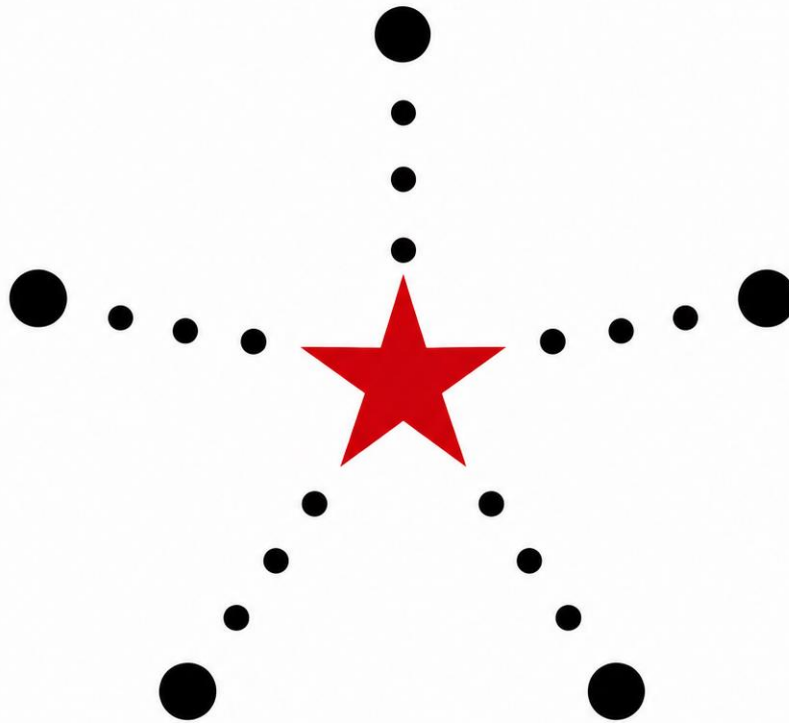




Comrade, welcome to ***The People's Dictionary***.

The People's Dictionary is a collection of defined concepts, forged in struggle, designed to arm cadres with the dialectical materialist method for analysing their conditions, organising their people, and fighting empire.

Every definition is a tool, tested in analysis and debate, open to revision as conditions change and practice deepens. It is meant to be studied, critiqued, and wielded – not passively consumed. It is organised to build from method to system to forces to strategy to horizon, but each entry also stands alone. Theory and practice are bound together here. The purpose is not to produce jargon, but to produce clarity.

The People's Dictionary is not a substitute for reading and studying theory. It is a companion – a tool to help us clarify concepts quickly, guide our study, and sharpen our organisational duties.

It is not an academic reference book, a fixed scripture, or a neutral glossary. It is a living tool for revolutionary education and struggle.

How to use: This resource is divided into 7 parts. Each part contains numerous entries, and each entry contains the core definition, explanation, example, and a section describing what it is, and what isn't. Click on a part or an entry to be directed to it directly.

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Part I: Method and Foundations

Dialectical Materialism

Core Definition: The science of the general laws of motion of nature, society, and thought the method of analysing reality as a totality of interconnected, contradictory processes in constant transformation.

Explanation: Dialectics sees the world as a process, not a collection of static things. Everything is connected, everything changes, and everything contains its own negation. Materialism insists that the material conditions of life (the mode of production, the class structure, the concrete historical situation) determine consciousness, not the other way around. Together, dialectical materialism is the revolutionary science. It teaches us to hold contradictions, identify the principal one, and intervene to transform reality.

Example: The liberal sees ethnic division in Bosnia and says "teach tolerance". The dialectical materialist sees a secondary contradiction produced by empire, connects it to the principal contradiction of imperialist domination, and organises multi-ethnic class struggle against the comprador elites and their imperial masters. Method shapes practice. Practice reveals method.

What it is: The revolutionary method.

What it isn't: Eclecticism, fragmenting, or mechanical determinism.

Historical Materialism

Core Definition: The science of history as the development of modes of production through the motor of class struggle – the base conditions the superstructure, and the superstructure reacts back in a dialectical unity.

Explanation: History is not a parade of kings and battles. It is the story of how humans organise to produce their material existence, and the contradictions that arise from that organisation. Each mode of production (slave, feudal, capitalist) contains its own internal contradictions, which generate class struggle, which eventually leads to qualitative transformation. The material base (forces and relations of production) shapes law, politics, culture, and ideology, but these superstructural elements also shape the base in return. Historical materialism is not economic determinism. It is the science of totality in motion, revealing that capitalism is historically specific, not eternal, and that communism is its dialectical negation.

Example: The Bosnian mode of production under Dayton is neo-colonial capitalism: a comprador bourgeoisie, a fragmented working class, and an imperial superstructure that enforces the arrangement. Historical materialism reveals this as a transient conjuncture, full of contradictions that will eventually produce its overthrow.

What it is: The materialist analysis of history through class struggle.

What it isn't: A mechanical reduction of everything to economics.

Materialist Dialectics (Practical Dialectics)

Core Definition: The living application of dialectical materialism to concrete analysis and revolutionary practice – the unity of theory and praxis, holding contradictions and resolving them through organised struggle.

Explanation: Materialist dialectics is not a philosophy to be debated in seminar rooms. It is a weapon for changing the world. It teaches us to analyse a concrete situation, identify the principal contradiction, locate the sharpest edge, and organise the masses to intervene. It refuses mechanical cause-and-effect in favour of overdetermined, relational thinking that sees everything as part of an unfolding process. It insists that contradictions are resolved in practice, not in theory alone. The revolutionary who masters practical dialectics can navigate the most complex conjuncture without dogmatic rigidity or liberal confusion. This is the method we have been using throughout our work.

Example: Applying practical dialectics to Bosnia means recognising empire as the principal contradiction, ethnic chauvinism as the overdetermined sharpest contradiction, and the multi-ethnic working class as the revolutionary subject – then building an organisation that fights the sharpest contradiction while preparing for the qualitative leap against the principal one. The analysis and the action are one process.

What it is: The active, revolutionary science of transformation.

What it isn't: Academic theorising divorced from struggle or a fixed dogma.

Totality

Core Definition: The dialectical materialist understanding that reality is a single, interconnected, contradictory whole, not a collection of isolated fragments.

Explanation: Bourgeois thought and colonial epistemology shatter the world into separate boxes – economics here, culture there, politics somewhere else. Dialectics restores the real. Empire is a totality. The factory closure in Zenica, the visa regime in Sarajevo, the Chinese port in Haifa, the Serbian steel in Palestine, the brain drain, the ethnic tensions – these are not separate issues. They are moments of a single system. To see the totality is the first act of revolutionary cognition.

Example: A liberal might analyse Bosnia's youth unemployment as an "education mismatch" or a "failure of governance". A dialectician sees it as a deliberate feature of the neo-colonial structure: a labour reserve for the EU core, maintained by Dayton's colonial constitution, enforced by IMF austerity, and justified by ethnic division. The totality connects what empire fragments.

What it is: The science of the whole.

What it isn't: A list of interconnected parts.

Specificity (Particularity)

Core Definition: The concrete, specific character of any phenomenon or contradiction, which must be analysed in its own terms. The soul of Marxism, according to Mao, and the necessary dialectical partner of Totality.

Explanation: Totality teaches that everything is connected. Particularity teaches that every connection is specific. Capitalism is a global system, but it operates differently in a neo-colony than in the imperial core. Genocide is a universal category, but the Bosnian genocide has its own specific dynamics, agents, and history. Without particularity, totality becomes an empty abstraction. Without totality, particularity becomes fragmented empiricism. Mao insisted that "the concrete analysis of concrete conditions" is the living soul of Marxism. There is no universal formula. Every contradiction must be analysed in its specific manifestation. The revolutionary masters both: the total system and the particular conjuncture.

Example: Imperialism is a global totality. But imperialism in Bosnia takes the specific form of the Dayton colonial constitution and an EU-managed neo-colony. Imperialism in Palestine takes the specific form of settler-colonial occupation and ethnic cleansing. The same system, different particularities. Revolutionary strategy must be tailored to the specific, not copied from a template.

What it is: The necessary dialectical partner of Totality. The concrete, specific character of any phenomenon.

What it isn't: A rejection of the universal or the total. It is their concrete expression.

Contradiction

Core Definition: The unity and struggle of opposites within a phenomenon, the motor of all motion, change, and development.

Explanation: Everything contains its own negation. A seed becomes a plant. A colony produces anti-colonial resistance. Capitalism creates its own gravediggers. Contradictions are not "problems" to be solved but the very nature of reality in motion. The dialectical method identifies contradictions, analyses their specific character, and intervenes to resolve them in a direction that serves the revolutionary subject. Some contradictions are antagonistic and resolved through destruction. Others are non-antagonistic and resolved through transformation.

Example: Empire in Bosnia contains its own contradiction: it requires a divided population, but the material conditions it creates (mass unemployment, dispossession, and shared misery) produce the objective basis for multi-ethnic class unity. The subjective task of the revolutionary is to make this latent contradiction conscious and organised.

What it is: The engine of history.

What it isn't: A logical inconsistency to be solved.

Principal Contradiction

Core Definition: The contradiction that dominates a process, determines its character, and shapes all other contradictions within it.

Explanation: In any complex situation, there are many contradictions. One is primary. It is the decisive antagonism that must be resolved for qualitative transformation to occur. To mistake a secondary contradiction for the principal one is to fight the enemy's proxy while leaving the enemy untouched. The principal contradiction sets the terrain. It does not always appear most urgent, but it is always most determinant.

Example: In Bosnia, ethnic division is real and violent. But it is a secondary contradiction, produced and maintained by the principal one: imperialist domination through the Dayton framework, the comprador elites, and economic extraction. Fighting one politician without fighting empire is treating the symptom, not the disease.

What it is: The strategic backbone.

What it isn't: Always the most visible or immediate tension.

Secondary Contradiction

Core Definition: A contradiction subordinate to and determined by the principal contradiction, but possessing its own specific dynamics, agents, and tempo.

Explanation: Secondary contradictions are not illusions. They are real, they can intensify, and they can dominate daily experience. But they cannot be finally resolved without resolving the principal contradiction, because their very existence is produced by it. Revolutionaries take secondary contradictions seriously (this is where the masses live) but they refuse to treat them as the final horizon of struggle.

Example: The Serb and Croat chauvinist projects threatening Bosnia are a secondary contradiction. They have their own leaders, their own ideological machinery, and their own electoral cycles. But they are propped up by empire. Without imperial backing, Republika Srpska collapses. The struggle against chauvinism is real, but it must be connected to the struggle against empire, not waged in isolation.

What it is: A real, subordinate antagonism.

What it isn't: A distraction to be ignored.

Sharpest Contradiction

Core Definition: The overdetermined secondary contradiction that, in a given conjuncture, concentrates the accumulated pressure of the principal contradiction into the most acute, mobilisation-producing, crisis-prone point of the totality.

Explanation: Not every secondary contradiction is sharp. The sharpest one is where the contradictions have fused, where the tension is unbearable, where the masses are already moving. It is the bleeding edge. The revolutionary identifies the sharpest contradiction, enters it, organises from it, and uses it to reveal the principal contradiction. The sharpest contradiction is the door. The principal contradiction is the house. You enter through the door to destroy the house.

Example: In Bosnia, the immediate threat of secessionism and ethnic violence is the sharpest contradiction. It is what people feel daily, what organises fear and resistance. The revolutionary does not dismiss this as "less important". They organise from this sharp edge, revealing its imperial wiring, and directing the struggle toward the primary enemy: empire.

What it is: The bleeding edge where struggle is most explosive.

What it isn't: A permanent state; it can shift as conditions change.

Overdetermination

Core Definition: A contradiction shaped by multiple fused determinations – economic, political, ideological, and historical – rather than a single simple cause.

Explanation: No real contradiction is caused by one thing. Empire's ethnic weapon in Bosnia is not "just economics" or "just ancient hatred". It is layered: material extraction, segregated education, Dayton's constitution, genocide memory, geopolitical rivalries, and comprador interests. All these determinations fuse into a single sharp edge. Overdetermination explains why some contradictions feel overwhelming and absolute – they carry the weight of the whole structure. The revolutionary must grasp this density, not reduce it to a slogan.

Example: The ethnic tension in Bosnia is not a simple product of class inequality. It is overdetermined by three decades of colonial administration, the memory of genocide, and the segregated school system, the entity voting structure, the economic desperation that makes people dependent on ethnic patronage, and the imperial interests that keep it all in place. Any strategy that ignores this density fails.

What it is: The accumulated weight of multiple determinations.

What it isn't: An excuse for inaction; it demands deeper analysis.

Principal Aspect of a Contradiction

Core Definition: Within any contradiction, the side that dominates at a given moment, determining the contradiction's character.

Explanation: The two sides of a contradiction are never equal. One is ascendant (the principal aspect), but this can shift. The dominated side can become dominant through struggle. This is how qualitative change happens. The revolutionary identifies the current principal aspect, understands its vulnerability, and organises to shift the balance. Nothing is permanently dominant. Every empire contains its own negation.

Example: In the contradiction between the Bosnian masses and the comprador ethno-elites, the compradors are the principal aspect – they control the state, the media, and the patronage networks, but this is not permanent. Through crisis, organisation, and the patient building of multi-ethnic class power, the masses can become the principal aspect. The revolutionary's task is to prepare for and accelerate that shift.

What it is: The side currently in command.

What it isn't: Immutable; it is a site of ongoing struggle.

Negation of the Negation

Core Definition: A universal law of dialectics: development proceeds not in a straight line but through the negation of an existing form, followed by the negation of that negation, producing a new form that preserves and transforms elements of the earlier stages.

Explanation: The seed is negated by the plant; the plant is negated by the fruit; the fruit contains new seeds in multiplied form. This is not a return to the starting point but a spiral upwards. The negation is not simple destruction; it is the supersession of a thing by its own internal contradictions, which then themselves develop and give rise to a further negation. In social development, primitive communism was negated by class society; class society will be negated by communism, which restores the communal character of production but on a vastly higher material and cultural level. The revolutionary who grasps this law understands that destruction and creation are moments of the same process. Smashing the old state is a negation; building the dictatorship of the proletariat is the next stage; the withering of that state into full communism is the negation of the negation, producing a free association of producers that is neither the original classless society nor the class dictatorship but something new, containing transformed elements of both. This law is not a formula to be mechanically applied to every situation; it is a general tendency of development that must be analysed concretely in each specific context.

Example: The Bosnian liberation struggle: the pre-genocidal, multi-ethnic society was destroyed (negation) by the chauvinist-imperialist war. Dayton is the deformed, frozen negation – a colonial constitution that codified genocide. The revolutionary overthrow of Dayton and the construction of a multi-ethnic workers' state is the negation of that negation. It does not simply restore the pre-war society; it transforms it on a higher, fully sovereign, class-conscious basis. The seeds of the future are already present in the memory of coexistence and the current, scattered acts of multi-ethnic solidarity.

What it is: A dialectical law describing development through the supersession of contradictions.

What it isn't: A mechanical three-step formula (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) or a guarantee of progress.

Antagonistic Contradiction

Core Definition: A contradiction between forces whose interests are fundamentally irreconcilable, resolved only through the defeat or destruction of one side.

Explanation: Not all contradictions are the same. Some are between enemies. The comprador elite and the multi-ethnic working class cannot coexist as equals. One must lose. Antagonistic contradictions are class war. Mistaking an antagonistic contradiction for a non-antagonistic one is collaboration. The revolutionary distinguishes clearly, because the strategy for each is different.

Example: The contradiction between the Bosnian working class and the ethno-comprador elites who serve empire is antagonistic. It cannot be resolved through dialogue, "reconciliation", or power-sharing. The compradors must be defeated and their material base destroyed. The contradiction between a Bosniak worker and a Serb worker is non-antagonistic – both are exploited. Confusing the two is fatal.

What it is: Class war.

What it isn't: A misunderstanding that can be negotiated away.

Non-Antagonistic Contradiction

Core Definition: A contradiction among the people, between forces that share fundamental interests but have differences requiring struggle and resolution.

Explanation: The revolutionary does not treat all disagreements as war. Among the exploited, the dispossessed, the colonised – there will be contradictions. Differences of national identity, religious tradition, strategic approach. These are non-antagonistic. They must be struggled over patiently, through unity-building, not annihilation. Mistaking a non-antagonistic contradiction for an antagonistic one leads to sectarianism, isolation, and can be fatal.

Example: A Bosniak worker who fears Serb nationalism and a Serb worker who fears being treated as a collective perpetrator share a common class interest, but their historical experiences differ. Their unity is necessary, but it cannot be commanded into existence. It must be built through shared struggle, honest confrontation of the past, and an organisational practice that refuses to privilege one identity over another – while never forgetting who the real enemy is.

What it is: A contradiction resolvable through struggle among allies.

What it isn't: A reason to avoid conflict; silence breeds rot.

Internal Relations

Core Definition: The dialectical principle that things do not exist as isolated atoms with external connections, but are constituted in their very essence by their relations to other things within a totality. Capital is a social relation, not a thing; the worker is constituted by the capital relation; everything is what it is through its position in the interconnected whole.

Explanation: Bourgeois thought isolates objects and treats them as self-contained units that then enter into external relations. A factory is a building. A worker is an individual. A commodity is a product. The dialectical method reveals that these are internal relations: the factory is not a factory without the workers who labour inside it, the raw materials extracted from colonised lands, the capital that owns it, and the market that absorbs its products. The worker is not a worker without the capital that exploits her labour. The commodity contains within it the labour of the producer, the surplus value extracted by the capitalist, and the global supply chains that connect mines in the Congo to assembly lines in China to consumers in Europe. Internal relations is the method of analysing any phenomenon by tracing the relations that constitute it, identifying which are primary, and intervening at the decisive point. This is not relativism; it is the dialectical alternative to the atomistic fragmentation of bourgeois ideology. Empire's strategy depends on making the oppressed see themselves as separate – separate ethnicities, separate nations, separate issues. Internal relations reveals the unity beneath the appearance of separation.

Example: You cannot understand a Bosnian youth's unemployment without analysing the ~~Dayton~~ constitution, the ~~EU~~ accession conditionalities, the comprador privatisation, and the brain drain. The unemployment is not a local economic problem; it is a node in a web of global imperialist relations. The revolutionary strategy must therefore address the whole web, not just the local node.

What it is: The dialectical method of analysing things as constituted by their relations within the totality.

What it isn't: Saying "everything is connected" without hierarchy or determination. It requires identifying which relations are primary and decisive.

Social Relation

Core Definition: The specific, historically determined connections between people into which they must enter to produce and reproduce their material existence. The content of any mode of production, beneath the appearance of relations between things.

Explanation: Under capitalism, the fundamental social relation is the capital-labour relation: the capitalist owns the means of production, the worker sells their labour power to survive. This relation appears as a fair exchange between equals (wages for work), but conceals exploitation. All social relations are produced by and reproduce the mode of production. They are not freely chosen by individuals; they are the necessary forms through which production occurs. When Marx says capital is not a thing but a social relation, he means that a factory is only capital within the relation that allows its owner to extract surplus value from wage labour. The revolutionary analyses social relations to identify their class character and to organise the forces capable of transforming them.

Example: The relation between a landlord and a tenant appears as a contract between two individuals. Beneath this is a class relation: the landlord owns a means of life and extracts rent; the tenant must pay to simply exist. The revolutionary connects this relation to the broader housing crisis, to financialisation, and to the comprador elites who profit from real estate speculation in neo-colonies.

What it is: The historically specific, materially grounded connections between people that constitute the mode of production.

What it isn't: A personal relationship, a freely chosen interaction, or a relation between things.

Equilibrium

Core Definition: The temporary, relative, unstable unity of opposites within a contradiction. A moment of dynamic stalemate in which quantitative changes accumulate without yet triggering a qualitative leap, always destined to be shattered by the absolute character of struggle.

Explanation: Mao uses equilibrium to describe the balance of forces within a contradiction. No contradiction is permanently in equilibrium; the very nature of contradiction is struggle, and struggle is absolute while unity is relative. But in a given conjuncture, the opposing forces may hold each other in check. The comprador state appears stable; the working class appears passive; the ethnic tensions are managed. This is equilibrium. Beneath it, quantitative changes accumulate, grievances deepen, organisation builds, and consciousness sharpens. At a certain point, the equilibrium ruptures. A qualitative leap occurs. The old balance is destroyed, and a new contradiction, or a new principal aspect, emerges.

Example: The Dayton regime in Bosnia appears to be in equilibrium. The comprador elites rule, the ethnic entities function, the protests flare and fade. But quantitative changes are accumulating: the youth exodus deepens the demographic crisis, the economy stagnates, and the diaspora grows in size and consciousness. This equilibrium is not permanent. It is relative, temporary, and brittle. The revolutionary task is to organise the forces that will shatter it when the contradictions mature.

What it is: The temporary, relative stalemate of opposing forces within a contradiction.

What it isn't: Permanent peace, natural stability, or a state to be preserved. It is always pregnant with its own disruption.

Theory

Core Definition: Systematised knowledge drawn from the analysis of concrete reality, tested and refined through practice, serving as a guide to action – not an abstract intellectual exercise.

Explanation: Theory without practice is empty intellectualism. Practice without theory is blind flailing. Revolutionary theory analyses the laws of motion of society, identifies the principal and secondary contradictions, and provides the strategic orientation for intervention. It is not dogma. It is a living method that develops through engagement with changing conditions. The Western left often oscillates between theory-as-fashion (obscure jargon, academic posturing) and theory-as-avoidance (refusing to study, celebrating spontaneity). Both are useless. The revolutionary treats theory as a weapon. They study it, apply it, test it against experience, and revise it when the facts demand.

Example: Our dialectical framework (principal contradiction, sharpest contradiction, and overdetermination) is theory. It does not tell us exactly what to do in every situation. It gives us a method for analysing any situation. Without it, we are lost in a fog of events. With it, we can orient ourselves and act.

What it is: A guide to action, drawn from and tested by practice.

What it isn't: A decorative intellectual identity or a fixed scripture.

Practice

Core Definition: The concrete, sensuous activity through which human beings transform their material conditions, and, in the revolutionary process, transform themselves.

Explanation: Practice is the crucible of truth. A theory is correct if it works in practice; if it fails, the theory must be revised. Revolutionary practice includes strikes, land occupations, armed struggle, political education, internal organisational discipline, and the daily work of building power. Practice is not just "doing things". It is conscious activity evaluated against strategic goals. The Western left often substitutes practice with performance: posting, attending marches that lead nowhere, mistaking catharsis for strategy. Revolutionary practice is oriented toward building the capacity to seize and wield state power. It is the unity of theory and action, each correcting and deepening the other.

Example: The mass line is a method that unites theory and practice: listen to the masses (practice), concentrate their scattered ideas into systematic knowledge (theory), return that knowledge as a guide for action (practice again). This spiral is the life of a revolutionary organisation.

What it is: Strategic, conscious activity aimed at transformation.

What it isn't: Spontaneous action or performative protest.

Materialism

Core Definition: The philosophical foundation of Marxist science – the recognition that matter is primary, that the material world exists independently of consciousness, and that social being determines social consciousness, not the other way around.

Explanation: Materialism is not the reduction of everything to economics. It is not the denial that ideas matter. It is the insistence that ideas emerge from material conditions – how people produce their existence, how they relate to the means of production, how they struggle against exploitation. The idealist says "change people's minds, and you change the world". The materialist says "change the material conditions, and people's minds will change, but also organise them to fight, because consciousness and conditions interact dialectically". Philosophical materialism, applied to history, becomes historical materialism: the analysis of how modes of production rise and fall through class struggle. The revolutionary who abandons materialism floats into idealism, moralism, and ultimately liberalism. Materialism grounds the movement in the concrete, the structural, and the transformable.

Example: The diaspora returnee who scolds locals for "ignorance" is being idealist. They assume that a lack of correct ideas is the problem, ignoring the material conditions of exhaustion, repression, and survival that shape local consciousness. The materialist listens to those conditions, organises around them, and builds consciousness through shared struggle against the material enemy, not through lectures.

What it is: The philosophical insistence on the primacy of material reality.

What it isn't: The denial of the importance of ideas, consciousness, or culture.

Idealism

Core Definition: The philosophical error that ideas, consciousness, morality, or culture are primary and determine material reality – the inversion of the actual relationship between being and consciousness.

Explanation: Idealism is the philosophical foundation of bourgeois thought. It appears in many forms: the liberal who thinks "tolerance education" will solve ethnic division, the dogmatist who thinks a state calling itself "socialist" makes it so regardless of its material class character, the Western leftist who thinks changing language changes the world. Idealism does not deny that material conditions exist; it denies that they are primary. Dialectical materialism fights idealism by insisting that social being determines social consciousness. This does not mean ideas are irrelevant. They react back upon material conditions, and ideological struggle is a real front of the class war, but ideas do not float free of their material base. An ideology serves class interests. A revolutionary strategy that ignores material conditions and centres on "awareness-raising" or "moral clarity" is an idealist strategy. It fails because it misunderstands how reality works.

Example: The diaspora returnee who thinks that scolding locals for their "cognitive dissonance" will awaken them to revolutionary consciousness is operating on idealist assumptions. They treat ignorance as the obstacle and knowledge as the solution, ignoring the material conditions that constrain and exhaust the locals. The materialist approach organises workers around their concrete grievances and builds consciousness through struggle, not lectures.

What it is: The inversion of the relationship between material conditions and consciousness.

What it isn't: The recognition that ideas matter; it is the claim that ideas matter more than or independently of material conditions.

Scientific Socialism

Core Definition: The term Marx and Engels used to distinguish their revolutionary theory from utopian socialism. Not a faith in inevitable progress, but the application of dialectical and historical materialism to the analysis of capitalism and the strategy for its overthrow.

Explanation: Scientific socialism does not mean "socialism with test tubes". It means socialism grounded in the concrete analysis of material conditions, class struggle, and the laws of motion of capitalist society. The utopian socialists imagined a better world and appealed to reason and morality to bring it about. The scientific socialists study the actually existing contradictions of capitalism (exploitation, crisis, the concentration of capital, the formation of the proletariat) and identify the revolutionary subject and the political path to power. Scientific socialism is therefore not a set of fixed predictions but a method. It requires constant investigation, criticism, and revision in light of practice. The revolutionary who claims to be a scientific socialist but refuses to analyse new conditions, who substitutes loyalty to a state for class analysis, has abandoned science for dogma. The term is often used colloquially to mean "Marxism-Leninism", but it is not a synonym for any particular party or state. It is the method itself, and it judges all parties and states by their material practice, not their self-descriptions.

Example: A scientific socialist analyses China not by asking "does it call itself socialist?" but by examining its class structure, its mode of production, its role in global accumulation, and its material effects on the struggles of the oppressed. That analysis reveals a contradictory force, not a socialist fatherland. The dogmatist, by contrast, starts from the label and refuses the analysis. The scientific socialist uses the method; the dogmatist buries it.

What it is: The revolutionary method of Marxism, grounded in materialist dialectics.

What it isn't: A fixed doctrine immune to revision, a synonym for any existing state, or a faith in automatic progress.

Criticism and Self-Criticism

Core Definition: The revolutionary practice of openly analysing errors, weaknesses, and contradictions – both individual and collective – in order to correct them and strengthen the struggle.

Explanation: Mao: "We have the Marxist-Leninist weapon of criticism and self-criticism". It is not liberal guilt. It is not public shaming. It is a disciplined, collective process of identifying what went wrong, why, and how to do better. Without it, organisations rot. Dogma replaces science. Loyalty replaces truth. The refusal of criticism (treating any challenge as betrayal) is not discipline. It is the death of the revolutionary spirit.

Example: The dogmatist who refuses to criticise China's trade with Israel has abandoned this weapon. They fear that naming a reactionary action will weaken "the camp". In reality, refusing to name it weakens the movement by lying to the masses. The revolutionary criticises openly, corrects honestly, and grows stronger.

What it is: A weapon for organisational health.

What it isn't: Liberal self-flagellation or public shaming.

Principles

Core Definition: The fundamental, non-negotiable commitments that define a revolutionary organisation's character. Derived from theory, tested in practice, and serving as the foundation upon which all tactical decisions are made.

Explanation: Principles are not preferences. They are the organisational bones. Without them, an organisation collapses into eclecticism, opportunism, and liquidation. Revolutionary principles include: the dictatorship of the proletariat, the right of nations to self-determination including secession, the mass line, democratic centralism, criticism and self-criticism, and the irreconcilability of class interests between exploiters and exploited. Tactics can shift; principles endure. The Western left often treats principles as optional or negotiable, which is why it is so easily co-opted. Empire does not fear a flexible opposition that has no bottom line. It fears an opposition that will not bend on fundamentals.

Example: The principle "against empire – for the people" is a compass principle. Every decision is measured against it. If an alliance with a given force strengthens the people's capacity to fight empire, it is correct in principle. If it weakens that capacity, it is unprincipled, however popular or convenient it may appear.

What it is: The non-negotiable foundation of revolutionary politics.

What it isn't: A list of rigid rules that ignore concrete conditions.

Part II: The System We Fight

Empire

Core Definition: The totality of imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism functioning as a single global system of domination.

Explanation: Empire is not one country. It is not "the West" as a cultural category. It is an integrated structure of military violence, economic extraction, political subordination, and ideological control. It divides the world into oppressor and oppressed nations. It produces colonies, neo-colonies, settler-states, and comprador elites. Every local struggle unfolds on empire's terrain. The principal contradiction globally is empire versus the multi-ethnic working class, youth, and peasantry of the oppressed nations.

Example: The ~~US~~ is empire's military backbone, but the ~~EU~~ enforces empire's economic discipline. The Office of the High Representative in Bosnia is empire's colonial administrator. The ~~IMF~~ structural adjustment is empire's debt prison. Empire is the system. Fighting it means fighting everywhere it operates.

What it is: A world-system of domination.

What it isn't: A synonym for "the West" as a cultural category.

Imperialism

Core Definition: The highest stage of capitalism, characterised by the concentration of production into monopolies, the fusion of banking and industrial capital into finance capital, the export of capital rather than just commodities, and the division of the world among the great powers.

Explanation: Lenin's analysis in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* remains the foundation. Imperialism is not a policy choice; it is a structural phase of capitalism. It produces a global hierarchy: imperialist core countries, semi-peripheral states, and colonies/neo-colonies. Finance capital dominates. Superprofits extracted from the periphery bribe the labour aristocracy in the core. Imperialist rivalry generates wars. The empire we speak of is the contemporary form (~~US~~ hegemony, ~~EU~~ economic discipline, the ~~IMF~~ debt system, ~~NATO~~ military force), all integrated into a single world-system of extraction and control.

Example: Bosnia is a victim of imperialism: its war was shaped by imperial rivalries, its peace was imposed by imperial powers, its economy is structured by imperial financial institutions, and its sovereignty is suppressed by imperial administrators.

What it is: Monopoly capitalism on a global scale.

What it isn't: A foreign policy choice that can be reversed without smashing capitalism.

Colonialism

Core Definition: The direct political, military, and administrative domination of one territory by another, involving the conquest of land, the subjugation of peoples, and the extraction of resources for the benefit of the colonising power.

Explanation: Colonialism is the most naked form of imperialist domination. It involves the settlement of colonisers, the destruction or transformation of Indigenous economies, the imposition of foreign law and language, and often genocide. Classical colonialism of the European empires largely ended through national liberation struggles, but it adapted into neo-colonialism. Settler-colonialism, where the colonisers seek to permanently replace the Indigenous population, is a distinct and ongoing form in Palestine and Turtle Island. Colonialism is not a "legacy"; its structures persist wherever land is stolen and sovereignty is denied.

Example: Bosnia was colonised by the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. Today it is a neo-colony under ~~Dayton~~. The entities created through genocide are settler-colonial formations within Bosnia's borders, maintained by imperial backing.

What it is: Direct domination of one people by another.

What it isn't: Just a historical period that ended with formal independence.

Settler-Colonialism

Core Definition: A distinct form of colonialism in which the colonising population does not merely extract resources and labour from the Indigenous population but seeks to permanently replace them, taking the land as its own and constructing a new society on the expropriated territory.

Explanation: Settler-colonialism is not a historical event that ended; it is an ongoing structure. Unlike extractive colonialism, which exploits Indigenous labour and resources while maintaining a thin colonial administration, settler-colonialism pursues the elimination of the native through genocide, forced displacement, cultural erasure, and legal frameworks that redefine the Indigenous people out of existence. It is annihilation as a permanent condition. The goal is not simply to rule over the colonised but to become the new natives, to claim the land as always-already belonging to the settlers. Settler-colonialism therefore requires not just military violence but an entire ideological apparatus that erases Indigenous history, appropriates Indigenous identity, and naturalises the settler presence. Patrick Wolfe's formulation is foundational: settler-colonialism is a structure, not an event. It does not end with formal independence or treaty; it persists as long as the settler society maintains its dominance over the stolen land. In our time, the most prominent examples are the Zionist entity in Palestine, the ~~United States, Canada,~~ and so-called ~~Australia~~. Each is built on the bones of the Indigenous and continues to dispossess, incarcerate, and erase them. The revolutionary position is unequivocal: settler-colonialism must be abolished, not reformed. Land must be returned.

Example: The Zionist entity is a settler-colonial state. It was founded on the expulsion and massacre of the Palestinian people in the Nakba of 1948, and it continues this project through military occupation, settlement expansion, land theft, and the denial of the Palestinian right of return. It does not seek to rule Palestinians as colonial subjects in perpetuity; it seeks their elimination (physically, demographically, and politically) so that the land can be claimed as exclusively Jewish. Similarly, the ~~United States, Canada,~~ and so-called ~~Australia~~ were built through the genocide of Indigenous peoples, the theft of their lands, and the construction of legal systems that define the settler presence as legitimate and the Indigenous presence as provisional or extinguished. In all these cases, the settler-colonial structure is not a past crime but a living reality, maintained through law, police, and ideology. The revolutionary supports the right of Indigenous and colonised peoples to reclaim their land and sovereignty, up to and including the dismantling of settler-colonial states.

What it is: A structure of Indigenous elimination and land theft, not an event that concluded with colonisation.

What it isn't: The same as extractive colonialism; it is a specific form with its own logic, dynamics, and ongoing character.

Neo-Colony

Core Definition: A formally independent state whose economy, politics, and sovereignty are structurally subordinated to imperialist powers through debt, trade agreements, military occupation, or colonial constitutions.

Explanation: Colonialism didn't end – it adapted. The flag changes. The viceroy becomes an "international administrator". The army becomes a "peacekeeping force". The looting continues through structural adjustment, unequal trade, and the extraction of labour. The neo-colony is a state that looks sovereign but is not. It cannot determine its own economic policy, defend its own borders, or educate its own children without imperial permission. Bosnia is a neo-colony. So are many others.

Example: Bosnia has a flag, an anthem, and a seat at the ~~UN~~. But the Office of the High Representative can dismiss elected officials. The ~~EU~~ imposes economic policy. The ~~Dayton~~ constitution was written in Ohio. Bosnia is not sovereign. It is a neo-colony, and the struggle for sovereignty is inseparable from the struggle against empire.

What it is: A state in colonial condition under a sovereign mask.

What it isn't: A "transitional democracy" on a journey to Europe.

Permanent War

Core Definition: The continuous, structural deployment of military, economic, and ideological violence by empire to maintain global domination. Not a series of discrete conflicts but a permanent condition.

Explanation: Empire does not wage peace interrupted by occasional wars. It wages permanent war interrupted by occasional lulls. Sanctions starve nations; coups overthrow elected governments; proxy wars bleed regions; structural adjustment impoverishes populations; colonial administrations manage ethnic tension. These are not separate tools. They are the same war prosecuted by different means. The oppressed live inside permanent war, which is why their consciousness of the sharpest contradiction is so acute. The Western left, sheltered from the sharpest edge, often forgets this.

Example: Bosnia under ~~Dayton~~ is not at peace. The war shifted from military to economic and political forms: demographic erasure through youth exodus, ethnic apartheid maintained by a colonial viceroy, paramilitary police enforcing entity borders. The war never ended; it changed shape.

What it is: The normal condition of imperialist rule.

What it isn't: A series of discrete foreign interventions with clear start and end dates.

Proxy War

Core Definition: A form of imperialist warfare in which the great powers avoid direct confrontation by arming, funding, and directing local forces to fight on their behalf. Exporting the violence to the periphery while preserving the appearance of distance.

Explanation: Proxy war is permanent war at one remove. The ~~US~~ does not fight Russia directly in Ukraine; it floods Ukraine with weapons, intelligence, and funding while Ukrainian and Russian soldiers die. Iran and Saudi Arabia fight through proxies across the West Asia. The great powers arm both sides, prolong conflict, and extract the geopolitical benefits while the periphery burns. The proxy is expendable; the imperial power is not. Proxy wars devastate nations, create refugee crises, and deepen dependency. They are not "civil wars" or "ethnic conflicts" – they are directed from the imperial core.

Example: The war in Syria was a proxy war. The ~~US~~, Russia, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and others each armed and funded different factions, prolonging the slaughter and destroying the country to advance their own strategic interests. Syrians died; empires gained.

What it is: Imperialist war conducted through local surrogates, preserving distance for the great powers.

What it isn't: A spontaneous local conflict with purely internal dynamics.

Agent of Empire

Core Definition: An individual who actively serves imperial interests. Not merely a beneficiary of empire, but someone who knowingly or structurally performs functions that maintain imperialist domination, whether as a politician, intellectual, journalist, cultural figure, informant, or enforcer.

Explanation: The agent of empire is not defined by class origin. A comprador capitalist is an agent of empire by structural position; a Western academic who launders imperialism through "objective" scholarship is also an agent, regardless of income. The agent may be conscious of their role (the ~~CIA~~ asset, the paid informant) or they may be unconscious, genuinely believing they serve "democracy", "human rights", or "reconciliation". Materialist analysis judges by function, not intention. The diaspora intellectual who returns to the homeland to "educate" locals on Western values; the NGO director who channels imperial funds into depoliticised "civil society"; the journalist who frames genocide as "ethnic conflict" – all are agents of empire. Some are bought; some are true believers; all serve.

Example: An exiled opposition figure living in London, funded by Western foundations, who regularly appears on BBC and CNN to denounce their home country's government as "authoritarian", call for sanctions, and legitimise intervention – this person is an agent of empire. Whether they believe their own rhetoric is irrelevant. Their function is to provide a native face for imperialist policy, to manufacture consent for sanctions and war, and to present foreign domination as liberation.

What it is: An individual who serves imperialist interests by function, regardless of intention or class origin.

What it isn't: A synonym for anyone who benefits from empire – it is an active, functional role, not a passive condition.

Colour Revolution

Core Definition: A form of imperialist regime change disguised as a spontaneous democratic uprising – externally funded, mediatised, and organised to overthrow governments that resist imperial domination.

Explanation: Colour Revolutions borrow the aesthetics of popular revolt (the colour symbol, the mass demonstrations, the rhetoric of freedom), while serving empire's strategic interests. Covert funding via NGOs and intelligence agencies, mass propaganda, and the mobilisation of comprador elements direct genuine grievances toward regime change. The formula is consistent: amplify a disputed election or economic crisis, provide diplomatic cover, and threaten intervention if the state defends itself. The revolution distinguishes a genuine mass uprising from a manufactured one by analysing the class forces leading it and the material interests it serves.

Example: The 2014 Maidan coup in Ukraine was the archetypal Colour Revolution. Mass protests were real, but they were co-opted, funded, and steered by Western intelligence toward the violent overthrow of a government that had refused EU austerity terms. The result was a fascist-aligned regime, civil war, and catastrophe for Ukrainian workers.

What it is: An imperialist tactic of regime change dressed as democratic uprising.

What it isn't: A genuine, independent mass movement for liberation.

Coup

Core Definition: The violent, usually military overthrow of a government, often orchestrated or backed by imperialist powers to remove leaders who resist their domination and install compliant regimes.

Explanation: The coup is empire's blunt instrument. When elections produce inconvenient results, when reformist governments threaten to nationalise resources or defy imperial policy, the coup removes them. The ~~US~~ has orchestrated or backed coups across Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Levant for over a century. The military seizes power, the targeted leader is killed or exiled, and a regime friendly to foreign capital is installed. Coups are often accompanied by mass repression, torture, and the dismantling of popular organisations. They are the violent hand of empire, less subtle than the Colour Revolution but serving the same function: regime change in imperial interests.

Example: The 1973 coup in Chile, backed by the ~~US~~, overthrew the elected socialist government of Salvador Allende and installed the fascist dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. Thousands were murdered, tortured, and disappeared. The crime was wanting to nationalise copper – Chile's own resources. The coup served ~~US~~ corporate interests and demonstrated the price of defying empire.

What it is: The military overthrow of a government, typically orchestrated or backed by imperialist powers.

What it isn't: A genuine popular uprising or revolution – it serves foreign capital, not the masses.

Genocide

Core Definition: The deliberate, systematic destruction of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, in whole or in part, through killing, infliction of conditions calculated to bring about physical destruction, prevention of births, or forcible transfer of children.

Explanation: Genocide is not "ethnic cleansing", a term invented by imperial bureaucrats to soften the horror and avoid legal obligation. Genocide is the specific, coordinated annihilation of a people. It is a process, not a moment. It begins with ideology, dehumanisation, and legal discrimination, escalates into violence and dispossession, and culminates in mass killing and – if successful – erasure. The Bosnian genocide of 1992-1995 was not a single atrocity at Srebrenica. It was the total war waged by Great Serb and Great Croat chauvinist projects, armed and shielded by Western powers, to dismember the country and destroy the Bosnian people. Srebrenica was the genocidal logic reaching its horrific climax, not an exception. To isolate Srebrenica as the only genocide is to accept the imperial narrative that fragments the crime and obscures its totality. Genocide denial (minimising, relativising, or excusing what happened) is an extension of the genocide itself.

Example: The Bosnian genocide included the siege of Sarajevo, the concentration camps of Omarska and Trnopolje, the systematic rape used as a weapon to destroy families and communities, the destruction of mosques, churches, libraries, and the expulsion of populations from their homes. All of it was coordinated. All of it was genocide. Dayton did not punish genocide; it codified its territorial results into a constitution.

What it is: The systematic destruction of a people as a process, not a single event.

What it isn't: "Ethnic cleansing" – a euphemism designed to evade the legal and moral weight of the crime.

Primitive Accumulation

Core Definition: The original theft (land enclosure, enslavement, colonial plunder, and dispossession) that violently created the conditions for capitalist accumulation, a process that is ongoing, not confined to the past.

Explanation: Marx identified primitive accumulation as the bloody genesis of capitalism, distinct from the "silent compulsion" of the market. But it did not end. In neo-colonies, primitive accumulation continues through land grabs, structural adjustment, privatisation, and debt. The diaspora is a product of primitive accumulation: populations are expelled from their land and turned into a flexible labour reserve for the imperial core. Primitive accumulation is therefore not a historical footnote. It is a current event.

Example: The Bosnian privatisation process after Dayton was primitive accumulation: public wealth transferred to foreign capital and comprador elites, massive unemployment created, population driven into migration. The land seizures by entity governments for "development" projects continue it.

What it is: The ongoing, violent dispossession that makes and sustains capitalism.

What it isn't: A one-time event in the 16th-18th centuries.

Dispossession

Core Definition: The taking of land, resources, homes, and livelihoods from people – not through the wage relation, but through direct seizure, enclosure, eviction, or displacement. Primitive accumulation is dispossession; so is gentrification, land grabbing, and ethnic cleansing.

Explanation: Dispossession is distinct from exploitation. Exploitation extracts surplus value from labour. Dispossession takes the very conditions of life (land, water, shelter), and hands them to capital. It is ongoing, not a historical origin story. Empire dispossesses to accumulate. The peasant driven from the land becomes a migrant worker; the tenant evicted becomes homeless; the Indigenous nation expelled becomes a diaspora. Dispossession is violence without the wage.

Example: A Palestinian family whose home is demolished by the Zionist state to make way for settlements is dispossessed. They are not exploited for their labour; they are expelled from existence on that land. The revolutionary demand is return – not compensation, not resettlement. Return.

What it is: The direct seizure of the conditions of life, ongoing under capitalism and empire.

What it isn't: A one-time historical event or the same as wage exploitation.

Slavery

Core Definition: The most extreme form of dispossession and exploitation combined. The ownership of human beings as property, the total extraction of their labour, life, and reproduction, foundational to the emergence of capitalism and persisting in transformed forms through prison labour, human trafficking, and debt bondage.

Explanation: Chattel slavery in the Americas was not a deviation from capitalism. It was its precondition. Enslaved Africans produced the cotton, sugar, and tobacco that fuelled European industrialisation and capital accumulation. Slavery was abolished formally, but its logic persists: the ~~US~~ prison-industrial complex forces incarcerated workers to labour for pennies or nothing; migrant workers are trapped in debt bondage; women and children are trafficked. The racial hierarchy constructed to justify slavery became white supremacy, structuring the global division of labour to this day. The revolutionary does not treat slavery as a closed chapter; it is a living legacy and an ongoing structure.

Example: Incarcerated people in the ~~United States~~ work in prisons producing goods for corporations, often under threat of solitary confinement if they refuse. This is not a metaphor for slavery; it is slavery's direct descendant, constitutionally permitted by the Thirteenth Amendment's exception clause.

What it is: The ownership and total extraction of human beings, foundational to and persisting within capitalism.

What it isn't: A historical relic with no contemporary relevance.

Mode of Production

Core Definition: The specific way a society organises the production and reproduction of its material existence. The unity of productive forces (tools, technology, labour power) and social relations of production (who owns the means of production, who does the work, how the surplus is extracted).

Explanation: Every society must produce food, shelter, and the means of survival. How it does so (the mode of production) determines its class structure, its political forms, and its dominant ideology. Marx identified several historical modes: primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and the transitional forms of socialism leading to full communism. Each mode contains internal contradictions that drive its development and eventual supersession. Capitalism, as a mode of production, is based on wage labour, private ownership, and the extraction of surplus value. It is not eternal. It arose historically, and it will be abolished historically. The mode of production is the material base upon which the legal, political, and ideological superstructure rises. To change the superstructure without changing the mode of production is reformism. Revolution means transforming the mode of production itself.

Example: Under feudalism, the peasant worked the land and gave a portion of the harvest to the lord. Under capitalism, the worker sells their labour power to the capitalist and produces commodities whose surplus value is appropriated as profit. The mode of extraction changed, and with it the entire society. A socialist mode of production would abolish wage labour and private ownership, organising production democratically for human need.

What it is: The historically specific, materially grounded way a society produces its existence – the foundation of all social life.

What it isn't: A set of technologies, a type of government, or a cultural preference – it is the structural base of society.

Means of Production

Core Definition: The material instruments and resources (land, factories, machines, raw materials, infrastructure) through which a society produces its material existence.

Explanation: Who owns the means of production defines the class structure of a society. Under capitalism, the bourgeoisie owns them. Under socialism, they are socially owned and democratically controlled by the producers themselves. Under neo-colonialism, the key means of production are owned by foreign capital with a comprador layer managing them locally. The question of the means of production is the question of power. Reforms that leave ownership untouched leave class power untouched. Revolution means expropriating the expropriators and placing the means of production under collective, democratic control. This is not a technical adjustment; it is the foundation of a new mode of production.

Example: The privatised factories, mines, and energy infrastructure of Bosnia are means of production owned by German, Austrian, and comprador capital. A revolutionary programme would expropriate them and place them under workers' management. This is not a policy preference; it is the material basis of socialism.

What it is: The material basis of social production and class power.

What it isn't: Just tools or equipment. It is the productive core of society.

Productive Forces

Core Definition: The material and human capacities available to a society for producing its material existence. Tools, machinery, technology, infrastructure, natural resources, scientific knowledge, and the labour power, skills, and experience of the direct producers themselves.

Explanation: Productive forces are not simply "technology". They are the total material capacity for production at a given historical stage, including the human beings who apply that capacity. The development of productive forces creates both the possibility of abundance and the contradictions that drive historical change. Capitalism develops productive forces to an unprecedented degree, but the relations of production (private ownership, wage labour, profit motive) act as fetters on their further development. This is the fundamental contradiction of the capitalist mode: socialised production versus private appropriation. Socialism must develop productive forces to the point where scarcity is overcome and communism becomes possible. But "developing productive forces" is not a neutral technical process; it must be done under the political leadership of the proletariat, or it becomes capitalist restoration under a red flag. The Chinese revisionists used "developing productive forces" as their justification for reintroducing market relations and capitalist exploitation. The revolutionary insists that productive forces must be developed through socialist relations – collective ownership, democratic planning, and orientation toward human need.

Example: Bosnia's productive forces under Dayton are neither sovereign nor developing in a way that serves the people. Factories are foreign-owned or shuttered, infrastructure decays, the most productive human force – the youth – is driven into diaspora. A revolutionary programme would expropriate foreign and comprador capital, nationalise key industries, and orient production toward domestic needs: housing, energy, food sovereignty. The productive forces would develop, but under collective, democratic control.

What it is: The total material and human capacity for production in a given society.

What it isn't: A neutral, apolitical process of "modernisation" separable from class relations.

Private Property / Personal Property

Core Definition: Private property is the ownership of the means of production (factories, land, banks, machinery) by a class that uses them to extract surplus value from labour. Personal property is the ownership of things for direct use (your home, your clothes, your toothbrush). Socialism abolishes the first; it does not touch the second.

Explanation: The bourgeoisie deliberately conflates private and personal property to terrify workers into opposing socialism. "They will take your house, your car, and your savings!" This is a lie. Marx distinguished clearly between property that exploits and property that serves human need. Private property is a social relation: the capitalist's ownership of the factory is not the same as the worker's ownership of their coat. Socialism expropriates the expropriators. It does not steal your belongings. It transfers the means of producing social wealth from private hands to collective, democratic control.

Example: A landlord who owns fifty apartments and extracts rent from tenants holds private property. A family that owns and lives in one apartment holds personal property.

What it is: Private property is capital; personal property is possessions. Socialism abolishes the former.

What it isn't: The same thing – conflating them is a bourgeois tactic to discredit revolution.

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Capitalism

Core Definition: A mode of production based on the private ownership of the means of production, wage labour, the extraction of surplus value, and the accumulation of capital as the driving force of society.

Explanation: Capitalism is not simply "markets" or "trade". It is a specific social formation in which production is organised not for human need but for profit. The capitalist owns the means of production; the worker, deprived of independent access to subsistence, must sell their labour power. The surplus value produced by the worker is appropriated by the capitalist and reinvested in expanded accumulation. This generates capitalism's intrinsic drives: endless growth, expanding exploitation, ecological destruction, and periodic crises. Capitalism emerged from primitive accumulation (colonial plunder, enclosure, slavery) and cannot be reformed into a humane system. It must be abolished.

Example: The Bosnian economy under Dayton is capitalist: privatised industries, wage labour, surplus value extracted by foreign and comprador capital, the commodification of housing, education, and healthcare. The form is neo-colonial capitalism. The substance is exploitation.

What it is: A mode of production driven by profit and exploitation.

What it isn't: Natural, eternal, or synonymous with "markets".

Neoliberalism

Core Definition: The contemporary phase of capitalist accumulation characterised by the restoration of ruling-class power through privatisation, deregulation, financialisation, austerity, and the destruction of social protections.

Explanation: Neoliberalism is not a "policy choice". It is a class project. It emerged in the 1970s as capitalism faced a crisis of profitability and the bourgeoisie went on the offensive. Its ideological mask is the free market, but in practice it enriches the few through state intervention on behalf of capital: bailouts for banks, austerity for the poor, deregulation for corporations, privatisation of public wealth. In neo-colonies, neoliberalism is imposed through structural adjustment programmes, ~~IMF~~ conditionalities, and ~~EU~~ accession requirements. It is the economic logic of empire in its current phase – dispossessing, extracting, impoverishing, and presenting the results as the natural order.

Example: Bosnia's post-Dayton economy was deliberately restructured according to neoliberal principles demanded by the ~~EU~~ and ~~IMF~~: mass privatisation, labour market "flexibility", the gutting of public services. The result is not prosperity but extraction, unemployment, and forced migration. This is neoliberalism deployed as a colonial technology.

What it is: A class project to restore ruling-class power through market discipline.

What it isn't: A neutral economic theory or a set of well-intentioned but flawed policies.

Unequal Exchange

Core Definition: The structural mechanism through which value is transferred from the Global South to the imperial core via international trade. Not through simple cheating, but through systemic differences in wages, productivity, and the global division of labour that allow core countries to systematically appropriate surplus from the periphery.

Explanation: The theory of unequal exchange explains why formal political independence does not end exploitation. Even without direct colonial administration, trade between nations operates on structurally unequal terms. The imperial core exports high-value, capital-intensive goods; the periphery exports low-value, labour-intensive raw materials and commodities. The labour of a Congolese miner and a German engineer may both be abstract labour, but the global market systematically rewards one and devalues the other. Wages in the periphery are kept low by repression, labour reserves, and structural adjustment. The result is a permanent transfer of value from poor nations to rich ones, hidden beneath the appearance of free and equal exchange. Unequal exchange is a core mechanism of neo-colonialism. It ensures that formal sovereignty does not interrupt the extraction of wealth.

Example: Coffee farmers in Ethiopia receive pennies for beans that are processed, branded, and sold for euros in European cafés. The value added in the core (roasting, packaging, marketing) vastly exceeds the value captured at the point of production. The exchange is "equal" in market terms; it is deeply unequal in terms of the value transferred. This is not an accident. It is the structure of the global economy.

What it is: The systemic transfer of value from periphery to core through the structure of international trade.

What it isn't: Simple price manipulation or individual corporate greed – it is a structural feature of the imperialist world-system.

Fascism

Core Definition: The open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, most imperialist elements of finance capital. A regime of violent suppression directed against the working class, oppressed nations, and all progressive forces when the bourgeoisie can no longer rule through parliamentary democracy alone.

Explanation: Fascism is not merely "authoritarian nationalism". It is a specific class phenomenon: sections of monopoly capital abandon bourgeois democracy because it is no longer a reliable instrument of rule. Fascism emerges in conditions of capitalist crisis, working-class militancy, and a threatened bourgeoisie that turns to paramilitary violence to crush its enemies. It uses mass mobilisation, populist rhetoric, and scapegoating to build a base among the desperate petty bourgeoisie and lumpen-proletariat.

Example: The Serb and Croat chauvinist projects during the Bosnian genocide exhibited fascist characteristics: paramilitary terror, genocidal ideology, alliance with organised crime, and backing by sections of monopoly capital and the state.

What it is: The open terrorist rule of the most reactionary sections of capital.

What it isn't: A generic insult for any strong state or any nationalist movement.

Zionism

Core Definition: A settler-colonial political ideology and structure that asserts Jewish supremacy over historic Palestine, achieved through the dispossession, expulsion, and ongoing subjugation of the Palestinian people, and maintained through military occupation, apartheid, and the denial of the right of return.

Explanation: Zionism is not Judaism. It is a political ideology that emerged in late 19th-century Europe, shaped by European colonial nationalism and British imperialism. Its realisation required the erasure of the people already living on the land – the Nakba of 1948 and every subsequent war, settlement, and massacre flow from this logic. Zionism is a form of Jewish supremacy, distinct from white supremacy but historically allied with it. Not all Jews are Zionists; many are its fiercest opponents. But all Jews, particularly in the diaspora, benefit structurally from its existence – the "right of return" that welcomes them while denying it to Palestinians, the geopolitical protection the Zionist state provides. Kwame Ture identified Zionism as a settler-colonial project inseparable from imperialism, stating plainly that "Zionism is a settler-colonial movement, pure and simple", and that solidarity with Palestine is a revolutionary imperative because the same forces that occupy Palestine and Lebanon occupy the Black communities and Indigenous lands of Turtle Island, and the neo-colonies of the Global South.

Example: The ongoing genocide in Palestine is the most visible expression of Zionist logic: mass killing, destruction of infrastructure, deliberate targeting of hospitals and refugee camps. This is not a response to October 2023; it is continuous since 1948. Zionism is the ideology that justifies it. Anti-Zionism is not antisemitism; it is anti-colonialism.

What it is: A settler-colonial ideology and structure based on Jewish supremacy and Palestinian dispossession.

What it isn't: Judaism, Jewish identity, or the right of Jewish people to live in peace – it is a political ideology in service of empire and settlement.

Base and Superstructure

Core Definition: The dialectical relationship between the economic foundation of society (base) and the political, legal, and ideological forms that arise from and interact with it (superstructure).

Explanation: The base is the sum of relations of production – who owns what, who works for whom, how surplus is extracted. The superstructure includes the state, law, politics, religion, education, art, and philosophy. The base conditions the superstructure; the superstructure maintains and legitimates the base. But this is not mechanical. The superstructure also reacts back upon the base. A legal change can alter property relations. An ideological shift can destabilise the state. Imperialism uses the superstructure (to maintain the base. Revolution must smash the superstructure and transform the base simultaneously.

Example: In Bosnia, the Dayton constitution (superstructure) sustains the neo-colonial economy (base). The ethnic parties (superstructure) manage the distribution of crumbs from extraction (base). Fighting Dayton means fighting both the political form and the economic relations it serves.

What it is: The dialectical unity of economic foundation and political-ideological forms.

What it isn't: A one-way street where the economy determines everything.

Surplus Value

Core Definition: The value produced by workers beyond what is necessary to reproduce their own labour power. The unpaid labour that is the source of capitalist profit.

Explanation: This is the heart of Marx's critique of political economy. The capitalist pays the worker a wage that covers their subsistence (or less). But the worker produces more value than that wage represents. The difference (surplus value) is taken by the capitalist as profit. Exploitation is not a moral failing; it is a structural mechanism. Under neo-colonialism, surplus value is extracted from the periphery and concentrated in the imperial core. The Bosnian worker who assembles car parts creates value that appears as profit on a German balance sheet. The entire global system runs on stolen labour, and surplus value is the name of the theft.

Example: A Bosnian textile worker paid 400 KM per month produces clothing sold for thousands of euros in Berlin. The difference is surplus value, extracted by the local employer and the foreign brand. Fighting for higher wages is a fight over surplus value; abolishing the wage system is the revolutionary horizon.

What it is: Unpaid labour, the source of profit.

What it isn't: A "fair return" on the capitalist's investment or risk.

Labour Theory of Value

Core Definition: The scientific doctrine that the value of a commodity is determined by the amount of socially necessary abstract labour time required for its production. Labour is the source of all value, and profit is the unpaid labour of the worker.

Explanation: This is the foundation of Marx's critique of political economy. All human societies produce things people need. Under capitalism, these things take the form of commodities, and their exchange-value is not determined by their usefulness, their scarcity, or the whims of the market, but by the quantity of human labour congealed in them. The capitalist pays the worker for their labour power, enough to reproduce the worker's existence, but the worker produces more value than they are paid. The difference is surplus value, the source of profit. The labour theory of value reveals that exploitation is not a theft committed by individual capitalists; it is a structural mechanism of the capitalist mode of production. Bourgeois economics has spent centuries trying to refute or bury this theory. It cannot, because the theory is true. The revolutionary who understands it sees through the illusion of the "free market" to the hidden extraction of unpaid labour that sustains the entire system.

Example: A shirt sells for twenty euros. The fabric, machinery, and overhead cost ten euros. The worker is paid five euros to produce it. The remaining five euros are surplus value – unpaid labour extracted by the capitalist. The labour theory of value explains where that five euros really comes from: the worker's body, time, and life.

What it is: The scientific theory that labour is the source of all value under capitalism.

What it isn't: A claim that labour is the only factor of production, or that individual effort determines individual reward.

Commodity

Core Definition: The basic cell-form of capitalist wealth. A thing produced by human labour for exchange rather than immediate use, whose value is determined by the socially necessary labour time required for its production.

Explanation: A commodity appears simple: a loaf of bread, a phone, a coat. But it contains within it the entire structure of capitalist social relations. First, it is a use-value – it satisfies a human need. Second, it is an exchange-value – it can be traded for other commodities in specific proportions. The source of this exchange-value is the abstract human labour congealed within it, measured by the socially necessary labour time required under average conditions. But because commodities are exchanged in the market, the social character of the labour that produced them appears as an objective property of the things themselves. This is the foundation of Marx's critique of political economy. The commodity is not a neutral object. It is a social form, specific to capitalism that conceals the exploitation at its heart. Every commodity is a crystallisation of unpaid labour, of the worker's exhaustion, of the surplus value extracted by the capitalist. The revolutionary understands the commodity not as a thing of desire but as a container of stolen life. Breaking commodity fetishism (revealing the labour behind the price) is the first step toward revolutionary consciousness in a market-saturated world.

Example: A lithium-ion battery in a smartphone. It appears as a sleek, seamless object with a price tag. Hidden within it is the lithium extracted from salt flats in Bolivia or Chile, often under conditions of neo-colonial extraction and ecological destruction. The cobalt mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo, much of it by workers (including children) labouring in lethal conditions. The factory workers in China or Vietnam who assemble the battery, working twelve-hour shifts for wages that barely cover subsistence. The engineers in Silicon Valley who designed it, well-paid but still selling their labour power. The battery contains all these relations, but the consumer sees only a price and a product. The revolutionary pierces this appearance.

What it is: The fundamental unit of capitalist wealth, a crystallisation of abstract labour and social relations.

What it isn't: A simple object with a natural price. It is a historically specific social form.

Exchange Value

Core Definition: The quantitative proportion in which one commodity exchanges for another. The form in which the value of a commodity, determined by the socially necessary abstract labour time it contains, appears in the market.

Explanation: A coat trades for twenty yards of linen. Their exchange-value is the ratio in which they are equivalent. This equivalence is not magical. It is determined by the amount of socially necessary abstract labour congealed in each. But in the market, this social relation between producers appears as a relation between things. Exchange-value is the phenomenal form of value. It conceals the exploitation at the heart of production. The coat and the linen appear to exchange because they "cost" a certain amount, not because human beings laboured to produce them under specific class relations. The revolutionary sees through this appearance to the stolen labour beneath.

Example: A smartphone exchanges for approximately one month's rent in a European city. The exchange-value is the ratio. Hidden beneath it is the labour of Congolese miners, Chinese assemblers, and the unpaid reproductive labour that sustains them all. Exchange-value is the surface; surplus value is the depth.

What it is: The phenomenal form of value, the ratio in which commodities exchange.

What it isn't: The intrinsic worth of a thing – value is a social relation, not a natural property.

Abstract Labour

Core Definition: Labour considered not as a specific, concrete activity (weaving, coding, harvesting) but as the general expenditure of human labour power in the physiological sense – the substance of value under capitalism.

Explanation: All human labour is concrete: the baker bakes, the coder codes, the farmer farms. But capitalism reduces all labour to a common measure: abstract labour, the sheer expenditure of human energy, nerves, and muscles, measured in time. This abstraction is not a mental operation; it is a real social process enforced by the market, which treats all commodities as equivalents and therefore all labours as comparable. Abstract labour is the substance of value. The value of a commodity is determined by the amount of socially necessary abstract labour time required for its production. This is the hidden essence behind exchange-value. The worker does not sell concrete labour (a specific skill); they sell labour power, the capacity to perform abstract labour, which the capitalist then consumes in the production process.

Example: An hour of a garment worker's labour in Bangladesh and an hour of a software engineer's labour in Silicon Valley are both abstract labour – general human labour power expended. But the socially necessary labour time for each commodity differs, and the value produced differs. Capitalism treats them as comparable units of abstract labour, concealing the vastly different concrete conditions and the exploitation both workers endure.

What it is: Labour as generalised human exertion, the substance of value under capitalism.

What it isn't: The specific, concrete activity of any particular worker – it is the reduction of all labour to a common, measurable substance.

Division of Labour

Core Definition: The separation of the total social labour process into distinct, specialised tasks. A material development of productive forces that, under capitalism, becomes a mechanism of exploitation, deskilling, and the fragmentation of the working class.

Explanation: All complex societies have a division of labour. Under capitalism, it takes a specific form: the technical division of labour within the factory, where each worker performs a fragment of the whole production process, and the social division of labour across society, where different industries and sectors are allocated by the market. The capitalist division of labour increases productivity but at a cost: the worker becomes a detail worker, performing one repetitive task, deskilled and alienated from the product. The worker does not make a coat; they sew a sleeve for ten hours a day. This division also fragments the working class, pitting skilled against unskilled, employed against unemployed, industrial against agricultural. Imperialism deepens this globally: the Global Majority is assigned extraction and assembly; the imperial core hoards finance, technology, and design. The revolutionary fights to overcome the capitalist division of labour through the abolition of the distinction between mental and manual labour, not by returning to pre-industrial craft production, but by socialising knowledge, rotating tasks, and democratically planning production so that all workers can develop their full human capacities.

Example: A garment worker in a factory sews only collars, thousands of collars, every day, for years. They do not design the shirt, cut the fabric, or sell the product. Their labour is a fragment. Meanwhile, a designer in Milan creates the pattern, a logistics firm in Germany coordinates shipping, and a retail worker in London sells the final product. The division of labour spans continents and class positions, each fragment concealing the others, each worker alienated from the whole.

What it is: The separation of social labour into specialised tasks – under capitalism, a mechanism of exploitation and fragmentation.

What it isn't: A natural or eternal feature of all human production; its specifically capitalist form must be abolished.

Commodity Fetishism

Core Definition: The process under capitalism whereby social relations between people appear as relations between things. The product of labour becomes a mysterious object whose value seems inherent rather than produced by exploitation.

Explanation: When you buy a shirt, you see a price tag, not the factory, the worker, the exhaustion, the surplus value extracted. The commodity appears to have value by its own nature, concealing the entire social process of its production. This is fetishism, not in the psychological sense, but in the structural sense. It is the necessary illusion of a market society. Commodity fetishism makes capitalism seem natural: "things have prices, that's just how the world works". It obscures class relations and makes exploitation invisible. Revolutionary education breaks the fetish by revealing the labour behind the commodity and the social relations behind the price.

Example: The German consumer who buys a car part assembled in Bosnia does not see the Bosnian worker's exhaustion, the suppressed strike, or the comprador's cut. They see a product. The revolutionary task is to make the hidden relations visible.

What it is: The structural illusion that masks social relations as relations between things.

What it isn't: A psychological obsession with shopping.

Exploitation

Core Definition: The extraction of unpaid labour from the direct producers by the owning class under capitalism, the appropriation of surplus value from workers who must sell their labour power to survive.

Explanation: Exploitation is not just "being treated unfairly". It is a structural economic relation. The worker produces more value than they receive in wages; the difference is surplus value, which the capitalist appropriates as profit. This is the engine of capitalism. Under imperialism, exploitation is global and stratified: the proletariat in the periphery is super-exploited (paid less, working longer, with fewer protections) while surplus value flows to the imperial core. Exploitation is distinct from dispossession (the direct seizure of land or resources) but often intertwined; primitive accumulation continues alongside regular exploitation. Revolutionary politics begins by recognising exploitation as a system, not a personal grievance, and by organising the exploited class to abolish the conditions of its exploitation.

Example: A Bosnian textile worker sewing garments for a German brand is exploited: her labour produces value far exceeding her meagre wage, and the surplus is captured by the local comprador factory owner and the foreign corporation. This exploitation is made possible by Dayton's neo-colonial structure, which provides cheap, non-unionised labour for European capital. The revolutionary organises the worker to fight for higher wages and better conditions, while connecting that fight to the political struggle to expropriate the factory and place it under workers' control.

What it is: The structural extraction of unpaid labour from the producing class.

What it isn't: A vague term for any unfairness or hardship.

Alienation

Core Definition: The separation of the worker from the product, the labour process, their human potential, and from others. A structural feature of class society, deepened by colonial relations.

Explanation: Under capitalism, what you make is not yours; your labour is controlled; your creative potential is crushed; other humans become competitors. Empire adds layers: the colonised are alienated from land, culture, and history. In neo-colonies, entire societies are alienated from their future. Alienation is not a feeling but a material relation. It can be reversed through collective struggle (occupations, worker control, and land defence).

Example: A Bosnian worker assembling car parts for a German corporation experiences alienation from the product, the process, and from the community that depends on remittances. A factory occupation, where workers collectively manage production, begins to reverse that.

What it is: A structural separation produced by class society.

What it isn't: An individual psychological disorder.

Social Murder

Core Definition: A concept developed by Friedrich Engels: the systematic infliction of premature death upon a population through economic and social arrangements (poverty, unsafe working conditions, denied healthcare, environmental destruction) that is no less violent for being slow and structural.

Explanation: Social murder is not a metaphor. It is a material process. When a government imposes austerity that cuts healthcare and people die of treatable diseases, that is social murder. When a corporation dumps toxic waste in a poor community and cancer rates spike – that is social murder. When empire imposes sanctions that prevent the import of medicine and children die, that is social murder. Empire prefers social murder to spectacular violence because it is quieter, easier to deny, and less likely to provoke organised resistance. The revolutionary names it for what it is: deliberate, class-based killing by economic means.

Example: The post-Dayton privatisation of Bosnian healthcare has made life-saving treatment unaffordable for many. The brain drain means there are fewer doctors. People die waiting for procedures that would be routine in Vienna. This is not a "failure of governance" – It is social murder, a feature of the neo-colonial design.

What it is: Structural killing through economic and social arrangements.

What it isn't: A rhetorical flourish. It is a precise materialist category.

Ecological Crisis (Metabolic Rift)

Core Definition: The systematic disruption by capitalism of the material exchange between humanity and the rest of nature. A structural contradiction that manifests as climate breakdown, species extinction, soil depletion, and the poisoning of air, water, and land.

Explanation: Marx identified the "metabolic rift" as capitalism's inherent tendency to sever the nutrient cycle between town and country, exhausting the soil and concentrating waste. This logic has expanded to a planetary scale. Capitalism, driven by the imperative of endless accumulation, treats nature as a free resource to be exploited and a free sink for waste. It cannot operate sustainably, not because of individual greed but because the profit motive is structurally incompatible with ecological balance. The ecological crisis disproportionately slaughters the poor, the colonised, and the racialised – those who contributed least to its creation. Imperialism exports pollution and waste to the periphery while hoarding resources. The ecological crisis is therefore a dimension of the imperialist class war. The revolutionary does not treat ecology as a separate "green" issue but understands that the fight for clean water, breathable air, and a stable climate is inseparable from the fight against capitalism and empire. Socialism must restore the metabolic relationship on a new basis, through democratic planning, the prioritisation of use-value over exchange-value, and the integration of ecological knowledge into production. Communism is the rational regulation of the metabolism between humanity and nature.

Example: The damming of Bosnia's rivers by foreign investors is an ecological crime that intersects with neo-colonial extraction. The rivers are privatised, the ecosystems destroyed, and the local communities dispossessed, all in the name of "green energy" that powers industries elsewhere. Fighting the dams is fighting empire. It unites the peasant, the ecologist, and the worker in a common struggle for resource sovereignty and ecological restoration.

What it is: A structural contradiction between capitalism and the natural conditions of life.

What it isn't: A consumer lifestyle choice or a separate issue from class struggle.

Extraction (Extractivism)

Core Definition: The specific imperialist mechanism of removing natural resources (minerals, fossil fuels, timber, water) from colonised and neo-colonised territories for processing and profit in the imperial core, leaving ecological destruction and social devastation in its wake.

Explanation: Exploitation extracts surplus value from labour. Extraction removes the material substance of the earth itself, often with minimal labour or local benefit. It is the contemporary face of primitive accumulation. Mining corporations, backed by imperial states and international financial institutions, dispossess communities, poison water, destroy ecosystems, and export wealth. Extraction directly connects ecological crisis to colonial domination.

Example: Gold mining in Ghana by multinational corporations displaces farming communities, poisons rivers with cyanide, and exports billions in value while locals remain impoverished. The same dynamic operates in lithium extraction in Bolivia. The earth is gutted; the profits flee.

What it is: The removal of natural resources from colonised territories, leaving ecological and social destruction.

What it isn't: A synonym for all resource use – it is a specific imperialist mechanism of dispossession.

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Patriarchy

Core Definition: A material system of social relations in which men as a group hold power over women, controlling their labour, sexuality, and reproductive capacity. Deeply intertwined with class society and empire, and reproduced through institutions, ideology, and violence.

Explanation: Patriarchy is not simply individual male prejudice. It is a structural arrangement that predates capitalism but has been reshaped and intensified by it. Capitalism relies on unpaid reproductive labour (childcare, cooking, cleaning, emotional maintenance) overwhelmingly performed by women, without which the workforce could not be reproduced. Empire deploys patriarchy as a weapon: colonial powers imposed European gender norms while destroying Indigenous social forms; mass rape is a deliberate tactic of genocide, as in Bosnia. Patriarchy fractures the working class, turning male workers against female workers, undermining solidarity. Women's liberation cannot be achieved within capitalism or empire. It requires the abolition of class society and the reconstruction of social reproduction on a collective, democratic basis.

Example: During the Bosnian genocide, rape was used systematically as an instrument of war, intended to destroy families, communities, and ethnic continuity. In post-Dayton Bosnia, patriarchal structures persist: women are disproportionately unemployed, underrepresented in politics, and burdened with invisible reproductive labour. The comprador elites weaponise conservative gender ideology to maintain social control.

What it is: A structural system of male domination intertwined with class and empire.

What it isn't: A collection of individual sexist attitudes or a "cultural" issue separate from political economy.

The Family Unit

Core Definition: A historically specific institution (not a natural or eternal form) that emerged with private property and class society to secure inheritance, control women's reproduction and labour, and privatise care work. Under capitalism – a mechanism for reproducing the workforce at minimal cost to capital.

Explanation: Engels, in *'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State'*, demonstrated that the nuclear family is not universal. Earlier societies organised kinship and care differently. With class society, the family became the means of controlling female sexuality, passing property to heirs, and isolating care work within the household. Capitalism exploits this: unpaid domestic labour (cooking, cleaning, childcare, emotional maintenance) reproduces the worker for the boss without the boss paying a cent. The family is also an ideological tool: it is presented as sacred, natural, and under threat from feminism, queerness, and communism. The revolutionary does not seek to "abolish the family" in the sense of breaking all bonds of love and care. The goal is to socialise reproductive labour, liberate women and children from patriarchal dependency, and create the material conditions for free, chosen relationships.

Example: A working mother who cooks, cleans, and cares for children after a full shift is performing unpaid labour that allows her boss to pay her less than it costs to reproduce her life. The family unit privatises this labour, hiding its cost.

What it is: A historically specific institution of patriarchal control and privatised care.

What it isn't: An eternal, natural, or sacred form of human organisation.

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Religion

Core Definition: A complex social phenomenon that is simultaneously an expression of real suffering and a protest against it, a tool of ruling-class legitimation, and under certain conditions, a mobilising force for revolutionary struggle. Marx's formulation "the opium of the people" captures both its pain-relieving and consciousness-dulling aspects.

Explanation: Marx did not simply dismiss religion. He understood that it arises from material conditions: exploitation, alienation, and the apparent powerlessness of human beings before forces they do not control. Religion provides solace and meaning in a world of suffering. In this sense, it is "the heart of a heartless world". But it also reconciles the oppressed to their oppression, promising reward in the afterlife and sanctifying the existing order. Under certain conditions, religious frameworks have been used for revolutionary purposes: Liberation Theology in Latin America, Islam in anti-colonial struggles. The revolutionary does not mock or condemn religious belief among the masses. They organise alongside religious comrades in the united front against empire, while maintaining the party's scientific atheism and patiently demonstrating that the material conditions producing religious alienation can only be abolished through revolutionary transformation, not divine intervention.

Example: The anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa drew on both Marxist and Christian currents. Many comrades were devout Christians who saw their faith as demanding resistance to injustice. The revolutionary works with such comrades in the united front without demanding they abandon their faith, while maintaining ideological clarity within the party itself.

What it is: A social expression of suffering, a tool of control, and a potential mobiliser – dialectically, not uniformly.

What it isn't: Simply a "lie" to be debunked or a private matter with no political content.

White Supremacy

Core Definition: A global, historically produced racial hierarchy that positions people racialised as "white" above those racialised as non-white. Originating in colonialism and slavery, maintained by capitalism and empire, and functioning to divide the working class and justify extraction and dispossession.

Explanation: White supremacy is not merely a belief system held by extremists. It is a structural feature of the modern world-system. European colonialism constructed the category of "whiteness" as a tool of rule, justifying genocide, enslavement, and land theft. Under imperialism, white supremacy structures the global division of labour, assigning racialised populations in the periphery to super-exploitation while granting even the white working class in the core a material stake in empire's continuation – the labour aristocracy. It operates ideologically through media, education, and culture to make colonial relations appear natural. The Western left often treats white supremacy as an interpersonal moral failing rather than a material structure, which is why its anti-racism remains performative. The revolutionary fights white supremacy not as a separate struggle but as an integral dimension of the anti-imperialist class war.

Example: Bosnia may not be a primary site of white supremacy in the same way as the US or South Africa, but it is shaped by it. The Western powers that managed the genocide and imposed Dayton viewed Bosnia through a racialised lens – "ancient tribal hatreds" in a backward Balkan periphery, not quite European, requiring civilising administration. Bosnian refugees in Europe were racialised and excluded. The imperial hierarchy that positions Bosnia as a neo-colony is itself a racial hierarchy. Solidarity with Black, Indigenous, and colonised peoples globally is inseparable from Bosnia's own liberation.

What it is: A global structural hierarchy produced by colonialism and reproduced by capitalism.

What it isn't: Simply prejudiced attitudes or the ideology of the far right alone.

Racism

Core Definition: A material structure of domination, rooted in colonialism and slavery that assigns differential value and access to resources based on racialised categories. Reproduced through institutions, ideology, and everyday practice to divide the working class and justify imperialist exploitation.

Explanation: Racism is not an unfortunate prejudice held by individuals. It is a system. It was produced historically through primitive accumulation – the transatlantic slave trade, colonial land theft, the construction of "whiteness" as a legal and social category. Under capitalism and empire, racism serves specific functions: it divides the working class, weakening solidarity; it justifies super-exploitation of racialised populations; it naturalises the global hierarchy that positions the white imperial core above the racialised periphery. The Western left often treats racism as a matter of individual morality (calling out "bad" racists) or representation (demanding "diverse" faces in power). This is idealism. Racism is structural, and it must be dismantled through structural means: the expropriation of capital, the destruction of imperialist institutions, and the building of multi-racial class unity in struggle. Anti-racism without anti-capitalism is performance; anti-capitalism without anti-racism is incomplete and vulnerable to chauvinism.

Example: Racism in Bosnia operates differently than in the US or South Africa but is no less real. The Roma population faces systematic marginalisation, discrimination, and violence. Refugees and migrants of colour are brutalised at borders and dehumanised in public discourse. Bosniaks have been racialised in European discourse as "Muslim", "Oriental", not quite European. The revolutionary fights these racisms by organising across ethnic and racial lines and connecting the struggle to the anti-colonial and anti-capitalist struggle against empire.

What it is: A structural system of racial domination serving class and empire.

What it isn't: Individual prejudice alone; it is a system that produces and rewards that prejudice.

Whiteness

Core Definition: A historically constructed political and social category, not a biological reality, produced by colonialism and capitalism to assign privilege, divide the working class, and naturalise imperialist domination.

Explanation: Whiteness was invented. It did not exist before European colonialism needed a justification for genocide, enslavement, and land theft. It was consolidated through law, ideology, and violence to unite Europeans across class lines into a shared identity of racial superiority, while fracturing the global working class along racial lines. Whiteness is material: it grants differential access to housing, employment, legal protection, and physical safety. It produces the labour aristocracy, bribing a section of the working class in the imperial core with the spoils of empire. Whiteness is not the same as having light skin; it is a structural position in the global racial hierarchy, one that can be claimed, assigned, or denied. The revolutionary does not moralise about whiteness (calling people "bad" for being white), but analyses it as a weapon of empire that must be understood, rejected, and dismantled. White comrades must commit class suicide and actively struggle against the privileges whiteness confers, not wallow in guilt or demand recognition for their "allyship".

Example: A Bosnian refugee in Germany may be racialised as non-white in a Western European context, subject to discrimination, xenophobia, and marginalisation. Yet within the global imperial hierarchy, they may still benefit from certain privileges relative to a Black refugee from the Congo or a Palestinian refugee in the same camp. Whiteness is not a fixed identity; it is a shifting, relational structure of power. The task is to refuse its logic entirely, to build solidarity across these divisions, and to organise against the empire that produces them.

What it is: A constructed political category serving racial capitalism and empire.

What it isn't: A biological fact or a synonym for "European ancestry".

Oppression

Core Definition: The systematic, structurally enforced subordination of a social group (through violence, law, ideology, and economic arrangements) that denies them full participation in social life, crushes their resistance, and serves the interests of the dominant class.

Explanation: Oppression is not a feeling. It is a material structure. It is not the same as exploitation, though they are intertwined. Exploitation is the extraction of surplus labour; oppression is the broader system of domination that makes certain groups more vulnerable to exploitation, dispossession, and violence. Under empire, oppression multiplies along multiple axes: national, racial, gendered, sexual, and religious. These oppressions are not separate "issues" to be tallied; they are internally related through the total imperialist-capitalist system. The revolutionary fights all forms of oppression not by separating them into autonomous struggles but by connecting them to the class war that abolishes the system producing them. The abolition of class society is the condition for the abolition of systemic oppression.

Example: In Bosnia, there is national oppression (the colonial administration of Dayton, the denial of sovereignty), gender oppression (patriarchal structures deepened by war and poverty), and class oppression (the exploitation and dispossession of the multi-ethnic working class). These are not three separate problems. They are dimensions of a single neo-colonial reality. The revolutionary organises against all of them by building a unified class movement that refuses to privilege one oppression over another while understanding that the class contradiction is the motor.

What it is: A systemic structure of subordination serving ruling-class interests.

What it isn't: A subjective experience of unfairness detached from material analysis.

Fragmentation

Core Definition: The deliberate imperial strategy of dividing oppressed peoples along ethnic, religious, linguistic, or cultural lines to prevent the formation of a unified revolutionary subject capable of challenging empire.

Explanation: Fragmentation is empire's oldest weapon. You cannot rule a vast, diverse population by force alone. You must divide them. Colonial powers drew borders to split nations. They elevated minority groups as comprador elites over majorities. They codified ethnic difference into law. Under neo-colonialism, fragmentation continues through constitutions that mandate ethnic power-sharing (like Dayton), through media that amplify inter-communal grievances, through the funding of sectarian political parties, and through the systematic encouragement of identity-based grievance over class-based analysis. The term "Balkanisation" is itself a piece of imperial ideology. It names a region as synonymous with fragmentation while erasing the imperial powers that deliberately fractured it. We reject that term. The revolutionary response to fragmentation is unity – not the erasure of difference, but the building of multi-ethnic class solidarity against the common enemy.

Example: Dayton's constitution is fragmentation codified into law. It created ethnic entities, mandated ethnic quotas in government, and institutionalised segregated education. It was designed to make the emergence of a unified Bosnian working class nearly impossible. Every time a Bosniak worker and a Serb worker are pitted against each other for a scarce job, fragmentation is working. The revolutionary task is to organise across those lines, to reveal the common class enemy, and to forge the unity that empire fears most.

What it is: An imperial strategy of division to prevent unified resistance.

What it isn't: A natural or ancient condition of a region, as the racist term "Balkanisation" implies.

Hierarchy

Core Definition: A social construct composed of internal and external dialectical relationships, involving one person or group having power over another. Never static, always complex, reproducing itself across multiple dimensions of society.

Explanation: Hierarchy is not natural. It is produced and maintained by material conditions, institutional arrangements, and ideological legitimization. Under empire, hierarchies multiply: imperial over colonised, comprador over proletarian, man over woman, white over racialised, metropole over periphery, the "conscious" diaspora over the "ignorant" local. These hierarchies are interwoven. You cannot flick a switch and abolish one while leaving the others intact. They develop dialectically and must be dismantled dialectically, through struggle that targets the material base of domination and the ideological superstructure simultaneously. The dictatorship of the proletariat begins the abolition of hierarchy by placing the exploited in command of society and beginning the long process of withering class distinctions.

Example: The ethnic hierarchy in Bosnia, imposed and managed by Dayton, is not an ancient curse. It is a colonial technology of control. It cannot be dismantled through "reconciliation" workshops. It must be destroyed through the seizure of power by the multi-ethnic working class, which then reorganises society on a basis that makes ethnic hierarchy materially impossible.

What it is: A constructed, dynamic system of power relations.

What it isn't: Natural, eternal, or resolvable through moral appeals.

Part III: The Forces

Class

Core Definition: A structural relation of power within the global division of labour, not an income bracket or cultural identity.

Explanation: Class is not about how much money you make or whether you wear a uniform. It is about your position in the system of exploitation and dispossession. Are you an exploiter or exploited? Do you own the means of production, or are you forced to sell your labour, or have even that opportunity denied? Under imperialism, class is a global relation. The German worker and the Bosnian worker are both exploited, but empire positions them differently. The unemployed youth in Zenica, the dispossessed peasant in Srebrenica, the diaspora worker in Berlin. All are part of the global working class, fractured by empire. Class unity requires recognising this fracture and organising across it.

Example: The Bosnian worker who assembles car parts for a German company, the German worker who buys the car, and the migrant who cleans the German factory floor are all workers. But their material interests are not automatically aligned. Imperialism bribes the core worker with a slice of superprofits extracted from the periphery. Class consciousness means seeing this structure and fighting accordingly. Not in national isolation, but as part of a global class war.

What it is: A social relation of exploitation.

What it isn't: How much money you make or what clothes you wear.

Bourgeoisie

Core Definition: The ruling class under capitalism. Those who own and control the means of production and live off the surplus value extracted from the labour of others.

Explanation: The bourgeoisie is not defined by wealth alone but by its structural position. It owns the factories, the land, the banks, the media, the institutions that organise production and reproduction. It does not work to survive; it profits from the work of others. Under imperialism, the bourgeoisie is stratified: there is the imperial bourgeoisie of the core, the comprador bourgeoisie of the neo-colonies, and the national bourgeoisie of oppressed nations, which occupies a contradictory position – exploited by empire but exploiting its own working class. The revolutionary identifies which section of the bourgeoisie it is dealing with; united front tactics may engage the national bourgeoisie against empire, but the comprador and imperial bourgeoisie are permanent enemies.

Example: In Bosnia, the ethno-nationalist party leadership is the comprador bourgeoisie. They own the companies, control the state contracts, and partner with foreign capital. They are not "middle class professionals". They are the ruling class in a neo-colony.

What it is: The owning class, structurally defined.

What it isn't: Simply "rich people" or a lifestyle category.

Petty Bourgeoisie

Core Definition: The ambiguous class between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Owners of small means of production, professionals, intellectuals, whose material position makes them oscillate politically between revolution and reaction.

Explanation: The petty bourgeoisie owns some means of production (a shop, a consultancy, a degree that grants access to income) but does not typically employ large numbers of workers. It is squeezed between big capital and the working class. Its ideology is defined by aspiration (fear of falling, dream of rising). Politically, it can be radicalised by crisis and join the revolution (Cabral's class suicide), or it can swing to fascism when it feels threatened. The diaspora intellectual, the NGO worker, the small business owner. These are the contemporary faces of the petty bourgeoisie. The vanguard must win the progressive sections while neutralising the reactionary ones.

Example: The diaspora Bosnian with a professional salary and an EU passport is petty bourgeois. Their material stability gives them space for reflection and analysis, but also breeds arrogance. Their revolutionary potential depends on committing class suicide.

What it is: A vacillating intermediate class.

What it isn't: An automatically revolutionary or automatically reactionary force.

Proletariat

Core Definition: The class of people who have nothing to sell but their labour power. The exploited, the dispossessed, the colonised, and all those who live by working rather than by owning.

Explanation: The proletariat is not defined by economic factors. It is defined by a structural position: you do not control the means of production, you must sell your labour to survive, or you are denied even that opportunity and must scrape by in the margins. Under imperialism, the proletariat is global and internally divided by design. Empire bribes a labour aristocracy in the core with superprofits from the periphery, while the proletariat in neo-colonies faces super-exploitation. The unemployed youth, the landless peasant, the sweatshop worker, the migrant domestic labourer, the incarcerated. All are part of the modern proletariat. The class is vast, but it is fragmented. Its revolutionary task is to unify across these divisions and seize power.

Example: The Bosnian factory worker, the German autoworker, the Filipino domestic worker in Dubai, the incarcerated Black worker in a US prison, and the Palestinian farmer resisting land theft are all proletarians. Their conditions differ because empire structures the global working class hierarchically. Revolutionary class consciousness means recognising this structure and organising to destroy it.

What it is: The class of those who live by working, not owning.

What it isn't: Only industrial factory workers with union cards.

Peasantry

Core Definition: A class of direct producers who work the land, possessing some independent access to the means of subsistence – distinct from the proletariat, who are separated from the land, and from capitalist farmers, who employ wage labour. Under imperialism, the peasantry is a central revolutionary force, particularly in the Global Majority.

Explanation: Marx and Engels often wrote of the peasantry as a doomed class, destined to dissolve into capital and labour. This proved true in parts of Western Europe. But under imperialism, the peasantry did not disappear. It was impoverished, dispossessed, and radicalised. In Russia, China, Vietnam, Cuba, and across Africa and Latin America, the peasantry formed the mass base of revolutionary struggles. Landless and land-poor peasants have nothing to sell but their labour and nothing to lose but their misery. They are a potential ally and a potential revolutionary force. The revolutionary does not romanticise the peasantry as inherently revolutionary; its political character depends on organisation and leadership. But to dismiss it, as Eurocentric Marxism often has, is to abandon the majority of the world's oppressed.

Example: The Chinese Revolution was won by a peasant army under proletarian leadership. Peasants provided the fighters, the food, and the base areas from which protracted people's war was waged. Mao understood that the national question in China was a land question – that peasants would fight for a revolution that gave them land and sovereignty.

What it is: A class of rural direct producers, a potential revolutionary force under proletarian leadership.

What it isn't: A monolithic block, or a romantic, naturally revolutionary subject.

Labour Aristocracy

Core Definition: A privileged stratum of the working class in imperialist countries, bribed by a share of the superprofits extracted from the colonies and neo-colonies

Explanation: Lenin developed the concept to explain why the Western working class did not automatically develop revolutionary consciousness and often supported its own bourgeoisie's imperialist wars. The imperialist exploitation of the periphery generates enormous superprofits. A portion of these is used to buy off a section of the metropolitan working class – better wages, social protections, and a stake in the system. This labour aristocracy forms the material basis for the betrayal of proletarian internationalism. It supports reformist parties, opposes militant class struggle, and defends its own imperialism. The labour aristocracy is not the entire working class of the core; it is the upper stratum. Below it, sections of the white working class are also exploited and can be won to revolution, as can the racialised and migrant proletariat who are super-exploited. But the labour aristocracy's influence poisons the movement. The revolutionary in the imperial core must recognise this dynamic, and organise against it. Without this, "internationalism" remains an abstraction.

Example: The British trade unionist who supports sanctions on Venezuela because "democracy" is more important than the material survival of Venezuelan workers, is acting as a labour aristocrat, whether or not they earn a high wage. Their political consciousness is shaped by the ideological spoils of empire, even if their material position is precarious.

What it is: A bribed stratum of the working class in the imperialist core, a material basis for opportunism.

What it isn't: The entire working class of the West; many workers are also exploited and can be won to revolution.

Reserve Army of Labour

Core Definition: The mass of unemployed, underemployed, and precariously employed workers (the relative surplus population) that capitalism produces and requires to discipline the employed workforce, keep wages low, and absorb the shocks of accumulation.

Explanation: Marx identified the reserve army as a structural necessity of capitalist accumulation. It is not a temporary misfortune. It is a permanent feature of the system, expanding and contracting with the economic cycle. The reserve army performs three functions: it holds down wages by threatening the employed with replacement; it provides a flexible pool of labour that can be pulled into production during booms and expelled during busts; and it divides the working class, pitting employed against unemployed, and permanent against temporary. The reserve army is layered: temporarily out of work, chronically precarious, and deprived, often overlapping with the lumpen-proletariat.

Example: In South Africa's townships, millions of young people are permanently unemployed, surviving through informal work, grants, and mutual aid. They are the reserve army—produced by the systematic deindustrialisation and dispossession that followed the end of apartheid, kept alive but barely, available for extraction when capital needs them, discarded when it does not.

What it is: A permanent structural condition of capitalism, not a temporary problem.

What it isn't: A separate class from the proletariat—it is the proletariat in its most precarious form, and its interests are identical to those of the employed.

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Lumpen-proletariat

Core Definition: The declassed, marginalised stratum of society (the chronically unemployed, the criminalised, the informal scavengers, and the displaced) who exist outside the formal wage-labour relation but are produced by and suffer under the same imperialist-capitalist system that exploits the proletariat.

Explanation: Marx and Engels described the lumpen-proletariat as a dangerous, reactionary mass, easily bought by the bourgeoisie to attack the working class. This is partly true but incomplete. Under imperialism, the lumpen-proletariat is vast: informal street vendors, displaced peasants, refugees, slum dwellers, sex workers, drug economy participants. They are not inherently reactionary. Their political character depends on whether they are organised. The lumpen-proletariat, unorganised, can be reactionary muscle for the right. Organised and given a revolutionary programme, it can be a fierce fighting force.

Example: The Bosnian youth who cannot find work, who survive through informal hustles, who are dismissed as "lazy" or "criminal" by the comprador media – these are the lumpen-proletarianised children of neo-colonial extraction. They have enormous revolutionary potential if they are organised, and dangerous potential if they are abandoned to nationalist demagogues.

What it is: The declassed margin produced by capitalism and empire.

What it isn't: Inherently reactionary or inherently revolutionary.

Comprador (Comprador Elite)

Core Definition: The section of the local bourgeoisie in a colony or neo-colony that serves as the economic and political agent of imperial capital. They are in the business of managing extraction, administering the territory on behalf of foreign interests, and maintaining the structures of dependency, division, and underdevelopment that keep it in power.

Explanation: Empire cannot directly administer every colony. It needs local agents. The comprador class performs this function. It channels wealth upward to imperial patrons and distributes crumbs downward along ethnic or clientelist lines. Its interests are entirely tied to foreign capital. It is the importer, the license-holder, the local partner of multinational corporations, the politician who passes austerity laws in exchange for personal enrichment and continued power. Its patriotism is a performance; its material reality is dependency. Without empire, it has no independent power base. This is why it fights so viciously to maintain ethnic division and political fragmentation. The comprador is not merely a "corrupt politician". It is a structural class – the enemy's local face.

Example: In Bosnia, the ethno-nationalist party leaders who have ruled since Dayton are compradors. They use ethnic fear to win elections, then deliver privatisation, austerity, and compliance with EU demands. They distribute state jobs and contracts as ethnic patronage, ensuring that the crumbs of extraction flow along ethnic lines just enough to maintain dependency. They keep the population divided and the extraction flowing.

What it is: The local agent of imperial capital; a structural class, not a collection of individuals.

What it isn't: A patriotic national elite, merely "corrupt politicians", or a national bourgeoisie with independent interests.

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The Masses / the People

Core Definition: The broad, heterogeneous body of the oppressed and exploited who share a fundamental interest in overturning the existing order – the social base of revolution.

Explanation: "The masses" is not a precise sociological category; it is a political one. It includes the proletariat, the peasantry, the unemployed, the marginalised, and those sections of the petty bourgeoisie whose interests are crushed by empire and align with the working class. The composition of the masses shifts with conditions; parts of it may be backward or confused, but the advanced sections can be organised. The revolutionary speaks to and learns from the masses, not because they are automatically correct, but because they are the only force capable of making revolution. "The people" is often used in anti-colonial and national liberation contexts to name the bloc of forces united against empire and its local agents.

Example: In Bosnia, the masses include the employed worker, the unemployed youth, and the rural peasant, the diaspora member who has not forgotten their roots, the anti-nationalist intellectual, and the poor of all ethnicities. They do not include the comprador elite or the foreign administrators. The task is to organise the masses across their differences against their common enemy.

What it is: The revolutionary social base, defined politically.

What it isn't: A romanticised, automatically correct, or homogeneous entity.

Revolutionary Subject

Core Definition: The class or bloc of classes that, by its structural position in the mode of production and its capacity for collective organisation, is the agent capable of leading the revolutionary transformation of society.

Explanation: Not every oppressed group can lead a revolution. The revolutionary subject is defined by its objective position and its subjective capacity. Under capitalism, the proletariat is the only consistently revolutionary class because it has nothing to lose but its chains and everything to gain from the abolition of class society. But the proletariat does not automatically become revolutionary – it must be organised, conscious, and led. Other classes (the peasantry, the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie) can be allies, but they cannot lead. The revolutionary subject is not a static identity; it is forged in struggle. The task of the vanguard is to help this subject become conscious of itself and capable of seizing power.

Example: In Bosnia, the revolutionary subject is the multi-ethnic working class, unemployed youth, and dispossessed peasantry. They are the ones who produce the wealth, suffer the extraction, and have no stake in the Dayton order. Their revolutionary potential is latent; the task is to organise it into a conscious force that can smash the neo-colonial state and build a new one.

What it is: The agent of revolutionary transformation, forged in struggle.

What it isn't: A pre-existing, automatically conscious group or a moral category of "the oppressed".

Class Consciousness

Core Definition: The subjective understanding by a class of its objective position in the relations of production, its shared interests against the exploiting class, and the political will to organise collectively to seize power and transform society.

Explanation: Class consciousness is not simply "feeling poor" or "disliking the rich". It is a developed, political understanding of the totality. A worker who is furious at their boss but votes for the nationalist party and blames the ethnic other is not yet class conscious. Class consciousness means seeing that the Bosniak, Serb, and Croat worker share a common enemy in the comprador elite and the empire it serves. It means understanding that reforms are insufficient, that the state must be smashed, and that the working class itself must become the ruling class. Class consciousness does not emerge spontaneously from economic struggle alone. It must be brought to the class by the revolutionary organisation through patient education, the mass line, and shared experience in struggle.

Example: In Bosnia, a class-conscious worker does not merely strike for higher wages. They connect the wage theft to the Dayton constitution, the EU-imposed austerity, and the comprador elites. They organise across ethnic lines, build independent unions, and understand that the final goal is not a better Dayton but the overthrow of Dayton and the establishment of a workers' state.

What it is: Political understanding of class position and the will to wield collective power.

What it isn't: Spontaneous anger, economic grievance alone, or a moral identity.

Class Traitor

Core Definition: A person who breaks with the fundamental interests of their own class. For a member of the exploiting classes, this means defecting to the side of the oppressed – a revolutionary act of honour. For a member of the exploited classes, this means siding with the oppressors against their own people – an act of betrayal.

Explanation: The term "class traitor" carries opposite meanings depending on which class is being betrayed. When the bourgeoisie condemns someone as a class traitor (a judge who rules against the state, a soldier who refuses orders) that person is doing revolutionary work. They have broken from their privileged class and committed class suicide. This is the class traitor as hero. But there is another figure: the proletarian, the colonised, and the oppressed person who sides with the ruling class against their own. It is the strike-breaker, the informant, the comprador who came from the working class but now manages extraction on behalf of empire, the labour aristocrat who votes for imperialist wars and calls the police on their neighbours. These are class traitors in the most contemptible sense. They have traded solidarity for scraps, betraying their people for a crumb of the oppressor's power.

Example: The diaspora Bosnian who abandons comfort, returns to the homeland, and submits to the discipline of the organised working class is a class traitor to the petty bourgeoisie – a term of honour. The Bosnian worker who becomes a police informant for the comprador state, feeding information that leads to the arrest of striking comrades, is a class traitor to the proletariat – a term of damnation.

What it is: A break with the interests of one's own class, whose meaning depends on which side one defects from and to.

What it isn't: A single, fixed moral judgement. It is a relational term defined by class position.

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Class Suicide

Core Definition: The deliberate process by which a revolutionary from the petty bourgeoisie or privileged strata kills their own class aspirations, habits, and arrogance, merging their fate with the exploited and oppressed.

Explanation: Amílcar Cabral taught that the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie (the educated, the professionals, the intellectuals) must commit class suicide. They must shed the colonial mindset, the career ambitions, the comfort-seeking, the tendency to lead rather than listen. This is not a metaphor. It is a material, practical, painful transformation. Without it, the privileged revolutionary will inevitably betray the movement. With it, their skills and resources can serve the people.

Example: The diaspora Bosnian who returns with an EU passport, a salary, and a head full of "awareness" must not position themselves as the enlightened saviour of ignorant locals. They must shut up, listen, learn the material conditions of those who never left, and submit their resources to the collective discipline of an organisation rooted in the homeland. This is class suicide. Killing the saviour to become a comrade.

What it is: A material, painful transformation.

What it isn't: A symbolic gesture or a guilt ritual.

Diaspora

Core Definition: A population scattered by genocide, dispossession, and imperialist extraction, whose relationship to the homeland is structured by trauma, material privilege, and political potential.

Explanation: The diaspora is a product of empire. It exists because the homeland was made unlivable. It carries the memory of genocide, the pain of displacement, and often a burning desire for justice. But it also occupies a contradictory material position: relative safety, foreign citizenship, income in imperial currency. This can produce arrogance, liberalism, and the impulse to "educate the locals". It can also produce resources, mobility, and a fierce anti-imperialist consciousness. The diaspora is not one thing. It is a terrain of struggle. The revolutionary task is to organise the diaspora's potential while killing its arrogance.

Example: The Bosnian diaspora sends remittances that keep families alive but also create dependency. It returns with sharp analysis but also with the colonial gaze. The task is not to reject the diaspora, nor to romanticise it, but to build organisational forms that connect its resources to homeland struggle without reproducing the colonial relationship.

What it is: A contradictory formation and terrain of struggle.

What it isn't: A monolith of victims or sell-outs.

Western Left (Imperial Left)

Core Definition: A political and structural condition, not a geographical designation. Defined by the material and ideological position of operating within the belly of empire, reproducing its assumptions even while claiming to oppose it, and remaining structurally incapable of waging genuine revolutionary struggle until this condition is broken through class suicide, immersion in anti-colonial struggle, and accountability to the colonised.

Explanation: The Western Left is not defined by where someone lives. It is defined by their relationship to empire. It is a condition that can afflict an activist in Berlin, a diaspora returnee in Sarajevo, an NGO worker in Nairobi, or a comprador intellectual in Mumbai. It is produced by the material privileges of empire (the labour aristocracy's higher wages, the diaspora's foreign passport, the academic's institutional prestige, the NGO professional's grant funding), and by the ideological saturation of imperialist education, media, and culture. The Western Left condition manifests as: eclecticism (mixing incompatible political traditions without criteria), opportunism (shifting principles for advantage), class collaboration (allying with the bourgeoisie against the exploited), tailism (following the masses without leading), liquidationism (dissolving revolutionary organisation into reformist spaces), economism (reducing struggle to economic demands), performative anti-racism and anti-imperialism (statements and symbols without material confrontation with power), social chauvinism (defending one's own nation's imperialist interests), fear of building power, suspicion of discipline, fragmentation, and parasitism on the struggles of the Global Majority.

This condition is not a moral failing. It is the ideological expression of a material position within the imperialist system. Empire produces it and benefits from it. The Western Left functions as a safety valve, absorbing dissent and channelling it into forms that never threaten the foundations of power. It marches for ceasefires but not for the destruction of settler-colonial states. It mourns the dead but will not arm the living. Its opposition is structurally accommodated by empire, serving as evidence that "dissent is permitted".

The condition can be broken. It requires class suicide – the deliberate, painful process of killing one's own class aspirations, colonial habits, and intellectual arrogance. It requires immersion in the actual struggles of the colonised, under their leadership, with accountability to their organisations. It requires the discipline of revolutionary organisation and the mass line. The Western Left comrade who remains in the imperial core can do useful work there, by attacking empire at its centre, exposing its mechanisms, and supporting struggles in the periphery without trying to lead them. But this work is only revolutionary if it is organised, disciplined, and accountable. Otherwise, it is performance.

Example: The Berlin activist who attends Palestine solidarity marches, posts, infographics about decolonisation, and speaks fluent anti-imperialist rhetoric, but has no analysis of China's trade with Israel, refuses to join a disciplined organisation, and scolds Bosnian or Palestinian comrades for being "too harsh" or "too authoritarian", is operating within the Western Left condition. Their politics are shaped by the comfort and fragmentation of empire, not by the discipline of revolutionary struggle. The cure is not to abandon them but to engage them with principled criticism and invite them into the real work. The Western Left is not an enemy; it is a sickness to be healed. But healing requires the patient to accept the diagnosis.

What it is: A political condition produced by empire, defined by its structural accommodation to imperialist rule despite anti-imperialist rhetoric.

What it isn't: A geographical location or a permanent identity.

Global South / Global Majority

Core Definition: A political and structural condition, not a geographical location. Defined by the boot of empire on the neck.

Explanation: The term "Global South" can misleadingly suggest a geographical split. "Global Majority" is increasingly used because the oppressed actually form the vast majority of the world's population, and their condition is not defined by latitude but by colonial dispossession. Both labels point to the same reality: wherever empire steals land, extracts labour, denies sovereignty, and erases culture, there the Global South/Global Majority exists. It is in Palestine, Congo, Haiti, and in Bosnia. It is in the refugee camps at imperial borders, in the Indigenous communities of Turtle Island, in the favelas and poor suburbs. The revolution identifies the condition, not the coordinates.

Example: Bosnia is a neo-colony. Dayton is a colonial constitution. The youth exodus is extraction. Bosnia is part of the Global South/Global Majority, regardless of its map location. To say otherwise is to accept the colonial geography that divides the oppressed into manageable zones.

What it is: A structural condition of colonisation.

What it isn't: A synonym for "poor countries" or "tropical geography".

Part IV: The Political Terrain

State

Core Definition: The organised instrument of class rule. A set of institutions (army, police, bureaucracy, courts, prisons, etc.) through which one class suppresses another and manages the contradictions of a given mode of production.

Explanation: The state is not a neutral arbiter. It is not the "social contract" between equals. Under capitalism, it is the executive committee of the bourgeoisie. Under imperialism, the state becomes more complex: some states are imperialist (US, core EU), some are comprador (administering neo-colonies on behalf of empire), and some are semi-peripheral and contradictory (China), and some are revolutionary states of the oppressed (emerging from national liberation). The state must be smashed in revolution, not reformed. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a transitional semi-state that begins withering the moment it rises.

Example: The Bosnian state under Dayton is a comprador-colonial apparatus. It cannot defend sovereignty because it was designed to prevent sovereignty. Reforming it is impossible; it must be shattered and replaced by a revolutionary state of the multi-ethnic working class.

What it is: A class dictatorship.

What it isn't: A neutral referee or a universal service provider.

Political Power

Core Definition: The specific and decisive form of power concentrated in control of the state apparatus (the army, police, courts, and administrative machinery) through which class rule is organised, enforced, and reproduced.

Explanation: Political power is the prize. It is not the only form of power, but it is the strategic centre. The bourgeoisie can tolerate losing economic battles, cultural influence, even elections – as long as it retains control of the state. Because the state commands the means of organised violence. It can crush strikes, outlaw organisations, and, when necessary, reorganise the entire political field through coups, constitutions, and the rewriting of the rules. This is why Lenin insisted that the fundamental question of every revolution is the question of state power. The working class cannot simply "take over" the existing state machine; it must smash it and replace it with its own – the dictatorship of the proletariat. Every other form of power is preparatory or supplementary. Political power is the form that determines all others. The revolutionary who avoids the question of political power, who focuses only on cultural transformation or local organising while treating the state as neutral or irrelevant, has abandoned the struggle.

Example: Dayton is a structure of political power. The Office of the High Representative, the entity governments, the constitutional court. These are the institutions through which imperial and comprador rule is enforced. A revolutionary movement in Bosnia must prepare to smash this apparatus and replace it with a workers' state, with its own armed defence, its own courts, and its own administrative capacity. Without that, no amount of factory occupations or community organising can secure a liberated future. Political power is the decisive form.

What it is: The decisive form of power – control of the state.

What it isn't: One form of power among many, equal in weight to economic or cultural power.

Power

Core Definition: The capacity of a social force (a class, a group, an institution) to shape material reality according to its interests, to impose its will, and to determine the conditions under which others must live.

Explanation: Power is not an object that can be held in the hand. It is a relation. It exists in the interaction between forces, structured by the mode of production, the state, ideology, and organised violence. Under capitalism, the bourgeoisie wields power through ownership of the means of production (economic power), control of the state (political power), and the saturation of society with its worldview (ideological power). The working class has latent power in its capacity to halt production, to withdraw its labour, to occupy and disrupt. This becomes real power only when it is organised, conscious, and directed toward strategic goals. Power is always contested. It shifts through struggle. The revolutionary task is not to "critique power" from the sidelines but to build counter-power capable of confronting and ultimately overthrowing ruling-class power. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the moment when the working class concentrates all forms of power (economic, political, military, and ideological) into a single apparatus capable of suppressing the former exploiters and reorganising society.

Example: In Bosnia, the comprador elites and the High Representative hold power in multiple forms. They control the state (political power), the ownership of privatised industries and the dispensation of patronage jobs (economic power), and the media and educational narratives about ethnic division and "reconciliation" (ideological power). The revolutionary counter-power begins in the workplace, the community, and the diaspora, building the capacity to challenge each form simultaneously, culminating in the seizure of political power.

What it is: A relational capacity to shape reality and impose will.

What it isn't: A static possession or a purely institutional position.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Core Definition: The transitional state form in which the working class seizes political power, smashes the old state apparatus, and uses its rule to suppress the overthrown exploiting classes while reorganising society on a socialist basis.

Explanation: Marxist terminology has been deliberately distorted. "Dictatorship" here does not mean one-person rule or the absence of democracy. It means the class dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. For the vast majority, it is democracy – workers' councils, mass participation, recallable delegates. For the former exploiters, it is dictatorship – they are prevented from reclaiming power. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not an end in itself. It begins withering the moment it rises, as class antagonisms diminish. The USSR under Lenin, China under Mao, Cuba – these were attempts at this form, however imperfect and ultimately vulnerable to internal counter-revolution.

Example: A revolutionary Bosnia would require the dictatorship of the multi-ethnic working class. The comprador state would be smashed, the Dayton institutions destroyed, the ethnic elites expropriated. Workers' councils would manage production. This would be the dictatorship of the proletariat in Bosnian conditions.

What it is: The class rule of the working majority over the exploiting minority.

What it isn't: One-person tyranny or the absence of mass democracy.

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Ideology

Core Definition: The material system of ideas, representations, and practices through which a ruling class secures consent, naturalises exploitation, and masks contradictions. It is embedded in institutions, not just in minds.

Explanation: Ideology is not a set of "wrong ideas" that clever theorists can debunk. It lives in schools, media, law, religion, family structures, and daily rituals. Under empire, ideology produces the colonial gaze, the myth of "ancient hatreds", and the narrative of "transitional democracy". It also produces contradictions: oppressed peoples generate counter-ideologies – anti-imperialism, class consciousness – that challenge the dominant one. Ideological struggle is not a side project. It is a front of the class war.

Example: The "ethnic hatred" narrative in Bosnia is an imperial ideology that frames genocide as tribal conflict, hiding the role of Western powers. Counter-ideology names the comprador elite and empire as the real criminals, unifying the multi-ethnic working class.

What it is: The material production of consent and naturalisation.

What it isn't: Just propaganda or false consciousness.

Cultural Hegemony

Core Definition: The process by which a ruling class secures dominance not just through force but through the manufacturing of consent – making its worldview appear natural, common sense, and universal.

Explanation: Antonio Gramsci developed this concept from the prison cells of fascist Italy. Hegemony operates through civil society: schools, media, religion, popular culture, family structures. The ruling class does not simply impose its ideas; it saturates the social body with them until the exploited internalise aspects of their own oppression. Empire's hegemonic achievements include the belief that "development" looks like Europe, that ethnic division is ancient and natural, that capitalism is the end of history. Counter-hegemony (the revolutionary alternative) must build its own institutions, its own common sense, and its own cultural power. This is ideological struggle as a material front of the class war.

Example: The "ancient ethnic hatreds" narrative is a hegemonic tool of empire in Bosnia. It makes the genocide appear as a tragic inevitability rather than a planned, imperial-facilitated crime. Counter-hegemonic work names the real criminals and builds multi-ethnic class culture.

What it is: Rule through the manufacturing of consent.

What it isn't: Simply propaganda or brainwashing.

Propaganda

Core Definition: The systematic dissemination of information, ideas, and narratives designed to shape mass consciousness in the interests of a specific class or political force.

Explanation: Propaganda is not inherently dishonest. Bourgeois propaganda constructs a reality in which exploitation is invisible or justified. Revolutionary propaganda constructs a reality in which exploitation is visible and resistance is possible. The question is not "is it propaganda?" but "whose class interests does it serve?" Empire's propaganda apparatus is vast: Hollywood, the BBC, the NGO industry, the "transitional justice" machinery. The revolutionary's propaganda is smaller but can be sharper – it names the enemy, explains the system, and calls the masses to action. Propaganda is a weapon. Like any weapon, it can be wielded by either side.

Example: The Western media's framing of the Bosnian war as a "civil war" or "ethnic conflict" is imperialist propaganda. It erases the planned genocide and the Western arms embargo. Revolutionary propaganda restores the truth: a multi-ethnic society was destroyed by imperialist-backed chauvinist projects.

What it is: Systematic information warfare serving class interests.

What it isn't: Automatically dishonest. It is defined by its function, not its truth value.

Psyop (Psychological Operation)

Core Definition: A targeted operation designed to manipulate the perceptions, emotions, and behaviour of a population. Deploying information, disinformation, and spectacle to demoralise enemies, confuse dissent, and manufacture consent for imperialist objectives.

Explanation: A psyop is propaganda with a specific tactical goal: to make a population doubt its own eyes, to spread fatalism, to amplify division, to paint resistance as futile or monstrous. Empire uses psyops against domestic populations and foreign enemies alike. The false story planted to justify invasion, the fake social media account sowing ethnic hatred, the leaked document designed to discredit a movement – these are psyops. They operate in the grey zone between truth and lie, exploiting trust and amplifying trauma. The revolutionary defence against psyops is collective analysis, critical consciousness, and organisational trust.

Example: The false claims of weapons of mass destruction used to justify the ~~US~~ invasion of Iraq in 2003 were a psyop on a global scale – a deliberate fabrication repeated by state officials and amplified by media until it became "truth" for millions, enabling a war that killed over a million people.

What it is: A targeted operation to manipulate perception and behaviour for imperialist ends.

What it isn't: Ordinary political spin or public relations – it is a weapon of psychological warfare.

Liberalism

Core Definition: The dominant political ideology of capitalism. Centred on individual rights, abstract equality before the law, procedural democracy, and the belief that social problems can be resolved through reform within the existing system.

Explanation: Liberalism is not "being open-minded". It is a class ideology that emerged with the bourgeoisie and serves to manage capitalist society. It presents the state as neutral, the market as natural, and individual choice as the locus of freedom. It absorbs dissent by channelling it into elections, NGO advocacy, and legal challenges. Empire speaks liberalism fluently: humanitarian intervention, transitional justice, reconciliation. The Western left that operates within liberal parameters, demanding "inclusion", "representation", and "dialogue", without challenging the class structure – is objectively liberal, whatever its self-image. The revolutionary breaks with liberalism entirely.

Example: The Bosnian NGO that runs inter-ethnic youth camps funded by the EU is practicing liberalism. It teaches tolerance without naming the comprador elites or the colonial constitution. It manages the contradiction without resolving it.

What it is: The ideology of capitalist management.

What it isn't: Just "being moderate" or open to debate.

Social Democracy

Core Definition: A political current that emerged from the betrayal of revolutionary Marxism by the Second International, advocating the management of capitalism through parliamentary reform, welfare states, and class compromise rather than its abolition through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Explanation: Social democracy began as Marxism. It ended as the left wing of bourgeois rule. Its foundational betrayal was supporting imperialist war in 1914, when social democratic parties voted for the war credits that sent millions of workers to slaughter. Since then, social democratic governments have consistently managed austerity, waged imperialist war, and disciplined the working class when it threatened capital. It presents itself as the "reasonable" alternative to revolution, offering regulated capitalism with a human face. The revolutionary recognises social democracy not as an ally but as a safety valve – a force that absorbs working-class anger and channels it into electoral cycles that never threaten the foundations of power.

Example: The German Social Democratic Party (SPD) once jailed Rosa Luxemburg's revolutionaries. More recently, it imposed austerity and privatisation while calling itself the party of workers. This is social democracy's consistent function: betray the working class while claiming to represent it.

What it is: The institutionalised left wing of capitalist management.

What it isn't: Socialism – it does not seek to abolish class society.

Democratic Socialism

Core Definition: A political tendency that claims to seek the replacement of capitalism with socialism through electoral, parliamentary, and gradual means – rejecting the dictatorship of the proletariat, the smashing of the bourgeois state, and revolutionary violence.

Explanation: Democratic socialism distinguishes itself from social democracy by claiming a more radical, systemic break with capitalism rather than its mere management. In practice, its projects have either been crushed by capital when they threatened real transformation (as in Chile under Allende), or they have governed as social democrats, managing the system they promised to replace. The core error is the belief that the capitalist state can be peacefully transformed into an instrument of working-class power through elections. The state is not a neutral vessel. It is a class dictatorship. The bourgeoisie will not permit its abolition by parliamentary vote.

Example: Salvador Allende's Popular Unity government in Chile sought to transition to socialism through constitutional means. It was overthrown by a ~~US~~-backed military coup that murdered thousands. The state did not peacefully transform; it violently reasserted its class character. This is the fate of every democratic socialist project that threatens capital.

What it is: A gradualist, electoral path claiming to seek systemic change, unable to achieve it within the capitalist state.

What it isn't: Social democracy – it claims a more radical break, even if it cannot deliver one.

Radical Liberal (Radlib)

Core Definition: A political tendency that adopts the aesthetics and rhetoric of leftist radicalism (anti-imperialist slogans, revolutionary language, the posture of militancy), while retaining the fundamental liberal assumptions of individualism, moralism, and the rejection of revolutionary organisation and state power.

Explanation: The radlib is not a conscious agent of empire. They genuinely oppose war, racism, and exploitation. But their politics remain within the liberal horizon. They treat oppression as a moral failing to be corrected through awareness, representation, and personal transformation, rather than as a structural feature of capitalism and empire requiring the seizure of state power and the reorganisation of production. The radlib is suspicious of discipline, uncomfortable with democratic centralism, and allergic to the concept of a vanguard party. They prefer horizontalism, spontaneity, and the performance of radical identity over the patient work of organising. The radlib is not the enemy; they are a potential ally who must be won to revolutionary politics. But their influence within movements can be devastating, fragmenting collective action into individual expression and substituting catharsis for strategy.

Example: The activist who posts a black square for Black Lives Matter but refuses to join a disciplined organisation, who attends protests with a sign saying "Smash Imperialism" but has no analysis. The revolutionary engages the radlib patiently, argues concretely, and invites them into the discipline of the mass line, not the performance of purity.

What it is: Liberalism wearing revolutionary clothing; a tendency that mimics radical aesthetics while rejecting revolutionary science.

What it isn't: A coherent ideology or a deliberate agent of empire.

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Eurocentric

Core Definition: The ideological centring of Europe (and its settler offshoots) as the subject and model of all history, progress, and civilisation, judging all other societies by European standards and erasing their agency and contributions.

Explanation: Eurocentrism is not simply "focusing on Europe". It is a structural epistemology produced by colonialism and capitalism. It positions Europe as the engine of history (the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution) and the rest of the world as passive recipients or obstacles. Marxism itself has a Eurocentric history that must be critically engaged. The Western leftist who treats Marx as a European philosopher to be "applied" elsewhere, who analyses China or Bosnia through Western categories without listening to the people who live there, is reproducing Eurocentrism. Decolonising Marxism means recognising that the centre of revolutionary gravity is in the periphery, not the metropole.

Example: The Western analyst who describes Bosnia as "the heart of Europe" in a romantic, Orientalist way, or who treats its political problems as failures to reach "European standards", is being Eurocentric. The dialectician analyses Bosnia on its own concrete terms.

What it is: A colonial epistemology that centres Europe.

What it isn't: Simply being from or interested in Europe.

Co-optation (Co-opt)

Core Definition: The process by which empire neutralises dissent and absorbs radical movements by offering their leaders and members positions, funding, or legitimacy within the existing order, transforming potential threats into instruments of management.

Explanation: Co-optation is not repression. It is seduction. The militant union leader is offered a government post. The activist collective is transformed into an NGO with grant funding and reporting requirements. The radical academic receives a prestigious chair and stops publishing dangerous ideas. Movements are co-opted when their leadership is peeled away from the base and integrated into the structures they once opposed. Empire prefers co-optation to confrontation because it produces the appearance of progress while leaving power untouched. The revolutionary guards against co-optation through collective discipline, accountability, and the refusal to be bought.

Example: A grassroots anti-austerity organiser in the Balkans is offered a well-paid position in an EU-funded "civil society" platform. They accept, and their work shifts from organising militant protests against the Dayton regime to writing reports and attending conferences. They have been co-opted. The movement loses a leader; empire gains a manager.

What it is: The neutralisation of opposition through incorporation, not repression.

What it isn't: Genuine strategic compromise within a united front or principled negotiation.

Reformism

Core Definition: The political practice of seeking improvements within the existing class structure without challenging the underlying power relations. Managing contradictions rather than resolving them through revolution.

Explanation: Reforms are not inherently bad. A wage increase, a shorter working day, a legal protection – these are gains that the working class struggles for and can win. Reformism is the systematic subordination of those struggles to the maintenance of capitalist rule. It promises that enough reforms will eventually add up to justice, which is a lie. Empire absorbs reforms to pacify and then reverses them when the pressure subsides. Without a revolutionary horizon, reforms become a safety valve. With one, they become training grounds for class power.

Example: The EU's "Bosnian path to membership" is reformism as colonial management – endless benchmarks, minor concessions, never sovereignty. A genuinely revolutionary approach would use every reform struggle (labour law, environmental regulation) to build organisation, expose the regime's illegitimacy, and prepare for the seizure of power.

What it is: The politics of managing the system.

What it isn't: Winning real gains that are part of a revolutionary strategy.

Opportunism

Core Definition: The subordination of long-term revolutionary principles to short-term advantage. Shifting one's political line to gain influence, avoid repression, or chase whatever seems popular or safe in a given moment.

Explanation: Opportunism is the disease of the politically unprincipled. It follows the path of least resistance. Today it defends a state uncritically because that state opposes the ~~US~~; tomorrow it might abandon that same state when the wind changes. Opportunism measures politics not by class analysis but by convenience, not by strategic goals but by immediate gains. It manifests as the refusal to criticise an ally's reactionary actions, the sudden adoption of reformist language to secure funding or legitimacy, the abandonment of ideological struggle for the sake of "unity" with forces that should be opposed. Lenin fought opportunism relentlessly. The revolutionary holds the line even when it is costly, even when it alienates former allies, even when it is unpopular. Principles are not luxuries; they are the skeleton of a revolutionary organisation. Without them, the body collapses.

Example: The "Marxist-Leninist" content creator who builds an audience critiquing ~~US~~ imperialism but refuses to name China's trade with the Zionist entity is an opportunist. They know that criticising China would make them lose followers and access among the dogmatist camp, so they stay silent. Their "anti-imperialism" is a brand, calibrated for maximum reach and minimum risk.

What it is: The sacrificing of principle for advantage.

What it isn't: Tactical flexibility within a principled strategic framework.

Revisionism

Core Definition: The systematic distortion, dilution, or abandonment of revolutionary principles, particularly the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leading role of the party, and the necessity of class struggle under socialism, while retaining Marxist language to conceal the restoration of capitalist social relations.

Explanation: Revisionism is the most dangerous form of counter-revolution because it wears the mask of continuity. It does not openly attack Marxism; it "revises" it, claiming to update it for new conditions while removing its revolutionary teeth. Khrushchev's "peaceful transition" and "party of the whole people" were revisionist deviations that paved the way for capitalist restoration in the USSR. Deng Xiaoping's "reform and opening up" and the Three Represents revisionised Marxism-Leninism to justify the restoration of capitalism in China while maintaining the party-state's Leninist form. Revisionism is not a scholarly disagreement; it is the ideological expression of a new bourgeoisie emerging within the socialist state. The revolutionary defends the dictatorship of the proletariat, organised mass supervision of the party, and the principle of continuing class struggle under socialism as the only antidotes to revisionism.

Example: The Chinese state today calls itself Marxist-Leninist while integrating the capitalist class into the party, pursuing capital accumulation as state policy, and trading with genocidal states. This is revisionism in power. The Western dogmatist who refuses to recognise this and pretends China is a purely Marxist-Leninist socialist state is objectively defending revisionism, whether or not they understand what they are doing.

What it is: The ideological liquidation of revolutionary principles from within.

What it isn't: Genuine theoretical development that responds to new conditions while maintaining revolutionary substance.

AES / Actually Existing Socialism

Core Definition: A term used, often uncritically, to describe states that label themselves socialist and maintain some socialist features while being deeply integrated into global capitalism. It is a term requiring concrete class analysis, not a blanket designation.

Explanation: "AES" emerged as a shorthand among some leftists to defend states like China, Vietnam, or Cuba against liberal attacks. The problem is that it lumps together profoundly different formations. Cuba under blockade retains significant socialist features. China has undergone capitalist restoration while retaining a Leninist party-state form. Vietnam is a complex mixed case. "AES" dodges the necessary concrete analysis. It substitutes a geopolitical label for a class analysis. The revolutionary does not ask "is this state AES?" but "what is the class character of this state, who holds power, and how does it function in the global accumulation system?" A label is not a substitute for dialectical materialism.

Example: The dogmatist who defends Chinese infrastructure in ~~Israel~~ by saying "China is AES, therefore anti-imperialist" is using a label to avoid confronting class reality. The dialectician analyses what China actually does, regardless of what it calls itself.

What it is: A label that often substitutes for analysis.

What it isn't: A scientific category of Marxist political economy.

Tankies

Core Definition: A term with multiple, contradictory meanings. Originally a slur coined by anti-communists to condemn those who supported Soviet military intervention against counter-revolution, it has been partially reclaimed and now operates in three registers: (1) a liberal smear against any principled Marxist-Leninist; (2) a self-descriptor for revolutionaries who affirm the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the defence of socialist states against imperialism; (3) a scientific critique of a specific Western political type – the campist who uncritically defends any state that opposes the ~~US~~, substituting geopolitical loyalty for class analysis.

Explanation: The term "tankie" originates from the 1956 Hungarian counter-revolution, where Khrushchev's revisionist leadership sent tanks to crush a movement that contained both genuine popular grievances and fascist elements. Liberals and anti-communists seized on the image of "tanks crushing democracy" and applied the label to anyone who defended the Soviet Union's right to suppress armed counter-revolution. Over decades, the term broadened into a generalised slur for communists who refuse to renounce revolutionary violence and the historical socialist states. In response, some Marxists have reclaimed the term with defiance: "Yes, I am a tankie. I support the right of the oppressed to arm themselves and crush their oppressors".

However, a specific Western phenomenon has emerged that requires its own critique. The Western "tankie" is not a Marxist-Leninist in the scientific sense. They are a campist. They reduce global politics to a binary: pro-~~US~~ or anti-~~US~~. They defend any state that positions itself against the empire, regardless of its class character, because "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". They cannot hold contradictions. They cannot criticise a state like China for trading with the Zionist entity or supporting Serb irredentism because to criticise is, in their framework, to side with imperialism. This is not revolutionary science. It is geopolitical cheerleading with a red flag. The dialectician distinguishes between the principled tankie – the Marxist-Leninist who defends Cuba under blockade, who affirms the October Revolution, who refuses to join the liberal chorus of anti-communist condemnation – and the dogmatic, Western campist variant. The former is a comrade. The latter has abandoned the science for a loyalty test. The term "tankie" is therefore a terrain of struggle itself, a word whose meaning is determined by the class analysis and political practice of the one who wields it.

Example: The principled Marxist-Leninist who says "Yes, the Bolsheviks were right to crush the Kronstadt rebellion when it became a base for counter-revolution, and I will not apologise for revolutionary violence" is a tankie in the defiant, reclaimed sense. The Western campist who says "China cannot be criticised because it opposes the ~~US~~, and if you mention the Haifa port, then you are a ~~CIA~~ asset" is a tankie in the dogmatic, unscientific sense. Both exist. The word names a contradiction, not a monolith.

What it is: A contested term with multiple registers. Slur, reclaimed identity, and scientific critique of Western campism.

What it isn't: A stable, self-evident category. It must be analysed dialectically in every usage.

Anarchism

Core Definition: A political tendency that opposes all forms of hierarchical authority, including the state, and advocates for a stateless society based on voluntary association, but which, in its rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the revolutionary party, objectively disarms the working class and leaves the bourgeois state intact.

Explanation: Anarchism shares with Marxism a commitment to the abolition of class society and the state. The split is not over the goal but the method. Anarchism rejects the transition period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, viewing any state form as inherently oppressive. It rejects the vanguard party, viewing disciplined organisation as authoritarian. It often substitutes individual acts of rebellion ("propaganda of the deed") for mass, organised, strategic struggle. Historically, this has led anarchists into adventurism on one hand (individual terrorism) and tailism on the other (following spontaneous movements without providing strategic leadership). In contemporary movements, anarchism manifests as horizontalism, the fetishisation of consensus, the refusal to build lasting structures of power, and the celebration of temporary autonomous zones over the seizure of state power. The Marxist does not dismiss anarchists as enemies; many are genuine revolutionaries. But their political method is incapable of defeating the bourgeois state, which will not be dismantled by moral example or temporary occupations. It must be smashed by a centralised, disciplined force of the organised working class. Anarchism and Marxism can collaborate in united fronts against empire, but the anarchist method cannot lead a revolution to victory.

Example: The anarchist collective that organises a community garden and declares it an "autonomous zone" while the comprador state continues to rule, the police continue to repress, and the factories remain in capitalist hands is not waging revolution. It is creating a temporary space of relief that empire can tolerate, or crush when it chooses. The revolutionary engages anarchists in principled struggle over these strategic questions, without sectarian dismissal.

What it is: A revolutionary tendency that shares the goal of communism but rejects the necessary methods of achieving it.

What it isn't: A coherent strategy for defeating the bourgeoisie; it is a critique of authority that becomes a fetter on revolutionary organisation.

Trotskyism

Core Definition: A political tendency originating with Leon Trotsky, defined by the theory of permanent revolution, opposition to the Leninist conception of the party, and a historical trajectory that, despite its anti-Stalin origins, has largely degenerated into a petty-bourgeois, sectarian current disconnected from actual revolutionary movements.

Explanation: Trotskyism is a complex phenomenon. Trotsky himself was a major revolutionary leader who played a decisive role in the October Revolution and the Red Army. His theory of permanent revolution contained genuine insights about the international character of the socialist revolution. However, his factional struggle against Stalin after Lenin's death, while containing legitimate criticisms of the bureaucratisation of the Soviet state, hardened into a permanent opposition that increasingly detached from material reality. Trotskyism's core theoretical error is its underestimation of the peasantry and the national bourgeoisie in anti-colonial revolutions, and its dogmatic insistence that socialist revolution could not succeed in one country, which history disproved in China, Vietnam, Cuba, and elsewhere. In the post-war period, Trotskyism largely degenerated into a series of small, fractious sects in the imperialist countries, more concerned with internal doctrinal disputes than with actually existing movements of the oppressed. Today, the typical Trotskyist group is an irrelevant debating society that critiques everything from the sidelines, refuses to support national liberation struggles that do not meet its abstract criteria, and parasitises social movements with entryist tactics. The revolutionary does not waste energy on polemics with Trotskyists but may engage them tactically where they participate in genuine struggles, while maintaining organisational and political independence.

Example: The Trotskyist sect that distributes newspapers at a Palestine solidarity march, denouncing Hamas as "not truly socialist" and calling for "permanent revolution", is not building solidarity with Palestine. It is using the struggle as a stage for its own propaganda, alienating the masses, and demonstrating the very irrelevance that defines the tendency. The Marxist-Leninist supports the actual national liberation movement and builds from within it, without imposing external dogmas.

What it is: A sectarian deviation from Marxism-Leninism that has become a fetter on revolutionary organisation in the imperialist countries.

What it isn't: A serious revolutionary current with a viable strategy for seizing power.

Adventurism

Core Definition: The political error of substituting spectacular, ill-prepared, or individual actions for the patient, organised, mass-based struggle required to build revolutionary power. A deviation that endangers the movement and often serves as a pretext for state repression.

Explanation: Adventurism is impatience dressed as militancy. It is the armed action without the mass base, the expropriation without infrastructure, the ultimatum without a balance of forces. It often emerges from frustration at the slow pace of organising, or from a romantic attachment to the idea of revolutionary violence detached from revolutionary strategy. Adventurism isolates the revolutionaries from the masses, gives the state a justification for crackdowns, and sets the movement back years. The revolutionary is not a pacifist; armed struggle is sometimes necessary. But armed struggle without mass support is suicide, not revolution. Timing is everything, and timing is determined by concrete analysis of the balance of forces, not by subjective desire for action.

Example: A small group of Bosnian revolutionaries launching a spectacular attack on a state institution without any organised base among workers and communities would be adventurism. The state would use it to justify mass arrests, the population would not rise in support, and the revolutionary capacity would be shattered. The alternative is the slow, unspectacular work of building organisation, accumulating capacity, and waiting until the balance of forces makes a qualitative leap possible.

What it is: Reckless, ungrounded action that substitutes for mass revolutionary strategy.

What it isn't: Revolutionary audacity or the willingness to take necessary risks when conditions are ripe.

Authoritarianism

Core Definition: A term with two opposing meanings. In the liberal vocabulary, a smear deployed against any state that resists imperial domination or suppresses bourgeois freedoms. In the Marxist-Leninist vocabulary, the necessary and openly acknowledged exercise of dictatorial power by the revolutionary class to crush the resistance of the overthrown exploiters. As Engels stated – a revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is.

Explanation: Liberalism defines "authoritarianism" as the absence of multiparty elections, free speech for counterrevolutionaries, and the protection of private property from state intervention. By this definition, every genuine revolution is authoritarian, because no ruling class voluntarily surrenders power. The bourgeoisie will use every weapon (money, media, foreign alliances, and armed force) to restore its rule. The revolutionary class must wield authority ruthlessly against them. This is the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is authority exercised by the vast majority against a tiny minority of exploiters, which is why it is also the most democratic thing there is for the masses. When Engels said "a revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is", he was not apologising. He was stating a scientific fact. The liberal who cries "authoritarianism" at revolutionary violence is revealing their allegiance to the existing order. The revolutionary is not afraid of the word; they understand that the question is always which class wields authority, against whom, and for what purpose. Liberal "anti-authoritarianism" is a defence of bourgeois authority disguised as opposition to authority in general.

Example: A revolutionary seizure of power in Bosnia would be authoritarian in the Leninist sense: the multi-ethnic working class would have to crush the comprador elites, suppress the chauvinist parties, dismantle the Dayton institutions, and defend the new state against imperialist intervention. The liberal would call this "authoritarian". The revolutionary calls it the precondition for liberation. The same scandalised liberal has no objection to the far more violent authority of the Office of the High Representative, the EU's economic dictatorship, or the comprador police – because that authority serves capital and empire.

What it is: The open exercise of class power to suppress the enemy and defend the revolution.

What it isn't: A neutral description of state form detached from class content.

Paper Tiger

Core Definition: A dialectical metaphor developed by Mao Zedong: the enemy appears terrifyingly powerful on the surface but is structurally weak, internally contradictory, and ultimately defeatable.

Explanation: A paper tiger looks like a real tiger. It has teeth painted on. It makes the sounds of a tiger. But it is made of paper, and paper burns. The ~~US~~ empire fits this description perfectly: eight hundred military bases, nuclear weapons, a propaganda apparatus that saturates the globe, and yet it lost in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq. It cannot win a trade war without damaging its own economy. It is internally rotting: homelessness, opioid epidemics, political crisis. The paper tiger is not an excuse for underestimation. The tiger's teeth are still sharp; it can still kill. But the revolutionary understands that beneath the spectacle of power lies fragility. The masses, once organised and conscious, can defeat it. This is not optimism. This is concrete analysis of the balance of forces.

Example: The ~~Dayton~~ regime in Bosnia appears unshakeable, backed by the ~~EU~~, enforced by the High Representative, sustained by a comprador class with ethnic patronage networks. But it is a paper tiger. Its economy cannot provide for the youth. Its legitimacy is a performance. When the multi-ethnic working class organises, ~~Dayton~~ will burn like paper.

What it is: A dialectical insight into the structural weakness of seemingly powerful enemies.

What it isn't: A claim that the enemy is harmless or that victory is automatic.

Violence

Core Definition: The application of physical or structural force to dominate, suppress, or eliminate. Not a single, uniform phenomenon but a spectrum ranging from the structural violence of poverty and social murder to the revolutionary violence of the oppressed seizing their freedom.

Explanation: Empire's propagandists obsess over "violence" as if it were a single thing committed only by the colonised against the coloniser. This is a lie. The violence of empire is permanent war: sanctions, coups, structural adjustment, drone strikes, settler pogroms, and the slow starvation of besieged populations. The violence of the oppressor maintains the system. The violence of the oppressed seeks to destroy it. The revolutionary does not fetishise violence but understands it as a necessary dimension of class war. You cannot peacefully dismantle a system whose entire existence depends on violence. The question is not violence or non-violence. The question is whose violence, for what purpose, under whose leadership, with what political programme.

Example: The Bosnian genocide was a reactionary violence, organised by chauvinist projects and enabled by imperial powers. The right of the Bosnian people to armed self-defence against that genocide was a revolutionary right. The ~~Dayton~~ regime maintains its rule through structural violence: economic strangulation, demographic erasure. The revolutionary movement does not seek violence for its own sake, but it does not renounce the right to collective self-defence against a system built on social murder.

What it is: A spectrum of force, defined by class character and political purpose.

What it isn't: A single moral category that treats oppressor and oppressed as equivalent.

Part V: Strategy and Organisation

Against the Empire – For the People

Core Definition: The political compass. Not a slogan, but an orientation that names the enemy and takes sides.

Explanation: Against the empire means seeing all fronts of struggle (war, exploitation, racial oppression, ecological destruction) as dimensions of a single system. For the people means taking sides without apology with the colonised, the dispossessed, and the working class. Every tactic, every alliance, every communication is measured against this compass. If it does not serve the people's capacity to fight empire, it is worthless. This orientation refuses both the dogmatist error (defending any state that opposes the US regardless of its class character) and the liberal error (condemning any state that is not a bourgeois democracy). It is the strategic expression of the principal contradiction: empire versus the oppressed. The compass points true north. The rest is navigation.

Example: A campaign that builds multi-ethnic class unity and targets both local compradors and their imperial backers aligns with this compass. A campaign that only demands "more ethnic representation" within the ~~Dayton~~ framework does not. A protest that calls for an end to genocide in Palestine while ignoring China's material support for the Zionist entity is incomplete. The compass demands consistency.

What it is: A strategic orientation rooted in the principal contradiction.

What it isn't: A feel-good chant or a substitute for concrete analysis.

Revolutionary

Core Definition: Someone who wages the total war against empire on all its fronts (anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, anti-fascist, and anti-Zionist), not as separate moral commitments but as integrated dimensions of a single, organised struggle for the seizure of state power by the oppressed.

Explanation: Empire is a totality. It does not present five separate systems for five separate activist scenes. Capitalism extracts surplus value. Imperialism divides the world into oppressor and oppressed nations. Colonialism steals land and sovereignty. Fascism deploys open terror. Zionism is the ongoing settler-colonial genocide in Palestine. The revolutionary sees these as one enemy with many faces and refuses to compartmentalise the fight. To call yourself anti-capitalist but stay silent on Palestine is not revolutionary. To oppose imperialism but defend China's trade with the Zionist entity is not revolutionary. The revolutionary identity is the practical refusal of fragmentation. It flows from dialectical materialism applied not as an academic exercise but as the compass of daily struggle against the whole enemy.

Example: A dockworker in Italy who refuses to load a ship carrying weapons to the Zionist entity is not performing a single-issue boycott. They are waging anti-Zionist, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist struggle simultaneously – disrupting genocide, striking at the arms trade, and withholding labour from the company that profits from death. This is the revolutionary identity in practice: indivisible, material, international.

What it is: The unified political identity produced by waging integrated struggle against all faces of empire simultaneously.

What it isn't: A checklist of correct opinions, a moral identity performed online, or an activist brand.

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Decolonisation

Core Definition: The material, revolutionary process of dismantling colonial structures. Not a cultural or psychological metaphor, but the concrete struggle to expel the coloniser, reclaim the land, restore sovereignty, and reorganise the mode of production on a basis determined by the colonised people themselves. It is the sharpest edge of class struggle on the terrain of the colonised, while not being reducible to class in the narrow, economic sense.

Explanation: The Western left has degraded "decolonisation" into a buzzword. It is applied to university curricula, museum exhibits, personal reading lists, and "unlearning" workshops. This is idealist nonsense. Decolonisation is not "decolonising your mind". It is not "questioning your assumptions". It is a material process with material stakes. It means the end of colonial administration, the withdrawal of foreign troops, the dissolution of settler institutions, the return of stolen land, and the abolition of the legal and political structures that enforce colonial domination.

Decolonisation is the sharpest edge of class struggle because it strikes directly at the foundation of the imperialist world-system: the theft of land and the super-exploitation of the colonised. It unites the working class, the peasantry, the lumpen-proletariat, and the revolutionary intelligentsia in a bloc against the coloniser and its comprador agents. But it is not reducible to class struggle in the narrow, economic sense (a struggle over wages, conditions, and the distribution of surplus value within the capitalist framework). Colonialism is not only an economic relation. It is a total social structure that includes the theft of land, the erasure of culture, the imposition of foreign law and language, and often genocide. Reducing decolonisation to a class demand in the narrow sense misses the specific, irreducible dimensions of colonial domination: sovereignty, land, cultural survival. The colonised do not only want better wages; they want the coloniser gone. They want their land back. They want to determine their own existence. This is why national liberation is a distinct stage of the revolutionary process, not simply a subset of economic class struggle. The revolutionary supports decolonisation in its full material scope, understanding that it is both an expression of the class war and a specific struggle with its own logic, its own demands, and its own revolutionary subject.

Example: Decolonisation in so-called ~~Australia~~ means the return of stolen land to Indigenous peoples. It means the dismantling of the settler-colonial state, the abolition of the legal fiction of *terra nullius* that justified invasion and genocide, and the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty, not as a symbolic gesture in a preamble, but as material restitution and political self-determination. It means Land Back. It means the end of the carceral system that imprisons Indigenous people at genocidal rates. It means the restoration of water rights, the protection of sacred sites from mining corporations, and the right of Indigenous nations to determine their own economic, social, and cultural development. This is not "reconciliation". Reconciliation is the settler state's offer to the colonised: forgive us and let us keep the land. Decolonisation is the colonised taking the land back.

What it is: The material, revolutionary dismantling of colonial structures and the restoration of sovereignty and land to the colonised. The sharpest edge of class struggle, without being reducible to narrow economism.

What it isn't: A metaphor for personal growth, cultural change, or institutional diversity detached from the struggle for land, sovereignty, and state power.

Black Power

Core Definition: A revolutionary tradition emerging from the Black liberation struggle, demanding self-determination, armed self-defence, community control, and international solidarity with colonised and oppressed peoples worldwide.

Explanation: Black Power broke from liberal integrationist strategies of the mainstream civil rights movement to forge a strategy that connected the Black condition in the US to the colonised condition globally. It understood Black communities as an internal colony (super-exploited, policed, incarcerated) and demanded sovereignty over their own institutions. The Black Panther Party's Ten-Point Programme combined economic demands with armed community patrols and internationalist alliances. Black Power transformed the lumpenproletariat into a revolutionary force and built multi-racial solidarity against empire. It was crushed by state violence (COINTELPRO, assassinations, mass incarceration) but its strategic insights endure.

Example: Fred Hampton, assassinated by the FBI and Chicago police at twenty-one, was building the Rainbow Coalition – a revolutionary alliance of Black Panthers, the Puerto Rican Young Lords, and white working-class youth. He was killed because this unity threatened empire.

What it is: The revolutionary tradition of Black self-determination, armed self-defence, and international solidarity.

What it isn't: A liberal diversity slogan, a celebration of Black capitalism, or a rejection of multi-racial class struggle.

Proletarian Feminism

Core Definition: The revolutionary current that understands women's liberation as inseparable from the abolition of capitalism, imperialism, and patriarchy – grounded in the material conditions of working-class, colonised, and racialised women, and organising them as a revolutionary force within the broader class war.

Explanation: Proletarian feminism is distinct from bourgeois feminism, which seeks equal access for privileged women to the structures of power. It starts from the reality of the majority of women: factory workers, peasants, domestic labourers, migrants, refugees. These women face exploitation, unpaid reproductive labour, state violence, and racialised super-exploitation. Proletarian feminism fights to socialise reproductive labour, to abolish the wage system, and to embed women's liberation in the daily practice of the revolutionary organisation – not defer it until after the revolution. It is not a separate movement; it is the women's front of the class war.

Example: The Wages for Housework movement, launched by Mariarosa Dalla Costa, Selma James, and others, argued that housework is productive labour that reproduces the worker for capital without pay. Their demand for wages was a revolutionary provocation exposing hidden exploitation and organising women around their material conditions.

What it is: The integration of women's liberation into the class war against capitalism, imperialism, and patriarchy.

What it isn't: Bourgeois feminism, radical feminism, or a "women's issue" to be postponed until after the revolution.

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Revolution

Core Definition: The qualitative leap in which one class seizes state power, smashes the old state apparatus, and reorganises the mode of production and social relations on a new basis.

Explanation: Revolution is not a riot. It is not a coup. It is not an election. It is the concentrated violent rupture of the principal contradiction, prepared by accumulated quantitative changes, and led by the revolutionary class. The Russian proletariat in 1917, the Chinese peasantry and proletariat in 1949, the Vietnamese nation in 1975. Each demonstrated that revolution is the only path to liberation. Revolutions can be betrayed from within if the class struggle continues and revisionism triumphs, as in the USSR. The revolution is a process, not an event. It continues long after the seizure of power, through the dictatorship of the proletariat and the long transition to communism. The revolutionary does not fetishise the insurrectionary moment but understands it as the necessary climax of a protracted war of position and manoeuvre.

Example: A revolutionary rupture in Bosnia would mean the multi-ethnic working class smashing the Dayton apparatus, dismantling the entities, and establishing a sovereign, anti-imperialist state that expropriates the compradors and foreign capital. This would not be the end. It would be the beginning of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the suppression of counter-revolution, and the long process of socialist construction.

What it is: The seizure of state power by the oppressed class.

What it isn't: A spontaneous uprising without organisation or a peaceful reform package.

National Liberation

Core Definition: The struggle of an oppressed nation against colonial rule, imperialist domination, or settler-colonial occupation to achieve political independence and sovereignty.

Explanation: National liberation is not an identity movement. It is class struggle on the terrain of the colonised. It unites the working class, the peasantry, the revolutionary intelligentsia, and sometimes sections of the national bourgeoisie against the foreign occupier and its local compradors. National liberation is a stage, not the end. After formal independence, the class contradiction sharpens. The national bourgeoisie that fought empire may become the new exploiting class, as Fanon and Cabral warned. National liberation is the sharpest edge of the global class war because it strikes directly at the imperialist chain.

Example: The Bosnian war of 1992-1995 was a national liberation struggle against genocidal chauvinist projects armed and shielded by Western empire. It was betrayed at Dayton, where imperial powers froze the frontline and installed a colonial constitution. National liberation in Bosnia remains unfinished. The revolutionary task is to complete it, and then to continue the struggle into socialist revolution.

What it is: The anti-colonial stage of the revolutionary process.

What it isn't: An endpoint; it must transition to socialist revolution or be recolonised.

Nationalism

Core Definition: A political ideology positing the nation as the central unit of political loyalty and identity, whose class character is not fixed but determined by its relationship to empire, colonialism, and class struggle.

Explanation: Nationalism is not one thing. There is the nationalism of an oppressed nation struggling for liberation against colonial rule. This is progressive and revolutionary in its context, a necessary stage of anti-imperialist struggle. There is the nationalism of an oppressor nation justifying domination over others. This is chauvinism, thoroughly reactionary. And there is the nationalism of comprador elites in neo-colonies, which uses patriotic rhetoric to obscure class exploitation and dependency on empire. The revolutionary supports the nationalism of the oppressed, including their right to self-determination and secession, while maintaining the independent organisation of the proletariat and fighting against the nationalism of the oppressor.

Example: The Bosnian national liberation struggle of 1992-1995 was a progressive nationalism – the defence of a multi-ethnic society against genocidal chauvinist projects. The Serb and Croat nationalisms that drove the genocide were reactionary oppressor nationalisms. Today, the nationalism of the Bosniak comprador elite is a contradictory force: it defends Bosnian statehood against secessionist threats, but it also reinforces ethnic division and masks class exploitation. The revolutionary supports the defence of Bosnian sovereignty while building an independent class politics that transcends the ethnic-nationalist framework.

What it is: A political ideology whose class character is determined by its relationship to empire and oppression.

What it isn't: A single, undifferentiated phenomenon to be condemned or celebrated wholesale.

Self-Determination and the Right to Secede

Core Definition: The right of oppressed nations and peoples to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development, up to and including the unconditional right to secede from an existing state and form an independent political entity.

Explanation: Lenin and Stalin insisted on self-determination as a foundational Marxist principle, against the "imperialist economism" that treated national questions as distractions. The right is not a blanket endorsement of any nationalism; it is a democratic demand that exposes the hypocrisy of imperial "unity". Bourgeois states are never voluntary unions of peoples; they are prisons of nations. The revolutionary supports the right of the oppressed to separate, even while arguing for the benefits of voluntary union among free peoples. Without the right to secede, self-determination is a hollow phrase, because unity under an oppressor nation is not voluntary. The Soviet constitution included the right to secede; it was largely formal under Stalin but established the principle. The revolutionary defends the right of the oppressed to secede, even if in a given conjuncture they argue against exercising it because voluntary union is strategically stronger. This distinguishes the Marxist from the chauvinist and the colonialist, who always defend "territorial integrity" as an alibi for continued domination. However, the right to secede must be analysed through its class character. A secession serving empire and ethnic cleansing is reactionary; a secession of an oppressed people breaking from empire is progressive. The principle is universal; its application requires concrete class analysis.

Example: In Bosnia, the Serb and Croat chauvinist projects claim the "right to secede" as cover for completing genocide and serving imperial interests. They weaponise a principle that belongs to the genuinely oppressed. The revolutionary defends the right of nations to self-determination, including secession, but analyses the class character of any given secessionist movement. The Bosnian right to self-determination was violated by Dayton, which imposed a colonial constitution. A revolutionary programme defends Bosnia's right to sovereignty and territorial integrity against both imperial encroachment and the chauvinist carve-ups that empire uses as instruments. The principle remains: oppressed nations have the right to choose their own path, including separation. But that right belongs to the masses, not to comprador elites manipulating ethnic grievance on behalf of foreign powers.

What it is: A democratic and strategic principle for oppressed nations, with secession as its ultimate guarantee.

What it isn't: A blanket endorsement of any secessionist movement regardless of class content, or a rejection of voluntary multi-national unity.

Chauvinism

Core Definition: The aggressive assertion of the superiority of one's own nation, group, or identity, used to justify oppression, exclude solidarity, or divert class struggle into inter-communal conflict.

Explanation: Chauvinism is not ordinary national pride. It is a political weapon. Great power chauvinism justifies imperialist domination. Settler chauvinism justifies colonial land theft. Social chauvinism (Lenin's term) describes the labour aristocracy's support for its own nation's imperialism against the interests of the global working class. The Western leftist who tells a Palestinian that Chinese ports in Haifa are "just business" is displaying social chauvinism – the interests of the oppressed are sacrificed to the comfort of a geopolitical narrative. Chauvinism must be actively struggled against within any revolutionary organisation. It is a poison that festers in privilege and must be cut out. The revolutionary defends the equality of all peoples and the unity of the multi-ethnic working class against all chauvinisms.

Example: Great Serb and Great Croat chauvinism drove the Bosnian genocide. Bosniak chauvinism, a reactive response, also exists and must be opposed. The revolutionary defends the equality of all peoples and the unity of the multi-ethnic working class against all chauvinisms, whether they come from the oppressor nation or emerge as a defensive reaction among the oppressed.

What it is: Aggressive national or group supremacy used as a political weapon.

What it isn't: Healthy national identity or pride among the oppressed.

Internationalism

Core Definition: The principle and practice of solidarity among the working class and oppressed peoples across national borders. The understanding that capitalism is a global system and that liberation requires a global, coordinated struggle against empire.

Explanation: Internationalism is not "caring about what happens in other countries". It is a strategic orientation rooted in material reality. Capitalism and empire are international systems; no single nation can fully liberate itself in isolation. Proletarian internationalism demands that workers of different nations see each other as comrades, not competitors; that they oppose their own bourgeoisie's imperialist wars; that they support the right of nations to self-determination including secession; and that they build organisational forms capable of coordinating struggle across borders. Internationalism is the opposite of cosmopolitanism (which denies national particularity) and of chauvinism (which asserts national superiority). It is the highest expression of class solidarity, and it requires the most conscious, disciplined political work.

Example: The Bosnian worker who refuses to handle Zionist goods in solidarity with Palestine, the diaspora comrade who organises in the imperial core against the EU policies that strangle Bosnia, the Palestinian who recognises Bosnia's struggle as their own – these are acts of internationalism. They are not symbolic. They are material interventions that weaken empire by connecting its various fronts of exploitation and resistance.

What it is: Strategic class solidarity across borders.

What it isn't: Abstract "global citizenship" or symbolic gestures of goodwill.

Vanguard

Core Definition: The organised, disciplined, most conscious section of the proletariat, leading the class struggle strategically and holding the contradictions of the revolutionary process, accountable to the masses through the mass line.

Explanation: The vanguard is not a self-appointed clique; it emerges from struggle. It is needed because the class is heterogeneous. Different sections have different levels of consciousness, different immediate interests, and different vulnerabilities to bourgeois ideology. The vanguard does not substitute itself for the class. It serves, learns, and remains revolutionary only through constant criticism and mass practice. Without it, struggle remains spontaneous and fragmented. With it, struggle becomes strategic and unified. The vanguard party model has been abandoned, distorted, or hollowed out by much of the Western left, which substitutes horizontalism, affinity groups, and social media mobilisation for disciplined organisation. But without a vanguard, the class struggle remains spontaneous, fragmented, and vulnerable to co-optation. The vanguard is not a permanent status. It must continually prove itself through practice, including the practice of class suicide for those members from privileged strata.

Example: In Bosnia, a vanguard organisation would be multi-ethnic, rooted in workplaces and communities, capable of analysing empire's contradictions and leading strikes that connect economic demands to the overthrow of Dayton. It would not declare itself the vanguard; it would earn that role through the mass line, through patient organising, through demonstrating in practice that it can lead.

What it is: A leadership forged in struggle, tested by the mass line.

What it isn't: A permanent title for a group of intellectuals or a self-appointed elite.

Comrade / Cadre

Core Definition: A comrade is a political relation of disciplined equality among militants who share a common revolutionary purpose. A cadre is a comrade who has taken on specific organisational responsibility – trained, tested, and accountable to the collective. Together, they form the living infrastructure of the revolutionary organisation.

Explanation: Jodi Dean, in *'Comrade: An Essay on Political Belonging'*, argues that "comrade" is not a synonym for friend, ally, or fellow traveller. It is a specific relation produced by shared commitment to a political struggle that aims at overthrowing the existing order. Comrades are bound not by affection or identity but by discipline, trust, and a common horizon. The comrade relation cuts against the atomisation of capitalist society, where relationships are privatised, consumerised, and depoliticised. To say "comrade" is to invoke a bond that is collective, militant, and accountable.

A cadre is a comrade who has assumed particular duties – organising a cell, leading a study group, maintaining security, training newer militants. The cadre is forged through practice, not appointed by decree. They are tested by struggle, evaluated by results, and subject to criticism and self-criticism. The cadre is not a rank or a title; it is a function. All cadres are comrades, but not all comrades are yet cadres. The development from comrade to cadre is the maturation of revolutionary commitment into revolutionary capacity.

The Western left has degraded both terms. "Comrade" becomes a performative greeting among people who share no organisation, no discipline, and no common strategy. "Cadre" is either unknown or treated as a sinister term for "cult member". This is a loss. Without the comrade relation, the revolutionary organisation dissolves into a network of acquaintances. Without cadres, it cannot act. The Bolsheviks, the Chinese Communists, the Black Panther Party, the anti-colonial movements, all built their strength on the disciplined comrade relation and the tested cadre. The revolutionary movement today must recover both.

Example: In a Bosnian revolutionary organisation, a comrade is not simply someone who shares your ethnic background or your trauma. They are someone who has committed to the overthrow of the Dayton neo-colony and the construction of a multi-ethnic workers' state. A cadre is the comrade who takes responsibility for organising the factory cell in Zenica, who ensures that the study group meets even when repression intensifies, who maintains the contact list and knows what to do if they are arrested. The cadre is accountable to the organisation and to the masses. The comrade relation is the bond that holds the organisation together when fear and fragmentation threaten to tear it apart. When a Serb worker and a Bosniak worker call each other comrade, they are not ignoring the genocide – they are building the political relation that makes overcoming its legacy possible.

What it is: A disciplined, political relationship of shared revolutionary commitment and accountability.

What it isn't: A casual greeting, a synonym for friend, or a sentimental label for anyone on "our side".

Democratic Centralism

Core Definition: The organisational principle of the Leninist party: full freedom of debate and criticism until a decision is reached, then unity of action and iron discipline in carrying it out. All members are bound by decisions they may have opposed, and higher bodies are accountable to lower ones through the mass line.

Explanation: Democratic centralism is not "democracy plus centralism" as separate spheres. It is their dialectical unity. Democracy without centralism produces a talking club; centralism without democracy produces a command structure detached from the masses. The principle requires: (1) election of all leading bodies from below, (2) accountability of leadership to the membership, (3) strict discipline, (4) subordination of the minority to the majority, and (5) collective work across all levels. Factions are prohibited – not because debate is suppressed, but because once the organisation has debated and decided, organised internal opposition becomes sabotage. Democratic centralism is the skeleton of the revolutionary party. Without it, the party disintegrates into a network of opinion-holders.

Example: A revolutionary organisation in Bosnia debates whether to participate in a specific united front action. Comrades argue for and against. The debate is open and thorough. A vote is taken. The decision is to participate. Every cadre then carries out that decision with full commitment, regardless of their individual position. This is democratic centralism – the unity of freedom and discipline that enables the party to act as one body.

What it is: The dialectical unity of internal democracy and unified action, the organising principle of the revolutionary party.

What it isn't: An excuse for leadership to ignore the membership, nor a rejection of debate in favour of blind obedience.

United Front

Core Definition: A strategic alliance of different classes or political forces against a common enemy, for a defined purpose, while each force maintains independence and the proletarian vanguard retains strategic leadership.

Explanation: The united front is not fusion. In a neo-colony, the proletariat may ally with the national petty bourgeoisie, progressive religious forces, or patriotic elements of the national bourgeoisie against empire and its compradors. The vanguard enters with its own line intact, its own organisation independent, and its own long-term goals uncompromised. After the common enemy falls, contradictions within the front intensify, and the class war continues. The error is either to refuse the united front on sectarian grounds (isolating the vanguard from the broader masses) or to liquidate the vanguard's independence within the front (surrendering leadership to the bourgeoisie). The art is to unite without dissolving, to lead without dominating, to fight together today while preparing to fight separately tomorrow if necessary.

Example: In Bosnia, a united front against empire could include workers' unions, peasant associations, anti-nationalist intellectuals, and patriotic business owners harmed by EU policies. The vanguard leads through practice, not decree, keeping its own organisation and long-term socialist goal. The front is a weapon for isolating the principal enemy, not a permanent arrangement.

What it is: A temporary, tactical alliance for a specific purpose.

What it isn't: A permanent merger or a surrender of revolutionary independence.

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Mass Line

Core Definition: The revolutionary method of learning from the masses, synthesising their scattered ideas into systematic knowledge, and returning that knowledge to the masses as a guide for action.

Explanation: Mao: "Take the ideas of the masses, concentrate them, and then go back to the masses so that they are taken up by the masses". The mass line rejects two errors: telling the masses what to think (vanguardism detached from reality) and following the masses uncritically (tailism). It is a spiral: listen, study, synthesise, return, test, and listen again. The masses are not empty vessels. They know what they suffer. The revolutionary's task is to help them understand why and organise to change it. The mass line is the living dialectic of the party and the people. Without it, the vanguard becomes a clique, and the masses become a passive object of manipulation. With it, the party and the people breathe as one.

Example: The Western leftist who arrives in Bosnia with a ready-made programme, never listening to locals, is violating the mass line. The diaspora returnee who listens to local workers and peasants, helps articulate their grievances within a class framework, and builds organisation collectively – that is the mass line in practice.

What it is: A method of revolutionary epistemology and leadership.

What it isn't: A recruitment process or populist pandering.

Doctrine

Core Definition: A coherent, systematised body of principles and strategic orientations developed through the accumulation of theoretical and practical experience. The living framework that guides revolutionary action.

Explanation: Doctrine is not dogma. Dogma is doctrine that has died and been embalmed. Living doctrine is constantly tested, refined, and enriched by new practice. A revolutionary organisation without doctrine is a ship without a compass; it drifts with every current. Doctrine answers: who is the enemy? What is the principal contradiction? What is the path to power? What are the non-negotiable principles? The Western left often fears doctrine, treating it as "sectarian" or "rigid". Empire loves this fear, because an undisciplined, unprincipled opposition is easy to manage. The revolutionary embraces doctrine as a weapon, but a weapon that requires constant maintenance and recalibration.

Example: The dialectical framework we use (totality, principal and secondary contradictions, sharpest contradiction, class suicide) is an emerging doctrine. It is not a finished book. It is a set of tools honed through analysis and struggle, open to revision but not to abandonment.

What it is: A living strategic framework.

What it isn't: A fossilised set of pronouncements.

Political Line

Core Definition: The concrete, conjunctural analysis and set of tasks that flow from revolutionary principles and doctrine applied to a specific historical moment. The bridge between theory and action.

Explanation: A revolutionary organisation without a political line is adrift. Principles are the permanent foundations; doctrine is the accumulated strategic wisdom; the political line is the living application of these to the present conjuncture. It answers: what is the principal contradiction in this moment? What are the secondary contradictions? What is the balance of forces? Who is the immediate enemy, and who can be neutralised or allied with? What are the key tasks around which the organisation must mobilise its forces? The line must be concrete, not abstract. It must be testable in practice. If the line fails, it must be revised through criticism and self-criticism. The development of a correct line requires the mass line – listening to the masses, studying their conditions, synthesising their scattered knowledge, and returning it as organised strategy. Organisations that refuse to develop a line, preferring vague radicalism or constant reactive protest, are not revolutionary; they are political spectators. The line is the organisation's sword; without it, the hand is empty.

Example: A Bosnian revolutionary organisation's political line in the current conjuncture might state: the principal contradiction is empire (US, EU, and the Dayton framework) versus the multi-ethnic Bosnian people. The sharpest contradiction is the secessionist threat from the Serb entity, which empire uses to maintain instability and prevent sovereignty. The primary political tasks are: build multi-ethnic workers' organisations in key industrial centres, agitate for resource sovereignty against foreign extraction, expose the comprador elites' complicity with empire, and prepare the organisational infrastructure for a sovereign, anti-imperialist rupture. This line would be tested, debated, and revised in light of events. It would guide all the organisation's work, from factory organising to diaspora outreach.

What it is: The application of principles to a concrete situation, producing a specific strategic orientation and set of tasks.

What it isn't: A permanent doctrine, a slogan, or a moral statement.

Dual Power

Core Definition: A revolutionary situation in which two rival authorities coexist within the same territory: the old state apparatus of the ruling class and the emerging organs of popular power (soviets, councils, assemblies) that represent the revolutionary masses.

Explanation: Lenin analysed dual power as the defining feature of the period between the February and October revolutions in Russia. The Provisional Government represented the old state, the bourgeoisie, and the landlords. The Soviets represented the workers, soldiers, and peasants. Neither could fully rule; power was contested. Dual power is inherently unstable. It cannot last. Either the old state crushes the popular organs, or the popular organs overthrow the old state and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. The revolutionary's task in a dual power situation is to build the strength, organisation, and political clarity of the popular organs until they are capable of seizing full power. This requires propaganda, patient organising, and a willingness to confront the old state when the balance of forces is favourable.

Example: A dual power situation in Bosnia would arise if workers' councils, community assemblies, and multi-ethnic committees emerged in parallel to the official Dayton institutions, managing production, dispensing justice, organising defence, while the comprador state still formally existed. The revolutionary vanguard would work to strengthen these popular organs, coordinate them, and build the political will for their seizure of full state power.

What it is: A transitional, unstable period of contested authority between two sources of power.

What it isn't: A permanent arrangement or a reformist strategy of coexistence with the bourgeois state.

Weak Link

Core Definition: Lenin's concept: the point in the imperialist chain where contradictions are most acute, the ruling class is most brittle, and the masses are most prepared to move.

Explanation: The imperialist chain does not break at its strongest point. It breaks at its weakest link – the location where multiple contradictions have fused into a single crisis, where the local bourgeoisie cannot rule in the old way and the masses refuse to be ruled in the old way. In Lenin's time, Russia was the weak link: not the most advanced capitalist country, but the one where war, land hunger, national oppression, and proletarian concentration combined to create a revolutionary situation. The weak link is not a permanent geographic designation; it shifts with historical conditions. Identifying the weak link in a given conjuncture is a strategic task for the revolutionary international movement, because concentrating forces there (materially, politically, and ideologically) can break the whole chain. The weak link often contains the sharpest contradiction, but not every sharpest contradiction makes a location a weak link.

Example: Russia in 1917 was the weak link. Germany was more industrially developed and had a larger proletariat, but the contradictions in Russia (tsarist collapse, peasant hunger, national revolts, and a war-exhausted army) had reached breaking point. The Bolsheviks identified the weak link, concentrated their forces there, and broke the chain.

What it is: The strategic location where the imperialist chain can be broken by revolutionary action.

What it isn't: A permanent geographic tag, a synonym for "sharpest contradiction," or a guarantee of success without organised revolutionary leadership.

Mutual Aid

Core Definition: The practice of communities directly meeting each other's needs (food, shelter, care, defence) outside the market and the state, building collective capacity and trust in the process of survival under capitalism and empire.

Explanation: Mutual aid is a tactic, not a strategy. It sustains the oppressed in crisis and builds bonds of solidarity. But without a revolutionary organisation and a strategic orientation toward state power, mutual aid can become a permanent substitute for political struggle – liberal charity in radical clothing. Empire tolerates food banks; it does not tolerate armed workers' councils. The revolutionary uses mutual aid to organise, to politicise, and to demonstrate that another world is possible, but never mistakes it for the revolution itself.

Example: During a strike, community kitchens feed workers' families, keeping the picket line strong. This is revolutionary mutual aid – directly linked to the class struggle, building the capacity to fight. A permanent food bank run by an NGO, disconnected from any political project, is not.

What it is: A tactic of collective survival and solidarity, useful when linked to revolutionary strategy.

What it isn't: A substitute for the seizure of state power or the abolition of capitalism.

Solidarity

Core Definition: Active, organised, material support among the oppressed, rooted in shared struggle against a common enemy. Not charity or performance.

Explanation: Empire fragments; solidarity reunites. It is not a social media post. It is transferring resources, coordinating actions, sharing risk. Solidarity is a practice requiring discipline, subordinating immediate interests to strategic needs. The diaspora that sends money without conditions, the worker who refuses to handle imperial goods – these are solidarity. Solidarity is not "standing with" someone in a statement. It is the material transfer of resources, the coordination of actions, the sharing of risk. It is strategic, not sentimental. It is organised, not spontaneous. The revolutionary builds solidarity not as an occasional gesture but as a permanent infrastructure of the movement.

Example: When a Bosnian workers' union strikes, diaspora comrades fund the strike fund without dictating strategy. When Palestinian unions call for boycott, Bosnian activists block Israeli products. This is material solidarity – the lived expression of the totality, the recognition that your liberation is bound to mine.

What it is: A disciplined, material practice.

What it isn't: A sentimental declaration or a hashtag.

Unity

Core Definition: The collective cohesion of the oppressed masses against their common enemy, built through shared struggle and principled resolution of non-antagonistic contradictions.

Explanation: Unity is not sameness. The working class contains diverse identities and histories. Unity does not erase these but subordinates them to shared class interest. It is built in motion, through fighting the same boss, defending the same neighbourhood. The vanguard provides the organisational space where unity is forged. Unity is not declared; it is practised. It is the product of struggle, not the precondition for it. The revolutionary does not wait for the masses to be unified before acting; they act in ways that build unity through the action itself. This requires holding non-antagonistic contradictions, between different ethnic experiences, different political traditions, different strategic assessments, and resolving them through patient, principled struggle.

Example: A multi-ethnic occupation of a factory in Zenica, where Bosniak, Serb, and Croat workers manage production together, builds a unity that electoral politics never could. The unity is not theoretical; it is forged in shared risk, shared labour, shared victory.

What it is: Forged collective power through struggle.

What it isn't: Erasing difference or enforcing conformity.

Mobilising

Core Definition: Bringing people together for a specific action, event, or demonstration. A necessary tactical capacity that becomes a substitute for lasting power if not connected to organising.

Explanation: A mobilisation is a rally, a march, a strike, a boycott. It gathers bodies in a place at a time. Mobilising is essential; it shows strength, it disrupts, it builds morale. But mobilising without organising is like filling a bucket with a hole. The crowd disperses, and the power evaporates. The Western left is often brilliant at mobilising (spectacular protests, viral campaigns) and terrible at organising durable structures. Empire can tolerate a thousand marches. It cannot tolerate a single disciplined revolutionary organisation embedded in workplaces and communities. Mobilising must be a tactic within an organising strategy, not the strategy itself.

Example: The mass protests in Bosnia in 2014 (the so-called "Bosnian Spring") were a powerful mobilisation. They briefly shook the regime and then dissipated, partly because they were not connected to an organised structure that could sustain the struggle, formulate demands, and build enduring power. The lesson is not "mobilisations are useless" but "mobilisations must be connected to organisation".

What it is: Gathering people for a specific action.

What it isn't: Building lasting organisational capacity.

Organising

Core Definition: The patient, disciplined work of building lasting structures of collective power (unions, committees, parties, assemblies) that can sustain struggle over time and develop the capacity to seize and exercise power.

Explanation: Organising is slower and less glamorous than mobilising. It involves conversations, meetings, leadership development, internal education, conflict resolution, and resource management. It builds the capacity of the class to act independently, not just to respond to crises. An organisation can call a mobilisation, but a mobilisation cannot replace an organisation. The revolutionary invests in organising because the long war against empire cannot be won by eruptions alone. It requires an army, and armies are built, not summoned. Organising is the infrastructure of revolution. It is the difference between a wave that crashes and recedes and a force that can seize and hold ground.

Example: Building a multi-ethnic workers' committee in a Zenica factory that meets regularly, discusses grievances, plans actions, educates its members, and connects to other workplaces across entity lines – that is organising. When the next crisis comes, the committee can act strategically, not just spontaneously.

What it is: Building durable collective power.

What it isn't: Spontaneous action or one-off events.

Movement

Core Definition: A broad, often spontaneous or loosely organised social force composed of diverse class elements around a shared grievance or aspiration. Frequently brief, and capable of being co-opted if not anchored by a disciplined revolutionary organisation.

Explanation: Movements rise and fall. They can be transformative or they can be steam vents that release pressure and then dissipate. Empire is not afraid of movements; it manages them. A movement without a vanguard is a wave without a vessel – it crashes and recedes. The Western left often fetishises "the movement" as an end in itself, celebrating spontaneity and horizontalism while avoiding the hard work of building lasting organisational power. The revolutionary participates in movements, learns from them, and works to orient them toward revolutionary goals. But they do not confuse a movement with a party, a protest with a seizure of power, a moment of uprising with the protracted war that liberation requires.

Example: The 2014 protests in Bosnia, the so-called "Bosnian Spring", were a movement that briefly shook the state and then dissipated. They lacked a revolutionary organisation capable of channelling the outrage into a sustained assault on the Dayton structure. The movement was real; its potential was enormous; its defeat was not inevitable. The lesson is not "movements are useless" but "movements must be organised to win".

What it is: A temporary upsurge of social energy, requiring organisation to become a revolutionary force.

What it isn't: A substitute for the party or a permanent locus of power.

Confederalism

Core Definition: A political form where self-governing units voluntarily unite for common purposes, maintaining autonomy. Under certain conditions, a transitional form for the national question.

Explanation: Confederalism's class character depends on who controls it. Dayton's ethnic apartheid is confederalism as imperial weapon. A revolutionary confederalism, built from below by multi-ethnic workers freely choosing to federate, could be a different thing – respecting national differences while uniting against a common class enemy. The principle is voluntary union, not forced architecture. The form must follow the concrete conditions and the will of the organised masses. The principle is not the architecture. The principle is voluntary union against empire, under proletarian leadership. The revolutionary does not fetishise any particular constitutional form but evaluates each by its class content and its effect on the balance of forces.

Example: A post-Dayton Bosnia might, under revolutionary conditions, take a confederal form if Serb, Croat, and Bosniak workers democratically decide to maintain certain autonomies while building a unified state. Or it might choose unitarism. The form follows the masses' will.

What it is: A possible political architecture, determined by class forces.

What it isn't: Inherently progressive or reactionary; it depends on who holds power.

Resource Sovereignty

Core Definition: The right of a people to control the natural resources of their territory (land, water, minerals, energy) against foreign extraction and comprador theft.

Explanation: Empire is built on stolen resources. Colonialism was never about "civilising missions"; it was about rubber, oil, diamonds, coltan, timber, fertile soil. Neo-colonialism continues this through legal frameworks that look sovereign but are not: a country signs a mining contract with a foreign corporation under IMF pressure, debt conditionalities mandate privatisation of water, and a trade agreement forces the opening of agricultural markets to subsidised imperial imports. Formal independence without resource sovereignty is a flag and an anthem without control over the ground beneath. Resource sovereignty is not won once and for all. It is a continuous struggle, because capital continually seeks new mechanisms of extraction. Under a revolutionary state, resource sovereignty must mean democratic control by the communities who live on the land, not just by a new national elite.

Example: Bosnia's rivers are being dammed by foreign investors with minimal local benefit. Resource sovereignty means communities, not Sarajevo bureaucrats or German banks, deciding the fate of their water and land. It means expropriating the foreign-owned mines and placing them under workers' and community control.

What it is: A continuous anti-imperialist and class struggle.

What it isn't: A single legal declaration that ends extraction.

Material Conditions

Core Definition: The concrete, objective circumstances of people's lives (how they work, eat, shelter, reproduce, and survive within a given mode of production) which fundamentally shape their consciousness and political possibilities.

Explanation: Historical materialism begins with material conditions. You cannot understand a society's politics without understanding its economy. You cannot understand a worker's consciousness without understanding their wages, their housing, their debt, their physical exhaustion. Material conditions are not merely economic; they include geography, climate, demographic pressures, and the built environment. But the mode of production is the core. Changing material conditions is the point of revolution. Revolutionaries analyse material conditions not to accept them passively but to identify the contradictions within them that can be exploited and transformed.

Example: The Bosnian local who seems "passive" or "unaware" is not ignorant. Their material conditions (a 400 KM monthly wage, informal labour, dependence on ethnic patronage, the constant threat of political retaliation) shape their calculations. The revolutionary understands this and organises accordingly, rather than scolding from a position of material comfort.

What it is: The objective circumstances that shape consciousness.

What it isn't: A mechanical prison that determines everything with no room for agency.

Cultural Revolution

Core Definition: The theory, developed by Mao Zedong, that class struggle continues under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and that the masses must be mobilised from below to combat the emergence of new bourgeois elements within the party, the state, and society, preventing capitalist restoration.

Explanation: The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) was the most ambitious attempt in revolutionary history to solve a problem the Bolsheviks failed to solve: how does a socialist state prevent itself from being subverted from within? Mao's answer was mass mobilisation against the "capitalist roaders" (officials, managers, and intellectuals) who used their positions to restore privilege and market relations. It was messy, violent, and remains fiercely debated. But its core theoretical contribution is indispensable: socialism is not a stable achievement. It is a site of ongoing class struggle, and without conscious, organised mass intervention, the new bourgeoisie will quietly restore capitalism behind the red flag. The Western left either demonises the Cultural Revolution as totalitarian madness or fetishises it as a blueprint. Neither is dialectical. The question is not "was it perfect?" but "what did it teach us about the dangers of revisionism and the necessity of mass vigilance?"

Example: A socialist Bosnia would face the same danger the Cultural Revolution tried to address. The comprador class would be smashed, but new privileged strata could emerge within the revolutionary party, the state administration, and the management of nationalised industries. Without mechanisms for mass supervision, recall, and ideological struggle, the revolution could be quietly reversed. The lesson is not to replicate the Cultural Revolution mechanically but to take its core problem seriously.

What it is: A theory and practice of continuing class struggle under socialism.

What it isn't: A one-time historical event to be either worshipped or condemned wholesale.

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Part VI: Errors and Deviations

Economism

Core Definition: The reduction of political struggle to economic demands (wages, conditions, trade union recognition) without challenging the broader political structure of capitalist state power.

Explanation: Lenin's '*What Is To Be Done?*' identified economism as the core deviation of the trade union consciousness that develops spontaneously among workers. Economism is not wrong to fight for wages. It is wrong to stop there. It treats the state as neutral, the law as a fair arbiter, and capitalism as a system that can be negotiated with indefinitely. The revolutionary fights for economic demands but connects them, always, to the political: who holds power, who controls the state, why reforms are reversed when pressure subsides. Without this connection, economic struggle becomes a safety valve, not a training ground for revolution. The trade union official who negotiates a minor raise while leaving the capitalist structure untouched is an economist, whether or not they use the label.

Example: The Bosnian workers' union that negotiates a small wage increase from the comprador boss but never questions the Dayton structure or the foreign ownership of the factory is practising economism. The revolutionary unionist wins the wage increase and uses it to demonstrate that real justice requires smashing the whole apparatus.

What it is: Political struggle confined to the economic horizon.

What it isn't: Genuine concern for the material conditions of the working class.

Liquidationism

Core Definition: The political tendency to dissolve the independent revolutionary organisation and its programme into broader reformist or movement-based formations, abandoning the struggle for state power.

Explanation: The term originated in the Russian socialist movement, describing those who wanted to liquidate the illegal party apparatus in favour of purely legal, trade-unionist work. Lenin fought them furiously. The contemporary form is the dissolution of revolutionary groups into NGO coalitions, broad "movement" spaces, or electoral campaigns that demand nothing of capital. Liquidationism often sounds reasonable: "we must unite everyone, we must not be sectarian". But it is the politics of surrender. The revolutionary maintains the party's independence, its programme, and its long-term goal, even while participating in united fronts. The form of the organisation is liquidated; the revolutionary content disappears with it. Liquidationism is the organisational expression of opportunism – the abandonment of the revolutionary organisation as the vehicle for seizing power.

Example: When a Bosnian leftist group dissolves its independent organisation to join an EU-funded "civil society" platform that never names the comprador elite or empire – that is liquidationism. The form is dissolved; the revolutionary content vanishes.

What it is: The abandonment of independent revolutionary organisation.

What it isn't: A tactical decision to participate in a broader coalition while maintaining independence.

Tailism

Core Definition: The political error of following behind the spontaneous movement of the masses rather than providing revolutionary leadership. Refusing to intervene consciously to raise political consciousness, shape strategy, and direct struggle toward the seizure of state power.

Explanation: Tailism takes its name from the image of following the tail of the masses, going wherever they go without attempting to lead. It often presents itself as humility: "the masses know best", "we must not impose our ideas", and "we follow the people". But this is not the mass line. The mass line listens to the masses, concentrates their scattered ideas into systematic knowledge, and returns that knowledge as a guide for action. Tailism skips the middle step. It abandons the vanguard's responsibility to bring political consciousness from outside the spontaneous economic struggle, as Lenin theorised in '*What Is To Be Done?*'. If left to itself, the working class develops only trade union consciousness – the understanding that it must fight for better wages and conditions, but not that it must overthrow the entire system. Tailism accepts this spontaneous consciousness as sufficient. It refuses to argue, to challenge, to raise the political level. This is not democracy; it is the abandonment of revolutionary responsibility. The tailist organisation does not lead; it follows. It is a passive reflector of existing consciousness rather than an active force for transforming it. Tailism is the organisational expression of the fear of being seen as authoritarian, of the liberal discomfort with leadership itself. But the masses need leadership, not flattery. The revolutionary earns the right to lead by serving, learning, and fighting alongside, but the goal is always to lead the class toward the seizure of power, not to follow it into reformism.

Example: The revolutionary organisation in Bosnia that sees a spontaneous protest against a factory closure and simply joins in, chanting whatever slogans the crowd chants, without attempting to connect the closure to the Dayton constitution, the EU austerity regime, and the comprador elites – that organisation is practising tailism. It follows the masses' anger but does not help the masses understand its cause or its strategic direction. The correct approach is to participate fully in the protest, earn the trust of the workers through militant solidarity, and then, patiently, through the mass line, raise the political level: "The factory closed because of the privatisation demanded by the EU. The same EU that funds our politicians. The same politicians who keep us divided by ethnicity while they steal. What if we organised across entity lines? What if we demanded not just the reopening of this factory, but the expropriation of all the privatised industries under workers' control?" This is not tailism. This is revolutionary leadership.

What it is: The refusal to lead, disguised as democratic humility.

What it isn't: The mass line, which transforms spontaneous consciousness through organised, principled intervention.

Class Collaboration

Core Definition: The active or passive alignment of sections of the working class or its organisations with the bourgeoisie against the interests of the exploited. A betrayal of class independence in exchange for short-term concessions, protections, or ideological comfort.

Explanation: Class collaboration is not simply "working with the bourgeoisie" in a tactical united front against a common enemy. That is a temporary alliance with clear limits and strategic purpose. Class collaboration is the abandonment of class independence, the subordination of proletarian interests to bourgeois leadership, the acceptance of the existing order as the permanent horizon of politics. The labour aristocracy in the imperial core, bribed by superprofits, is the classic collaborator: it defends its own imperialism, supports its own wars, and votes for its own bourgeoisie against the interests of workers in the periphery. The comprador trade unionist who negotiates smaller wage cuts instead of organising for expropriation is collaborating. The NGO that takes imperial money to manage ethnic "dialogue" instead of naming empire is collaborating. The dogmatist who refuses to criticise the Chinese state's accumulation-driven foreign policy because it weakens the ~~US~~ is collaborating with a capitalist class against the genocided. Class collaboration is a betrayal, and it must be named as such.

Example: The Bosnian trade union leader who accepts an ~~EU~~-funded position on a "social dialogue" commission, who negotiates minor concessions that protect a small stratum of workers while the rest are super-exploited, and who refuses to break with the comprador parties, is a class collaborator. They have traded the independence of the working class for a seat at a table that was never theirs.

What it is: The betrayal of class independence for concessions or comfort.

What it isn't: Tactical alliance with sections of the bourgeoisie in a united front against a common enemy.

Dogmatism

Core Definition: A political error in which the revolutionary method of dialectical materialism is abandoned in favour of fixed, uncritical loyalty to a particular state, party, or text. Treating Marxism as a completed scripture rather than a living science.

Explanation: Dogmatism is the refusal of concrete analysis. It replaces the examination of material conditions and class contradictions with the mechanical application of slogans, labels, and historical precedents. The dogmatist decides that a state is "socialist" or "anti-imperialist" based on its self-designation or its position in a geopolitical rivalry, and then defends all its actions, no matter how reactionary, because the label is fixed. This is not materialist analysis; it is idealist faith. Dogmatism can afflict any tendency – the "tankie" who cannot acknowledge the bureaucratic degeneration of the USSR, the Marxist who cannot see capitalist restoration in China, and the Trotskyist who applies permanent revolution as a formula to every situation. The cure is the mass line, scientific socialism, and the relentless practice of criticism and self-criticism. The dogmatist treats the revolution as an inheritance to be guarded; the dialectician treats it as a practice to be continued.

Example: The dogmatist defends China's trade with Israel because "China is anti-imperialist". The dialectician analyses China's class character, identifies its accumulation-driven foreign policy, and concludes that its trade with a genocidal settler-colony is objectively reactionary, even while acknowledging that China's challenge to US hegemony opens strategic space for the Global Majority. The dogmatist demands loyalty; the dialectician holds the contradiction and acts accordingly.

What it is: The abandonment of dialectical materialism for fixed loyalty.

What it isn't: The principled defence of revolutionary states on scientific grounds, which requires concrete analysis, not blind faith.

Reactionary

Core Definition: A force, idea, or movement that seeks to preserve or restore the existing order of exploitation and oppression, or to roll back gains won by the masses, aligning objectively with the interests of the ruling class.

Explanation: "Reactionary" is not a synonym for "conservative" or "disagreeable". It is a precise political designation. A reactionary force opposes the forward motion of history; it defends empire, patriarchy, white supremacy, comprador rule. Reaction can be violent and explicit (fascist militias, genocidal nationalism) or it can wear a progressive mask (NGO "reconciliation" that pacifies, "anti-imperialist" campism that defends a capitalist state's reactionary actions). The revolutionary must identify what is objectively reactionary in a given conjuncture, regardless of the subjective intentions of its proponents. A progressive action weakens the ruling class; a reactionary one strengthens it. This is not a matter of opinion but of material effect. The question is always: does this serve the liberation of the oppressed, or does it reinforce the structures that oppress them?

Example: The Serb and Croat chauvinist projects that threaten Bosnia are reactionary. They seek to complete genocide under the cover of national self-determination. China's trade with the Zionist entity is objectively reactionary, whatever its subjective anti-US rhetoric, because it materially strengthens a genocidal settler-colony. The diaspora returnee who scolds locals for "ignorance" is being subjectively arrogant but objectively reactionary, because they fracture the unity of the oppressed.

What it is: A force that objectively serves the ruling class.

What it isn't: Simply something you dislike or disagree with.

Part VII: The Horizon

Socialism

Core Definition: The lower phase of communism. A transitional society in which the means of production are socialised, the working class holds state power, and distribution is based on the principle "from each according to ability, to each according to work".

Explanation: Socialism is not the end goal. It is the bridge from capitalism to communism. The dictatorship of the proletariat is its political form. Class antagonisms persist, the state has not yet withered, bourgeois habits and inequalities linger, and the productive forces must be developed to the point where abundance makes full communism possible. Socialism is a site of continued class struggle, between the old capitalist forces, bourgeois ideology, and the revolutionary state, as Mao theorised. It can be reversed, as the USSR demonstrates. It is not a permanent achievement but a process requiring constant vigilance and mass mobilisation. The revolutionary does not treat socialism as a stable endpoint but as a protracted, contested transition. The danger of revisionism (the quiet restoration of capitalist relations behind socialist rhetoric) is ever-present, and only the organised masses can prevent it.

Example: A socialist Bosnia would be a workers' state, with factories, land, and banks under collective democratic control. It would still bear the scars of the genocide and the neo-colonial period. Class struggle would continue. The old comprador networks would attempt to reassert themselves, bourgeois ideology would persist in habits and institutions, and the danger of a new bureaucratic elite emerging would require constant vigilance. But the logic of accumulation would be broken, and production would be oriented toward human need, not profit. The multi-ethnic working class would hold state power, and the long process of building communism would begin.

What it is: The transitional phase between capitalism and full communism.

What it isn't: An eternal state or a perfect utopia without contradictions.

Communism

Core Definition: The classless, stateless society in which the means of production are held in common, production is organised for human need, and distribution follows the principle "from each according to ability, to each according to need".

Explanation: Communism is the resolution of the principal contradiction of all class societies. Without classes, there is no state, no exploitation, and no systematic alienation. The division between mental and manual labour dissolves. The opposition between town and countryside is overcome. Humanity collectively and democratically plans its relationship with nature and with itself. This is not a dream. It is the historical tendency of the productive forces and the class struggle, if the working class wins. Communism is not an event but a process, the result of the withering away of the state and the abolition of class distinctions through the protracted transition of socialism. It is the full negation of class society, the realisation of human freedom, the beginning of truly human history after the prehistory of class struggle. The revolutionary does not expect to see communism in their lifetime, but every strike, every land occupation, every factory seized, and every act of solidarity is a step toward it. The horizon orients the struggle.

Example: In a communist Bosnia, there would be no ethnic division, no compradors, no foreign viceroy, no unemployment, and no brain drain. The factories and fields would serve the people. Work would be shared, leisure abundant, decisions collective. The scars of genocide would be healed, not through forgetting but through the abolition of the conditions that made genocide possible. This is the horizon. It is not imminent. But it is the direction of every revolutionary act.

What it is: The full negation of class society and the beginning of true human freedom.

What it isn't: An imaginary perfect world with no problems or an event that happens overnight.

Liberation

Core Definition: The process and outcome of smashing all structures of domination (class exploitation, colonial rule, patriarchy, white supremacy), and creating the material and social conditions in which human beings can freely and collectively determine their own lives.

Explanation: Liberation is not an event. It is not an independence day. It is a protracted revolutionary process with stages. National liberation throws off the foreign occupier but does not end class exploitation. Women's liberation cannot be achieved under capitalism, which depends on unpaid reproductive labour and patriarchal ideology. True liberation – human emancipation – is communism: a classless, stateless society where production is organised for need, not profit, and where the division between mental and manual labour, town and countryside, has been overcome. Every revolutionary act is a step toward liberation. Every reform that strengthens the working class's capacity to fight is a step. But partial liberation is not the goal. The horizon is total liberation, and that horizon requires the abolition of class society itself. The revolutionary measures all tactics by whether they advance or retard this long march.

Example: For Bosnia, liberation means first smashing the Dayton neo-colony. Abolishing the entities, expelling the foreign administrators, expropriating the comprador elites, and establishing a sovereign, multi-ethnic workers' state. But that is not the end. The new state must begin the long work of dismantling the ethnic divisions, the patriarchal structures, the capitalist logic that remains embedded in habits and institutions. Liberation is the journey from Dayton to communism. Every factory occupation, every community assembly, every successful strike is a prefiguration of that liberated world.

What it is: The total, ongoing emancipation of humanity from all structures of domination.

What it isn't: A single legal declaration, a symbolic gesture, or reform within empire.

Abolition

Core Definition: The political demand and revolutionary process of destroying an oppressive system in its entirety, not reforming it, not managing it, not making it more humane, but ending it.

Explanation: "Abolition" carries the legacy of the struggle against chattel slavery. The abolitionists did not demand better conditions for slaves; they demanded the destruction of slavery as an institution. In the revolutionary tradition, abolition is the horizon of transformative politics. We do not seek a kinder empire, or a "~~Dayton~~ with a human face", or a capitalism with stronger social safety nets. We seek the abolition of empire, the abolition of class society, the abolition of patriarchy, the abolition of white supremacy, the abolition of the state as an instrument of class rule. Abolition is not an overnight event. It is a protracted revolutionary process that begins with smashing the old state apparatus and reorganising production and social life on a new basis, and continues through the withering of class distinctions and the construction of communism. The revolutionary spirit is an abolitionist spirit – uncompromising, horizon-focused, refusing to mistake partial victories for the final goal.

Example: In the Bosnian context, abolition means the destruction of the ~~Dayton~~ constitution and the colonial Office of the High Representative, the smashing of the ethnic entities, the expropriation of the comprador class, and the building of a revolutionary state of the multi-ethnic working class. It also means the abolition of the patriarchal structures that subordinate women, and the abolition of the brain drain that functions as demographic erasure. Abolition is the logic of revolution applied to every structure of domination. It is the horizon that distinguishes the revolutionary from the reformer.

What it is: The revolutionary destruction of an oppressive system.

What it isn't: Reform, regulation, or kinder management of the existing order.