is rising up**

Indeed, workers are beginning to break away from past restraints and forge a new workers' movement. There is a global strike wave that extends from France to India to the U.S. Militant young workers have begun a rank-and-file struggle to organize Starbucks, and this struggle has spread to other restaurant and store chains.

Amazon workers have made organizing inroads into this global, mega corporation that has vowed to crush any organizing attempts. Gig workers and migrant workers are organizing under the most difficult conditions. However, all of this is just the beginning.

### **How should we commemorate Lenin?**

The best way to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Lenin's death is to review, along with fellow comrades on as wide a basis as possible, what would be required – theoretically, politically, ideologically, organizationally and practically – to move the world towards the goals of Leninism.

The only way that such a lofty objective can even be seriously considered is if we proceed on the basis of seeing the state of the anti-imperialist movement, the working-class movement, and other important movements not merely as we'd like them to be, but as they are. Doing this will give us a true sense of how far we have to go, and what it is that can be done now, as opposed to what tasks must wait for changes in conditions.

Let's use this Lenin centennial to analyze, study and determine new ways, better ways to advance and help the struggle to smash imperialism and to aid the revolutionary development of the working class. □