

Towards the Future with Lenin!*

Address of the Central Committee of the CPRF to the People of Russia

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Dear fellow citizens,
Comrades and friends,

Each of us can see that in the third millennium humanity has not been spared from misery and suffering. From the horror of wars and bloody conflicts. From mass poverty. World capitalism is pushing us into the darkness of reaction and violence. More and more ruthless is the grin of predators who want to tear the world to pieces and assert their dominance. The deeper the tragic character of events, the brighter shines the great example of the heroes and fighters for the happiness and a worthy life for the working people.

Russia was extremely lucky. At Russia's most difficult period of disintegration, disarray, and deep crisis came along the man who understood like no-one else the essence of historical turning points and the way out of the country's tragic situation. He perceived "the nerve of history" and led the movement forward. The name of that man is Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. One hundred years have passed since his large and kind heart stopped beating. We have begun the second century of Lenin's immortality.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin passed away on 21 January 1924. The tragic news shook the Soviet Union – the country he founded. Profound grief filled the hearts of millions of working people across the planet. Despite the severe cold, masses of people streamed to Moscow. Up to half a million people came to the Hall of Columns in the Trade Union Building. Each of them wanted to honor the memory of the man who changed the world forever, who made it purer and more just.

*) Г.А. Зюганов. В будущее – с Лениным! (2023-11-13, the original is accessible under the official website of the CPRF by <https://kprf.ru/party-live/cknews/222449.html>)

Translator: International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation

World history is vast, complex and multi-faceted. It has many metrics and various “scales,” which determine the contribution of everyone to the course of life. By any planetary measure, Lenin’s contribution to the destiny of humanity is enormous. As we enter the second century after his death, Russia and the world will continue to march under the influence of his great discoveries and outstanding achievements.

It would seem that there is nothing eternal under the sun. Yet life shows that time is no obstacle for passing on truly great ideas. After testing their strength, history elevates them to ever greater heights. It is 175 years since the publication of *The Communist Manifesto*. But history has not forgotten the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, which were taken up and brilliantly implemented by Lenin.

Communist theory was an unheard-of accomplishment in the history of humanity. For the first time in thousands of years it answered the key, fundamental questions of world history. From century to century the best brains struggled to resolve them. And then a teaching appeared that discovered the laws of the development of society.

In rejecting attempts to doom working people to eternal oppression, socialist theory gave people the master map for moving toward justice. This great knowledge helps working people not to lose their way in the maze of byways of “capitalism gone mad” and to choose the correct and reliable path toward the future. Ill-wishers, liars, and traitors are powerless in the face of such theoretical weapons.

Even Lenin’s strongest enemies had to reckon with this invincible power. Not to appear small, evil, and narrow-minded they recognized Lenin’s greatness. “No Asian conqueror, whether Tamerlane or Genghis Khan, has enjoyed the reputation of Lenin,” wrote the staunch anti-communist Winston Churchill.

There have, of course, been attempts to challenge the titan. But those who tried ended up looking helpless and pitiful – like Alexander Solzhenitsyn who cooked up his lampoon “Lenin in Zurich.” Today it has become evident that all the mud in the world could not denigrate the name of the founder of Bolshevism.

In our day, liberal propaganda of every stripe, on the one hand, and “Black Hundred” sorties on the other continue trying to smear and distort the image of Vladimir Ilyich. The enemies of socialism blame him for receiving “money from Parvus,” for “the philosophers’ ship,” and for the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. They have no desire to investigate properly and understand in depth. They have assumed the role of information killers, counting on the inhumanity of new-era psychological warfare. Through relentless misinformation these minions are anxious to bury Lenin’s authority beneath heaps of slander and lies.

But the truth is alive and it attests that the entire activity of Ulyanov-Lenin was focused on the great feat of liberating the working people from oppression and coercion, of transforming society based on the principles of justice and humanism, equality and creative endeavor. The founder of Bolshevism acted in the name of the majority of the people – Lenin’s main ally. This majority is his associate and follower, well-wisher and friend. Nothing can compare with such an ally!

High achievers were even more aware of the significance of Lenin’s contribution to world history. Concerning the founder of the Soviet state, the great scientist Albert Einstein said: “I honor Lenin as a man who completely sacrificed himself and devoted all his energy to the realization of social justice ... men of his type are the guardians and restorers of humanity.”

For all who are able to think and feel, Lenin was a giant who creatively developed the teaching of scientific communism. Being an outstanding theoretician, he was thoroughly conversant with the dialectics of Marx and Engels. He was a brilliant propagandist of these ideas. He developed and implemented all this in daily life. In fierce polemics with the right- and left-wing opportunists, Vladimir Ilyich firmly opposed attempts to revise Marxism.

Lenin's own contribution to Marxism was so great that it ushered in a new stage in the comprehensive and organic development of communist teaching. In the early 20th century Marxism-Leninism became a veritable ideological and theoretical breakthrough. The power of this science consists in the ability to profoundly understand complicated processes, sum up the accumulated experience, and propose ways of resolving the main contradictions of the epoch.

The truth of Marxist-Leninist theory is universal. It is as relevant today as it was in the early 20th century. Its ideological framework is the basis of the programs of all communist and workers' parties worldwide. In the 2021 book, *Thoughts on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era*, Xi Jinping said that history should be assessed "from the viewpoint of historical materialism." He stressed that "Marxism itself is the truth," whose brilliance "is manifested in its constant development in time and in practice." For Marx the outcome of the struggle against capitalism was not in doubt – communism will prevail. Xi Jinping notes that with the collapse of the Soviet Union many came to doubt Marxism, but China has overturned all doubts. The leader of the PRC is completely correct: his country's spectacular successes are proof of the victory of Marxism.

The strength of the communist movement is its close connection with practice. Lenin worked tirelessly to strengthen this tradition. That is why, having created a party of a new type, he confidently steered it through the trials of revolution and the conflagrations of Civil War. The Bolshevik Party breathed into millions of hearts the immense confidence that a just peace is possible.

Lenin managed to accomplish his main task. He proved the all-conquering power of socialist ideas. Vladimir Ulyanov-Lenin became the first Marxist who led a victorious proletarian revolution and stood at the helm of a state of workers and peasants. The foundations of Soviet society and state system were laid under his leadership. Our Motherland became the leader of world development.

Lenin's thinking embraced phenomena on a global scale and showed its genius in solving practical issues of managing a large country. His ability astonished contemporaries. Awareness of the scale of his personality translated itself into powerful artistic images, like in the case of Vladimir Mayakovsky:

In his brain
He handled
a thousand gubernias,
Carried
up to a billion and a half
people,
He weighed
the world
in a single night...

In the eyes of the proletarian poet Lenin is the man who “captured the whole earth at once and saw what was hidden by time.”

Lenin combined sober political calculation, precise assessments, and conclusions with the extraordinary audacity of a revolutionary. Under his guidance, the Party succeeded in turning a bourgeois revolution into a socialist revolution. He insisted on signing the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, an extremely difficult decision that eventually led to new victories. Lenin's turn to the New Economic Policy puzzled many of his associates, but the Party's leader again turned out to be correct!

In a situation of economic disarray, hunger, and typhus epidemics Lenin figured out how to take the mangled and bleeding Motherland to the cutting edge of technological progress. He put forward the slogan: “Communism is Soviet power plus electrification of the whole country.” This formula distilled an incentive for all generations of communists: at every historical turning point, find what is most promising, grasp what is truly advanced, and put them at the service of socialism.

The man who founded our Party was a true leader of the people. Lenin struck fear into enemies by the irresistible power of truth, and he was close to the working people as one of them. As a brilliant agitator he captured his audience. His speech was concrete, realistic and invested with profound content, and his ideas carried away the masses.

Lenin's approach called for a high level of culture. Surprising many participants in the Third Congress of the Komsomol, he spoke not about heroic victories on the front, but declared: Proletarian culture “is not clutched out of thin air; it is not an invention of those who call themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense.” He describes proletarian culture as the result of the development of accumulated knowledge, hence: “You can become a Communist only when you enrich your mind with a knowledge of all the treasures created by humanity.” These words were addressed to the generations of the champions and builders of communism.

Combining in himself the courage of a leader, an iron will, and fearlessness, Vladimir Ilyich was always attentive and sensitive toward people. In particular, he saw hope in the youth. His concern for the upbringing of the young generation, his keen interest in the activities of the Komsomol greatly assisted Soviet Power in molding a new human being – a hero and creator.

Seeing all the details of complicated problems, Lenin knew how to single out the major and truly fatal problem. Clearly understanding the laws of development, he never succumbed to panic or dejection, and always believed in the revolutionary creativity of the masses. As a prodigious organizer, he took into account every detail and felt deeply responsible for every decision made.

Lenin's ability to anticipate the future was not a result of magic or witchcraft; it was the result of rigorous scientific analysis based on Marxist methodology. Transformation of the country's economic life on a planned basis was the foundation of his success as a statesman. A comprehensive transformation of society was launched. Living standards steadily improved, educational and cultural standards were raised.

Lenin inspired the Bolshevik nationalities policy. For him proletarian internationalism was not a reason for beating his breast, but the basis of state decisions. He proposed a way to bring together the splinters of a disintegrated Russia into a new type of state, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Together with his comrades, he put this plan into

practice in an exemplary manner. Through decisions of the Congress, the country was reunited peacefully and democratically.

The old form of the Russian state had been destroyed under the bourgeois Provisional Government. Lenin's decrees of October 1917 ensured its reestablishment on a new basis. Later continuity may be seen as follows: the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) – the Russian Federation. Thus, Lenin became the founder father of the present-day Russian state. He initiated the formation of all the main institutions that ensured national life. Thus, the creation of the Red Army was the most important condition for the victory over the foreign interventionists and their White Guard accomplices.

The foundation of socialist democracy was laid by the system of Soviets. It was born out of the living creativity of the working people in the course of the revolutionary events in 1905–1907. The idea of the soviets fully corresponded to the Russian tradition. Lenin immediately saw the tremendous potential of the Soviets and helped the Party to make them an effective weapon.

The economic, social, scientific, and cultural achievements of the Lenin-Stalin modernization have no analogs in world history. Lenin's "State Commission for Electrification of Russia" (GOELRO) became the basis of a mighty industrial leap forward. The power stations built at that time still supply energy for cities and villages all over Russia.

In its first 30 years the USSR increased its industrial output nearly 13-fold. During the same period the USA only doubled its output and the UK managed an increase of only 60 percent. During this period, the productivity of heavy industry in the USSR almost trebled and machine building quadrupled. Labor productivity increased by almost one-third.

During the pre-war Five-Year Plan periods 9,000 major industrial facilities were built. Compared with 1913, gross industrial output increased nearly eight-fold. New industries, including machine building, tractor building, the chemical industry and aircraft building were created from scratch.

At the time of the collapse of the USSR, the RSFSR accounted for 9% of world industrial output, the Soviet Union twenty percent, and the socialist family of countries accounted for forty percent. Today Russia's share in world industrial output has dropped significantly.

Between 1921 and 1967, the real incomes of Soviet workers increased almost seven-fold and of peasants by 8.5 times. In the first twenty years, Soviet power put an end to unemployment and illiteracy. The country was the first in the world to conquer the most dangerous infections. One in every four scientists in the world was a Soviet citizen. One in every three air passengers flew on Soviet-made planes, which had no equals in terms of reliability.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the population of the Russian Empire was 125 million. By 1991, the population of the USSR was 294 million – an increase by almost 2.5 times. Half a century after the victory of socialism the life expectancy of our citizens increased by an average of 38 years. In the USA during the same period the average life expectancy increased by only 18 years.

The Great October Socialist Revolution gave a powerful impetus to the communist and national liberation movements. The Communist International was founded and had an immense influence. The countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America cast off the yoke

of colonial domination. Their peoples still cherish with gratitude memories of the Soviet Union. Together with China and Russia they are making their contribution in the struggle against neocolonialism of the 21st century.

Lenin's ideas firmly united the Soviet people. Having overcome social divisions, the USSR created a solid basis for the Great Victory in May of 1945. The sword of justice forged by the Bolsheviks cut off the heads of the ugly hydra of Hitler's Nazism, European Fascism, and Japanese militarism. We remind all Russophobes and Soviet-haters that in history only communists have defeated Nazism and Fascism.

Lenin's ideas stand behind all our victories in the twentieth century. His image among the people combines post-war rehabilitation, the creation of a nuclear missile defense system, and the dawn of the space age. Yuri Gagarin said: "To fly to the stars it is not enough to break the shackles of earth's gravitation – it was necessary to throw off the trammels in which labor, reason, the human soul languished until the October Revolution. It is not for nothing that the Communards were referred to as the 'people storming the sky.' The storming of outer space did not begin on April 12, 1961... It all started with the salvo of the Aurora, with the storming of the Winter Palace."

Our enemies claim that the collapse of the USSR proved that the ideas of Marx and Lenin "were no fit for purpose." But this is a clumsy juggling act! Quite the opposite! That tragedy confirmed the importance of Lenin's warnings to the effect that a communist party needs ideological purity and fidelity to Marxism. His loyal student, Stalin, put it this way: "Without theory, we are dead." Alas, Khrushchev's see-sawing and the Gorbachev-Yeltsin betrayal confirmed this truth.

The fate of Russia and the world after 1991 proves that Marx, Engels and Lenin were correct. Saccharine talk about "humanization of capitalism," vain hopes pinned on convergence, speculations about "the end of history" turned out to be a cover for still more relentless and all-encompassing oppression. Capitalism has found new levers to influence people's conscious and subconscious minds. It fosters utter egoism and consumerism, stifles culture and promotes undisguised perversion. The world oligarchy sees this as a chance to consolidate its power over the billions who are oppressed, pillaged, and hungry, who are deprived of access to education and modern medicine.

With the collapse of the USSR the globalists took off their belts. They are directly to blame for rising inequality, violence, and poverty. The UN's plans to conquer global poverty by 2030 have failed dismally. On a national level, only socialist China has achieved this end. A third of the Earth's population is chronically undernourished. Ten million deaths from starvation a year – this is the price of capitalist savagery. Only out-and-out rascals can consider this to be normal.

Counter-revolution threw Russia out to the periphery of capitalism and its people into poverty and disfranchisement. The country's wealth was looted. Advanced production facilities were destroyed. Oligarchic clans were formed. Natural and financial resources were syphoned off. Banditry was rife. What remained of Soviet people's power was shot down.

While bourgeois reaction was bleeding Russia white, external threats were growing. The West cynically ignored our legitimate demands "to take into account our national interests". The consequences of criminal privatization complicated the badly needed special military operation. NATO, entrenched in Eastern Europe, is now capturing Finland and Sweden.

Global capitalism seeks to subjugate and destroy our country. The government seeks to uphold sovereignty while remaining within the old system. “We thought we were like them, the bourgeoisie, we wanted to be part of this family of so-called civilized peoples,” admitted Putin sarcastically. This fateful conclusion came too late, as Americans and the Fifth Column continue to strangle Russia. The duality of power is becoming extremely dangerous.

As on the eve of 1917, our country stands at a fork in the road. One path leads into the quagmire of oligarchic capitalism and catastrophe. The other is the path towards socialism, to creative endeavor and spiritual revival. This is the only way to secure a worthy future. Lenin’s ideas are indispensable. We, our country and our people, need them like air.

Lenin’s special contribution is in developing of the theory of imperialism. Having determined the characteristics of the highest stage of capitalism he drew the conclusion that all its contradictions are sharpening, creating prerequisites for socialism. Lenin wrote in 1915 that when conditions are ripe for the world to move towards socialism, “the war of capitalists for privileges and monopolies” has become a way “to delay the downfall of capitalism.” This is what is causing tragedies for entire peoples in our day.

Capitalism responded to the worsening crisis by increasing exploitation of working people, attacking rights and freedoms, and unleashing wars and conflicts. Today the scars of bloody conflicts disfigure Ukraine, the Middle East, and Africa. US imperialism seeks to dominate the world and establish a new colonial system. The Western coalition is pursuing vicious aggression against Russia. It uses anti-communism and Russophobia to foster Fascism. By imposing ideas about alien nations, religions and races, the bourgeoisie gains a free hand and “cannon fodder” for its ventures.

The danger of a global nuclear conflict is growing with every passing day. It can be prevented only if the working people of all countries unite to make a breakthrough toward socialism. Here, too, Lenin helps us with his ideas about the hegemony of the proletariat in a revolution, its alliance with the working peasantry, the possibility of peaceful development of the revolution, and the link between the struggle for socialism and the national liberation movement.

Today, life around the world and in individual countries is changing rapidly. After the start of the special operation (in Ukraine) political and social processes in Russia have acquired a new logic and dynamics. Any major provocation can upset the current balance of forces and trigger a fateful chain reaction. In these circumstances Russian communists and the patriotic forces of the people continue their struggle against bourgeois reaction. This is a struggle for a just peace and social progress. Our key task is to change the balance of forces in our country in favor of socialism.

Russia is duty-bound to respond to the challenges of the times on all the fronts of the hybrid war. These include economic, scientific, technological, social, and demographic challenges. The course followed by the ruling clique is not up to the task. This amounts to an attempt to build a guardrail against historical challenges and to go on living according to the recipes of liberal fundamentalists.

An ambivalent policy cannot be creative. It always leads to defeat. It is impossible to criticize capitalism and hope to achieve success in the framework of this system. The ruling clique feels no kinship with the working people and fear the will of the popular masses. That is why they shy away from a broad dialogue aimed at working out a new

national course. They target the CPRF, hem in the trade unions, and do not want to rein in the anti-Sovietism symbolized by the festering abscess of the Yeltsin Center. This path cannot cure the ulcers of mass poverty, social discord, and corruption eating away at the social organism. To tolerate this in the context of vicious aggression by the West is a recipe for disaster.

The CPRF has accumulated a wealth of creative experience. The Primakov-Maslyukov government saved the country from default in 1998. The people's enterprises of P. Grudinin, I. Kazankov, I. Bogachev, and I. Sumarokov have for many years demonstrated the successful experience of collective development. The communist teams of A. Lokot, S. Levchenko, A. Klychkov, V. Konovalov and A. Russkikh have notable results in the development of Novosibirsk, the Irkutsk and Oryol oblasts, the Republic of Khakassia and the Ulyanovsk oblast.

The CPRF is constantly studying the best of management practices. On this basis, the Party has proposed drafts of laws, government programs, and national projects. Important contributions to this work are being made by I. Melnikov and V. Kashin, N. Kharitonov and Yu. Afonin, D. Novikov and L. Kalashnikov, N. Kolimeitsev and S. Savitskaya, M. Arefyev and K. Taysyev, O. Smolin and N. Ivanov, N. Ostanina and Yu. Sinelshchikov, V. Sobolev and N. Osadchy, S. Kazankov and A. Kurinny. G. Kamnev and V. Isakov, as well as all the CPRF deputies.

Our *Victory Program* guarantees a fundamental change of policy. It is aimed at improving the quality of life and well-being of citizens. Its provisions include:

- nationalization of strategically important sectors;
- long-term socio-economic planning;
- removing the oligarchy from managing the economy;
- substantial increases in government investments in the high-tech economy, science, education, and healthcare;
- stopping capital outflows from the country;
- comprehensive support of people's and collective enterprises;
- improving the people's well-being and providing broad access to cultural achievements.

We attach paramount importance to uniting society and mobilizing the resources, forces, and means to defeat those who have declared war on the Russian world. Every patriot must feel personal responsibility for defending our country and its great future.

It is only after solving these strategic tasks that we can confidently move forward. Implementation of our ideas would guarantee a decent life for workers and farmers, the intelligentsia and the military, veterans and youth.

The Central Committee of the CPRF is honestly fulfilling its duty to the people of Russia. By forming a creative team and working out the Victory Program we have done much to safeguard the national memory and the right of citizens to be proud of the heroes of the Soviet era. We will continue this work as we approach the Centenary for the commemoration of Lenin's death.

We have announced a Lenin call-up and are inviting to our ranks all those who are committed to the struggle for socialism. Preparing those who will replace us is a pivotal task. Ideological firmness and the cohesion of communists are extremely important.

Lenin taught us that there is no alternative to being organized. He wrote: “The party is the politically conscious, advanced section of the class, it is its vanguard. The strength of that vanguard is ten times, a hundred times, more than a hundred times, greater than its numbers... Organization increases strength tenfold.”

Communists of the twenty-first century should remember the teaching about the party of a new type. “The role of the frontline fighter can only be fulfilled by a party guided by an advanced theory,” Lenin stressed. He maintained that without relying on the working class the party would degenerate into a sect, and without a revolutionary theory it would not be able to lead the working people. Lenin’s idea was vindicated by the fate of the renegades of the Second International and the left-wing parties which turned into appendages of the bourgeois system. There are many pseudo-left organizations in the world today. To protect the working people from these fakes, the communist party is called upon to fulfill its role as the political vanguard of the masses.

The CPRF is open to admitting to its ranks those for whom the name of Lenin is a symbol of genius and valor. We call on them to carry on working together for this cause, to implement the Victory Program, to march toward socialism and to revitalize our beloved country.

Lenin spared neither his time nor his health in the struggle for the highest ideals. Frantic, feverish work, sleepless nights and the consequences of his being wounded undermined his strength. But he did not give up until the last, remaining an example of a true communist.

Lenin’s heart stopped beating a hundred years ago. But the main task had been accomplished. The world had changed. Changed for the better and forever. Lenin’s heritage is our priceless treasure. His ideas carry an immense creative charge. His thought, will, and accomplishments continue to illuminate the path of world development.

Back then, in the cold January of 1924, the nationwide farewell to Vladimir Ilyich affirmed that his name would be written in gold letters in the annals of history. The poet Mikhail Isakovsky reflected this very accurately:

“Night passes. And ever broader
Dawn breaks, shining...
He did not die: everywhere in this world
His deeds live on”.

The nationwide mourning demonstrated how much Lenin meant for the peoples of our country. When his heart stopped beating the party announced a call-up to its ranks. In his report to the Thirteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik), on 24 May 1924, the General Secretary of the Central Committee, I. V. Stalin, summed up the interim results of the Lenin call-up. Party membership had increased from 485,000 to 680,000. In a letter, Alexander Bezymensky expressed his thoughts and feelings, his will and choice:

As for me, I am joining the Party. I am a son of the Land of the Soviets.
Do you hear me, Party? I give you my pledge...
In a few months a hundred thousand party membership cards will be issued
They will replace Lenin’s lost party card.

Life goes on. No one can forbid people to dream of genuine freedom and happiness. The legions of Hitler and Himmler, Franco and Salazar, Vlasov and Bandera, Batista and Pinochet have been powerless to kill this hope. A hundred years ago Lenin passed away, like all mortals do. But the hot pulse of Lenin's immortal ideas was already beating in millions of hearts across the world.

Henceforth from century to century – along with the brightest dreams of the working people – goes the image of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the great visionary and dreamer, an outstanding theoretician and practitioner. He was a thinker, revolutionary, and creator who was immortalized 100 years ago. And we repeat without a shadow of a doubt, clearly and proudly, after Vladimir Mayakovsky:

Lenin lived,
Lenin lives,
Lenin will live!

So, dear fellow-citizens, let us go forward to the future under the victorious banner of Lenin! Toward a strong, just and Socialist Russia!

(Editor: Lu Xia)