Section readings: *Uprisings*

CHOOSE THREE OF THESE!

1776: New England

ALL MEN WOULD BE TYRANTS IF THEY COULD

Braintree, Massachusetts, March 31
Abigail Adams to John Adams:

I wish you would ever write me a letter half as long as I write you, and tell me, if you may, where your fleet has gone, what sort of defense Virginia can make against our common enemy, whether it is so situated as to make an able defense. Are not the gentry lords and the common people vassals? Are they not like the uncivilized vassals Britain represents us to be? I hope their riflemen, who have shown themselves very savage and even bloodthirsty, are not a specimen of the generality of the people. I am willing to allow the colony great merit for having produced a Washington, but they have been shamefully duped by a Dunmore.

I have sometimes been ready to think that the passion for liberty cannot be equally strong in the breasts of those who have been accustomed to deprive their fellow creatures of theirs. Of this I am certain, that it is not founded upon that generous and Christian principle of doing to others as we would that others should do unto us.

Do not you want to see Boston? I am fearful of the smallpox, or I should have been in before this time. I got Mr. Crane to go to our house and see what state it was in. I find it has been occupied by one of the doctors of a regiment; very dirty, but no other damage has been done to it. The few things which were left in it are all gone. I look upon it as a new acquisition of property—a property which one month ago I did not value at a single shilling, and would with pleasure have seen it in flames.

The town in general is left in a better state than we expected—more owing to a precipitate flight than any regard to the inhabitants—though some individuals discovered a sense of honor and justice and have left the rent of the houses in which they were for the owners, and the furniture unhurt, or, if damaged, sufficient to make it good. Others have committed abominable ravages. The mansion house of your president is safe, and the furniture unhurt; while the house and furniture of the solicitor general have fallen a prey to their own merciless party. Surely the very fiends feel a reverential awe for virtue and patriotism, while they detest the parricide and traitor.

I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.

> *Revolution can never be forecast; it cannot be foretold; it comes of itself. Revolution is brewing and is bound to flare up.*
>
> —*Vladimir Lenin, 1918*

That your sex are naturally tyrannical is a truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute, but such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of master for the more tender and endearing one of friend. Why then not put it out of the power of the vicious and the lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity? Men of sense in all ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your sex; regard us then as beings placed by Providence under your protection, and in imitation of the Supreme Being make use of that power only for our happiness.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 14
John Adams to Abigail Adams:

You justly complain of my short letters, but the critical state of things and the multiplicity of avocations must plead my excuse. You ask

where the fleet is? The enclosed papers will inform you. You ask what sort of defense Virginia can make? I believe they will make an able defense. Their militia and minutemen have been some time employed in training themselves, and they have nine battalions of regulars, as they call them, maintained among them under good officers at the Continental expense. They have set up a number of manufactories of firearms which are busily employed. They are tolerably supplied with powder and are successful and assiduous in making saltpeter. Their neighboring sister, or rather daughter, colony

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it.

—Abraham Lincoln, 1861

of North Carolina, which is a warlike colony and has several battalions at the Continental expense, as well as a pretty good militia, are ready to assist them, and they are in very good spirits and seem determined to make a brave resistance. The gentry are very rich, and the common people very poor. This inequality of property gives an aristocratical turn to all their proceedings, and occasions a strong aversion in their patricians to "Common Sense."

You give me some pleasure by your account of a certain house in Queen Street. I had burned it long ago in imagination. It rises now to my view like a phoenix. What shall I say of the solicitor general? I pity his pretty children. I pity his father and his sisters. I wish I could be clear that it is no moral evil to pity him and his lady. Upon repentance, they will certainly have a large share in the compassions of many. But let us take warning and give it to our children. Whenever vanity and gaiety, a love of pomp and dress, furniture, equipage, buildings, great company, expensive diversions, and elegant entertainments get the better of the principles and judgments of men or women, there is no knowing where they will stop, nor into what evils, natural, moral, or political, they will lead us.

As to your extraordinary code of laws, I cannot but laugh. We have been told that our struggle has loosened the bonds of government everywhere, that children and apprentices were disobedient, that schools and colleges were grown turbulent, that Indians slighted their guardians and Negroes grew insolent to their masters. But your letter was the first intimation that another tribe, more numerous and powerful than all the rest, were grown discontented. This is rather too coarse a compliment, but you are so saucy I won't blot it out. Depend upon it, we know better than to repeal our masculine systems. Although they are in full force, you know they are little more than theory. We dare not exert our power in its full latitude. We are obliged to go fair and softly, and in practice you know we are the subjects. We have only the name of masters, and rather than give up this, which would completely subject us to the despotism of the petticoat, I hope General Washington and all our brave heroes would fight; I am sure every good politician would plot, as long as he would, against despotism, empire, monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, or ochlocracy. A fine story, indeed! I begin to think the ministry as deep as they are wicked. After stirring up Tories, land jobbers, trimmers, bigots, Canadians, Indians, Negroes, Hanoverians, Hessians, Russians, Irish Roman Catholics, Scottish renegades, at last they have stimulated the ladies to demand new privileges and threaten to rebel.

Abigail Adams *and* **John Adams**, *from their letters. Abigail posted her letter only two weeks after the British evacuated their troops from Boston and almost one year after the Battles of Lexington and Concord signaled the beginning of the American Revolution. It had been this event that prompted John once again to leave his family for Philadelphia, where he served in the Second Continental Congress, sitting on more than ninety committees and chairing twenty-five. Benjamin Rush wrote of Adams, "Every member of Congress in 1776 acknowledged him to be the first man in the House."*

1919: Petrograd

VICTOR SERGE ANSWERS THE PHONES

Maxim Gorky offered me employment with him in the Petrograd publishing house Universal Literature, but the only people I met there were aging or embittered intellectuals trying to escape from the present by retranslating Giovanni Boccaccio, Knut Hamsun, or Honoré de Balzac. My mind was made up: I was neither against the Bolsheviks nor neutral; I was with them, albeit independently, without renouncing thought or critical sense. It would have been easy for me to pursue careers in government, but I decided to avoid them and also, as far as possible, jobs that required the exercise of authority. Others seemed to so enjoy them that I thought I could legitimately afford this obviously wrongheaded attitude. I would support the Bolsheviks because they were doing what was necessary tenaciously, doggedly, with magnificent ardor and a calculated passion; I would be with them because they alone were carrying this out, taking all responsibilities on themselves, all the initiatives, and were demonstrating an astonishing strength of spirit. Certainly on several essential points they were mistaken: in their intolerance, in their faith in stratification, in their leaning toward centralism and administrative techniques. But, given that one had to counter them with freedom of the spirit and the spirit of freedom, it must be with them and among them. Possibly, after all, these evils had been impelled by civil war, blockade, and famine, and if we managed to survive, the remedy would come of itself. I remember having written in one of my first letters from Russia that I was "resolved to make no career out of the Revolution, and, once the mortal danger has passed, to join again with those who will fight the evils of the new regime."

I was on the staff of the *Northern Commune*, the organ of the Petrograd Soviet, an instructor in the public education clubs, organizing inspector for schools in the second district, lecturing assistant to the Petrograd militia, etc. People were in short supply, and I was overwhelmed with work. All this activity brought me the means of bare existence from one day to the next, in a chaos that was oddly organized. The militiamen to whom I gave evening classes in history and the first elements of "political science" (or "political grammar," as it was called) would offer me a cob of black bread and a herring if the lesson had been interesting. Happy to ask me endless questions, they would escort me after the lesson through the shadows of the city, right up to my lodgings, in case anyone should steal my precious little parcel, and we would all trip over the carcass of a horse, dead in the snow in front of the Opera House.

All civilization has from time to time become a thin crust over a volcano of revolution.
—Havelock Ellis, 1921

The Third International had just been founded in Moscow (it was now March) and had appointed Grigory Zinoviev as president of its executive (the proposal was actually Lenin's). The new executive still possessed neither personnel nor offices. Although I was not a member of the Party, Zinoviev asked me to organize his administration. As my knowledge of Russian life was too limited, I was unwilling to assume such a responsibility by myself. After some days Zinoviev told me, "I've found an excellent man, you'll get along with him really well..."—and so it turned out. It was thus that I came to know Vladimir Ossipovich Mazin who, prompted by the same motives as myself, had just joined the Party.

Through its severely practical centralization of power and its repugnance toward individualism and celebrity, the Russian Revolution has left in obscurity at least as many first-rate men as it has made famous. Of all these great but still practically unknown figures, Mazin seems to me to be one of the most remarkable. One day, in an enormous room in the Smolny Institute, furnished solely with a table and two chairs, we met face to face, both of us rigged

1920: Vienna

UNHOLY TRINITY

By bringing into prominence the unconscious in psychic life, we have raised the most evil spirits of criticism against psychoanalysis. Do not be surprised at this, and do not believe that the opposition is directed only against the difficulties offered by the conception of the unconscious or against the relative inaccessibility of the experiences which represent it. I believe it comes from another source. Humanity, in the course of time, has had to endure from the hands of science two great outrages against its naive self-love. The first was when humanity discovered that our earth was not the center of the universe but only a tiny speck in a world system hardly conceivable in its magnitude. This is associated in our minds with the name Nicolaus Copernicus [*Nuremberg*, page 130], although Alexandrian science had taught much the same thing. The second occurred when biological research robbed man of his apparent superiority under special creation, and rebuked him with his descent from the animal kingdom and his ineradicable animal nature. This reevaluation, under the influence of Darwin, Wallace, and their predecessors, was not accomplished without the most violent opposition of their contemporaries. But the third and most irritating insult is flung at the human mania of greatness by present-day psychological research, which wants to prove to the "I" that it is not even master in its own home, but is dependent upon the most scanty information concerning all that goes on unconsciously in its psychic life. We psychoanalysts were neither the first nor the only ones to announce this admonition to look within ourselves. It appears that we are fated to represent it most insistently and to confirm it by means of empirical data which are of importance to every single person. This is the reason for the widespread revolt against our science, the omission of all considerations of academic urbanity, and emancipation of the opposition from all restraints of impartial logic. We were compelled to disturb the peace of the world.

Sigmund Freud, *from* Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis. *During World War I, while his three sons were serving in the Austrian army, Freud delivered this series of lectures at the University of Vienna. The founder of psychoanalysis published his first major work,* The Interpretation of Dreams, *in 1899 and his last,* Moses and Monotheism, *in 1938—the same year Adolf Hitler invaded Austria. The following year, Freud died at the age of eighty-three in London.*

out rather absurdly. I still wore a large sheepskin hat that had been a present from a Cossack and a short, shabby overcoat, the garb of the Western unemployed. Mazin wore an old blue uniform with worn-out elbows. He had three-days' growth of beard, his eyes were encircled by old-fashioned spectacles of white metal, his face was elongated, his brow lofty, and his complexion pasty from starvation.

"Well," he said to me, "so we're the executive of the new International. It's really ridiculous!" And upon that bare table we set about drawing rough sketches of seals, for a seal was required immediately for the president: the great seal of the World Revolution, no more, no less! We decided that the globe would be the emblem on it.

We were friends with the same points of concern, doubt, and confidence, spending any moments spared us from our grinding work in examining together the problems of authority, terror, centralization, Marxism, and heresy. We both had strong leanings toward heresy. I was beginning my initiation into Marxism. Mazin had arrived there through the path of personal experience in jail. With those convictions he combined an old-fashioned libertarian heart and an ascetic temperament.

As a Marxist he was at first a Menshevik, because of his zeal for democracy, and then entered the Bolshevik Party to be on the side of those who were the most active, the most creative, and the most imperiled. He had a consuming interest in great books, a scholar's soul, a childlike frankness in the face of evil, and few basic wants. For eleven years he had been waiting to see his wife again; she was at present separated from him by the southern front. "The faults in the Revolution," he would say to me over and over again, "must be fought in the realm of action."

We spent our lives among telephones, trailing around the huge, dead city in wheezy motorcars, commandeering print shops, selecting staff, correcting proofs even in the trams, bargaining with the board of trade for string and with the state bank's printers for paper, running to the

The Defenestration, 1618, by Václav Brožík, c. 1890.

Cheka or to distant suburban prisons whenever (which was every day) we were notified of some abomination, fatal mistake, or piece of cruelty, and conferring with Zinoviev in the evening. Since we were senior officials, we lived in the Hotel Astoria, the foremost "House of the Soviets," where the most responsible of the Party's militants resided under the protection of machine guns posted on the ground floor. Through the black market I came into possession of a fur-lined riding jacket which, cleared of its fleas, made me look wonderful. In the former Austro-Hungarian Embassy we found some Habsburg officers' clothes in excellent condition for some of the comrades on our new staff. We were enormously privileged, although the bourgeoisie, dispossessed and now addicted to every imaginable form of speculation, lived much better than we did. Every day, at the table reserved for the Northern Commune Executive, we found greasy soup and often a ration of slightly high but still delicious horsemeat. The customary diners there were Zinoviev, Yevdokimov from the Central Committee, Zorin from the Petrograd Committee, Bakayev, president of the Cheka, sometimes Helena Stassova, secretary of the Central Committee, and sometimes Stalin, who was practically unknown. Zinoviev occupied an apartment on the first floor of the Astoria. As an extraordinary privilege, this hotel of dictators was kept almost warm and was lit brightly at nightfall since work there never stopped, and thus it formed an enormous vessel of light above the dark public squares. Rumor endowed us with incredible comfort and even detailed our alleged orgies, with actresses from the corps de ballet, naturally. All this time, Bakayev of the Cheka was going around with holes in his boots. In spite of my special rations as a government official, I would have died of hunger without the sordid manipulations of the black market, where we traded the petty possessions we had brought in from France. The eldest son of my friend Ionov, Zinoviev's brother-in-law, an executive member of the Soviet and founder and director of the state library, died of hunger before our very eyes. All this while we were looking after considerable stocks, and even riches, but on the state's behalf and under rigorous control, something that our subordinates never ceased to mock us over. Our salaries were limited to the "Communist maximum," equal to the average wage of a skilled worker. During this period the old Lettish Bolshevik and Soviet delegate Peter Stuchka, a great figure now forgotten,

instituted a strictly egalitarian regime, in which the Party Committee was also the government: its members were forbidden to enjoy any material privileges at all. Vodka was banned, though the comrades obtained it clandestinely from peasants, who through home distilling extracted a terrifying alcohol from corn, eighty proof. I remember only one orgy, which I happened upon in a room in the Astoria, during a night of danger, where my friends, all heads of sections, were drinking this fiery liquid in silence. On the table was a huge tin of tuna, captured from the English somewhere in the forests of Shenkursk and brought back by a fighter. Sweet and oily, this fish seemed to us a heavenly food. All that blood made us depressed.

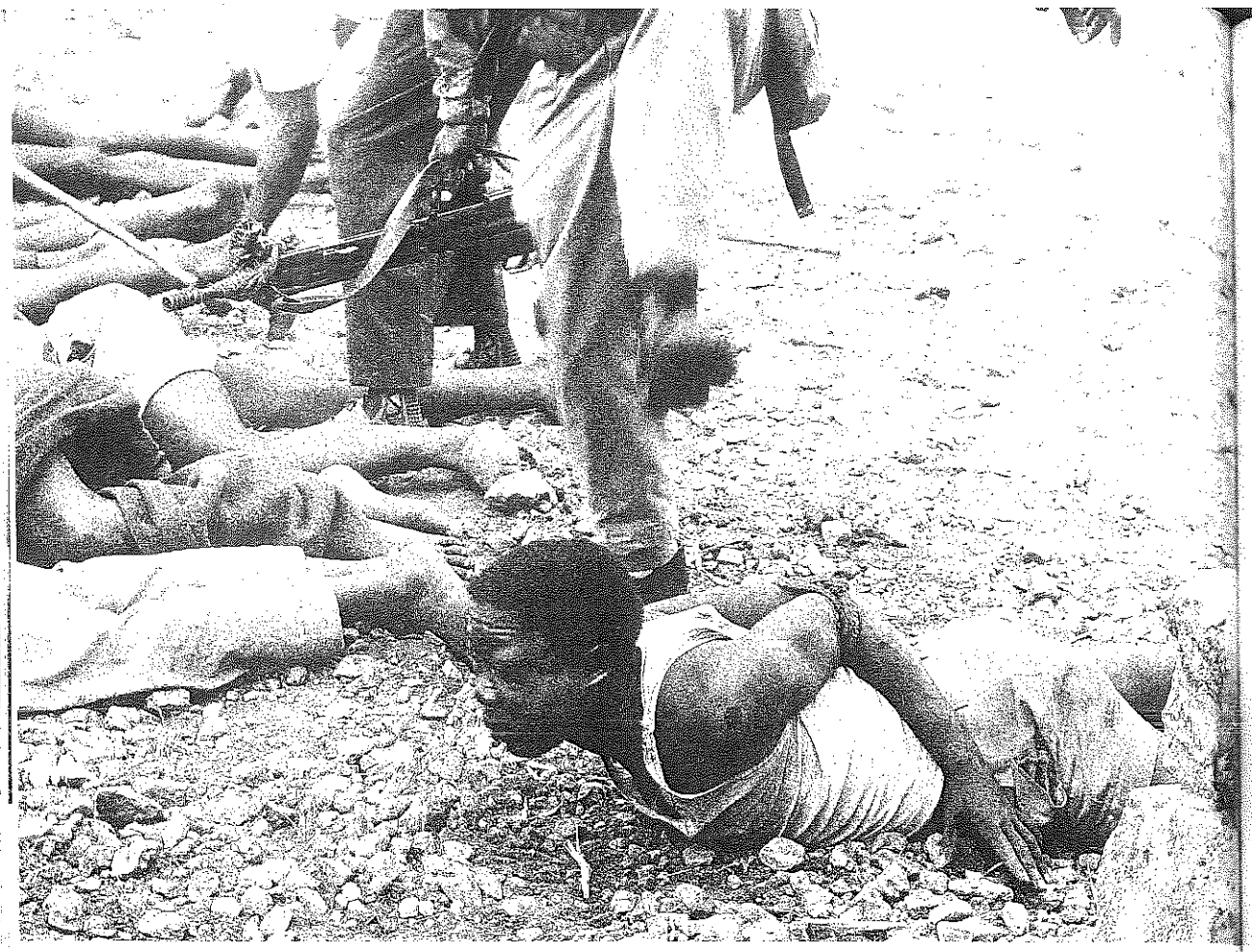
Make the revolution a parent of settlement and not a nursery of future revolutions.

—Edmund Burke, 1790

The telephone became my personal enemy; perhaps it is for that reason that I still feel a stubborn aversion to it. At every hour it brought me voices of panic-stricken women who spoke of arrests, imminent executions, and injustice, and begged me to intervene at once, for the love of God! Since the first massacres of Red prisoners by the Whites, the murders of Volodarsky and Uritsky, and the attempt against Lenin (in the summer of 1918), the custom of arresting and, often, executing hostages had become generalized and legal. Already the Cheka (the Extraordinary Commission for Repression against counterrevolution, speculation, and desertion), which made mass arrests of suspects, was tending to settle their fate independently, under formal control by the Party, but in reality without anybody's knowledge. It was becoming a state within the state, protected by military secrecy and proceedings in camera. The Party endeavored to head it with incorruptible men like the former convict Dzerzhinsky, a sincere idealist, ruthless but chivalrous, with the emaciated profile of an inquisitor: tall forehead, bony nose, untidy goatee, and an expression of weariness and austerity. But the Party had few men of this stamp and many Chekas: these gradually came to select their personnel by virtue of their psychological inclinations. The only temperaments that devoted themselves willingly and tenaciously to this task of "internal defense" were those characterized by suspicion, embitterment, harshness, and sadism. Longstanding social-inferiority complexes and memories of humiliations and suffering in the tsar's jails rendered them intractable, and since professional degeneration has rapid effects, the Chekas inevitably consisted of perverted men tending to see conspiracy everywhere and to live in the midst of perpetual conspiracy themselves.

I believe that the formation of the Chekas was one of the gravest and most impermissible errors that the Bolshevik leaders committed in 1918, when plots, blockades, and interventions made them lose their heads. All evidence indicates that revolutionary tribunals, functioning in the light of day (without excluding secret sessions in particular cases) and admitting the right of defense, would have attained the same efficiency with far less abuse and depravity. Was it so necessary to revert to the procedures of the Inquisition? By the beginning of 1919, the Chekas had little or no resistance against this psychological perversion and corruption. I know for a fact that Dzerzhinsky judged them to be "half-rotten," and saw no solution to the evil except in shooting the worst Chekists and abolishing the death penalty as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, the Terror went on, since the whole Party was living in the sure inner knowledge that they would be massacred in the event of defeat, and defeat remained possible from one week to the next.

From Memoirs of a Revolutionary. *Born to Russian parents in Belgium in 1890, Serge was imprisoned for anarchist sympathies in France in 1912, took part in an uprising in Barcelona in 1917, and joined the Bolsheviks in 1919. He and his fellow revolutionaries, he later wrote, "unwittingly, with our own hands, constructed the most terrifying state machine conceivable, and when, with revulsion, we realized the truth, this machine, driven by our friends and comrades, turned on us and crushed us." He died in Mexico City in 1947.*



Simba Maoist rebels captured by police being beaten to death for having dismembered two women in front of their neighbors, northeast Congo, 1964.

1914: Milan

THE ABOLITION OF DIPLOMATIC LITTLE DOTS

Humanity always dressed itself with modesty, fear, caution, and indecision, forever wearing the mourning suit, the cape, or the cloak. The male body was habitually diminished by neutral shades and colors, degraded by black, stifled by belts, and imprisoned by folds of fabric.

Until now, men wore suits of static colors and forms, rather solemn, heavy, uncomfortable, draped, and priestly. They wore expressions of timidness, melancholia, and slavery, a negation of the muscular life that was repressed by the unhealthy traditionalism of weighty materials and boring, effeminate, or decadent halftones. The mood and rhythms resembled a funereal, depressing, and desolate peace.

Today we want to abolish:

1. All of the neutral "nice," faded, "fanciful," murky, and humble colors.

2. All pedantic, professorial, and Teutonic shapes and hues. Designs with stripes, checks, and *diplomatic little dots*.

3. Mourning suits, which are not even fitting for gravediggers. The heroic dead should not be lamented but rather commemorated by us in red dress.

4. The mediocrity of moderation, so-called good taste and so-called harmony of colors and forms that curb our excitement and slow us down.

5. The symmetrical cut and static lines that tire, depress, sadden, and bind the muscles; the uniformity of ill-fitting lapels and all wrinkles; useless buttons and starched collars and cuffs.

We Futurists want to liberate our race from every neutrality, from fearful and ener-

vating indecision, from negating pessimism and nostalgic, romantic, and flaccid inertia. We want to color Italy with Futurist audacity and risk—and finally give Italians joyful and bellicose clothing.

Futurist attire will therefore be:

1. Aggressive, in order to intensify the courage of the strong and overcome the sensitivity of the cowardly.

2. Agile, such that it will augment litheness of body and encourage momentum in struggle, stride, and the charge of battle.

3. Dynamic, with textiles of dynamic patterns and colors (triangles, cones, spirals, ellipses, circles) that inspire the love of danger, speed, and assault, and loathing of peace and immobility.

4. Simplicity and comfort, that is, easy to put on and take off, so that one is well prepared to aim the gun, ford the streams, and hurl oneself into the water.

5. Hygienic, or cut in such a way that every pore of the skin can breathe during long marches and steep climbs.

6. Joyful. Colored materials of thrilling iridescence. The use of muscular colors: the most violet violet, the reddest red, the deepest of deep blues, the greenest of greens, brilliant yellows, vermilions, and oranges.

7. Illuminating. Phosphorescent textiles that can ignite temerity in a fearful crowd, spread light around when it rains, and ameliorate the dimness of twilight in the streets and in the nerves.

8. Strong-willed. Violent colors and designs that are imperious and impetuous like the commands on the field of battle.

9. Asymmetrical. For example, the tips of sleeves and fronts of jackets will be rounded on the left side, squared off on the right. There will be ingenious counterdispositions of lines.

10. Short-lived, so that we may incessantly renew the wanton pleasure and liveliness of the body.

11. Changeable, by means of alterations (the incorporation of materials, of enlargements and layers, varying colors and designs) to dispose of when and where you want, from whatever part of the suit, by pneumatic buttons. In this way anyone can invent a new suit, at any moment. The changes will be arrogant, annoying, unsettling, decisive, warlike, etc.

The Futurist hat will be asymmetrical and of exuberant, aggressive colors. Futurist shoes will be dynamic, different from one another in form and color, and happily able to kick all the neutralists.

The pairing of yellow and black will be vehemently prohibited.

No one makes a revolution by himself, and there are some revolutions which humanity accomplishes without quite knowing how, because it is everybody who takes them in hand.
—George Sand, 1851

One thinks and acts as one dresses. Since neutrality is the synthesis of all tradition, today we Futurists display these antineutral, that is, cheerfully bellicose, clothes.

Only the gouty ones disapprove of us.

All of Italy's youth will recognize that we don our feisty Futurist banners for our urgent and imperative great war.

If the government does not take off its *passéiste* attire of fear and indecision, then we will double, *centuple the red* of the tricolor flag, in which we dress.

Approved enthusiastically by the Direction of the Futurist Movement and by all of the Italian Futurist groups.

Giacomo Balla, *from "The Antineutral Suit: Futurist Manifesto." The painter published this declaration on September 11, nine days before biologist and philosopher Ernst Haekel declared, "There is no doubt that the course and character of the feared 'European War'... will become the first world war in the full sense of the word." It is the earliest known use of the term to describe the war. Balla joined the Futurists in 1910 and two years later painted his best-known Futurist work,* Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash. *He died at the age of eighty-six in 1958.*

1792: Paris

MAXIMILIEN DE ROBESPIERRE FORCES AN ISSUE

Citizens,

The Assembly has been led, without realizing it, far from the real question. There is no trial to be held here. Louis XVI is not a defendant. You are not judges. You are not, you cannot be, anything but statesmen and representatives of the nation. You have no sentence to pronounce for or against a man, but a measure of public salvation to implement, an act of national providence to perform. A dethroned king in the republic is good for only two uses: either to trouble the peace of the state and threaten liberty, or to affirm both of these at the same time. Now I maintain that the character of your deliberation so far runs directly counter to that goal. In fact, what is the decision that sound policy prescribes to consolidate the nascent republic? It is to engrave contempt for royalty deeply on people's hearts and dumbfound all the king's supporters. Thus, to present his crime to the universe as a problem, to treat his cause as an object of the most imposing, the most

Burning Car, I-40, Needles, California, by Jeff Brouws, 2005.

religious, the most difficult discussion that could occupy the representatives of the French people; to establish an immeasurable distance between the mere memory of what he was and the dignity of a citizen, amounts precisely to having found the secret of keeping him dangerous to liberty.

Louis was king, and the republic is founded; the famous question you are considering is settled by those words alone. Louis was dethroned by his crimes; Louis denounced the French people as rebellious; to chastise them he called on the arms of his fellow tyrants; victory and the people decided that he was the rebellious one—therefore Louis cannot be judged. Either he is already condemned or the republic is not acquitted. Proposing to put Louis on trial, in whatever way that could be done, would be to regress toward royal and constitutional despotism; it is a counterrevolutionary idea, for it means putting the revolution itself in contention. In fact, if Louis can still be put on trial, then he can be acquitted—he may be innocent; what am I saying! He is presumed to be so until he has been tried. But if Louis is acquitted, if Louis can be presumed innocent, what becomes of the revolution? If Louis is innocent, then all defenders of liberty become slanderers; the rebels were the friends of truth and defenders of oppressed innocence; all the manifestos from foreign courts are just legitimate complaints against a dominant faction. Even the detention Louis has suffered so far is an unjust vexation; the *fédérés*, the people of Paris, all the patriots of the French empire are guilty; and pending nature's tribunal, this great trial between crime and virtue, between liberty and tyranny, is decided in favor of crime and tyranny.

When a nation has been forced to resort to the right of insurrection, it returns to the state of nature in relation to the tyrant. How can the tyrant invoke the social pact? He has annihilated it. The nation can still keep it, if it thinks fit, for everything concerning relations between citizens, but the effect of tyranny and insurrection is to break it entirely where the tyrant is concerned; it places them reciprocally in a state of war. Courts and legal proceedings are only for members of the same side.

It is a gross contradiction to suppose that the constitution might preside over this new order of things; that would be to assume it had itself survived. What are the laws that replace it? Those of nature, the one which is the foundation of society itself: the salvation of the people. The right to punish the tyrant and the right to dethrone him are the same thing; both include the same forms. The tyrant's trial is the insurrection; the verdict, the collapse of his power; the sentence, whatever the liberty of the people requires.

> *The main effect of a real revolution is perhaps that it sweeps away those who do not know how to wish, and brings to the front men with insatiable appetites for action, power, and all that the world has to offer.*
>
> —*Eric Hoffer, 1955*

Peoples do not judge in the same way as courts of law; they do not hand down sentences, they throw thunderbolts; they do not condemn kings, they drop them back into the void; and this justice is worth just as much as that of the courts. If it is for their salvation that they take arms against their oppressors, how can they be made to adopt a way of punishing them that would pose a new danger to themselves?

We have allowed ourselves to be led into error by foreign examples that have nothing in common with us. Oliver Cromwell had Charles I tried by a judicial commission he controlled; Queen Elizabeth had Mary Queen of Scots condemned in the same way; it is natural that tyrants who sacrifice their fellows not to the people but to their own ambition should seek to mislead vulgar opinion with illusory forms. There is no question there of principle or liberty, but of deceit and intrigue. But the people! What other law can it follow, than justice and reason supported by its own absolute power?

We are establishing as legitimate acts what any free people would have regarded as the greatest of crimes. We are ourselves inviting the citizens to baseness and corruption. We could

Working Revolutions

When: Where	Invention	Effects
1794: United States	Cotton Gin: Quickly separated cotton from its seed	Increased production rate and labor demand: cotton production grew from 731,000 bales in 1830 to 2.13 million by 1850; exports were ⅔ of global total by 1860; 375% rise in number of slaves between 1800 and 1850
c. 1800: England	Gas Lamp: Provided relatively bright, cheap, and long-lasting artificial lighting	Increased workspace luminosity by a factor of approximately 2.5 for one quarter of the cost of tallow candles; round-the-clock factory production; extended working hours
1828: Scotland	Hot-Blast Stove: Preheated air blown into the blast furnace for smelting iron	Lowered production costs; increased number of foundries to 125 across the country by 1863; increased employment to over 50,000 foundry workers by 1863; production grew from 29,000 tons in 1829 to 475,000 tons by 1845
1914: United States	Car Assembly Line: Divided car production into a greater number of simple steps	Increased employment to 450,000 workers in the automobile industry by 1929; reduced production time for a Ford Model T from 12.5 hours in 1913 to 1.5 hours in 1914; reduced price from $950 in 1908 to under $300 in 1927
c. 1977: United States	Personal Computer: Stored, retrieved, and processed data	Replaced many jobs involving limited, routine tasks; increased wages in "nonroutine" jobs at the high- and low-skill levels; reduced wages in "routine" jobs at the mid-skill level; between 1980 and 2005, wages rose by roughly 15% in lowest-skill jobs and 25% in highest-skill jobs

well find ourselves one day awarding Louis' defenders civic crowns, for if they defend his cause, they may hope to make it triumph; otherwise you would be showing the universe nothing but a ridiculous charade. And we dare to use the word *republic*! We invoke forms because we have no principles; we pride ourselves on our delicacy because we lack energy; we flaunt a false humanity because the feeling of true humanity is foreign to us; we revere the shadow of a king because we do not know how to respect the people; we are tender toward oppressors because we are heartless toward the oppressed.

The trial of Louis XVI! But what is that trial if not a call for insurrection in some tribunal or assembly? When a king has been annihilated by the people, who has the right to resuscitate him and make him a new pretext for trouble and rebellion, and whatever other effects this scheme might produce? By opening an arena for the champions of Louis XVI, you are renewing the quarrels of despotism against liberty, you are establishing the right to blaspheme against the republic and against the people; for the right to defend the former despot carries with it the right to say anything appropriate to his cause. You awaken all the factions; you revive and encourage dormant royalism: people can take sides freely for or against. What could be more legitimate, what more natural than to repeat everywhere the maxims that his defenders will be able to profess openly at your bar and in your parliament itself! What sort of republic is it whose founders seek out adversaries for it on all sides to attack it in its cradle!

From "On the Trial of the King." While the storming of the Bastille and the formation of the National Constituent Assembly had occurred in July 1789, the monarchy was not overthrown until August 1792. A lawyer by training, Robespierre delivered this speech in December, and two months later Louis XVI was guillotined. By 1794 Robespierre was a leading advocate for the principle of terror—"nothing but prompt, severe, inflexible justice." Later in that year he too was guillotined.

1916: Wronke

TO MARCH OR TO CREEP

Dearest Tilde,

I want to answer your Christmas letter immediately, as long as I am in the state of rage which it has evoked in me. Yes, your letter made me seethe with rage because, despite its brevity, it shows me in every line how very much you are again under the influence of your milieu. This whining tone, this "alas" and "alack" about the "disappointments" that you have experienced—disappointments that you blame on others, instead of just looking into the mirror to see the whole of humanity's wretchedness in its most striking likeness! And when you say "we," that now means your boggy, froggish friends, whereas earlier, when you and I were together, it meant *my* company. Just you wait, I will treat "you" in the plural.

In your melancholy view, I have been complaining that you people are not marching up to the cannon's mouth. "Not marching" is a good one! You people do not march; you do not even walk—you creep. It is not simply a difference of degree, but rather of kind. On the whole, *you* people are a different zoological species than I, and your grousing, peevish, cowardly, and half-hearted nature has never been as alien, as hateful to me, as it is now. You think that audacity would surely please you, but because of it one can be thrown into the cooler and one is then "of little use!" Ach!—you miserable little mercenaries. *You* would be ready enough to put a little bit of "heroism" up for sale—but only "for cash," even if only for three moldy copper pennies. After all, one must immediately see its "use" on the sales counter.

For you people, the simple words of honest and upright men have not been spoken: "Here I stand, I can't do otherwise; God help me!" Luckily, world history, up until this point, has not been made by people like yourselves. Otherwise, we wouldn't have had a Reformation, and we probably would still be living in the ancien régime.

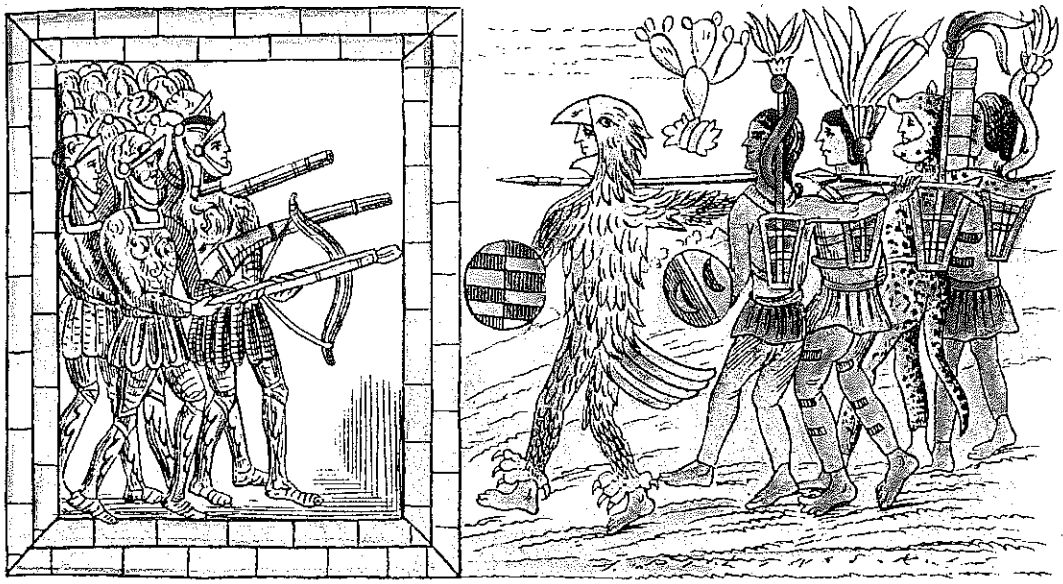
As for me, although I have never been soft, lately I have grown hard as polished steel, and I will no longer make the smallest concession either in political or personal intercourse. When I think of your heroes, a creepy feeling comes over me—ah, there's no end to it!

I swear to you: I would rather do time for years on end—and I do not mean to say here, where after all, compared to those previous places, I am in heaven, but rather in the joint on Alexanderplatz where, morning and night without light, I was squeezed between the C (but without the W) and the iron cot in an eleven-cubic-meter cell and where I recited the poetry of Eduard Mörike—than (excuse the expression) "struggle" along with your heroes, or, generally speaking, have anything to do with them!

Do you have enough now for a New Year's greeting? Then see that you remain a mensch! Being a mensch is the main thing! And that means to be firm, lucid, and cheerful. Yes, cheerful despite everything and anything—since whining is the business of the weak. Being a mensch means happily throwing one's life "on fate's great scale" if necessary, but at the same time, enjoying every bright day and every beautiful cloud. Oh, I can't write you a prescription for being a mensch. I only know how one is a mensch, and you used to know it too when we went walking for a few hours in the Südende fields with the sunset's red light falling on the wheat.

The world is so beautiful even with all its horrors, and it would be even more beautiful if there were no weaklings or cowards. Come, you still get a kiss, because you are a sincere little dear. Happy New Year!

Rosa Luxemburg, *from a letter to Emanuel and Mathilde Wurm. Having illegally spoken against German involvement in World War I, "Bloody Rosa" wrote this letter to her friends from prison, around the same time that she cofounded the Spartacus League. Not long before her release in 1918, she wrote an appraisal of the revolution in Russia: "[Lenin] is completely mistaken in the means he employs. Decree, dictatorial force of the factory overseer, draconian penalties, rule by terror—all these things are but palliatives." Luxemburg was killed by German soldiers in the Spartacist Revolt in early 1919.*



Conquistadors defending the occupied palace of Tenochtitlán from an Aztec siege in 1520, by Fray Diego Durán, 1585. The uprising began after a Spanish leader ordered an attack on an Aztec festival, resulting in about two hundred deaths.

1381: England

WHEN THE PEASANTS REVOLT

It is the custom in England, as in several other countries, for the nobles to have strong powers over their men and to hold them in serfdom: that is, that by right and custom they have to till the lands of the gentry, reap the corn and bring it to the big house, put it in the barn, thresh and winnow it, mow the hay and carry it to the house, cut logs and bring them up, and all such forced tasks. All this the men must do by way of serfage to the masters. In England there is a much greater number than elsewhere of such men who are obliged to serve the prelates and the nobles. And in the counties of Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Bedford in particular, there are more than in the whole of the rest of England.

These bad people in the counties just mentioned began to rebel, because, they said, they were held too much in subjection, and when the world began there had been no serfs and could not be, unless they had rebelled against their lord, as Lucifer did against God; but they were not of that stature, being neither angels nor spirits, but men formed in the image of their masters, and they were treated as animals. This was a thing they could no longer endure, wishing rather to be all one and the same, and if they worked for their masters, they wanted to have wages for it. In these machinations they had been greatly encouraged originally by a crackbrained priest of Kent called John Ball, who had been imprisoned several times for his reckless words by the archbishop of Canterbury. This John Ball had the habit on Sundays after Mass, when everyone was coming out of church, of going to the cloisters or the graveyard, assembling the people around him and preaching thus:

"Good people, things cannot go right in England, and never will until goods are held in common and there are no more villeins and gentlefolk, and we are all one and the same. In what way are those whom we call *lords* greater masters than ourselves? How have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in bondage? If we all spring from a single father and mother, Adam and Eve, how can they claim or prove that they are lords more than us, except by making us produce and grow the wealth that they spend? They are clad in velvet and camlet lined with squirrel and ermine, while we go dressed in coarse cloth. They have the wines, the spices, and the good bread; we have the rye, the husks, and the straw, and we drink water. They have shelter and ease in their fine manors, and we

have hardship and toil, the wind and the rain in the fields. And from us must come, from our labor, the things that keep them in luxury. We are called serfs and beaten if we are slow in our service to them, yet we have no sovereign lord we can complain to, none to hear us and do us justice. Let us go to King Richard—he is young—and show him how we are oppressed, and tell him that we want things to be changed, or else we will change them ourselves. If we go in good earnest and all together, very many people who are called serfs and are held in subjection will follow us to get their freedom. And when the king sees and hears us, he will remedy the evil, either willingly or otherwise."

The archbishop of Canterbury, being informed of all this, had John Ball arrested and put in prison, where he kept him for two or three months as a punishment. It would have been better if he had condemned him to life imprisonment on the first occasion, or had him put to death, than to do what he did. But he had great scruples about putting him to death and set him free, and when John Ball was out of prison, he went on with his intrigues as before. The things he was doing and saying came to the ears of the common people of London, who were envious of the nobles and the rich. These began saying that the country was badly governed and was being robbed of its wealth by those who called themselves noblemen. So these wicked men in London started to become disaffected and to rebel, and they sent word to the people in the counties mentioned to come boldly to London with all their followers, and they would find the city open and the common people on their side. They could then so work on the king that there would be no more serfs in England.

Three demonstrators at a Woolworth's lunch counter sit-in being smeared with ketchup, mustard, and sugar by segregationists, Jackson, Mississippi, 1963. Photograph by Fred Blackwell.

These promises incited the people of Kent, Essex, Sussex, Bedford, and the neighboring districts, and they set off toward London. They were a full sixty thousand, and their chief captain was one Wat Tyler. With him as his companions were Jack Straw and John Ball. These three were the leaders, and Wat Tyler was the greatest of them. He was a tiler of roofs, and a wicked and nasty fellow he was.

It was on the Monday before Corpus Christi day that those people left their homes to go to London to see the king and be freed from serfdom. They reached Canterbury, and with them was John Ball, who was expecting to find the archbishop, but he was in London with the king. When Wat Tyler and Jack Straw entered the place, they were cheered by everyone, for the whole town was on their side.

After sacking the abbeys of St. Thomas and St. Vincent on the Monday, they left the next morning for Rochester, with all the common people of Canterbury accompanying them. They drew in all the people from the villages they went by, and they passed by like a tornado, leveling and gutting the houses of lawyers and judges of the king's and archbishop's courts and showing them no mercy. When they reached Rochester, they were greeted with enthusiasm, for the people of that town were of their party.

When they had achieved their purpose in Rochester, they crossed the River Medway and came to Dartford, still relentlessly pursuing their course of destroying the houses of lawyers and judges whenever they passed near them. They cut off the heads of a number of men and went on to within about twelve miles of London, where they halted on a hill known as Blackheath. And as they went, they said they stood for the king and the noble commons of England.

When the inhabitants of London heard that they were quartered so near to them, they shut the gates of London Bridge and posted guards over it. This was done on the orders of the Lord Mayor, Sir William Walworth, and a number of wealthy citizens who were not of the rebel party. The men who were at Blackheath now decided to send for the king, who was hiding out in the Tower of London, to ask him to come and talk with them and to say that all they were doing was in his interest: since for many years past the realm of England had been misgoverned, both as regarding its prestige and the welfare of the common people, and all this thanks to his uncles and his clergy, and principally his chancellor, the archbishop of Canterbury, from whom they demanded an account.

On the morning of Corpus Christi day, King Richard heard Mass in the Tower of London with all his nobles and afterward entered his barge, accompanied by the earls of Salisbury, Warwick, Oxford, and others. They were rowed downstream in order to cross the Thames near one of the king's manors, where about ten thousand of the rebels, having come down from the hill, were waiting to see the king and talk to him. When they saw the royal barge coming, they all began to shout and raised such a din that it sounded as though all the devils in hell had been let loose. When the king and his nobles saw the frenzied crowds on the bank, the boldest of them were frightened and his barons advised the king not to land. They began to turn the barge away and upstream again. The king called, "Sirs, what have you to say to me? Tell me. I came here to talk to you." Those who could hear him shouted with one voice, "Come on land, you! It'll be easier that way to tell you what we want." The earl of Salisbury, speaking for the king, replied, "Sirs, you are not in a fit condition for the king to talk to you now." Nothing was added to this, and the king went back, as advised, to the Tower of London from where he had started.

When those people saw that they would obtain nothing more, they were aflame with fury. They went back to the hill where the main body was and reported what had been said to them and that the king had gone back to the Tower. The whole mass of them began

It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees.

—Dolores Ibárruri, 1936

1965: Léopoldville

PARTING WORDS

Dear Hildita, Aleidita, Camilo, Celia, and Ernesto,

If you ever have to read this letter, it will be because I am no longer with you. You practically will not remember me, and the smaller ones will not remember at all.

Your father has been a man who acted on his beliefs and has certainly been loyal to his convictions.

Grow up as good revolutionaries. Study hard so that you can master technology, which allows us to master nature. Remember that the revolution is what is important, and each one of us, alone, is worth nothing.

Above all, always be capable of feeling deeply any injustice committed against anyone, anywhere in the world. This is the most beautiful quality in a revolutionary.

Until forever, my children. I still hope to see you. A great big kiss and a big hug from

Papá

Che Guevara, *a letter. To overthrow Fulgencio Batista's dictatorship, Guevara landed with Fidel Castro and his rebel army on the shores of Cuba in December 1956; over the next two years the guerillas gained arms and manpower, seizing control of Havana and establishing a communist government in January 1959. After serving in various posts in the Cuban government, he went in 1965 to assist in the civil war in the Congo and in 1966 to help foment revolution in Bolivia, where he was later captured and executed.*

shouting together, "To London! Straight to London!" They started off and swept down toward the city, ransacking and destroying the houses of abbots, lawyers, and court officials, and came to the immediate outskirts. They leveled several fine buildings and, in particular, the king's prisons, setting free all the prisoners inside. They committed many outrages in the suburbs, and when they reached the bridge, they began to threaten the Londoners because they had closed its gates. They said they would set fire to all the suburbs and then take London by storm, burning and destroying it. The common people of London, many of whom were on their side, assembled together and said, "Why not let these good people come into the town? They are our own people and they are doing all this to help us." So the gates had to be opened, and all those famished men entered the town and rushed into the houses that had stocks of provisions. Nothing was refused them, and everyone made haste to welcome them in and set out food and drink to appease them. After that, their leaders, John Ball, Jack Straw, and Wat Tyler, with more than thirty thousand men, went straight through London to the Palace of the Savoy. They quickly got inside and killed the guards, and then sent it up in flames. In the town they killed a wealthy man called Richard Lyon, whose servant Wat Tyler had once been during the wars in France. On one occasion Richard Lyon had beaten his servant, and Wat Tyler remembered it. He led his men to him, had his head cut off in front of him, and then had it stuck on a lance and carried through the streets. So those wicked men went raging about in wild frenzy, committing many excesses on that Thursday throughout London.

Toward evening, they all collected together for the night in a square called St. Katherine's, just outside the Tower of London. They said they would not budge from there until they had the king in their power and had got him to grant all their demands. They also said that they wanted to have an account from the chancellor of all the sums of money that had been raised in the kingdom during the past five years, and that unless he could give a good and satisfactory account of them, it would be the worse for him. With those intentions, after a day spent in doing much harm to the foreigners in London, they settled for the night beneath the walls of the Tower.

On the Friday morning, the crowds in St. Katherine's Square beneath the Tower began to stir and raise a great outcry, saying that if the king would not come and speak to them they would take the Tower by force and kill everyone inside. For fear of these boasts and threats, the king decided to do as they asked and sent word that they were all to go out of London to a fine open space which is called Mile End, situated

in the middle of a pleasant meadow, where the people go for recreation in summer. There the king would grant them all they were demanding or might demand. The mayor of London announced this to them and he had it cried in the king's name that whoever wanted to talk to the king should go to the place just mentioned, in the certainty that the king would be there. Then those people, the commons of the villages, began to move off in that direction, but all did not leave, nor were they all of the same sort. There were many whose only object was to destroy the nobles and seize their wealth and to loot and ransack London. That was the main reason why they had begun all this. They quickly showed their hand, for no sooner had the gate of the Tower been opened and the king had come out with the earls of Salisbury, Warwick, and Oxford, Sir Robert of Namur, the lords of Vertaing and Gommegnies, and several others, than Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and John Ball entered the castle by force with some four hundred men and went from room to room until they found the archbishop Simon of Canterbury. That wise and worthy man, chancellor of England, who had just celebrated divine service and said Mass before the king, was seized by those scoundrels and instantly beheaded. So were the grand prior of the hospital of St. John, and a Franciscan friar who was a physician attached to the duke of Lancaster, which was the reason why he was killed to his master's subsequent anger, and a sergeant-at-arms of the king called John Legge. Their four heads were placed on long lances and carried before the crowd through the streets. When they had sported with them long enough, they set them up on London Bridge, as though they had been traitors to the king and the realm. Those scoundrels also entered the room of the princess of Wales and tore her bed to pieces, so terrifying her that she fainted. Her menservants and maids carried her down in their arms to the river gate and put her in a small boat which took her along the river to the Tower Royal, where she was placed in a house known as the Queen's Wardrobe. She remained there for a day and night, like a half-dead woman.

As the King was going toward Mile End outside London, his two brothers, the earl of Kent and Sir John Holland, left him for fear of death, and with them also went the lord of Gommegnies. They dared not show themselves to the populace at Mile End. When the king arrived there, accompanied by the other nobles named above, he saw over sixty thousand men from different districts and villages in the English counties. He rode right in among them and said very amiably, "Good people, I am your lord and king. What are you asking for? What do you want to say to me?" Those who were near enough to hear him replied, "We want you to make us free forever and ever, we and our heirs and our lands, so that we shall never again be called serfs or bondmen." The king answered, "That I grant you. Now go back home in your village companies as you came here, but leave two or three men behind to represent each village. I will have letters written at once and sealed with my great seal for them to take back with them, granting you all that you ask freely, faithfully, and absolutely. And in order to reassure you still more, I will order my banners to be sent to you in each bailiwick, castlewick, and borough. You will find no hitch in any of this, for I will never go back on my word."

All men recognize the right of revolution, that is, the right to refuse allegiance to, and to resist, the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable.

—Henry David Thoreau, 1849

Jean Froissart, *from* Chronicles. *The poll tax of 1381 was the most immediate cause for the Peasants' Revolt, or Wat Tyler's Rebellion—the first large-scale uprising in English history—but economic unrest due to wage caps and labor shortages had been growing throughout the Hundred Years' War. The day after King Richard II spoke to the crowd, negotiations took place at which Tyler was wounded and then executed by order of the mayor of London. The rebellion was soon quelled, and the king's promises forgotten, but the poll tax was not levied again.*

1775: London

NURSED WITH GREAT TENDERNESS

My lords and gentlemen:

The present situation of America and my constant desire to have your advice, concurrence, and assistance on every important occasion, have determined me to call you thus early together.

Those who have long too successfully labored to inflame my people in America, by gross misrepresentations, and to infuse into their minds a system of opinions repugnant to the true constitution of the colonies and to their subordinate relation to Great Britain now openly avow their revolt, hostility, and rebellion. They have raised troops and are collecting a naval force; they have seized the public revenue and assumed to themselves legislative, executive, and judicial powers, which they already exercise in the most arbitrary manner over the persons and property of their fellow subjects. And although many of these unhappy people may still retain their loyalty and may be too wise not to see the fatal consequence of this usurpation and wish to resist it, yet the torrent of violence has been strong enough to compel their acquiescence till a sufficient force shall appear to support them.

I desired as many as could to join together in fasting and prayer, that God would restore the spirit of love and of a sound mind to the poor deluded rebels in America.

—John Wesley, 1777

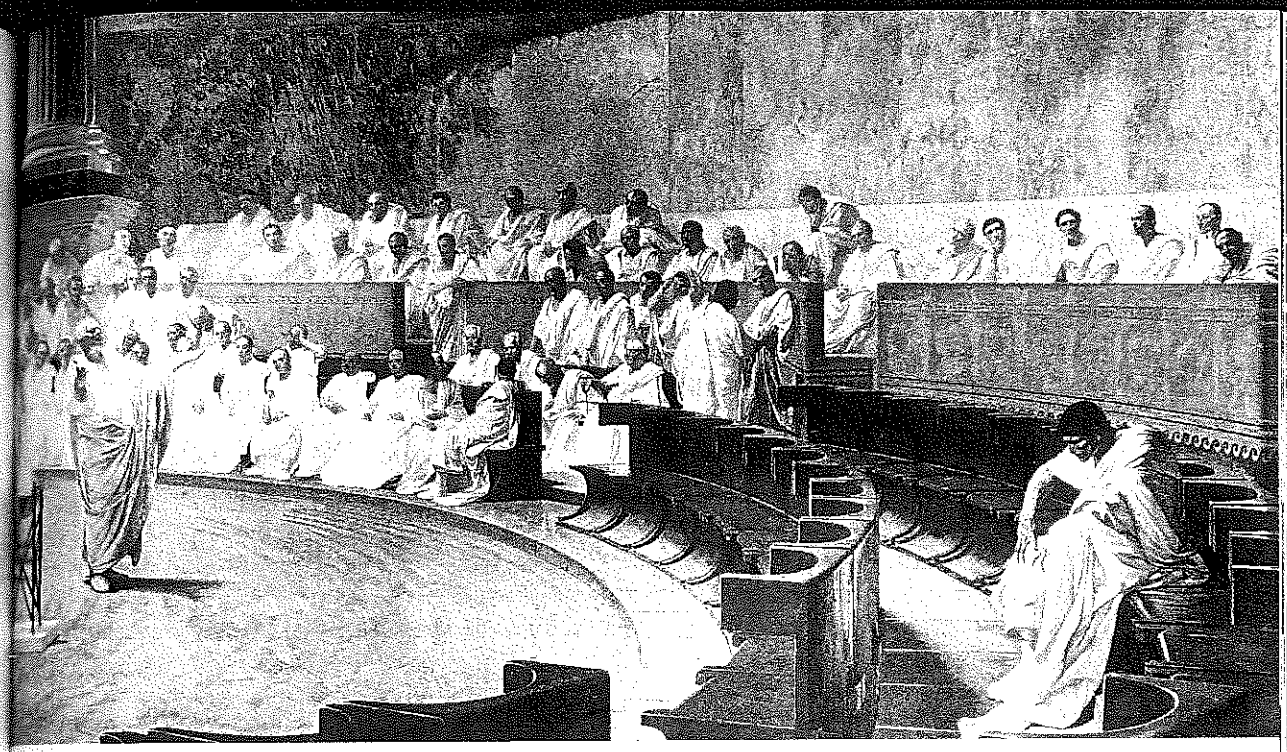
The authors and promoters of this desperate conspiracy have in the conduct of it derived great advantage from the difference of our intention and theirs. They meant only to amuse, by vague expressions of attachment to the parent state and the strongest protestations of loyalty to me, while they were preparing for a general revolt. On our part, though it was declared in your last session that a rebellion existed within the province of the Massachusetts Bay, yet even that province we wished rather to reclaim than to subdue. The resolutions of Parliament breathed a spirit of moderation and forbearance; conciliatory propositions accompanied the measures taken to enforce authority, and the coercive acts were adapted to cases of criminal combinations among subjects not then in arms. I have acted with the same temper, anxious to prevent, if it had been possible, the effusion of the blood of my subjects and the calamities which are inseparable from a state of war; still hoping that my people in America would have discerned the traitorous views of their leaders and have been convinced that to be a subject of Great Britain, with all its consequences, is to be the freest member of any civil society in the known world.

The rebellious war now levied is become more general and is manifestly carried on for the purpose of establishing an independent empire. I need not dwell upon the fatal effects of the success of such a plan. The object is too important, the spirit of the British nation too high, the resources with which God hath blessed her too numerous to give up so many colonies which she has planted with great industry, nursed with great tenderness, encouraged with many commercial advantages, and protected and defended at much expense of blood and treasure.

It is now become the part of wisdom and (in its effects) of clemency, to put a speedy end to these disorders by the most decisive exertions. For this purpose, I have increased my naval establishment and greatly augmented my land forces, but in such a manner as may be the least burdensome to my kingdoms.

When the unhappy and deluded multitude against whom this force will be directed shall become sensible of their error, I shall be ready to receive the misled with tenderness and mercy.

King George III, *from an address to Parliament. George delivered this speech on October 26; six months prior, American patriots and British soldiers had fought at the Battles of Lexington and Concord. The war lasted eight years, concluding with the Treaty of Paris, which stipulated, among other things, that Britain recognize America's independence as a nation stretching as far west as the Mississippi River, with the waterway open to use for both countries. George reigned until his death in 1820.*



Cicero Denounces Catiline, by Cesare Maccari, 1888.

c. 1945: China

OUT OF THE BARREL OF A GUN

The world is progressing, the future is bright, and no one can change this general trend of history. We should carry on constant propaganda among the people on the facts of world progress and the bright future ahead so that they will build their confidence in victory.

The socialist system will eventually replace the capitalist system; this is an objective law independent of man's will. However much the reactionaries try to hold back the wheel of history, sooner or later revolution will take place and will inevitably triumph.

We must not become complacent over any success. We should check our complacency and constantly criticize our shortcomings, just as we should wash our faces or sweep the floor every day to remove the dirt and keep them clean.

It is up to us to organize the people. As for the reactionaries in China, it is up to us to organize the people to overthrow them. Everything reactionary is the same; if you don't hit it, it won't fall. This is also like sweeping the floor; as a rule, where the broom does not reach, the dust will not vanish of itself.

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

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

In transforming a backward agricultural China into an advanced industrialized country, we are confronted with arduous tasks, and our experience is far from adequate. So we must be good at learning.

Apart from their other characteristics, the outstanding thing about China's 600 million people is that they are "poor and blank." This may seem a bad thing, but in reality it is a good thing. Poverty gives rise to the desire

for change, the desire for action, and the desire for revolution. On a blank sheet of paper free from any mark, the freshest and most beautiful characters can be written, the freshest and most beautiful pictures can be painted.

What is a true bastion of iron? It is the masses, the millions upon millions of people who genuinely and sincerely support the revolution. That is the real iron bastion that it is impossible, and absolutely impossible, for any force on earth to smash. The counterrevolution cannot smash us; on the contrary, we shall smash it. Rallying millions upon millions of people round the revolutionary government and expanding our revolutionary war, we shall wipe out all counterrevolution and take over the whole of China.

Class struggle, the struggle for production, and scientific experiments are the three great revolutionary movements for building a mighty socialist country. These movements are a sure guarantee that communists will be free from bureaucracy and immune against revisionism and dogmatism, and will forever remain invincible.

A communist must never be opinionated or domineering, thinking that he is good in everything while others are good in nothing; he must never shut himself up in his little room, or brag and boast and lord it over others.

"Fewer and better troops and simpler administration." Talks, speeches, articles, and resolutions should all be concise and to the point. Meetings also should not go on too long.

For a military school, the most important question is the selection of a director and instructors and the adoption of an educational policy.

The world is yours, as well as ours, but in the last analysis, it is yours. You young people, full of vigor and vitality, are in the bloom of life, like the sun at eight or nine in the morning. Our hope is placed on you.

The atom bomb is a paper tiger which the U.S. reactionaries use to scare people. It looks terrible, but in fact it isn't. Of course, the atom bomb is a weapon of mass slaughter, but the outcome of war is decided by the people, not by one or two new types of weapon.

Things develop ceaselessly. It is only forty-five years since the revolution of 1911, but the face of China has completely changed. In another forty-five years, that is, in the year 2001, or the beginning of the twenty-first century, China will have undergone an even greater change. She will have become a powerful socialist industrial country. And that is as it should be. China is a land with an area of 9.6 million square kilometers and a population of 600 million people, and she ought to have made a greater contribution to humanity. Her contribution over a long period has been far too small. For this we are regretful.

But we must be modest—not only now but forty-five years hence as well. We should always be modest. In our international relations, we Chinese people should get rid of great-power chauvinism resolutely, thoroughly, wholly, and completely.

Our purpose is to ensure that literature and art fit well into the whole revolutionary machine as a component part, that they operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and that they help the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind.

Every communist must grasp the truth, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

Mao Zedong, *from* Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong. *The first edition of "The Little Red Book," containing excerpts from Mao's collected writings and speeches, was published under the direction of Lin Baio in 1964, and within a few years it became almost required reading throughout China. It is now considered one of the most-printed works in history. Mao served as chairman of the People's Republic of China from 1949 to 1959 and remained head of the Communist Party until he died at the age of eighty-two in 1976.*

1976: Paris

CLASS NOTES

Many Marxist critics, who begin with the notion of the class struggle, tend to consider as revolutionary only those writers who belong to the dominated classes or who have broken off with the bourgeoisie in order to join the ranks of the oppressed. They would consider that a writer like me, who in birth and cultural formation belongs to the bourgeoisie, can only be a fellow traveler. And it is necessary to add at this point that the most widely read writers in Latin America are from the bourgeoisie.

Faced with this fact, from the beginning I chose to accept a situation which seems inevitable at this stage of our geopolitical evolution and to commit myself to the struggle for a socialist future for Latin America, without thereby giving up all that which is natural and familiar to me—a system of cultural values that has made me what I am as a writer, and above all an individualism perhaps suspect on the level of militancy but which on the level of literary creativity has not yet been replaced by any collective identification, by teamwork or submission to any line of orientation based on political crisis. In other words, I believe that whatever will be eliminated in the socialist future of Latin America, when a plenitude is reached in all areas of life which will permit the creation of new aesthetic and intellectual products, continues today to be one of the positive and fertile forces in the struggle to achieve this future change. Paradoxically, I affirm that an intellectual like me has the right and duty to keep on taking advantage of these forms of creation destined to disappear or to be radically modified in the future and that one should do so precisely in order to bring about that modification.

When I write a novel, many times I have the impression that I am creating a kind of anachronistic monster, a dinosaur in a world which is moving toward other species, and that the novel, like so many other aesthetic forms today, will be replaced by new vehicles for the transmission of ideas and emotions. None of this keeps me from writing novels, because I am well aware that fiction is the type of literature that interests me and the majority of readers (and writers) in Latin America. In writing our novels in the manner that we do, completely rupturing internal and external tradition, we facilitate future access to new aesthetic vehicles which today we can hardly imagine.

This attitude has been severely attacked by many critics, but from what I know of the artistic products of those who submit to this type of criticism and create "proletarian literature"

Revolutions are not about trifles, but they are produced by trifles. —*Aristotle, c. 350 BC*

and other varieties of dead socialist realism, they have not achieved anything that seems valuable for the present or for the transformation of the future. Some years ago I participated in a polemic whose focal point was the concept of reality and which revolved around how a revolutionary writer should confront and treat reality in his work. On that occasion I did everything possible to show that any impoverishment of the idea of reality in the name of a thematics limited to the immediate and concrete on a supposedly revolutionary plane, on behalf of the capacity of less sophisticated readers, is no less than a counterrevolutionary act, since any impoverishment of the present weighs on the future and makes it seem further away. On the contrary, nothing seems more revolutionary to me than enriching the notion of reality by all means possible for the reader of novels and short stories.

Julio Cortázar, *from "Politics and the Intellectual in Latin America." About his preference for "pure intuition" over "theory," Cortázar wrote elsewhere in this essay, "Using a scandalous comparison, if I had to choose between Machiavelli and Cesare Borgia, it would fall to me to be Borgia." Dissatisfied with the government of Juan Perón in his native Argentina, he moved to France in 1951, the same year he published his first short-story collection,* Bestiary. *Cortázar's story "The Devil's Drivel" was the inspiration for Michelangelo Antonioni's film* Blow-up.