

SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM SERIES

# LENIN

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## ON IMPERIALISM AND IMPERIALISTS



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*SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM SERIES*

**ON IMPERIALISM  
AND IMPERIALISTS**



V. I. Lenin

*WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!*

**V. I. Lenin**

**ON IMPERIALISM  
AND IMPERIALISTS**



Progress Publishers  
Moscow

В. И. ЛЕНИН

ОБ ИМПЕРИАЛИЗМЕ И ИМПЕРИАЛИСТАХ

*На английском языке*

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CONTENTS

Preface . . . . .	7
IMPOVERISHMENT IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY . . . . .	24
ARMAMENTS AND CAPITALISM . . . . .	26
THE GROWTH OF CAPITALIST WEALTH . . . . .	28
CIVILISED BARBARISM . . . . .	31
From THE WAR AND RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY . . . . .	33
From SOCIALISM AND WAR . . . . .	36
<i>Chapter I. The Principles of Socialism and the War of 1914-1915</i> . . . . .	36
The Attitude of Socialists Towards Wars . . . . .	36
The Historical Types of Wars in Modern Times . . . . .	37
The Difference Between Wars of Aggression and of Defence . . . . .	37
The War of Today Is an Imperialist War . . . . .	38
A War Between the Biggest Slave-Holders for the Maintenance and Consolidation of Slavery . . . . .	39
"War Is the Continuation of Politics by Other" (i.e.: Violent) "Means" . . . . .	41
The Case of Belgium . . . . .	42
PREFACE TO N. BUKHARIN'S PAMPHLET, <i>IMPERIALISM AND THE WORLD ECONOMY</i> . . . . .	44
From IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM . . . . .	49
VII. Imperialism, as a Special Stage of Capitalism . . . . .	49
VIII. Parasitism and Decay of Capitalism . . . . .	59
IX. Critique of Imperialism . . . . .	68
X. The Place of Imperialism in History . . . . .	81
From A CARICATURE OF MARXISM AND IMPERIALIST ECONOMISM . . . . .	87
3. What Is Economic Analysis? . . . . .	87
4. The Example of Norway . . . . .	94
From IMPERIALISM AND THE SPLIT IN SOCIALISM . . . . .	101
From WAR AND REVOLUTION . . . . .	114

From A TURN IN WORLD POLITICS . . . . .	124
From MATERIALS RELATING TO THE REVISION OF THE PARTY PROGRAMME . . . . .	126
Comments on the Remarks Made by the Committee of the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B) . . . . .	126
From REVISION OF THE PARTY PROGRAMME . . . . .	127
V . . . . .	127
VI . . . . .	132
LETTER TO AMERICAN WORKERS . . . . .	134
From DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE R.C.P.(B.) . . . . .	148
From ANSWERS TO AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST'S QUES- TIONS . . . . .	150
From SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF WORKING COSSACKS, MARCH 1, 1920 . . . . .	152
From SPEECH DELIVERED AT A MEETING OF ACTIVISTS OF THE MOSCOW ORGANISATION OF THE R.C.P.(B.), DECEMBER 6, 1920 . . . . .	153
<i>Notes</i> . . . . .	159
<i>Name Index</i> . . . . .	169

## PREFACE

Lenin's analysis of imperialism, as a new and the last stage in the development of capitalism, occupies an outstanding place in his theoretical heritage. This colossal and thorough research enriched Marxism with the knowledge of many decisive peculiarities of the historical process in modern times. It laid the cornerstone of the theory of socialist revolution. A new light was thrown on the roads of social progress, the main content of which is the transition on a world scale from capitalism to socialism.

After the defeat of the Paris Commune (1871), the economic and political situation in Western Europe was characterised by stronger positions of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, rapid growth of monopolies and unprecedented colonial expansion. All this marked the beginning of capitalism's transition into a new, imperialist stage. In more developed industrial countries conditions were being created which facilitated the growth of reactionary forces and hampered a new revolutionary upsurge.

In this complicated historical situation the research into the paths of world development started by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels could be continued only by a scientist of genius and a wise practical revolutionary. This task was fulfilled by Lenin.

Lenin's profound and comprehensive analysis of imperialism, of its driving forces and inner logic of development, the strong and weak aspects of state-monopoly capitalism, its characteristic features and its basic contradictions has become an integral part of the revolutionary theory of the proletariat in the 20th century. Lenin is, in the full sense of the word, the founder of the

political economy of imperialism. He equipped the revolutionary forces with both a scientific characterisation of the processes involved in the origin and development of imperialism and a dialectical-materialist method of cognising its further changes, thereby providing a reliable key for understanding new phenomena in the economics and politics of modern capitalism. The basic propositions of Lenin's analysis have brilliantly stood the test of time in the conditions of the most stormy and dynamic epoch in the history of humanity.

Like Marx, Lenin took the economic basis as the starting-point in his research on contemporary capitalism. He brushed aside Kautsky's methodologically faulty and historically incorrect view of imperialism as a definite political line of the bourgeoisie, and concentrated his attention on the analysis of the socio-economic relations of the bourgeois world and the development of capitalism as a social system.

Monopoly played the main role in Lenin's analysis, which revealed the fundamental laws of the development of imperialism. Lenin wrote: "If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism."<sup>\*</sup> Lenin's theoretical analysis led him to the discovery that the change-over from free competition to monopoly is the "*economic essence of imperialism*".<sup>\*\*</sup>

Lenin's dialectics made it possible to trace how some properties of capitalism characterising it as an ascending social system are turning into their opposites as a result of the gradually increasing domination of the monopolies, and how capitalism, while rising to a new, higher stage in the development of the productive forces and the socialisation of production and developing on the whole considerably more rapidly than before, becomes—despite all kinds of reformist assertions that its organisation and might are growing stronger—a decaying, parasitic and dying system. The study of tendencies brought about by monopoly domination enabled Lenin to see the historical perspective of the development of human society and led

<sup>\*</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 266.

<sup>\*\*</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, p. 42.

him to elaborate a new strategy of the world socialist revolution.

Lenin's conclusion about imperialism as a dying social system is a brilliant embodiment of the revolutionary optimism and deep conviction of the progressive character of social development which are so characteristic of Marxist theory. No Marxist has ever doubted that the fact of the ascending development of capitalism being replaced by a steady slipping-down to its inevitable doom and of over-ripe capitalism turning into a brake on social progress, does not signify an impasse for the whole of humanity but only for that historically outdated socio-economic system. Herein lies evidence of the inevitable approach of the revolutionary replacement of the capitalist by the socialist relations of production.

In his analysis of imperialism Lenin first of all clarified how the concentration of production and capital and the monopoly resulting from this influence the productive forces, and which processes lead capitalism to its highest stage.

Acting in conformity with the laws of "natural" selection, free competition could not but give birth to its own opposite, monopoly. The strengthening of a handful of industrial giants was accompanied by the destruction and ruin of a mass of their weak rivals—small and middle-size enterprises. The concentration of production and centralisation of capital result in the bulk of production in the major branches of industry falling to the share of an ever narrowing group of companies. Hence the prerequisites for an agreement between them on ending competition and establishing monopoly prices. By coming to terms on prices and spheres of influence, the monopolies can assess the prospects of demand for their commodities in a more realistic manner and plan their production accordingly. This possibility increases as their monopoly position in the market is strengthened by seizure of the sources of raw materials, the trade network, transport and other material factors securing extended reproduction of capital. Monopoly profits increase the possibility of new capital investments on the basis of modern technology, which raises the efficiency and profitability of production. The share form enables big firms, which establish close connections with the banks, to mobilise

considerable money resources and use them for further increasing their production capacities and consolidating their positions in the market. All this opens up fresh possibilities for intensifying the concentration and centralisation of capital and for utilising the advantages of broad co-operation of labour and its specialisation and division.

Monopoly exerts a dual influence on the productive forces. By promoting the social character of production it pushes on their development. But at the same time monopoly gives rise to tendencies leading to decay and hindrance of technological progress. It provides opportunities for obtaining higher profits both by increasing production and lowering its costs, and by limiting or even curtailing production by means of artificially inflated prices. Big firms are in a position to buy up promising patents and bury them so as to avoid competition. However, these actions of the big monopolies, resulting from their economic essence, are opposed by competition on the part of other monopolies both within a given country and in the world market.

Consequently, the tendency towards decay inherent in monopoly and the possibilities of rapid growth also inherent in it exist side by side. Their struggle and concrete correlation at a certain period determine the scale, rate and direction of the economic development of capitalist countries.

Proceeding from the analysis of the processes involved in the concentration and monopolisation of production, Lenin formulated his famous five economic features of imperialism which distinguish the new stage in the development of bourgeois society from the capitalism of free competition. These basic features retain their importance even in present-day conditions of monopoly capitalism though, to use Marx's words, like all other laws of capitalism, they are "modified . . . by many circumstances".\* In particular, greater domination by the monopolies, conditioned by objective processes of concentration and centralisation of capital, is supported in every possible way by the greater economic role of the bourgeois state. On the other hand, the class struggle, which today has acquired the character of

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\* Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1972, p. 603.

a world revolutionary process, is an obstacle to the increasing monopoly-capital domination. The need to withstand the revolutionary forces attacking monopolies both from the front and from the rear, from within and from without, seriously affects the whole of the monopolies' economic policy, deprives them of complete "freedom of action" and makes them resort to social manoeuvring and concessions. Nevertheless, the varied and contradictory conditions under which modern capitalism develops have by no means essentially altered the basic features of imperialism discovered by Lenin, their role as a definite system of interrelated economic laws.

The first feature emphasises the importance of the concentration and centralisation of capital resulting in the formation of monopolies. This process becomes ever stronger in the historical periods when capitalism undergoes the specific "waves" of mergers and take-overs which give rise to sharp leaps in the level of monopoly concentration. Such a regular "wave" swept over the capitalist world approximately in the mid-1950s. Unprecedented in scale, it raised the high level of concentration of capital to a qualitatively new stage.

In the conditions of early-20th-century imperialism, monopoly domination was typical mainly of the heavy industries. At present, monopoly structure has established itself in nearly all branches of the economy, the monopolies involving in their orbit the non-production sphere as well.

The highest level of concentration of production and capital is characteristic of industrial branches. Thus, in 1966, in the U.S.A. the share of the four biggest firms of the corresponding branches was: 70 per cent of the production of automobiles and spare parts, 67 per cent of aircraft and computers, 55 per cent of organic-chemistry products, 49 per cent of pig iron and steel, etc. In Britain, in 1968, one firm owned over 90 per cent of the production of electricity, steel and coal and the output of helicopters, automobiles and locomotives, 70-80 per cent of the production of tractors, chemical fibres, electronic equipment, etc.

The same state of affairs is to be seen in France, the F.R.G., Japan and other developed capitalist countries.

The picture of branch concentration is seriously complicated by the fact that the last 10-15 years have been character-



ised by the penetration of bigger monopolies into "foreign" branches—the purchase of firms and enterprises either supplementing the production complex of a given monopoly or having no technological connections with it at all. Like mushrooms spring up gigantic companies-conglomerations, which group under the signboard of one monopoly enterprises belonging to different branches, as well as banks and other organisational and financial institutions serving their needs.

Absence of production ties between the various enterprises of a conglomeration and the general complication of the entire economy due to their growth objectively increase the anarchy of production and undermine the possibilities and efficiency of state-monopoly control. The economic crisis in the U.S.A. in 1969-70 and the slump in a number of other industrially developed countries dispelled the myth about the alleged stability of conglomerations in face of market fluctuations. During the crisis the financial position of monopoly conglomerations was far more grave and the price of their shares fell much lower than in traditional branch monopolies. The appearance of conglomerations reflects stronger tendencies towards further socialisation of production. It marks a new aggravation of the contradiction between the social character of modern capitalist production and the private-ownership principles of its organisation. The socialisation of production shakes still more the pillars of capitalism, and the need for the transition to socialist forms of ownership and planned methods of economy becomes ever more obvious.

Modern capitalist economy shows a clear connection between the first and the second feature of imperialism, between the growing concentration of production and of capital and the increased domination of a financial oligarchy.

Finance capital, arising and developing from the interweaving of the capital of industrial and banking monopolies, leads to the sharpening of a whole complex of social contradictions. The exploitation of the working people intensifying, the class struggle grows. Moreover, contradictions within the ruling class itself become aggravated and the split in the bourgeois camp, as Lenin predicted, becomes deeper. A narrow monopoly top stratum represented by the financial oligarchy appropriates monopoly superprofits, thereby stand-

ing opposed not only to the working people but also to a broad layer of the middle and small bourgeoisie pushed aside from the most profitable sources of wealth. In the interests of the financial oligarchy there is also a redistribution of a substantial part of the state budget, which today accounts for nearly one-third of the national income in the developed capitalist countries.

After the last war the financial oligarchy reorganised radically the entire banking system and secured control over practically all temporarily free money resources of society, including the working people's savings. It is noteworthy that in the total assets of the American banking system, the share of banking and insurance institutions whose clients are the working masses increased from 23 per cent in 1929 to 41 per cent in 1967.

The coalescence of big banks with industrial monopolies produced powerful capitalist associations, financial groups, whose members are closely connected by mutual possession of shares, by personal union and by common interests in the competitive struggle.

By means of various subterfuges the financial groups obtain control over big spheres in the economy. Thus, 18 financial groups in the U.S.A., uniting about 200 monopolies, control nearly 60 per cent of the country's industrial production. The biggest of them, the Morgan group, extends its influence over not less than twenty gigantic banks, insurance companies, savings funds, and several monopolies in the oil, automobile, chemical, electronic, metallurgical and other industries. In early 1969 the assets of the banks and industrial corporations, in one way or another connected with the Morgan group, reached 168,000-170,000 million dollars. The Rockefeller group, second in size, controlled capital of 125,000 million dollars. It continues to rule supreme in the "oil business" of the capitalist world, and recently it managed to seize powerful positions in a number of other branches (electrical engineering, chemistry, paper and food industries).

In Japan, the three biggest associations of industrial, commercial and banking firms—"Mitsubishi", "Mitsui" and "Sumitomo"—account for nearly 17 per cent of the country's industrial output, while in trade—both home and foreign—their share is even higher.

In countries where the finance system is characterised by a high degree of state control, state banks play a major role in founding monopoly associations. Thus, in Italy, four state banks fully control the country's basic financial operations and are the centres of powerful state-monopoly associations covering the activities of practically all branches of the national economy.

Accumulation of enormous stocks of capital in the hands of the financial oligarchy continues to be a principal source for its export. The importance of the export of capital as a weapon of the monopolies in the struggle for markets and spheres of influence is now greater than in the era of colonial empires and political domination of the overwhelming part of the globe by a handful of powers.

Lenin characterised the export of capital not only as one of the basic features of imperialism but also as one of its most important economic foundations. It is precisely the export of capital that helps finance capital to spread its net over all countries of the world. As Lenin wrote, the export of capital "becomes a means of encouraging the export of commodities".\* And nowadays the increased export of capital serves as a basis for the further internationalisation of the world capitalist economy and for the growing penetration of the monopolies in the economies of other countries.

In post-war years the export of capital from the imperialist countries reached truly enormous dimensions. By early 1969, the total sum of American investments abroad was approximately 128,000 million dollars, of which 102,000 million belonged to private monopolies (including 65,000 million of direct investments).\*\* In respect of total direct private investments abroad the U.S.A. has outstripped all its rivals. Thus, in 1967-68, Britain's direct private investments amounted to 18,000 million dollars, France's to 8,000 million, those of the Federal Republic of Germany to 3,600 million and of Japan to 900 million.

Unable to deny that the export of capital, especially from the U.S.A., has assumed gigantic proportions bourgeois ideologists try to refute Lenin's proposition that the desire to obtain a higher rate of profit is the stimulus for that export.

\* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 244.

\*\* *Survey of Current Business*, October 1969, p. 24.

They refer to the substantial increase in the export of state capital in the form of long-term loans and credits, and also subsidies and free grants under the programme of "aid" to the developing countries.

Such an argument can confuse only those who fail to understand the nature of modern capitalism. Indeed, the volume of long-term state credits extended by the U.S.A. to foreign countries (not including Canada and Western Europe) increased from 2,700 million dollars in 1957 to 16,900 million in 1968, or  $6\frac{1}{5}$  times. The influx of state capital to the countries of the "Third World" from Britain, France, F.R.G. and other imperialist countries is also growing. But can all this serve to refute Lenin's proposition about the drive for a higher rate of profit being the main stimulus for the export of capital? Of course not. This becomes obvious as soon as we consider "aid", subsidies and state loans as a weapon of the economic policy of state-monopoly capitalism, the aim of which is to ensure high profits for private monopolies. The loans and "gifts" granted by the U.S. Government, as a rule, make it incumbent upon the countries receiving them to expend the money on the purchase of American goods. Frequently, the "aid" is aimed at creating in the developing countries a "political climate" favourable for the capital-exporting private monopolies, and saving them from the threatening nationalisation of foreign enterprises. A substantial part of the loans and credits goes to create an infrastructure, that is, to invest money in the least profitable industries, without which, however, the development of the private sector is either difficult or impossible.

The export of capital to the developed capitalist countries has become an important tendency in the export of capital in general. In this tendency we clearly see the process of international interweaving of capitals examined by Lenin, the basis for forming international associations of monopolists which carry out the economic redivision of the world (the fourth feature of imperialism). Whereas in the early twentieth century colonies and semi-colonies were the main objects of the monopolies' expansion, now the most vigorous movement of capital is between industrial countries. The latter account for over two-thirds of the exported long-term

private capital, while the whole of the "Third World" accounts for only about one-third.

This is to be explained by a number of weighty reasons. To begin with, the developed countries attract foreign capital by their "political stability" as compared with the tense situation in Africa, Asia and Latin America, so that the risk connected with the investment of capital abroad is diminished to a minimum.

Besides this essentially political factor, there are many purely economic reasons for the greater interest in investing capital in the "rich" countries. The interweaving of the capital of developed countries reveals the monopolies' objective need to adjust themselves to the requirements of the contemporary stage in the development of the productive forces. In the conditions of the scientific and technological revolution, which has called for deeper social division of labour and a gigantic increase in the scale of the concentration of production, the framework of national states becomes too narrow for the productive forces and they can very often develop successfully only if the resources (and markets) of several countries are combined. The optimal dimensions of production enterprises are increased, while the process of capitalist integration, the formation of economic groups, expands the home market for the member-countries of a group and makes it difficult for the goods of third countries to penetrate into it. This provides a stimulus for the export of capital from some countries of the group to others, for international enterprise and the merging of companies of the different countries within the group.

The formation of closed economic groups is aimed not only at facilitating the movement of goods between their members and protecting their industries against competition of third countries. On the basis of imperialist integration the monopolies seek to form not mere customs unions but economic and political associations with more extensive plans, including common principles of tax and currency policies and co-ordination of long-term state investment programmes. At the same time, capitalist integration does not solve the problem of struggle and rivalry not only between separate groups or between such groups and third countries but also within the groups themselves, i.e., between their member-countries.

The struggle for the constant redivision of the capitalist market "according to force" or "according to capital" goes on. Integration, which arose on the basis of the export of capital and enlivened it, brings in its wake all the contradictions and antagonisms which are typical of this form of economic ties between the imperialist countries. For the egoistic interests of the imperialists of different countries in their struggle for markets and spheres of capital investment are stronger than the tendencies dictated by the desire to implement the general strategy of the imperialist camp in the struggle against socialism, the workers' and the national liberation movements.

The formation of international monopolies was also a natural outcome of the world concentration of capital and its international interweaving. The distinguishing feature of imperialism, Lenin wrote, is "something which *did not exist* before the twentieth century—the economic partitioning of the world among international trusts, the partitioning of countries, *by agreement*, into market areas".\* Characterising imperialism, Lenin emphasised that "the division of the world among the international trusts has begun".\*\*

Fifty years ago Lenin confirmed the birth of international super-monopolies. In our day, the development of this process has led to a handful of super-monopolies taking more or less full possession of the world capitalist market. What is also new and specific for the present-day development of imperialism is that, while retaining world cartels, it has turned gigantic trusts and concerns, largely national in capital and control but international in the sphere and scale of activities, into a most typical and perhaps the decisive form of international super-monopolies. This has brought about a contradiction between monopolies operating on a world-wide scale and national states.

International monopolies can and do enter into agreements with each other on the division of the markets, limitation of production and inflation of prices. However, with the present-day level of the export of capital and the gigantic role which super-monopolies play in the capitalist economy, it is precisely the struggle of such monopolies for the priority

\* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 167.

\*\* *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 267.

development of their economic potential and for domination in the market that acquires great importance. The economic division of that part of the world which is still under imperialist rule is now becoming in many respects the continuously changing spontaneous result of the struggle between international super-monopolies.

Along with imperialist integration and fierce rivalry among the international trusts and concerns, such new factors in international relations as aggressive military blocs of imperialist powers have also appeared. "Collective colonialism" has developed. Imperialism is waging wars of aggression against whole nations, trying to impose upon them by force the systems and forms of government which suit it most, and such wars are in many cases fought simultaneously by several imperialist powers. Hence, the tendency towards war for the territorial repartitioning of the world (the fifth feature of imperialism) still remains nowadays too. It is true, the conditions for its development have radically changed, because imperialism has lost its former domination over the world. It is in the grip of a general crisis, and its economics and politics are greatly influenced by the existence and successes of the world socialist system and the powerful upsurge of the national liberation movement. In these circumstances, the general direction of the military and political strategy of the imperialist powers is determined above all by their desire to restore the positions lost as a result of the formation of the world socialist system and the collapse of the colonial empires. Temporarily, the imperialists' readiness to use military means for reshaping the world map in conformity with the new balance of forces within the group of the imperialist powers, recedes into the background. But it can disappear altogether only with the complete destruction of imperialism itself.

Of vital importance for understanding the deep-going processes characterising modern imperialism is Lenin's law of the uneven economic and socio-political development of capitalism at its imperialist stage. Lenin was the first to lay bare the roots and show the importance of such uneven development and the reasons for its increased influence on the course of history and on the destinies of the dying capitalist system and of socialism, which will replace it. Analysing the fundamental difference between pre-monopoly capital-

ism and imperialism in the aspect of uneven development, Lenin wrote: "There was an epoch of relatively 'peaceful' capitalism, when it had completely defeated feudalism in the leading European countries and was free to develop with the utmost—*relative*—tranquillity and smoothness, expanding 'peacefully' over the vast expanses of the as yet unsettled lands and the countries not yet irrevocably drawn into the capitalist maelstrom." And further: "This epoch is gone for good, it has given way to an epoch which is relatively much more violent, spasmodic, disastrous and conflicting."<sup>8</sup>

Studying the law of the uneven economic development in the epoch of imperialism, Lenin arrived at a number of theoretical generalisations, the most important of which, perhaps, is his teaching on the appearance of weak links in the single chain of imperialism owing to its spasmodic development. Therefore, Lenin concludes, different countries will come to socialism at different times and the imperialist front may be breached not necessarily in countries with the highest level of development. "That conclusion was a new word in the science of Marxism. It radically changed the old conception of the conditions for the victory of the new system and opened a clear prospect of struggle to the Russian and international proletariat. Already then, Lenin foresaw the course of the main processes of social development as a result of the victory of socialism in one or several countries; foresaw the inevitability of struggle between the two systems in the world arena."<sup>9</sup>

History has confirmed Lenin's conclusion: the breach of the imperialist chain made by the Russian proletariat and its allies under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, the triumphal march of Soviet power and the victory of socialism in the U.S.S.R. have put an end to the epoch of the undivided and complete rule of imperialism. As a system imperialism has received a blow from which it can never recover: a general crisis of capitalism has set in. Its most vivid and deep-going manifestation is the existence, competition and struggle of the two systems—socialist and capitalist. Facts show that this struggle has been exerting a most powerful impact on the internal processes going on in the cap-

<sup>8</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 104.

<sup>9</sup> *Lenin's Ideas and Cause Are Immortal*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, p. 14.

italist world and on its social and political antagonisms. Cardinal changes in the balance of forces of the two world systems are the main factors that determined the principal stages in the development of the general crisis of capitalism.

The victory of the socialist revolution in Russia ushered in a new transitional epoch in the development of mankind, marked by the ever growing offensive of socialism on capitalism. Lenin wrote: "The abolition of capitalism and its vestiges, and the establishment of the fundamentals of the communist order comprise the content of the new era of world history that has set in."\* Life has borne out the correctness of Lenin's approach to the very nature of the world socialist revolution, which draws into its mainstream the struggle of the overwhelming majority of mankind. "It is perfectly clear that in the impending decisive battles in the world revolution," Lenin stressed in his speech at the Third Congress of the Communist International, "the movement of the majority of the population of the globe, initially directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and will, perhaps, play a much more revolutionary part than we expect."\*\* That is why, viewed historically, the collapse of the colonial system, the emergence of scores of young national states and their choice of non-capitalist paths of development are nothing but grave defeats of imperialism.

The law of the uneven economic and socio-political development of imperialism operates in full force in the present-day epoch too. Sharp changes in the correlation of the economic potentials of the main imperialist powers become more frequent. The development of their productive forces is markedly spasmodic, and is accompanied by serious structural changes in the economy. The state-monopoly system regulating economic processes shapes itself unevenly, and the abyss between the level of development of the leading imperialist states and the other non-socialist countries is growing. The gap between individual countries and their groups in the sphere of scientific research, as well as in the rate and scale of application of new scientific and technological achievements in production, is broadening. As Lenin foresaw,

\* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 392.

\*\* *Ibid.*, Vol. 32, p. 482.

owing to uneven development now in one, now in another link of the world capitalist system, the aggravation of all its antagonistic contradictions reaches the critical point, and the working people begin to look for a way out of the situation in the struggle for the radical socio-economic reforms, for the full removal of the exploiter classes from power in society.

The contemporary epoch has been marked by the vastly growing contradictory and conflicting nature of development in all spheres of society's economic and political life. The socialisation of production has led to a further clarifying of positions among the social forces. In the course of the scientific and technological revolution the working class has grown both in quality and in quantity, its qualification, the general level of knowledge and ideological education have risen sharply, and it has acquired new allies from among engineers, office employees and intelligentsia. Now, the monopolist top section, which has entered into alliance with the politicians and the military, is opposed by an absolute majority of the population united by the democratic slogans of the anti-monopoly struggle. Thereby the abyss between the interests of the overwhelming majority of the nation in the imperialist countries and the financial oligarchy is rapidly growing.

Although the imperialist bourgeoisie strive to unite in face of the advancing forces of socialism, the national liberation and the working-class movement, a factor which is inherent in imperialism, namely, the ineradicable hostility between the economic interests of the monopolies in the various countries arising from the drive for profits, makes itself felt in full measure. This inevitably leads to deeper inter-imperialist contradictions and weakens the general positions of imperialism; moreover, the processes of international interweaving of capital and regional integration, while changing the forms of rivalry, by no means promote harmony of interests between the different "national imperialisms" in the world arena.

Despite all efforts, the mechanism of capitalist economy has its misfires. Production continues to develop cycle-wise, and all the capitalist countries without exception experience grave difficulties connected with the working of the chaotic forces in the home and foreign markets. This produces a

negative impact on the use of the existing production capacities and gives rise to such phenomena as a continuously increasing labour intensification, considerable under-capacity working of enterprises, constant unemployment which has assumed enormous proportions in some countries, sharpening of the problem of occupation everywhere and inflation processes which strike at the people's living standard. The gigantic possibilities of the modern scientific and technological revolution are not fully utilised in the interests of society; its fruits become the property of monopoly capital and only help to multiply its superprofits.

Owing to a number of reasons—both objective, connected with the vital needs of the developing productive forces, and subjective, based on the capitalists' striving to preserve and extend their world domination—the monopolist bourgeoisie agrees to widen the economic function of the state and to establish state control over considerable fields of the economy.

Lenin saw the basic reasons for the emergence of state-monopoly capitalism in the same laws which determined the transition of capitalism from the stage of free competition to that of imperialism. He discerned the main characteristic feature of the new phenomenon in the fact that "monopoly, in general, has evolved into state monopoly";\* that capitalism seeks to regulate economic processes on a national scale. As for the forms and mechanism of state-monopoly capitalism, Lenin regarded as the most typical the coalescence of monopolies and the state and the combination of "the colossal power of capitalism with the colossal power of the state into a single mechanism".\*\*

Lenin's works contain a genuinely scientific conception of state-monopoly capitalism in all its complexity and contradiction. He saw that the measures taken to fortify capitalism and artificially to gloss over its contradictions undermine capitalism's foundations from within and that the capitalists are drawn, "against their will and consciousness, into some sort of a new social order, a transitional one from complete free competition to complete socialisation".\*\*\* Noting that "state-monopoly capitalism is a complete *material* prepara-

tion for socialism",\* Lenin repeatedly emphasised that preparation of the material prerequisites for socialism, no matter how deeply it goes, is not equivalent to the transition to socialism and that socialist revolution is indispensable between state-monopoly capitalism and socialism. He wrote: "The 'proximity' of *such* capitalism to socialism should serve genuine representatives of the proletariat as an argument proving the proximity, facility, feasibility and urgency of the socialist revolution, and not at all as an argument for tolerating the repudiation of such a revolution and the efforts to make capitalism look more attractive, something, which all reformists are trying to do".\*\*

Whatever forms imperialism assumes, whatever camouflage of state control it resorts to, it remains the last stage of the exploiting social system for which Lenin predicted revolutionary overthrow. Such are the main conclusions from the analysis of the over-fifty-year development of imperialism, whose scientific treatment was given for the first time in the immortal works of the leader of the October Revolution.

A. Borodayevsky

\* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 240.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 403.

\*\*\* *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 205.

\* *Ibid.*, Vol. 25, p. 359.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 443.

## IMPOVERISHMENT IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY

Bourgeois reformists, who are echoed by certain opportunists among the Social-Democrats, assert that there is no impoverishment of the masses taking place in capitalist society. "The theory of impoverishment" is wrong, they say, for the standard of living of the masses is improving, if slowly, and the gulf between the haves and have-nots is narrowing, not widening.

The falsity of such assertions has lately been revealed to the masses more and more clearly. The cost of living is rising. Wages, *even* with the most stubborn and *most* successful strike movement, are increasing much more slowly than the necessary expenditure of labour power. And side by side with this, the wealth of the capitalists is increasing at a dizzy rate.

Here are some data on Germany, where the workers' condition is far better than in Russia, thanks to a higher standard to culture, to *freedom of strikes* and association, to political liberty, to the millions of trade unionists and the millions of readers of workers' newspapers.

According to data furnished by *bourgeois* sociologists, who draw on official sources, wages in Germany have increased by an average of 25 per cent during the past 30 years. In the same period, the cost of living has gone up by *at least* 40 per cent!!

Food, clothing, fuel and rent have all become more expensive. The worker is becoming impoverished *absolutely*, i.e., he is actually becoming poorer than before; he is compelled to live worse, to eat worse, to suffer hunger more, and to live in basements and attics.

But the *relative* impoverishment of the workers, i.e., the diminution of their *share* in the national income, is still more striking. The workers' *comparative* share in capitalist society, which is fast growing rich, is dwindling because the millionaires are becoming ever richer.

There is no income tax in Russia, and no data are available on the growing wealth of the well-to-do classes of society. Our reality, which is even sadder, is shut off by a veil—the veil of ignorance and lack of publicity.

In Germany there are exact data on the wealth of the propertied classes. In Prussia, for example, the *first* 10,000 million marks (5,000 million rubles) of taxable property belonged to 1,853 persons in 1902 and to 1,108 in 1908.

The number of the very rich has diminished. Their wealth has increased—in 1902 each of them owned property worth 5,000,000 marks (2,500,000 rubles) on the average and in 1908, as much as 9,000,000 marks (4,500,000 rubles)!

People speak of the "upper 10,000". In Prussia the "upper 21,000" rich owned property valued at 13,500 million marks, while the taxable property of the remaining 1,300,000 owners was worth only 3,000 million marks.

Four of the wealthiest millionaires in Prussia (one prince, one duke and two counts) owned property worth 149 million marks in 1907 and 481 million marks in 1908.

Wealth in capitalist society is growing at an incredible rate—side by side with the impoverishment of the mass of the workers.

*Pravda* No. 181, November 30, 1912  
Signed: *U.*

Vol. 18, pp. 435-36

## ARMAMENTS AND CAPITALISM

Britain is one of the richest, freest and most advanced countries in the world. The armaments fever has long afflicted British "society" and the British Government, in exactly the same way as it has the French, German and other governments.

And now the British press, particularly the labour press, is publishing very interesting data, which reveal the ingenious capitalist "mechanics" of arms manufacture. Britain's naval armaments are particularly great. Britain's shipyards (Vickers, Armstrong, Brown and others) are world-famous. Hundreds and thousands of millions of rubles are being spent by Britain and other countries on war preparations, and of course it is all being done exclusively in the interests of peace, for the preservation of culture, in the interests of the country, civilisation, etc.

And we find that admirals and prominent statesmen of both parties, Conservative and Liberal, are shareholders and directors of shipyards, and of gunpowder, dynamite, ordnance and other factories. A shower of gold is pouring straight into the pockets of bourgeois politicians, who have got together in an exclusive international gang engaged in instigating an armaments race among the peoples and *fleeing* these trustful, stupid, dull and submissive peoples like sheep.

Armaments are considered a national matter, a matter of patriotism; it is presumed that everyone maintains strict secrecy. But the shipyards, the ordnance, dynamite and small-arms factories are *international enterprises*, in which the capitalists of the various countries work together in duping and fleecing the public of the various countries, and mak-

ing ships and guns alike for Britain against Italy, and for Italy against Britain.

An ingenious capitalist set-up! Civilisation, law and order, culture, peace—and hundreds of millions of rubles being plundered by capitalist businessmen and swindlers in ship-building, dynamite manufacture, etc.!

Britain is a member of the Triple Entente, which is hostile to the Triple Alliance. Italy is a member of the Triple Alliance. The well-known firm of Vickers (Britain) has *branches* in Italy. The shareholders and directors of this firm (through the venal press and through venal parliamentary "figures", Conservative and Liberal alike) incite Britain against Italy, and vice versa. And profit is taken both from the workers of Britain and those of Italy; the people are fleeced in both countries.

Conservative and Liberal Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament are almost all shareholders in these firms. They work hand in glove. The son of the "great" Liberal Minister, Gladstone, is a director of the Armstrong concern. Rear-Admiral Bacon, the celebrated naval specialist and a high official at the Admiralty, has been appointed to a post at an ordnance works in Coventry at a salary of £7,000 (over 60,000 rubles). The salary of the British Prime Minister is £5,000 (about 45,000 rubles).

The same thing, of course, takes place in all capitalist countries. Governments manage the affairs of the capitalist class, and the managers are well paid. The managers are shareholders themselves. And they shear the sheep together, under cover of speeches about "patriotism. . ."

Written on May 16 (29), 1913

Vol. 19, pp. 106-07

Published in *Pravda* No. 115, May 21, 1913

Signed: Fr.



## THE GROWTH OF CAPITALIST WEALTH

Capitalists are not inclined to be frank about their incomes. "Commercial secrets" are strictly guarded and it is very difficult for the uninitiated to penetrate the "mysteries" of how riches are piled up. Private property is sacred—nobody is permitted to meddle in the affairs of its owner. Such is the principle of capitalism.

Capital, however, has long since overstepped the bounds of private property and introduced joint-stock companies. Hundreds and thousands of shareholders who do not know each other make up a single enterprise; and these property-owners are quite often diddled by smart businessmen who empty the pockets of their business partners using "commercial secrets" as a cover.

Sacred private property has been forced to sacrifice a bit of its sacredness; laws have had to be made compelling joint-stock companies to keep proper books and publish the chief results of their accountancy. This, of course, has not prevented the public being swindled; the swindling has merely taken new forms and become more subtle than before. Big capital, gathering around itself small sums of shareholders' capital from all over the world, has become more powerful still. Through the joint-stock company, the millionaire now has at his disposal not only his own million, but additional capital of, say, 800,000 rubles that may have been gathered from 8,000 petty proprietors.

This makes the absurdity of capitalism much clearer to the masses of the population.

Take, for example, the published reports of insurance companies in Russia over a period of ten years, from 1902 to 1911.

In 1902 share capital amounted to 31.3 million rubles (in 21 joint-stock companies), and in 1911 (in the same 21 companies) it was 34.8 million rubles. The greater part of the capital usually belongs to a handful of millionaires. Ten or twenty magnates perhaps hold shares for eighteen million rubles, which gives them a majority vote, and they can, without any control, dispose of the other thirteen or sixteen million rubles belonging to "small" shareholders.

The professors who defend capitalism chatter about the increase in the number of property-owners when they see a growth in the number of small shareholders. What actually happens is that the power (and the income) of the millionaire magnates *over* the capital of the "small fry" is increased.

Just see how our insurance kings have expanded in the course of these ten years. The *average* dividend on share capital for the ten years was *more* than 10 per cent! Not a bad profit, eh? In the worst year of the decade they "earned" six kopeks in the ruble, and in the best year twelve kopeks!

Reserve capital was doubled—in 1902 it amounted to 152,000,000 rubles and in 1911 to 327,000,000 rubles. Property was almost doubled as well—in 1902 it was valued at 44,000,000 rubles and in 1911 at 76,000,000 rubles.

The result—in ten years in twenty-one companies, 32,000,000 rubles' worth of *new* property!

Who "earned" this property?

Those who did not work, the shareholders, and first and foremost the millionaire magnates who hold most of the shares.

The work was done by hundreds of employees, who canvassed insurance clients, inspected their property and laboured over the accounts. These employees remained employees. They do not receive anything more than their salaries (which, as we know, are in the majority of cases insufficient even to maintain a family decently). They cannot accumulate any property.

If any of the magnates did a bit of "work" *as a director*, he received *special* remuneration in the form of a ministerial salary and bonuses.

The gentlemen holding the shares grew rich *for not* working. During the decade they received on the average three millions a year net profit for the "toil" of clipping coupons, and accumulated additional capital to the tune of thirty-two million rubles.

Written on May 19 (June 1), 1913  
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in *Pravda* No. 131  
Signed: *V. I.*

Vol. 19, pp. 203-05

## CIVILISED BARBARISM

Britain and France are the most civilised countries in the world. London and Paris are the world's capitals, with populations of six and three million, respectively. The distance between them is an eight- to nine-hour journey.

One can imagine how great is the commercial intercourse between these two capitals, what masses of goods and of people are constantly moving from the one to the other.

And yet the richest, the most civilised and the freest countries in the world are now discussing, in fear and trepidation—by no means for the first time!—the "difficult" question of whether a tunnel can be built under the English Channel (which separates Britain from the European Continent).

Engineers have long been of the opinion that it can. The capitalists of Britain and France have mountains of money. Profit from capital invested in such an enterprise would be absolutely certain.

What, then, is holding the matter up?

Britain is afraid of—invasion! A tunnel, you see, would, "if anything should happen", facilitate the invasion of Britain by enemy troops. That is why the British military authorities have, not for the first time, wrecked the plan to build the tunnel.

The madness and blindness of the civilised nations makes astonishing reading. Needless to say, it would take only a few seconds with modern technical devices to bring traffic in the tunnel to a halt, and to wreck the tunnel completely.

But the civilised nations have driven themselves into the position of barbarians. Capitalism has brought about a situation in which the bourgeoisie, in order to hoodwink the workers, is *compelled* to frighten the British people with idiotic

tales about "invasion". Capitalism has brought about a situation in which a whole group of capitalists who stand to lose "good business" through the digging of the tunnel are doing their utmost to wreck this plan and hold up technical progress.

The Britishers' fear of the tunnel is fear of themselves. Capitalist barbarism is stronger than civilisation.

On all sides, at every step one comes across problems which man is quite capable of solving *immediately*, but capitalism is in the way. It has amassed enormous wealth—and has made men the *slaves* of this wealth. It has solved the most complicated technical problems—and has blocked the application of technical improvements because of the poverty and ignorance of millions of the population, because of the stupid avarice of a handful of millionaires.

Civilisation, freedom and wealth under capitalism call to mind the rich glutton who is rotting alive but will not let what is young live on.

But the young is growing and will emerge supreme in spite of all.

*Pravda Truda* No. 6,  
September 17, 1913  
Signed: *W.*

Vol. 19, pp. 388-89

### From THE WAR AND RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY<sup>1</sup>

The European war, which the governments and the bourgeois parties of all countries have been preparing for decades, has broken out. The growth of armaments, the extreme intensification of the struggle for markets in the latest—the imperialist—stage of capitalist development in the advanced countries, and the dynastic interests of the more backward East-European monarchies were inevitably bound to bring about this war, and have done so. Seizure of territory and subjugation of other nations, the ruining of competing nations and the plunder of their wealth, distracting the attention of the working masses from the internal political crises in Russia, Germany, Britain and other countries, disuniting and nationalist stultification of the workers, and the extermination of their vanguard so as to weaken the revolutionary movement of the proletariat—these comprise the sole actual content, importance and significance of the present war.

It is primarily on Social-Democracy that the duty rests of revealing the true meaning of the war, and of ruthlessly exposing the falsehood, sophistry and "patriotic" phrasemongering spread by the ruling classes, the landowners and the bourgeoisie, in defence of the war.

One group of belligerent nations is headed by the German bourgeoisie. It is hoodwinking the working class and the toiling masses by asserting that this is a war in defence of the fatherland, freedom and civilisation, for the liberation of the peoples oppressed by tsarism, and for the destruction of reactionary tsarism. In actual fact, however, this bourgeoisie, which servilely grovels to the Prussian Junkers, headed by Wilhelm II, has always been a most faithful ally of tsarism, and an enemy of the revolutionary movement of Russia's

workers and peasants. In fact, whatever the outcome of the war, this bourgeoisie will, together with the Junkers,<sup>2</sup> exert every effort to support the tsarist monarchy against a revolution in Russia.

In fact, the German bourgeoisie has launched a robber campaign against Serbia, with the object of subjugating her and throttling the national revolution of the Southern Slavs, at the same time sending the bulk of its military forces against the freer countries, Belgium and France, so as to plunder richer competitors. In fact, the German bourgeoisie, which has been spreading the fable that it is waging a war of defence, chose the moment it thought most favourable for war, making use of its latest improvements in military matériel and forestalling the rearmament already planned and decided upon by Russia and France.

The other group of belligerent nations is headed by the British and the French bourgeoisie, who are hoodwinking the working class and the toiling masses by asserting that they are waging a war for the defence of their countries, for freedom and civilisation and against German militarism and despotism. In actual fact, this bourgeoisie has long been spending thousands of millions to hire the troops of Russian tsarism, the most reactionary and barbarous monarchy in Europe, and prepare them for an attack on Germany.

In fact, the struggle of the British and the French bourgeoisie is aimed at the seizure of the German colonies, and the ruining of a rival nation, whose economic development has been more rapid. In pursuit of this noble aim, the "advanced" "democratic" nations are helping the savage tsarist regime to still more throttle Poland, the Ukraine, etc., and more thoroughly crush the revolution in Russia.

Neither group of belligerents is inferior to the other in spoliation, atrocities and the boundless brutality of war; however, to hoodwink the proletariat and distract its attention from the only genuine war of liberation, namely, a civil war against the bourgeoisie both of its "own" and of "foreign" countries—to achieve so lofty an aim—the bourgeoisie of each country is trying, with the help of false phrases about patriotism, to extol the significance of its "own" national war, asserting that it is out to defeat the enemy, not for plunder and the seizure of territory, but for the "liberation" of all other peoples except its own.

But the harder the governments and the bourgeoisie of all countries try to disunite the workers and pit them against one another, and the more savagely they enforce, for this lofty aim, martial law and the military censorship (which even now, in wartime, is applied against the "internal" foe more harshly than against the external), the more pressingly is it the duty of the class-conscious proletariat to defend its class solidarity, its internationalism, and its socialist convictions against the unbridled chauvinism of the "patriotic" bourgeois cliques in all countries. If class-conscious workers were to give up this aim, this would mean renunciation of their aspirations for freedom and democracy, to say nothing of their socialist aspirations.

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## From SOCIALISM AND WAR<sup>3</sup>

### CHAPTER I

#### THE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIALISM AND THE WAR OF 1914-1915

#### The Attitude of Socialists Towards Wars

Socialists have always condemned wars between nations as barbarous and brutal. Our attitude towards war, however, is fundamentally different from that of the bourgeois pacifists (supporters and advocates of peace) and of the anarchists. We differ from the former in that we understand the inevitable connection between wars and the class struggle within a country; we understand that wars cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished and socialism is created; we also differ in that we regard civil wars, i.e., wars waged by an oppressed class against the oppressor class, by slaves against slave-holders, by serfs against landowners, and by wage-workers against the bourgeoisie, as fully legitimate, progressive and necessary. We Marxists differ from both pacifists and anarchists in that we deem it necessary to study each war historically (from the standpoint of Marx's dialectical materialism) and separately. There have been in the past numerous wars which, despite all the horrors, atrocities, distress and suffering that inevitably accompany all wars, were progressive, i.e., benefited the development of mankind by helping to destroy most harmful and reactionary institutions (e.g., an autocracy or serfdom) and the most barbarous despotisms in Europe (the Turkish and the Russian). That is why the features historically specific to the present war must come up for examination.

## The Historical Types of Wars in Modern Times

The Great French Revolution ushered in a new epoch in the history of mankind. From that time down to the Paris Commune,<sup>4</sup> i.e., between 1789 and 1871, one type of war was of a bourgeois-progressive character, waged for national liberation. In other words, the overthrow of absolutism and feudalism, the undermining of these institutions, and the overthrow of alien oppression, formed the chief content and historical significance of such wars. These were therefore progressive wars; during *such* wars, all honest and revolutionary democrats, as well as all socialists, always wished success to that country (i.e., that bourgeoisie) which had helped to overthrow or undermine the most baneful foundations of feudalism, absolutism and the oppression of other nations. For example, the revolutionary wars waged by France<sup>5</sup> contained an element of plunder and the conquest of foreign territory by the French, but this does not in the least alter the fundamental historical significance of those wars, which destroyed and shattered feudalism and absolutism in the whole of the old, serf-owning Europe. In the Franko-Prussian War,<sup>6</sup> Germany plundered France but this does not alter the fundamental historical significance of that war, which liberated tens of millions of German people from feudal disunity and from the oppression of two despots, the Russian tsar and Napoleon III.

#### The Difference Between Wars of Aggression and of Defence

The period of 1789-1871 left behind it deep marks and revolutionary memories. There could be no development of the proletarian struggle for socialism prior to the overthrow of feudalism, absolutism and alien oppression. When, in speaking of the wars of *such* periods, socialists stressed the legitimacy of "defensive" wars, they always had these aims in mind, namely, revolution against mediævalism and serfdom. By a "defensive" war socialists have always understood a "*just*" war in this particular sense (Wilhelm Liebknecht once expressed himself precisely in this way<sup>7</sup>). It is only in this sense that socialists have always regarded wars

“for the defence of the fatherland”, or “defensive” wars, as legitimate, progressive and just. For example, if tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia, or China on Russia, and so on, these would be “just” and “defensive” wars, *irrespective* of who would be the first to attack; any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory over the oppressor, slave-holding and predatory “Great” Powers.

But imagine a slave-holder who owns 100 slaves warring against another who owns 200 slaves, for a more “just” redistribution of slaves. The use of the term of a “defensive” war, or a war “for the defence of the fatherland”, would clearly be historically false in such a case and would in practice be sheer deception of the common people, philistines, and the ignorant, by the astute slave-holders. It is in this way that the peoples are being deceived with “national” ideology and the term of “defence of the fatherland”, by the present-day imperialist bourgeoisie, in the war now being waged between slave-holders with the purpose of consolidating slavery.

### The War of Today Is an Imperialist War

It is almost universally admitted that this war is an imperialist war. In most cases, however, this term is distorted, or applied to one side, or else a loophole is left for the assertion that this war may, after all, be bourgeois-progressive, and of significance to the national liberation movement. Imperialism is the highest stage in the development of capitalism, reached only in the twentieth century. Capitalism now finds that the old national states, without whose formation it could not have overthrown feudalism, are too cramped for it. Capitalism has developed concentration to such a degree that entire branches of industry are controlled by syndicates, trusts and associations of capitalist multimillionaires and almost the entire globe has been divided up among the “lords of capital” either in the form of colonies, or by entangling other countries in thousands of threads of financial exploitation. Free trade and competition have been superseded by a striving towards monopolies, the seizure of territory for the investment of capital and as sources of raw materials, and so on. From the liberator of nations,

which it was in the struggle against feudalism, capitalism in its imperialist stage has turned into the greatest oppressor of nations. Formerly progressive, capitalism has become reactionary; it has developed the forces of production to such a degree that mankind is faced with the alternative of adopting socialism or of experiencing years and even decades of armed struggle between the “Great” Powers for the artificial preservation of capitalism by means of colonies, monopolies, privileges and national oppression of every kind.

### A War Between the Biggest Slave-Holders for the Maintenance and Consolidation of Slavery

To make the significance of imperialism clear, we will quote precise figures showing the partition of the world among the so-called “Great” Powers (i.e., those successful in great plunder). [See table on p. 40.]

Hence it will be seen that, since 1876, most of the nations which were foremost fighters for freedom in 1789-1871, have, on the basis of a highly developed and “over-mature” capitalism, become oppressors and enslavers of most of the population and the nations of the globe. From 1876 to 1914, six “Great” Powers grabbed 25 million square kilometres, i.e., an area two and a half times that of Europe! Six Powers have enslaved 523 million people in the colonies. For every four inhabitants in the “Great” Powers there are five in “their” colonies. It is common knowledge that colonies are conquered with fire and sword, that the population of the colonies are brutally treated, and that they are exploited in a thousand ways (by exporting capital, through concessions, etc., cheating in the sale of goods, submission to the authorities of the “ruling” nation, and so on and so forth). The Anglo-French bourgeoisie are deceiving the people when they say that they are waging a war for the freedom of nations and of Belgium; in fact they are waging a war for the purpose of retaining the colonies they have grabbed and robbed. The German imperialists would free Belgium, etc., at once if the British and French would agree to “fairly” share their colonies with them. A feature of the situation is that in this war the fate of the colonies is being decided by a war on the Continent. From the standpoint of bourgeois

Partition of the World Among the "Great" Slave-Holding Powers

	Colonies		Metropolis				Total	
	1876		1914		1914			
	Square kilo- metres	Population	Square kilo- metres	Population	Square kilo- metres	Population	Square kilo- metres	Population
	millions	millions	millions	millions	millions	millions	millions	millions
"Great" Powers								
Britain . . . .	22.5	251.9	33.5	393.5	0.3	46.5	33.8	440.0
Russia . . . .	17.0	15.9	17.4	33.2	5.4	136.2	22.8	169.4
France . . . .	0.9	6.0	10.6	55.5	0.5	39.6	11.1	95.1
Germany . . . .	—	—	2.9	12.3	0.5	64.9	3.4	77.2
Japan . . . .	—	—	0.3	19.2	0.4	53.0	0.7	72.2
United States of America . . . .	—	—	0.3	9.7	9.4	97.0	9.7	106.7
Total for the six "Great" Powers	40.4	273.8	65.0	523.4	16.5	437.2	81.5	960.6
Colonies belong- ing to <i>other</i> than Great Powers (Bel- gium, Holland and other states) . . . .			9.9	45.3			9.9	45.3
Three "semi-colonial" countries (Turkey, China and Persia)	14.5							361.2
			<i>Total</i>				105.9	1,367.1
Other states and countries . . . . .							28.0	289.9
Entire globe (exclusive of Arctic and Antarctic regions)	133.9							1,657.0

justice and national freedom (or the right of nations to existence), Germany might be considered absolutely in the right as against Britain and France, for she has been "done out" of colonies, her enemies are oppressing an immeasurably far larger number of nations than she is, and the Slavs that are being oppressed by her ally, Austria, undoubtedly enjoy far more freedom than those of tsarist Russia, that veritable

"prison of nations". Germany, however, is fighting, not for the liberation of nations, but for their oppression. It is not the business of socialists to help the younger and stronger robber (Germany) to plunder the older and overgorged robbers. Socialists must take advantage of the struggle between the robbers to overthrow all of them. To be able to do this, socialists must first of all tell the people the truth, namely, that this war is, in three respects, a war between slave-holders with the aim of consolidating slavery. This is a war, firstly, to increase the enslavement of the colonies by means of a "more equitable" distribution and subsequent more concerted exploitation of them; secondly, to increase the oppression of other nations within the "Great" Powers, since *both* Austria *and* Russia (Russia in greater degree and with results far worse than Austria) maintain their rule only by such oppression, intensifying it by means of war; and thirdly, to increase and prolong wage-slavery, since the proletariat is split up and suppressed, while the capitalists are the gainers, making fortunes out of the war, fanning national prejudices and intensifying reaction, which has raised its head in all countries, even in the freest and most republican.

**"War Is the Continuation of Politics by Other"  
(i.e.: Violent) "Means"**

This famous dictum was uttered by Clausewitz,<sup>8</sup> one of the profoundest writers on the problems of war. Marxists have always rightly regarded this thesis as the theoretical basis of views on the significance of any war. It was from this viewpoint that Marx and Engels always regarded the various wars.

Apply this view to the present war. You will see that for decades, for almost half a century, the governments and the ruling classes of Britain and France, Germany and Italy, Austria and Russia have pursued a policy of plundering colonies, oppressing other nations, and suppressing the working-class movement. It is this, and only this, policy that is being continued in the present war. In particular, the policy of both Austria and Russia, in peacetime as well as in wartime, is a policy of enslaving nations, not of liberating them.

In China, Persia, India and other dependent countries, on the contrary, we have seen during the past decades a policy of rousing tens and hundreds of millions of people to a national life, of their liberation from the reactionary "Great" Powers' oppression. A war waged on such a historical basis can even today be a bourgeois-progressive war of national liberation.

If the present war is regarded as a continuation of the politics of the "Great" Powers and of the principal classes within them, a glance will immediately reveal the glaring anti-historicity, falseness and hypocrisy of the view that the "defence-of-the-fatherland" idea can be justified in the present war.

### The Case of Belgium

The favourite plea of the social-chauvinists of the Triple (now Quadruple) Entente<sup>9</sup> (in Russia, Plekhanov and Co.) is the case of Belgium. This instance, however, speaks against them. The German imperialists have brazenly violated the neutrality of Belgium, as belligerent states have done always and everywhere, trampling upon *all* treaties and obligations if necessary. Let us suppose that all states interested in the observance of international treaties should declare war on Germany with the demand that Belgium be liberated and indemnified. In that case, the sympathies of socialists would, of course, be with Germany's enemies. But the whole point is that the Triple (and Quadruple) Entente is waging war, *not* over Belgium: this is common knowledge and only hypocrites will disguise the fact. Britain is grabbing at Germany's colonies and Turkey; Russia is grabbing at Galicia and Turkey; France wants Alsace-Lorraine and even the left bank of the Rhine; a treaty has been concluded with Italy for the division of the spoils (Albania and Asia Minor); bargaining is going on with Bulgaria and Rumania, also for the division of the spoils. In the present war waged by the governments of today, it is *impossible* to help Belgium *otherwise* than by helping to throttle Austria or Turkey, etc.! Where does "defence of the fatherland" come in here?? Herein lies the specific feature of imperialist war, a war between reactionary-bourgeois and historically outmoded

governments, waged for the purpose of oppressing other nations. Whoever justifies participation in the present war is perpetuating the imperialist oppression of nations. Whoever advocates taking advantage of the present embarrassments of the governments so as to fight for the social revolution is championing the real freedom of really all nations, which is possible only under socialism.

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**PREFACE TO N. BUKHARIN'S PAMPHLET,  
"IMPERIALISM AND THE WORLD ECONOMY"**

There is no need for any special explanation to show that the subject dealt with in Bukharin's paper is topical and important. The question of imperialism is not only one of the most essential but is probably the most essential question in that sphere of economic science which traces the change in the forms of capitalism in modern times. Anyone interested not only in economics but in any aspect of contemporary social life must certainly acquaint himself with the facts pertaining to this sphere which the author has collected in such abundance from the latest material. It goes without saying that there can be no concrete historical assessment of the current war, unless it is based on a thorough analysis of the nature of imperialism, both in its economic and political aspects. Otherwise, it would be impossible to arrive at a correct understanding of the economic and diplomatic history of the last few decades without which it would be ridiculous to expect to work out a correct view of the war. From the standpoint of Marxism, which states most definitely the requirements of modern science on this question in general, one can merely smile at the "scientific" value of such methods as taking the concrete historical assessment of the war to mean a random selection of facts which the ruling classes of the country find gratifying or convenient, facts taken at will from diplomatic "documents", current political developments, etc. Plekhanov, for instance, must have completely parted with Marxism to substitute the angling after a couple of little facts which delighted Purishkevich as much as Milyukov, for an analysis of the essential properties and tendencies of imperialism, as the system of economic relations of modern highly developed, mature and rotten-ripe

capitalism. The scientific concept of imperialism, moreover, is reduced to a sort of term of abuse applied to the immediate competitors, rivals and opponents of the two imperialists mentioned, each of whom holds exactly the same class position as his rivals and opponents! This is not at all surprising in this day of words forgotten, principles lost, philosophies overthrown, and resolutions and solemn promises discarded.

N. I. Bukharin's paper has especially high scientific value because he examines the main facts of the world economy relating to imperialism as a whole, as a definite stage of development of the most highly developed capitalism. There was an epoch of relatively "peaceful" capitalism, when it had completely defeated feudalism in the leading European countries and was free to develop with the utmost—*relative*—tranquillity and smoothness, expanding "peacefully" over the vast expanses of the as yet unsettled lands and the countries not yet irrevocably drawn into the capitalist maelstrom. Of course, even in that period, roughly between 1871 and 1914, "peaceful" capitalism created conditions of life that were a very far cry from actual "peace", both in the military and the class sense. For nine-tenths of the population of the leading countries, for hundreds of millions in the colonies and backward countries, that epoch was not one of "peace" but of oppression, suffering and horror, which was the more terrible, possibly, for appearing to be a "horror without end". This epoch is gone for good, it has given way to an epoch which is relatively much more violent, spasmodic, disastrous and conflicting, an epoch which for the mass of the population is typified not so much by a "horror without end" as by a "horrible end".

In all this it is extremely important to bear in mind that this change has been brought about in no other way but the immediate development, expansion and continuation of the most profound and basic trends in capitalism and in commodity production in general. These main trends, which have been in evidence all over the world for centuries, are the growth of exchange and the growth of large-scale production. At a definite stage in the development of exchange, at a definite stage in the growth of large-scale production, namely, at the stage which was attained towards the turn of the century, exchange so internationalised economic relations and capital, and large-scale production assumed such

proportions that monopoly began to replace free competition. Monopoly associations of entrepreneurs, trusts, instead of enterprises, "freely" competing with each other—at home and *in relations between the countries*—became typical. Finance capital took over as the typical "lord" of the world; it is particularly mobile and flexible, particularly interknit at home and internationally, and particularly impersonal and divorced from production proper; it lends itself to concentration with particular ease, and has been concentrated to an unusual degree already, so that literally a few hundred multimillionaires and millionaires control the destiny of the world.

*Abstract* theoretical reasoning may lead to the conclusion at which Kautsky has arrived—in a somewhat different fashion but also by abandoning Marxism—namely, that the time is not too far off when these magnates of capital will unite on a world scale in a single world trust, substituting an internationally united finance capital for the competition and struggle between sums of finance capital nationally isolated. This conclusion is, however, just as abstract, simplified and incorrect as the similar conclusion drawn by our Struvists and Economists<sup>10</sup> of the nineties, when they drew conclusions from the progressive nature of capitalism, its inevitability and its final victory in Russia that ranged from the apologetic (admiration for capitalism, reconciliation with it, and glorification instead of struggle), and the apolitical (that is, a denial of politics or a denial of the importance of politics, the probability of general political upheavals, etc., a mistake specifically Economist), to the outrightly "strike-ist" (the "general strike", as the apotheosis of the strike movement, brought up to a point where other forms of movement are forgotten or ignored and capitalism is overcome solely by a "leap" from it to a strike, pure and simple). There is evidence that even today the indisputable fact that imperialism is progressive, when compared with the semi-philistine "paradise" of free competition, and that imperialism and its final victory over "peaceful" capitalism in the leading countries of the world are inevitable—that this fact is still capable of producing an equally great and varied number of political and apolitical mistakes and misadventures.

With Kautsky, in particular, his clear break with Marxism has not taken the form of a denial or neglect of politics, or of a "leap" *over* the political conflicts, upheavals and trans-

formations, so numerous and varied in the imperialist epoch; it has not taken the form of an apology of imperialism but of a *dream of "peaceful" capitalism*. That "peaceful" capitalism has given way to non-peaceful, aggressive, cataclysmic imperialism Kautsky is forced to admit, because that is something he had admitted as far back as 1909 in the paper in which he last produced some integrated conclusions as a Marxist.<sup>11</sup> But if it is impossible to toy in rude, simple fashion with the dream of a straightforward retreat from imperialism to "peaceful" capitalism, why not let these dreams, which are essentially petty-bourgeois, take the form of innocent speculation on "peaceful" "ultra-imperialism"? If the international integration of national (rather nationally isolated) imperialisms is to be called ultra-imperialism, which "could" remove the conflicts, such as wars, political upheavals, etc., which the petty bourgeois finds especially unpalatable, disquieting, and alarming, why not, in that case, make an escape from the present highly conflicting and cataclysmic epoch of imperialism, which is here and now, by means of innocent dreams of an "ultra-imperialism" which is relatively peaceful, relatively lacking in conflict and relatively un-cataclysmic? Why not try to escape the acute problems that have been and are being posed by the epoch of imperialism that has dawned for Europe by dreaming up the possibility of it soon passing away and being followed by a relatively "peaceful" epoch of "ultra-imperialism" that will not require any "abrupt" tactics? Kautsky says precisely that "such a [ultra-imperialist] new phase of capitalism is at any rate imaginable", but that "there are not yet enough prerequisites to decide whether or not it is feasible" (*Die Neue Zeit*,<sup>12</sup> April 30, 1915, p. 144).

There is not a whit of Marxism in this urge to ignore the imperialism which is here and to escape into the realm of an "ultra-imperialism" which may or may not arrive. In this formulation, Marxism is recognised in that "new phase of capitalism" which its inventor himself does not warrant *can be realised*, while in the present stage (which is already here) the petty-bourgeois and profoundly reactionary desire to blunt the contradictions is substituted for Marxism. Kautsky *swore* to be a Marxist in this coming, acute and cataclysmic epoch, which he was forced to predict and recognise very definitely in his 1909 paper on this coming epoch. Now that

this epoch has most definitely arrived, Kautsky once again *swears* to be a Marxist in the coming epoch of ultra-imperialism, which may or may not arrive! In short, any number of promises to be a Marxist in *another* epoch, not now, not under present conditions, not in this epoch! Marxism on credit, Marxism in promises, Marxism tomorrow, a petty-bourgeois, opportunist theory—and *not only a theory*—of blunting contradictions today. This is something like the internationalism for export which is very popular today with ardent—oh, so ardent!—internationalists and Marxists who sympathise with every manifestation of internationalism—in the enemy camp, anywhere, but not at home, not among their allies; they sympathise with democracy—when it remains an “allied” promise; they sympathise with “the self-determination of nations”, but only *not* of those dependent on the nation which has the honour of having the sympathiser among its citizens. In a word, it is one of the 1,001 varieties of hypocrisy.

Can it be denied, however, that a new phase of capitalism is “imaginable” in the abstract *after* imperialism, namely, ultra-imperialism? No, it cannot. Such a phase can be imagined. But in practice this means becoming an opportunist, turning away from the acute problems of the day to dream of the unacute problems of the future. In theory this means refusing to be guided by actual developments, *forsaking* them arbitrarily for such dreams. There is no doubt that the trend of development is *towards* a single world trust absorbing all enterprises without exception and all states without exception. But this development proceeds in such circumstances, at such a pace, through such contradictions, conflicts and upheavals—not only economic but political, national, etc., etc.—that inevitably imperialism will burst and capitalism will be transformed into its opposite *long before* one world trust materialises, before the “ultra-imperialist”, world-wide amalgamation of national finance capitals takes place.

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*U. Ilyin*

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## From IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM<sup>13</sup>

### VII. IMPERIALISM, AS A SPECIAL STAGE OF CAPITALISM

We must now try to sum up, to draw together the threads of what has been said above on the subject of imperialism. Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general. But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development, when certain of its fundamental characteristics began to change into their opposites, when the features of the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system had taken shape and revealed themselves in all spheres. Economically, the main thing in this process is the displacement of capitalist free competition by capitalist monopoly. Free competition is the basic feature of capitalism, and of commodity production generally; monopoly is the exact opposite of free competition, but we have seen the latter being transformed into monopoly before our eyes, creating large-scale industry and forcing out small industry, replacing large-scale by still larger-scale industry, and carrying concentration of production and capital to the point where out of it has grown and is growing monopoly: cartels, syndicates and trusts, and merging with them, the capital of a dozen or so banks, which manipulate thousands of millions. At the same time the monopolies, which have grown out of free competition, do not eliminate the latter, but exist above it and alongside it, and thereby give rise to a number of very acute, intense antagonisms, frictions and conflicts. Monopoly is the transition from capitalism to a higher system.

If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include

what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrialists; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories unseized by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of monopolist possession of the territory of the world, which has been completely divided up.

But very brief definitions, although convenient, for they sum up the main points, are nevertheless inadequate, since we have to deduce from them some especially important features of the phenomenon that has to be defined. And so, without forgetting the conditional and relative value of all definitions in general, which can never embrace all the concatenations of a phenomenon in its full development, we must give a definition of imperialism that will include the following five of its basic features:

(1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; (2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital", of a financial oligarchy; (3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; (4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves, and (5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed. Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.

We shall see later that imperialism can and must be defined differently if we bear in mind not only the basic, purely economic concepts—to which the above definition is limited—but also the historical place of this stage of capitalism in relation to capitalism in general, or the relation between imperialism and the two main trends in the working-class movement. The thing to be noted at this point is that imperialism, as interpreted above, undoubtedly represents a

special stage in the development of capitalism. To enable the reader to obtain the most well-grounded idea of imperialism, I deliberately tried to quote as extensively as possible *bourgeois* economists who have to admit the particularly incontrovertible facts concerning the latest stage of capitalist economy. With the same object in view, I have quoted detailed statistics which enable one to see to what degree bank capital, etc., has grown, in what precisely the transformation of quantity into quality, of developed capitalism into imperialism, was expressed. Needless to say, of course, all boundaries in nature and in society are conventional and changeable, and it would be absurd to argue, for example, about the particular year or decade in which imperialism "definitely" became established.

In the matter of defining imperialism, however, we have to enter into controversy, primarily, with Karl Kautsky, the principal Marxist theoretician of the epoch of the so-called Second International<sup>14</sup>—that is, of the twenty-five years between 1889 and 1914. The fundamental ideas expressed in our definition of imperialism were very resolutely attacked by Kautsky in 1915, and even in November 1914, when he said that imperialism must not be regarded as a "phase" or stage of economy, but as a policy, a definite policy "preferred" by finance capital; that imperialism must not be "identified" with "present-day capitalism"; that if imperialism is to be understood to mean "all the phenomena of present-day capitalism"—cartels, protection, the domination of the financiers, and colonial policy—then the question as to whether imperialism is necessary to capitalism becomes reduced to the "flattest tautology", because, in that case, "imperialism is naturally a vital necessity for capitalism", and so on. The best way to present Kautsky's idea is to quote his own definition of imperialism, which is diametrically opposed to the substance of the ideas which I have set forth (for the objections coming from the camp of the German Marxists, who have been advocating similar ideas for many years already, have been long known to Kautsky as the objections of a definite trend in Marxism).

Kautsky's definition is as follows:

"Imperialism is a product of highly developed industrial capitalism. It consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to bring under its control or to annex all large

areas of *agrarian* [Kautsky's italics] territory, irrespective of what nations inhabit it."<sup>\*</sup>

This definition is of no use at all because it one-sidedly, i.e., arbitrarily, singles out only the national question (although the latter is extremely important in itself as well as in its relation to imperialism), it arbitrarily and *inaccurately* connects this question *only* with industrial capital in the countries which annex other nations, and in an equally arbitrary and inaccurate manner pushes into the forefront the annexation of agrarian regions.

Imperialism is a striving for annexations—this is what the *political* part of Kautsky's definition amounts to. It is correct, but very incomplete, for politically, imperialism is, in general, a striving towards violence and reaction. For the moment, however, we are interested in the *economic* aspect of the question, which Kautsky *himself* introduced into *his* definition. The inaccuracies in Kautsky's definition are glaring. The characteristic feature of imperialism is *not* industrial *but* finance capital. It is not an accident that in France it was precisely the extraordinarily rapid development of *finance* capital, and the weakening of industrial capital, that, from the eighties onwards, gave rise to the extreme intensification of annexationist (colonial) policy. The characteristic feature of imperialism is precisely that it strives to annex *not only* agrarian territories, but even most highly industrialised regions (German appetite for Belgium; French appetite for Lorraine), because (1) the fact that the world is already partitioned obliges those contemplating a *redivision* to reach out for *every kind* of territory, and (2) an essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between several great powers in the striving for hegemony, i.e., for the conquest of territory, not so much directly for themselves as to weaken the adversary and undermine *his* hegemony. (Belgium is particularly important for Germany as a base for operations against Britain; Britain needs Baghdad as a base for operations against Germany, etc.).

Kautsky refers especially—and repeatedly—to English writers who, he alleges, have given a purely political meaning to the word "imperialism" in the sense that he, Kautsky,

understands it. We take up the work by the English writer Hobson, *Imperialism*, which appeared in 1902, and there we read:

"The new imperialism differs from the older, first, in substituting for the ambition of a single growing empire the theory and the practice of competing empires, each motivated by similar lusts of political aggrandisement and commercial gain; secondly, in the dominance of financial or investing over mercantile interests."<sup>\*</sup>

We see that Kautsky is absolutely wrong in referring to English writers generally (unless he meant the vulgar English imperialists, or the avowed apologists for imperialism). We see that Kautsky, while claiming that he continues to advocate Marxism, as a matter of fact takes a step backward compared with the *social-liberal* Hobson, who *more correctly* takes into account two "historically concrete" (Kautsky's definition is a mockery of historical concreteness!) features of modern imperialism: (1) the competition between *several* imperialisms, and (2) the predominance of the financier over the merchant. If it is chiefly a question of the annexation of agrarian countries by industrial countries, then the role of the merchant is put in the forefront.

Kautsky's definition is not only wrong and un-Marxist. It serves as a basis for a whole system of views which signify a rupture with Marxist theory and Marxist practice all along the line. I shall refer to this later. The argument about words which Kautsky raises as to whether the latest stage of capitalism should be called imperialism or the stage of finance capital is not worth serious attention. Call it what you will, it makes no difference. The essence of the matter is that Kautsky detaches the politics of imperialism from its economics, speaks of annexations as being a policy "preferred" by finance capital, and opposes to it another bourgeois policy which, he alleges, is possible on this very same basis of finance capital. It follows, then, that monopolies in the economy are compatible with non-monopolistic, non-violent, non-annexationist methods in politics. It follows, then, that the territorial division of the world, which was completed during this very epoch of finance capital, and which constitutes the basis of the present peculiar forms of rivalry be-

<sup>\*</sup> *Die Neue Zeit*, 1914, 2 (B. 32), S. 909, Sept. 11, 1914; cf. 1915, 2, S. 107 et seq.

<sup>\*</sup> Hobson, *Imperialism*, London, 1902, p. 324.

tween the biggest capitalist states, is compatible with a non-imperialist policy. The result is a slurring-over and a blunting of the most profound contradictions of the latest stage of capitalism, instead of an exposure of their depth; the result is bourgeois reformism instead of Marxism.

Kautsky enters into controversy with the German apologist of imperialism and annexations, Cunow, who clumsily and cynically argues that imperialism is present-day capitalism; the development of capitalism is inevitable and progressive; therefore imperialism is progressive; therefore we should grovel before it and glorify it! This is something like the caricature of the Russian Marxists which the Narodniks<sup>45</sup> drew in 1894-95. They argued: if the Marxists believe that capitalism is inevitable in Russia, that it is progressive, then they ought to open a tavern and begin to implant capitalism! Kautsky's reply to Cunow is as follows: imperialism is not present-day capitalism; it is only one of the forms of the policy of present-day capitalism. This policy we can and should fight, fight imperialism, annexations, etc.

The reply seems quite plausible, but in effect it is a more subtle and more disguised (and therefore more dangerous) advocacy of conciliation with imperialism, because a "fight" against the policy of the trusts and banks that does not affect the economic basis of the trusts and banks is mere bourgeois reformism and pacifism, the benevolent and innocent expression of pious wishes. Evasion of existing contradictions, forgetting the most important of them, instead of revealing their full depth—such is Kautsky's theory, which has nothing in common with Marxism. Naturally, such a "theory" can only serve the purpose of advocating unity with the Cunows!

"From the purely economic point of view," writes Kautsky, "it is not impossible that capitalism will yet go through a new phase, that of the extension of the policy of the cartels to foreign policy, the phase of ultra-imperialism",\* i.e., of a super-imperialism, of a union of the imperialisms of the whole world and not struggles among them, a phase when wars shall cease under capitalism, a phase of "the joint exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital".\*\*

\* *Die Neue Zeit*, 1914, 2 (B. 32), S. 921, Sept. 11, 1914; cf. 1915, 2, S. 107 et seq.

\*\* *Die Neue Zeit*, 1915, 1, S. 144, April 30, 1915.

We shall have to deal with this "theory of ultra-imperialism" later on in order to show in detail how decisively and completely it breaks with Marxism. At present, in keeping with the general plan of the present work, we must examine the exact economic data on this question. "From the purely economic point of view", is "ultra-imperialism" possible, or is it ultra-nonsense?

If the purely economic point of view is meant to be a "pure" abstraction, then all that can be said reduces itself to the following proposition: development is proceeding towards monopolies, hence, towards a single world monopoly, towards a single world trust. This is indisputable, but it is also as completely meaningless as is the statement that "development is proceeding" towards the manufacture of food-stuffs in laboratories. In this sense the "theory" of ultra-imperialism is no less absurd than a "theory of ultra-agriculture" would be.

If, however, we are discussing the "purely economic" conditions of the epoch of finance capital as a historically concrete epoch which began at the turn of the twentieth century, then the best reply that one can make to the lifeless abstractions of "ultra-imperialism" (which serve exclusively a most reactionary aim: that of diverting attention from the depth of *existing* antagonisms) is to contrast them with the concrete economic realities of the present-day world economy. Kautsky's utterly meaningless talk about ultra-imperialism encourages, among other things, that profoundly mistaken idea which only brings grist to the mill of the apologists of imperialism, i.e., that the rule of finance capital *lessens* the unevenness and contradictions inherent in the world economy, whereas in reality it *increases* them.

R. Calwer, in his little book, *An Introduction to the World Economy*,\* made an attempt to summarise the main, purely economic, data that enable one to obtain a concrete picture of the internal relations of the world economy at the turn of the twentieth century. He divides the world into five "principal economic areas", as follows: (1) Central Europe (the whole of Europe with the exception of Russia and Great Britain); (2) Great Britain; (3) Russia; (4) Eastern Asia; (5) America; he includes the colonies in the "areas" of the states

\* R. Calwer, *Einführung in die Weltwirtschaft*, Berlin, 1906.

to which they belong and "leaves aside" a few countries not distributed according to areas, such as Persia, Afghanistan, and Arabia in Asia, Morocco and Abyssinia in Africa, etc.

Here is a brief summary of the economic data he quotes on these areas:

Principal economic areas	Area (000,000 sq. km.)	Population (000,000)	Transport		Trade	Industry Output (000,000 tons)		Number of cotton spindles (000,000)
			Railways (000 km.)	Mercantile fleet (000,000 tons)	Imports and exports (000,000,000 marks)	Coal	Iron	
1) Central Europe	27.6 (23.6)*	388 (146)	204	8	41	251	15	26
2) Britain	28.9 (28.6)*	398 (355)	140	41	25	249	9	51
3) Russia	22	131	63	1	3	16	3	7
4) Eastern Asia	12	389	8	1	2	8	0.02	2
5) America	30	148	379	6	14	245	14	19

We see three areas of highly developed capitalism (high development of means of transport, of trade and of industry): the Central European, the British and the American areas. Among these are three states which dominate the world: Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. Imperialist rivalry and the struggle between these countries have become extremely keen because Germany has only an insignificant area and few colonies; the creation of "Central Europe" is still a matter for the future, it is being born in the midst of a desperate struggle. For the moment the distinctive feature of the whole of Europe is political disunity. In the British and American areas, on the other hand, political concentration is very highly developed, but there is a vast disparity between the immense colonies of the one and the insignificant colonies of the other. In the colonies, however, capital-

\* The figures in parentheses show the area and population of the colonies.

ism is only beginning to develop. The struggle for South America is becoming more and more acute.

There are two areas where capitalism is little developed: Russia and Eastern Asia. In the former, the population is extremely sparse, in the latter it is extremely dense; in the former political concentration is high, in the latter it does not exist. The partitioning of China is only just beginning, and the struggle for her between Japan, the U.S., etc., is continually gaining in intensity.

Compare this reality—the vast diversity of economic and political conditions, the extreme disparity in the rate of development of the various countries, etc., and the violent struggle among the imperialist states—with Kautsky's silly little fable about "peaceful" ultra-imperialism. Is this not the reactionary attempt of a frightened philistine to hide from stern reality? Are not the international cartels which Kautsky imagines are the embryos of "ultra-imperialism" (in the same way as one "can" describe the manufacture of tablets in a laboratory as ultra-agriculture in embryo) an example of the division *and the redivision* of the world, the transition from peaceful division to non-peaceful division and vice versa? Is not American and other finance capital, which divided the whole world peacefully with Germany's participation in, for example, the international rail syndicate, or the international mercantile shipping trust, now engaged in *redividing* the world on the basis of a new relation of forces that is being changed by methods *anything but* peaceful?

Finance capital and the trusts do not diminish but increase the differences in the rate of growth of the various parts of the world economy. Once the relation of forces is changed, what other solution of the contradictions can be found *under capitalism* than that of *force*? Railway statistics\* provide remarkably exact data on the different rates of growth of capitalism and finance capital in world economy. In the last decades of imperialist development, the total length of railways has changed as follows:

\* *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das deutsche Reich, 1915; Archiv für Eisenbahnwesen, 1892.* Minor details for the distribution of railways among the colonies of the various countries in 1890 had to be estimated approximately.

	1890	1913	Railways (000 kilometres)	
Europe . . . . .	224	346	+122	
U.S. . . . .	268	411	+143	
All colonies . . . . .	82	240	+128	
Independent and semi-independent states of Asia and America	43	137	+94	} +222
		125	347	
<i>Total</i>	617	1,104		

Thus, the development of railways has been most rapid in the colonies and in the independent (and semi-independent) states of Asia and America. Here, as we know, the finance capital of the four or five biggest capitalist states holds undisputed sway. Two hundred thousand kilometres of new railways in the colonies and in the other countries of Asia and America represent a capital of more than 40,000 million marks newly invested on particularly advantageous terms, with special guarantees of a good return and with profitable orders for steel works, etc., etc.

Capitalism is growing with the greatest rapidity in the colonies and in overseas countries. Among the latter, *new* imperialist powers are emerging (e.g., Japan). The struggle among the world imperialisms is becoming more acute. The tribute levied by finance capital on the most profitable colonial and overseas enterprises is increasing. In the division of this "booty", an exceptionally large part goes to countries which do not always stand at the top of the list in the rapidity of the development of their productive forces. In the case of the biggest countries, together with their colonies, the total length of railways was as follows:

	(000 kilometres)		
	1890	1913	
U.S. . . . .	268	413	+145
British Empire . . . . .	107	208	+101
Russia . . . . .	32	78	+ 46
Germany . . . . .	43	68	+ 25
France . . . . .	41	63	+ 22
<i>Total for 5 powers</i>	491	830	+339

Thus, about 80 per cent of the total existing railways are concentrated in the hands of the five biggest powers. But the concentration of the *ownership* of these railways, the concentration of finance capital, is immeasurably greater since the French and British millionaires, for example, own an enormous amount of shares and bonds in American, Russian and other railways.

Thanks to her colonies, Great Britain has increased the length of "her" railways by 100,000 kilometres, four times as much as Germany. And yet, it is well known that the development of productive forces in Germany, and especially the development of the coal and iron industries, has been incomparably more rapid during this period than in Britain—not to speak of France and Russia. In 1892, Germany produced 4,900,000 tons of pig-iron and Great Britain produced 6,800,000 tons; in 1912, Germany produced 17,600,000 tons and Great Britain, 9,000,000 tons. Germany, therefore, had an overwhelming superiority over Britain in this respect.\* The question is: what means other than war could there be *under capitalism* to overcome the disparity between the development of productive forces and the accumulation of capital on the one side, and the division of colonies and spheres of influence for finance capital on the other?

### VIII. PARASITISM AND DECAY OF CAPITALISM

We now have to examine yet another significant aspect of imperialism to which most of the discussions on the subject usually attach insufficient importance. One of the shortcomings of the Marxist Hilferding is that on this point he has taken a step backward compared with the non-Marxist Hobson. I refer to parasitism, which is characteristic of imperialism.

As we have seen, the deepest economic foundation of imperialism is monopoly. This is capitalist monopoly, i.e., monopoly which has grown out of capitalism and which exists in the general environment of capitalism, commodity production and competition, in permanent and insoluble con-

\* Cf. also Edgar Crammond, "The Economic Relations of the British and German Empires" in *The Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, July 1914, p. 777 et seq.



tradition to this general environment. Nevertheless, like all monopoly, it inevitably engenders a tendency to stagnation and decay. Since monopoly prices are established, even temporarily, the motive cause of technical and, consequently, of all other progress disappears to a certain extent and, further, the *economic* possibility arises of deliberately retarding technical progress. For instance, in America, a certain Owens invented a machine which revolutionised the manufacture of bottles. The German bottle-manufacturing cartel purchased Owens's patent, but pigeonholed it, refrained from utilising it. Certainly, monopoly under capitalism can never completely, and for a very long period of time, eliminate competition in the world market (and this, by the by, is one of the reasons why the theory of ultra-imperialism is so absurd). Certainly, the possibility of reducing the cost of production and increasing profits by introducing technical improvements operates in the direction of change. But the *tendency* to stagnation and decay, which is characteristic of monopoly, continues to operate, and in some branches of industry, in some countries, for certain periods of time, it gains the upper hand.

The monopoly ownership of very extensive, rich or well-situated colonies, operates in the same direction.

Further, imperialism is an immense accumulation of money capital in a few countries, amounting, as we have seen, to 100,000-150,000 million francs in securities. Hence the extraordinary growth of a class, or rather, of a stratum of rentiers, i.e., people who live by "clipping coupons", who take no part in any enterprise whatever, whose profession is idleness. The export of capital, one of the most essential economic bases of imperialism, still more completely isolates the rentiers from production and sets the seal of parasitism on the whole country that lives by exploiting the labour of several overseas countries and colonies.

"In 1893," writes Hobson, "the British capital invested abroad represented about 15 per cent of the total wealth of the United Kingdom."\* Let me remind the reader that by 1915 this capital had increased about two and a half times. "Aggressive imperialism," says Hobson further on, "which costs the tax-payer so dear, which is of so little value to the manufacturer and trader . . . is a source of great gain to the

\* Hobson, *op. cit.*, pp. 59, 62.

investor. . . . The annual income Great Britain derives from commissions in her whole foreign and colonial trade, import and export, is estimated by Sir R. Giffen at £18,000,000 [nearly 170 million rubles] for 1899, taken at 2½ per cent, upon a turnover of £800,000,000." Great as this sum is, it cannot explain the aggressive imperialism of Great Britain, which is explained by the income of £90 million to £100 million from "invested" capital, the income of the rentiers.

The income of the rentiers is *five times greater* than the income obtained from the foreign trade of the biggest "trading" country in the world! This is the essence of imperialism and imperialist parasitism.

For that reason the term "rentier state" (*Rentnerstaat*), or usurer state, is coming into common use in the economic literature that deals with imperialism. The world has become divided into a handful of usurer states and a vast majority of debtor states. "At the top of the list of foreign investments," says Schulze-Gaevernitz, "are those placed in politically dependent or allied countries: Great Britain grants loans to Egypt, Japan, China and South America. Her navy plays here the part of bailiff in case of necessity. Great Britain's political power protects her from the indignation of her debtors."\* Sartorius von Waltershausen in his book, *The National Economic System of Capital Investments Abroad*, cites Holland as the model "rentier state" and points out that Great Britain and France are now becoming such.\*\* Schilder is of the opinion that five industrial states have become "definitely pronounced creditor countries": Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland. He does not include Holland in this list simply because she is "industrially little developed".\*\* The United States is a creditor only of the American countries.

"Great Britain," says Schulze-Gaevernitz, "is gradually becoming transformed from an industrial into a creditor state. Notwithstanding the absolute increase in industrial output and the export of manufactured goods, there is an increase in the relative importance of income from interest

\* Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Britischer Imperialismus*, S. 320 et seq.

\*\* Sartorius von Waltershausen, *Das volkswirtschaftliche System*, etc., Berlin, 1907, Buch IV.

\*\*\* Schilder, *Entwicklungstendenzen der Weltwirtschaft*, Berlin, 1912, Bd. I, S. 393.

and dividends, issues of securities, commissions and speculation in the whole of the national economy. In my opinion it is precisely this that forms the economic basis of imperialist ascendancy. The creditor is more firmly attached to the debtor than the seller is to the buyer.”\* In regard to Germany, A. Lansburgh, the publisher of the Berlin *Die Bank*,<sup>16</sup> in 1911, in an article entitled “Germany—a Rentier State”, wrote the following: “People in Germany are ready to sneer at the yearning to become rentiers that is observed in France. But they forget that as far as the bourgeoisie is concerned the situation in Germany is becoming more and more like that in France.”\*\*

The rentier state is a state of parasitic, decaying capitalism, and this circumstance cannot fail to influence all the socio-political conditions of the countries concerned, in general, and the two fundamental trends in the working-class movement, in particular. To demonstrate this in the clearest possible manner let me quote Hobson, who is a most reliable witness, since he cannot be suspected of leaning towards Marxist orthodoxy; on the other hand, he is an Englishman who is very well acquainted with the situation in the country which is richest in colonies, in finance capital, and in imperialist experience.

With the Anglo-Boer War<sup>17</sup> fresh in his mind, Hobson describes the connection between imperialism and the interests of the “financiers”, their growing profits from contracts, supplies, etc., and writes: “While the directors of this definitely parasitic policy are capitalists, the same motives appeal to special classes of the workers. In many towns most important trades are dependent upon government employment or contracts; the imperialism of the metal and ship-building centres is attributable in no small degree to this fact.” Two sets of circumstances, in this writer’s opinion, have weakened the old empires: (1) “economic parasitism”, and (2) the formation of armies recruited from subject people. “There is first the habit of economic parasitism, by which the ruling state has used its provinces, colonies, and dependencies in order to enrich its ruling class and to bribe its lower classes into acquiescence.” And I shall add that the economic

\* Schulze-Gaevernitz, op. cit., S. 122.

\*\* *Die Bank*, 1911, 1, S. 10-11.

possibility of such bribery, whatever its form may be, requires high monopolist profits.

As for the second circumstance, Hobson writes: “One of the strangest symptoms of the blindness of imperialism is the reckless indifference with which Great Britain, France and other imperial nations are embarking on this perilous dependence. Great Britain has gone farthest. Most of the fighting by which we have won our Indian Empire has been done by natives; in India, as more recently in Egypt, great standing armies are placed under British commanders; almost all the fighting associated with our African dominions, except in the southern part, has been done for us by natives.”

Hobson gives the following economic appraisal of the prospect of the partitioning of China: “The greater part of Western Europe might then assume the appearance and character already exhibited by tracts of country in the South of England, in the Riviera, and in the tourist-ridden or residential parts of Italy and Switzerland, little clusters of wealthy aristocrats drawing dividends and pensions from the Far East, with a somewhat larger group of professional retainers and tradesmen and a large body of personal servants and workers in the transport trade and in the final stages of production of the more perishable goods: all the main arterial industries would have disappeared, the staple foods and manufactures flowing in as tribute from Asia and Africa. . . . We have foreshadowed the possibility of even a larger alliance of Western states, a European federation of Great Powers which, so far from forwarding the cause of world civilisation, might introduce the gigantic peril of a Western parasitism, a group of advanced industrial nations, whose upper classes drew vast tribute from Asia and Africa, with which they supported great tame masses of retainers, no longer engaged in the staple industries of agriculture and manufacture, but kept in the performance of personal or minor industrial services under the control of a new financial aristocracy. Let those who would scout such a theory [it would be better to say: prospect] as undeserving of consideration examine the economic and social condition of districts in Southern England today which are already reduced to this condition, and reflect upon the vast extension of such a system which might be rendered feasible by the subjection of China to the economic control of similar groups of finan-

ciers, investors, and political and business officials, draining the greatest potential reservoir of profit the world has ever known, in order to consume it in Europe. The situation is far too complex, the play of world forces far too incalculable, to render this or any other single interpretation of the future very probable: but the influences which govern the imperialism of Western Europe today are moving in this direction, and, unless counteracted or diverted, make towards some such consummation.”\*

The author is quite right: if the forces of imperialism had not been counteracted they would have led precisely to what he has described. The significance of a “United States of Europe” in the present imperialist situation is correctly appraised. He should have added, however, that, also *within* the working-class movement, the opportunists, who are for the moment victorious in most countries, are “working” systematically and undeviatingly in this very direction. Imperialism, which means the partitioning of the world and the exploitation of other countries besides China, which means high monopoly profits for a handful of very rich countries, makes it economically possible to bribe the upper strata of the proletariat, and thereby fosters, gives shape to, and strengthens opportunism. We must not, however, lose sight of the forces which counteract imperialism in general, and opportunism in particular, and which, naturally, the social-liberal Hobson is unable to perceive.

The German opportunist, Gerhard Hildebrand, who was once expelled from the Party for defending imperialism, and who could today be a leader of the so-called “Social-Democratic” Party of Germany, supplements Hobson well by his advocacy of a “United States of Western Europe” (without Russia) for the purpose of “joint” action . . . against the African Negroes, against the “great Islamic movement”, for the maintenance of a “powerful army and navy”, against a “Sino-Japanese coalition”,\*\* etc.

The description of “British imperialism” in Schulze-Gaevernitz’s book reveals the same parasitical traits. The national income of Great Britain approximately doubled from 1865 to 1898, while the income “from abroad” increased

\* Hobson, op. cit., pp. 103, 205, 144, 335, 386.

\*\* Gerhard Hildebrand, *Die Erschütterung der Industrieherrschaft und des Industriesozialismus*, 1910, S. 229 et seq.

*ninefold* in the same period. While the “merit” of imperialism is that it “trains the Negro to habits of industry” (you cannot manage without coercion. . .), the “danger” of imperialism lies in that “Europe will shift the burden of physical toil—first agricultural and mining, then the rougher work in industry—on to the coloured races, and itself be content with the role of rentier, and in this way, perhaps, pave the way for the economic, and later, the political emancipation of the coloured races”.

An increasing proportion of land in England is being taken out of cultivation and used for sport, for the diversion of the rich. As far as Scotland—the most aristocratic place for hunting and other sports—is concerned, it is said that “it lives on its past and on Mr. Carnegie” (the American multimillionaire). On horse racing and fox hunting alone England annually spends £14,000,000 (nearly 130 million rubles). The number of rentiers in England is about one million. The percentage of the productively employed population to the total population is declining:

	Population England and Wales (000,000)	Workers in basic industries (000,000)	Per cent of total population
1851	17.9	4.1	23
1901	32.5	4.9	15

And in speaking of the British working class the bourgeois student of “British imperialism at the beginning of the twentieth century” is obliged to distinguish systematically between the “*upper stratum*” of the workers and the “*lower stratum of the proletariat proper*”. The upper stratum furnishes the bulk of the membership of co-operatives, of trade unions, of sporting clubs and of numerous religious sects. To this level is adapted the electoral system, which in Great Britain is still “*sufficiently restricted to exclude the lower stratum of the proletariat proper*”!! In order to present the condition of the British working class in a rosy light, only this upper stratum—which constitutes a *minority* of the proletariat—is usually spoken of. For instance, “the problem of unemployment is mainly a London problem and that of the lower proletarian stratum, to which the politicians attach lit-

the importance. . . .”<sup>\*</sup> He should have said: to which the bourgeois politicians and the “socialist” opportunists attach little importance.

One of the special features of imperialism connected with the facts I am describing, is the decline in emigration from imperialist countries and the increase in immigration into these countries from the more backward countries where lower wages are paid. As Hobson observes, emigration from Great Britain has been declining since 1884. In that year the number of emigrants was 242,000, while in 1900, the number was 169,000. Emigration from Germany reached the highest point between 1881 and 1890, with a total of 1,453,000 emigrants. In the course of the following two decades, it fell to 544,000 and to 341,000. On the other hand, there was an increase in the number of workers entering Germany from Austria, Italy, Russia and other countries. According to the 1907 census, there were 1,342,294 foreigners in Germany, of whom 440,800 were industrial workers and 257,329 agricultural workers.<sup>\*\*</sup> In France, the workers employed in the mining industry are, “in great part”, foreigners: Poles, Italians and Spaniards.<sup>\*\*\*</sup> In the United States, immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe are engaged in the most poorly paid jobs, while American workers provide the highest percentage of overseers or of the better-paid workers.<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> Imperialism has the tendency to create privileged sections also among the workers, and to detach them from the broad masses of the proletariat.

It must be observed that in Great Britain the tendency of imperialism to split the workers, to strengthen opportunism among them and to cause temporary decay in the working-class movement, revealed itself much earlier than the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries; for two important distinguishing features of imperialism were already observed in Great Britain in the middle of the nineteenth century—vast colonial possessions and a monopolist position in the world market. Marx and Engels traced this connection between opportunism in the working-class movement and the imperialist features of British capi-

\* Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Britischer Imperialismus*, S. 301.

\*\* *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs*, Bd. 211.

\*\*\* Henger, *Die Kapitalanlage der Franzosen*. Stuttgart, 1913.

\*\*\*\* Hourwich, *Immigration and Labour*, New York, 1913.

talism systematically, during the course of several decades. For example, on October 7, 1858, Engels wrote to Marx: “The English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat *alongside* the bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable.”<sup>18</sup> Almost a quarter of a century later, in a letter dated August 11, 1881, Engels speaks of the “worst English trade unions which allow themselves to be led by men sold to, or at least paid by, the middle class”. In a letter to Kautsky, dated September 12, 1882, Engels wrote: “You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general. There is no workers’ party here, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England’s monopoly of the world market and the colonies.”<sup>19</sup> (Engels expressed similar ideas in the press in his preface to the second edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, which appeared in 1892.<sup>20</sup>)

This clearly shows the causes and effects. The causes are: (1) exploitation of the whole world by this country; (2) its monopolist position in the world market; (3) its colonial monopoly. The effects are: (1) a section of the British proletariat becomes bourgeois; (2) a section of the proletariat allows itself to be led by men bought by, or at least paid by, the bourgeoisie. The imperialism of the beginning of the twentieth century completed the division of the world among a handful of states, each of which today exploits (in the sense of drawing superprofits from) a part of the “whole world” only a little smaller than that which England exploited in 1858; each of them occupies a monopolist position in the world market thanks to trusts, cartels, finance capital and creditor and debtor relations; each of them enjoys to some degree a colonial monopoly (we have seen that out of the total of 75,000,000 sq. km., which comprise the *whole* colonial world, 65,000,000 sq. km., or 86 per cent, belong to six

\* *Briefwechsel von Marx und Engels*, Bd. II, S. 290; IV, 433.—Karl Kautsky, *Sozialismus und Kolonialpolitik*, Berlin, 1907, S. 79; this pamphlet was written by Kautsky in those infinitely distant days when he was still a Marxist.

powers; 61,000,000 sq. km., or 81 per cent, belong to three powers).

The distinctive feature of the present situation is the prevalence of such economic and political conditions that are bound to increase the irreconcilability between opportunism and the general and vital interests of the working-class movement: imperialism has grown from an embryo into the predominant system; capitalist monopolies occupy first place in economics and politics; the division of the world has been completed; on the other hand, instead of the undivided monopoly of Great Britain, we see a few imperialist powers contending for the right to share in this monopoly, and this struggle is characteristic of the whole period of the early twentieth century. Opportunism cannot now be completely triumphant in the working-class movement of one country for decades as it was in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century; but in a number of countries it has grown ripe, overripe, and rotten, and has become completely merged with bourgeois policy in the form of "social-chauvinism".\*

#### IX. CRITIQUE OF IMPERIALISM

By the critique of imperialism, in the broad sense of the term, we mean the attitude of the different classes of society towards imperialist policy in connection with their general ideology.

The enormous dimensions of finance capital concentrated in a few hands and creating an extraordinarily dense and widespread network of relationships and connections which subordinates not only the small and medium, but also the very small capitalists and small masters, on the one hand, and the increasingly intense struggle waged against other national state groups of financiers for the division of the world and domination over other countries, on the other hand, cause the propertied classes to go over entirely to the side of imperialism. "General" enthusiasm over the prospects of imperialism, furious defence of it and painting it in the

\* Russian social-chauvinism in its overt form, represented by the Potresovs, Chkhenkeli, Maslovs, etc., and in its covert form (Chkheidze, Skobelev, Axelrod, Martov, etc.), also emerged from the Russian variety of opportunism, namely, liquidationism.<sup>21</sup>

brightest colours—such are the signs of the times. Imperialist ideology also penetrates the working class. No Chinese Wall separates it from the other classes. The leaders of the present-day, so-called "Social-Democratic" Party of Germany are justly called "social-imperialists", that is, socialists in words and imperialists in deeds; but as early as 1902, Hobson noted the existence in Britain of "Fabian imperialists" who belonged to the opportunist Fabian Society.<sup>22</sup>

Bourgeois scholars and publicists usually come out in defence of imperialism in a somewhat veiled form; they obscure its complete domination and its deep-going roots, strive to push specific and secondary details into the forefront and do their very best to distract attention from essentials by means of absolutely ridiculous schemes for "reform", such as police supervision of the trusts or banks, etc. Cynical and frank imperialists who are bold enough to admit the absurdity of the idea of reforming the fundamental characteristics of imperialism are a rarer phenomenon.

Here is an example. The German imperialists attempt, in the magazine *Archives of World Economy*, to follow the national emancipation movements in the colonies, particularly, of course, in colonies other than those belonging to Germany. They note the unrest and the protest movements in India, the movement in Natal (South Africa), in the Dutch East Indies, etc. One of them, commenting on an English report of a conference held on June 28-30, 1910, of representatives of various subject nations and races, of peoples of Asia, Africa and Europe who are under foreign rule, writes as follows in appraising the speeches delivered at this conference: "We are told that we must fight imperialism; that the ruling states should recognise the right of subject peoples to independence; that an international tribunal should supervise the fulfilment of treaties concluded between the great powers and weak peoples. Further than the expression of these pious wishes they do not go. We see no trace of understanding of the fact that imperialism is inseparably bound up with capitalism in its present form and that, therefore (!!), an open struggle against imperialism would be hopeless, unless, perhaps, the fight were to be confined to protests against certain of its especially abhorrent excesses."\* Since the re-

\* *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*, Bd. II, S. 193.

form of the basis of imperialism is a deception, a "pious wish", since the bourgeois representatives of the oppressed nations go no "further" forward, the bourgeois representative of an oppressing nation goes "further" *backward*, to servility towards imperialism under cover of the claim to be "scientific". That is also "logic"!

The questions as to whether it is possible to reform the basis of imperialism, whether to go forward to the further intensification and deepening of the antagonisms which it engenders, or backward, towards allaying these antagonisms, are fundamental questions in the critique of imperialism. Since the specific political features of imperialism are reaction everywhere and increased national oppression due to the oppression of the financial oligarchy and the elimination of free competition, a petty-bourgeois-democratic opposition to imperialism arose at the beginning of the twentieth century in nearly all imperialist countries. Kautsky not only did not trouble to oppose, was not only unable to oppose this petty-bourgeois reformist opposition, which is really reactionary in its economic basis, but became merged with it in practice, and this is precisely where Kautsky and the broad international Kautskian trend deserted Marxism.

In the United States, the imperialist war waged against Spain in 1898<sup>23</sup> stirred up the opposition of the "anti-imperialists", the last of the Mohicans of bourgeois democracy, who declared this war to be "criminal", regarded the annexation of foreign territories as a violation of the Constitution, declared that the treatment of Aguinaldo, leader of the Filipinos (the Americans promised him the independence of his country, but later landed troops and annexed it), was "Jingo treachery", and quoted the words of Lincoln: "When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs others, it is no longer self-government; it is despotism."\* But as long as all this criticism shrank from recognising the inseparable bond between imperialism and the trusts, and, therefore, between imperialism and the foundations of capitalism, while it shrank from joining the forces engendered by large-scale capitalism and its development—it remained a "pious wish".

This is also the main attitude taken by Hobson in his

\* J. Patouillet, *L'impérialisme américain*, Dijon, 1904, p. 272.

critique of imperialism. Hobson anticipated Kautsky in protesting against the "inevitability of imperialism" argument, and in urging the necessity of "increasing the consuming capacity" of the people (under capitalism!). The petty-bourgeois point of view in the critique of imperialism, the omnipotence of the banks, the financial oligarchy, etc., is adopted by the authors I have often quoted, such as Agahd, A. Lansburgh, L. Eschwege, and among the French writers Victor Berard, author of a superficial book entitled *England and Imperialism* which appeared in 1900. All these authors, who make no claim to be Marxists, contrast imperialism with free competition and democracy, condemn the Baghdad railway scheme, which is leading to conflicts and war, utter "pious wishes" for peace, etc. This applies also to the compiler of international stock and share issue statistics, A. Neymarck, who, after calculating the thousands of millions of francs representing "international" securities, exclaimed in 1912: "Is it possible to believe that peace may be disturbed ... that, in the face of these enormous figures, anyone would risk starting a war?"\*

Such simple-mindedness on the part of the bourgeois economists is not surprising; moreover, *it is in their interest* to pretend to be so naïve and to talk "seriously" about peace under imperialism. But what remains of Kautsky's Marxism, when, in 1914, 1915 and 1916, he takes up the same bourgeois-reformist point of view and affirms that "everybody is agreed" (imperialists, pseudo-socialists and social-pacifists) on the matter of peace? Instead of an analysis of imperialism and an exposure of the depths of its contradictions, we have nothing but a reformist "pious wish" to wave them aside, to evade them.

Here is a sample of Kautsky's economic criticism of imperialism. He takes the statistics of the British export and import trade with Egypt for 1872 and 1912; it seems that this export and import trade has grown more slowly than British foreign trade as a whole. From this Kautsky concludes that "we have no reason to suppose that without military occupation the growth of British trade with Egypt would have been less, simply as a result of the mere operation of

\* *Bulletin de l'Institut International de Statistique*, T. XIX, livr. II, p. 225.

economic factors". "The urge of capital to expand . . . can be best promoted, not by the violent methods of imperialism, but by peaceful democracy."\*\*

This argument of Kautsky's, which is repeated in every key by his Russian armour-bearer (and Russian shielder of the social-chauvinists), Mr. Spectator, constitutes the basis of Kautskian critique of imperialism, and that is why we must deal with it in greater detail. We will begin with a quotation from Hilferding, whose conclusions Kautsky on many occasions, and notably in April 1915, has declared to have been "unanimously adopted by all socialist theoreticians".

"It is not the business of the proletariat," writes Hilferding, "to contrast the more progressive capitalist policy with that of the now bygone era of free trade and of hostility towards the state. The reply of the proletariat to the economic policy of finance capital, to imperialism, cannot be free trade, but socialism. The aim of proletarian policy cannot today be the ideal of restoring free competition—which has now become a reactionary ideal—but the complete elimination of competition by the abolition of capitalism."\*\*\*

Kautsky broke with Marxism by advocating in the epoch of finance capital a "reactionary ideal", "peaceful democracy", "the mere operation of economic factors", for *objectively* this ideal drags us back from monopoly to non-monopoly capitalism, and is a reformist swindle.

Trade with Egypt (or with any other colony or semi-colony) "would have grown more" *without* military occupation, without imperialism, and without finance capital. What does this mean? That capitalism would have developed more rapidly if free competition had not been restricted by monopolies in general, or by the "connections", yoke (i.e., also the monopoly) of finance capital, or by the monopolist possession of colonies by certain countries?

Kautsky's argument can have no other meaning; and *this* "meaning" is meaningless. Let us assume that free competition, without any sort of monopoly, *would* have developed capitalism and trade more rapidly. But the more rapidly trade and capitalism develop, the greater is the concentration of production and capital which *gives rise* to monopoly. And

\* Kautsky, *Nationalstaat, imperialistischer Staat und Staatenbund*, Nürnberg, 1915, S. 72, 70.

\*\* *Finance Capital*, p. 567.

monopolies have *already* arisen—precisely *out of* free competition! Even if monopolies have now begun to retard progress, it is not an argument in favour of free competition, which has become impossible after it has given rise to monopoly.

Whichever way one turns Kautsky's argument, one will find nothing in it except reaction and bourgeois reformism.

Even if we correct this argument and say, as Spectator says, that the trade of the colonies with Britain is now developing more slowly than their trade with other countries, it does not save Kautsky; for it is *also* monopoly, *also* imperialism that is beating Great Britain, only it is the monopoly and imperialism of another country (America, Germany). It is known that the cartels have given rise to a new and peculiar form of protective tariffs, i.e., goods suitable for export are protected (Engels noted this in Vol. III of *Capital*). It is known, too, that the cartels and finance capital have a system peculiar to themselves, that of "exporting goods at cut-rate prices", or "dumping", as the English call it: within a given country the cartel sells its goods at high monopoly prices, but sells them abroad at a much lower price to undercut the competitor, to enlarge its own production to the utmost, etc. If Germany's trade with the British colonies is developing more rapidly than Great Britain's, it only proves that German imperialism is younger, stronger and better organised than British imperialism, is superior to it; but it by no means proves the "superiority" of free trade, for it is not a fight between free trade and protection and colonial dependence, but between two rival imperialisms, two monopolies, two groups of finance capital. The superiority of German imperialism over British imperialism is more potent than the wall of colonial frontiers or of protective tariffs: to use this as an "argument" *in favour* of free trade and "peaceful democracy" is banal, it means forgetting the essential features and characteristics of imperialism, substituting petty-bourgeois reformism for Marxism.

It is interesting to note that even the bourgeois economist, A. Lansburgh, whose criticism of imperialism is as petty-bourgeois as Kautsky's, nevertheless got closer to a more scientific study of trade statistics. He did not compare one single country, chosen at random, and one single colony with the other countries; he examined the export trade of an

imperialist country: (1) to countries which are financially dependent upon it, and borrow money from it; and (2) to countries which are financially independent. He obtained the following results:

Export Trade of Germany (000,000 marks)

	1889	1908	Per cent increase	
To countries financially dependent on Germany	Rumania . . . . .	48.2	70.8	47
	Portugal . . . . .	19.0	32.8	73
	Argentina . . . . .	60.7	147.0	143
	Brazil . . . . .	48.7	84.5	73
	Chile . . . . .	28.3	52.4	85
	Turkey . . . . .	29.9	64.0	114
<i>Total</i>	<i>234.8</i>	<i>451.5</i>	<i>92</i>	
To countries financially independent of Germany	Great Britain . . . . .	651.8	997.4	53
	France . . . . .	240.2	437.9	108
	Belgium . . . . .	137.2	322.8	135
	Switzerland . . . . .	177.4	401.1	127
	Australia . . . . .	21.2	64.5	205
	Dutch East Indies . . . . .	8.8	40.7	363
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,206.6</i>	<i>2,264.4</i>	<i>87</i>	

Lansburgh did not draw *conclusions* and therefore, strangely enough, failed to observe that *if* the figures prove anything at all, they prove that *he is wrong*, for the exports to countries financially dependent on Germany have grown *more rapidly*, if only slightly, than exports to the countries which are financially independent. (I emphasise the “if”, for Lansburgh’s figures are far from complete.)

Tracing the connection between exports and loans, Lansburgh writes:

“In 1890-91, a Rumanian loan was floated through the German banks, which had already in previous years made advances on this loan. It was used chiefly to purchase railway materials in Germany. In 1891, German exports to Rumania amounted to 55 million marks. The following year they dropped to 39.4 million marks and, with fluctuations, to 25.4 million in 1900. Only in very recent years have they regained the level of 1891, thanks to two new loans.

“German exports to Portugal rose, following the loans of 1888-89, to 21,100,000 (1890); then, in the two following years, they dropped to 16,200,000 and 7,400,000, and regained their former level only in 1903.

“The figures of German trade with Argentina are still more striking. Loans were floated in 1888 and 1890; German exports to Argentina reached 60,700,000 marks (1889). Two years later they amounted to only 18,600,000 marks, less than one-third of the previous figure. It was not until 1901 that they regained and surpassed the level of 1889, and then only as a result of new loans floated by the state and by municipalities, with advances to build power stations, and with other credit operations.

“Exports to Chile, as a consequence of the loan of 1889, rose to 45,200,000 marks (in 1892), and a year later dropped to 22,500,000 marks. A new Chilean loan floated by the German banks in 1906 was followed by a rise of exports to 84,700,000 marks in 1907, only to fall again to 52,400,000 marks in 1908.”\*

From these facts Lansburgh draws the amusing petty-bourgeois moral of how unstable and irregular export trade is when it is bound up with loans, how bad it is to invest capital abroad instead of “naturally” and “harmoniously” developing home industry, how “costly” are the millions in bakhshish that Krupp has to pay in floating foreign loans, etc. But the facts tell us clearly: the increase in exports is connected with *just these* swindling tricks of finance capital, which is not concerned with bourgeois morality, but with skinning the ox twice—first, it pockets the profits from the loan; then it pockets other profits from the *same* loan which the borrower uses to make purchases from Krupp, or to purchase railway material from the Steel Syndicate, etc.

I repeat that I do not by any means consider Lansburgh’s figures to be perfect; but I had to quote them because they are more scientific than Kautsky’s and Spectator’s and because Lansburgh showed the correct way to approach the question. In discussing the significance of finance capital in regard to exports, etc., one must be able to single out the connection of exports especially and solely with the tricks of the financiers, especially and solely with the sale of goods by

\* *Die Bank*, 1909, 2, S. 819 et seq.



cartels, etc. Simply to compare colonies with non-colonies, one imperialism with another imperialism, one semi-colony or colony (Egypt) with all other countries, is to evade and to obscure the very *essence* of the question.

Kautsky's theoretical critique of imperialism has nothing in common with Marxism and serves only as a preamble to propaganda for peace and unity with the opportunists and the social-chauvinists, precisely for the reason that it evades and obscures the very profound and fundamental contradictions of imperialism: the contradictions between monopoly and free competition which exists side by side with it, between the gigantic "operations" (and gigantic profits) of finance capital and "honest" trade in the free market, the contradiction between cartels and trusts, on the one hand, and non-cartelised industry, on the other, etc.

The notorious theory of "ultra-imperialism", invented by Kautsky, is just as reactionary. Compare his arguments on this subject in 1915, with Hobson's arguments in 1902.

Kautsky: "... Cannot the present imperialist policy be supplanted by a new, ultra-imperialist policy, which will introduce the joint exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital in place of the mutual rivalries of national finance capitals? Such a new phase of capitalism is at any rate conceivable. Can it be achieved? Sufficient premises are still lacking to enable us to answer this question."<sup>\*</sup>

Hobson: "Christendom thus laid out in a few great federal empires, each with a retinue of uncivilised dependencies, seems to many the most legitimate development of present tendencies, and one which would offer the best hope of permanent peace on an assured basis of inter-Imperialism."

Kautsky called ultra-imperialism or super-imperialism what Hobson, thirteen years earlier, described as inter-imperialism. Except for coining a new and clever catchword, replacing one Latin prefix by another, the only progress Kautsky has made in the sphere of "scientific" thought is that he gave out as Marxism what Hobson, in effect, described as the cant of English parsons. After the Anglo-Boer War it was quite natural for this highly honourable caste to exert their main efforts to *console* the British middle class and the workers who had lost many of their relatives on the

\* *Die Neue Zeit*, April 30, 1915, S. 144.

battlefields of South Africa and who were obliged to pay higher taxes in order to guarantee still higher profits for the British financiers. And what better consolation could there be than the theory that imperialism is not so bad; that it stands close to inter- (or ultra-) imperialism, which can ensure permanent peace? No matter what the good intentions of the English parsons, or of sentimental Kautsky, may have been, the only objective, i.e., real, social significance of Kautsky's "theory" is this: it is a most reactionary method of consoling the masses with hopes of permanent peace being possible under capitalism, by distracting their attention from the sharp antagonisms and acute problems of the present times, and directing it towards illusory prospects of an imaginary "ultra-imperialism" of the future. Deception of the masses—that is all there is in Kautsky's "Marxist" theory.

Indeed, it is enough to compare well-known and indisputable facts to become convinced of the utter falsity of the prospects which Kautsky tries to conjure up before the German workers (and the workers of all lands). Let us consider India, Indo-China and China. It is known that these three colonial and semi-colonial countries, with a population of six to seven hundred million, are subjected to the exploitation of the finance capital of several imperialist powers: Great Britain, France, Japan, the U.S.A., etc. Let us assume that these imperialist countries form alliances against one another in order to protect or enlarge their possessions, their interests and their spheres of influence in these Asiatic states; these alliances will be "inter-imperialist", or "ultra-imperialist" alliances. Let us assume that *all* the imperialist countries conclude an alliance for the "peaceful" division of these parts of Asia; this alliance would be an alliance of "internationally united finance capital". There are actual examples of alliances of this kind in the history of the twentieth century—the attitude of the powers to China,<sup>24</sup> for instance. We ask, is it "conceivable", assuming that the capitalist system remains intact—and this is precisely the assumption that Kautsky does make—that such alliances would be more than temporary, that they would eliminate friction, conflicts and struggle in every possible form?

The question has only to be presented clearly for any other than a negative answer to be impossible. This is because the only conceivable basis under capitalism for the

division of spheres of influence, interests, colonies, etc., is a calculation of the *strength* of those participating, their general economic, financial, military strength, etc. And the strength of these participants in the division does not change to an equal degree, for the *even* development of different undertakings, trusts, branches of industry, or countries is impossible under capitalism. Half a century ago Germany was a miserable, insignificant country, if her capitalist strength is compared with that of the Britain of that time; Japan compared with Russia in the same way. Is it "conceivable" that in ten or twenty years' time the relative strength of the imperialist powers will have remained *unchanged*? It is out of the question.

Therefore, in the realities of the capitalist system, and not in the banal philistine fantasies of English parsons, or of the German "Marxist", Kautsky, "inter-imperialist" or "ultra-imperialist" alliances, no matter what form they may assume, whether of one imperialist coalition against another, or of a general alliance embracing *all* the imperialist powers, are *inevitably* nothing more than a "truce" in periods between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars; the one conditions the other, producing alternating forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle on *one and the same* basis of imperialist connections and relations within world economics and world politics. But in order to pacify the workers and reconcile them with the social-chauvinists who have deserted to the side of the bourgeoisie, over-wise Kautsky *separates* one link of a single chain from another, separates the present peaceful (and ultra-imperialist, nay, ultra-ultra-imperialist) alliance of *all* the powers for the "pacification" of China (remember the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion<sup>25</sup>) from the non-peaceful conflict of tomorrow, which will prepare the ground for another "peaceful" general alliance for the partition, say, of Turkey, on the day after tomorrow, *etc., etc.* Instead of showing the living connection between periods of imperialist peace and periods of imperialist war, Kautsky presents the workers with a lifeless abstraction in order to reconcile them to their lifeless leaders.

An American writer, Hill, in his *A History of the Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe* refers in the preface to the following periods in the recent history of

diplomacy: (1) the era of revolution; (2) the constitutional movement; (3) the present era of "commercial imperialism".\* Another writer divides the history of Great Britain's "world policy" since 1870 into four periods: (1) the first Asiatic period (that of the struggle against Russia's advance in Central Asia towards India); (2) the African period (approximately 1885-1902); that of the struggle against France for the partition of Africa (the "Fashoda incident"<sup>26</sup> of 1898 which brought her within a hair's breadth of war with France); (3) the second Asiatic period (alliance with Japan against Russia); and (4) the "European" period, chiefly anti-German.\*\* "The political patrol clashes take place on the financial field," wrote the banker, Riesser, in 1905, in showing how French finance capital operating in Italy was preparing the way for a political alliance of these countries, and how a conflict was developing between Germany and Great Britain over Persia, between all the European capitalists over Chinese loans, etc. Behold, the living reality of peaceful "ultra-imperialist" alliances in their inseverable connection with ordinary imperialist conflicts!

Kautsky's obscuring of the deepest contradictions of imperialism, which inevitably boils down to painting imperialism in bright colours, leaves its traces in this writer's criticism of the political features of imperialism. Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom. Whatever the political system, the result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction and an extreme intensification of antagonisms in this field. Particularly intensified become the yoke of national oppression and the striving for annexations, i.e., the violation of national independence (for annexation is nothing but the violation of the right of nations to self-determination). Hilferding rightly notes the connection between imperialism and the intensification of national oppression. "In the newly opened-up countries," he writes, "the capital imported into them intensifies antagonisms and excites against the intruders the constantly growing resistance of the peoples who are awakening to national consciousness;

\* David Jayne Hill, *A History of the Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe*, Vol. I, p. x.

\*\* Schilder, *op. cit.*, S. 178.

this resistance can easily develop into dangerous measures against foreign capital. The old social relations become completely revolutionised, the age-long agrarian isolation of 'nations without history' is destroyed and they are drawn into the capitalist whirlpool. Capitalism itself gradually provides the subjugated with the means and resources for their emancipation and they set out to achieve the goal which once seemed highest to the European nations: the creation of a united national state as a means to economic and cultural freedom. This movement for national independence threatens European capital in its most valuable and most promising fields of exploitation, and European capital can maintain its domination only by continually increasing its military forces."\*

To this must be added that it is not only in newly opened-up countries, but also in the old, that imperialism is leading to annexation, to increased national oppression, and, consequently, also to increasing resistance. While objecting to the intensification of political reaction by imperialism, Kautsky leaves in the shade a question that has become particularly urgent, viz., the impossibility of unity with the opportunists in the epoch of imperialism. While objecting to annexations, he presents his objections in a form that is most acceptable and least offensive to the opportunists. He addresses himself to a German audience, yet he obscures the most topical and important point, for instance, the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany. In order to appraise this "mental aberration" of Kautsky's I shall take the following example. Let us suppose that a Japanese condemns the annexation of the Philippines by the Americans. The question is: will many believe that he does so because he has a horror of annexations as such, and not because he himself has a desire to annex the Philippines? And shall we not be constrained to admit that the "fight" the Japanese is waging against annexations can be regarded as being sincere and politically honest only if he fights against the annexation of Korea by Japan, and urges freedom for Korea to secede from Japan?

Kautsky's theoretical analysis of imperialism, as well as his economic and political critique of imperialism, are permeated *through and through* with a spirit, absolutely irrec-

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\* *Finance Capital*, p. 487.

oncilable with Marxism, of obscuring and glossing over the fundamental contradictions of imperialism and with a striving to preserve at all costs the crumbling unity with opportunism in the European working-class movement.

## X. THE PLACE OF IMPERIALISM IN HISTORY

We have seen that in its economic essence imperialism is monopoly capitalism. This in itself determines its place in history, for monopoly that grows out of the soil of free competition, and precisely out of free competition, is the transition from the capitalist system to a higher socio-economic order. We must take special note of the four principal types of monopoly, or principal manifestations of monopoly capitalism, which are characteristic of the epoch we are examining.

Firstly, monopoly arose out of the concentration of production at a very high stage. This refers to the monopolist capitalist associations, cartels, syndicates and trusts. We have seen the important part these play in present-day economic life. At the beginning of the twentieth century, monopolies had acquired complete supremacy in the advanced countries, and although the first steps towards the formation of the cartels were taken by countries enjoying the protection of high tariffs (Germany, America), Great Britain, with her system of free trade, revealed the same basic phenomenon, only a little later, namely, the birth of monopoly out of the concentration of production.

Secondly, monopolies have stimulated the seizure of the most important sources of raw materials, especially for the basic and most highly cartelised industries in capitalist society: the coal and iron industries. The monopoly of the most important sources of raw materials has enormously increased the power of big capital, and has sharpened the antagonism between cartelised and non-cartelised industry.

Thirdly, monopoly has sprung from the banks. The banks have developed from modest middleman enterprises into the monopolists of finance capital. Some three to five of the biggest banks in each of the foremost capitalist countries have achieved the "personal link-up" between industrial and bank capital, and have concentrated in their hands the control of

thousands upon thousands of millions which form the greater part of the capital and income of entire countries. A financial oligarchy, which throws a close network of dependence relationships over all the economic and political institutions of present-day bourgeois society without exception—such is the most striking manifestation of this monopoly.

Fourthly, monopoly has grown out of colonial policy. To the numerous “old” motives of colonial policy, finance capital has added the struggle for the sources of raw materials, for the export of capital, for spheres of influence, i.e., for spheres for profitable deals, concessions, monopoly profits and so on, economic territory in general. When the colonies of the European powers, for instance, comprised only one-tenth of the territory of Africa (as was the case in 1876), colonial policy was able to develop by methods other than those of monopoly—by the “free grabbing” of territories, so to speak. But when nine-tenths of Africa had been seized (by 1900), when the whole world had been divided up, there was inevitably ushered in the era of monopoly possession of colonies and, consequently, of particularly intense struggle for the division and the redivision of the world.

The extent to which monopolist capital has intensified all the contradictions of capitalism is generally known. It is sufficient to mention the high cost of living and the tyranny of the cartels. This intensification of contradictions constitutes the most powerful driving force of the transitional period of history, which began from the time of the final victory of world finance capital.

Monopolies, oligarchy, the striving for domination and not for freedom, the exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations by a handful of the richest or most powerful nations—all these have given birth to those distinctive characteristics of imperialism which compel us to define it as parasitic or decaying capitalism. More and more prominently there emerges, as one of the tendencies of imperialism, the creation of the “rentier state”, the usurer state, in which the bourgeoisie to an ever-increasing degree lives on the proceeds of capital exports and by “clipping coupons”. It would be a mistake to believe that this tendency to decay precludes the rapid growth of capitalism. It does not. In the epoch of imperialism, certain branches of industry, certain strata of the bourgeoisie and certain countries betray, to a

greater or lesser degree, now one and now another of these tendencies. On the whole, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before; but this growth is not only becoming more and more uneven in general, its unevenness also manifests itself, in particular, in the decay of the countries which are richest in capital (Britain).

In regard to the rapidity of Germany's economic development, Riesser, the author of the book on the big German banks, states: “The progress of the preceding period (1848-70), which had not been exactly slow, compares with the rapidity with which the whole of Germany's national economy, and with it German banking, progressed during this period (1870-1905) in about the same way as the speed of the mail coach in the good old days compares with the speed of the present-day automobile . . . which is whizzing past so fast that it endangers not only innocent pedestrians in its path, but also the occupants of the car.” In its turn, this finance capital which has grown with such extraordinary rapidity is not unwilling, precisely because it has grown so quickly, to pass on to a more “tranquil” possession of colonies which have to be seized—and not only by peaceful methods—from richer nations. In the United States, economic development in the last decades has been even more rapid than in Germany, and *for this very reason*, the parasitic features of modern American capitalism have stood out with particular prominence. On the other hand, a comparison of, say, the republican American bourgeoisie with the monarchist Japanese or German bourgeoisie shows that the most pronounced political distinction diminishes to an extreme degree in the epoch of imperialism—not because it is unimportant in general, but because in all these cases we are talking about a bourgeoisie which has definite features of parasitism.

The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists in one of the numerous branches of industry, in one of the numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to bribe certain sections of the workers, and for a time a fairly considerable minority of them, and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie of a given industry or given nation against all the others. The intensification of antagonisms between imperialist nations for the division of the world increases this urge. And so there is created that bond between imperialism and opportunism, which revealed itself first and

most clearly in Great Britain, owing to the fact that certain features of imperialist development were observed there much earlier than in other countries. Some writers, L. Martov, for example, are prone to wave aside the connection between imperialism and opportunism in the working-class movement—a particularly glaring fact at the present time—by resorting to “official optimism” (*à la* Kautsky and Huysmans) like the following: the cause of the opponents of capitalism would be hopeless if it were progressive capitalism that led to the increase of opportunism, or, if it were the best-paid workers who were inclined towards opportunism, etc. We must have no illusions about “optimism” of this kind. It is optimism in respect of opportunism; it is optimism which serves to conceal opportunism. As a matter of fact the extraordinary rapidity and the particularly revolting character of the development of opportunism is by no means a guarantee that its victory will be durable: the rapid growth of a painful abscess on a healthy body can only cause it to burst more quickly and thus relieve the body of it. The most dangerous of all in this respect are those who do not wish to understand that the fight against imperialism is a sham and humbug unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism.

From all that has been said in this book on the economic essence of imperialism, it follows that we must define it as capitalism in transition, or, more precisely, as moribund capitalism. It is very instructive in this respect to note that bourgeois economists, in describing modern capitalism, frequently employ catchwords and phrases like “interlocking”, “absence of isolation”, etc.; “in conformity with their functions and course of development”, banks are “not purely private business enterprises; they are more and more outgrowing the sphere of purely private business regulation”. And this very Riesser, whose words I have just quoted, declares with all seriousness that the “prophecy” of the Marxists concerning “socialisation” has “not come true”!

What then does this catchword “interlocking” express? It merely expresses the most striking feature of the process going on before our eyes. It shows that the observer counts the separate trees, but cannot see the wood. It slavishly copies the superficial, the fortuitous, the chaotic. It reveals the observer as one who is overwhelmed by the mass of raw ma-

terial and is utterly incapable of appreciating its meaning and importance. Ownership of shares, the relations between owners of private property “interlock in a haphazard way”. But underlying this interlocking, its very base, are the changing social relations of production. When a big enterprise assumes gigantic proportions, and, on the basis of an exact computation of mass data, organises according to plan the supply of primary raw materials to the extent of two-thirds, or three-fourths, of all that is necessary for tens of millions of people; when the raw materials are transported in a systematic and organised manner to the most suitable places of production, sometimes situated hundreds or thousands of miles from each other; when a single centre directs all the consecutive stages of processing the material right up to the manufacture of numerous varieties of finished articles; when these products are distributed according to a single plan among tens and hundreds of millions of consumers (the marketing of oil in America and Germany by the American oil trust)—then it becomes evident that we have socialisation of production, and not mere “interlocking”; that private economic and private property relations constitute a shell which no longer fits its contents, a shell which must inevitably decay if its removal is artificially delayed, a shell which may remain in a state of decay for a fairly long period (if, at the worst, the cure of the opportunist abscess is protracted), but which will inevitably be removed.

The enthusiastic admirer of German imperialism, Schulze-Gaevernitz, exclaims:

“Once the supreme management of the German banks has been entrusted to the hands of a dozen persons, their activity is even today more significant for the public good than that of the majority of the Ministers of State... [The “interlocking” of bankers, ministers, magnates of industry and rentiers is here conveniently forgotten.] If we imagine the development of those tendencies we have noted carried to their logical conclusion we will have: the money capital of the nation united in the banks; the banks themselves combined into cartels; the investment capital of the nation cast in the shape of securities. Then the forecast of that genius Saint-Simon will be fulfilled: ‘The present anarchy of production, which corresponds to the fact that economic relations are developing without uniform regulation, must make way for or-

ganisation in production. Production will no longer be directed by isolated manufacturers, independent of each other and ignorant of man's economic needs; that will be done by a certain public institution. A central committee of management, being able to survey the large field of social economy from a more elevated point of view, will regulate it for the benefit of the whole of society, will put the means of production into suitable hands, and above all will take care that there be constant harmony between production and consumption. Institutions already exist which have assumed as part of their functions a certain organisation of economic labour, the banks.' We are still a long way from the fulfilment of Saint-Simon's forecast, but we are on the way towards it: Marxism, different from what Marx imagined, but different only in form."<sup>26</sup>

A crushing "refutation" of Marx, indeed, which retreats a step from Marx's precise, scientific analysis to Saint-Simon's guess-work, the guess-work of a genius, but guess-work all the same.

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## From A CARICATURE OF MARXISM AND IMPERIALIST ECONOMISM<sup>27</sup>

### 3. WHAT IS ECONOMIC ANALYSIS?

Central to all the disquisitions of the self-determination opponents is the claim that it is generally "unachievable" under capitalism or imperialism. The word "unachievable" is frequently used in widely different and inaccurately defined meanings. That is why in our theses<sup>28</sup> we insisted on what is essential in any theoretical discussion: an explanation of what is meant by "unachievable". Nor did we confine ourselves to that. We tried to give such an explanation. *All* democratic demands are "unachievable" under imperialism in the sense that politically they are hard to achieve or totally unachievable without a series of revolutions.

It is fundamentally wrong, however, to maintain that self-determination is unachievable in the economic sense.

That has been our contention. It is the pivotal point of our theoretical differences, a question to which our opponents in any serious discussion should have paid due attention.

But just see how Kievsky treats the question.

He definitely rejects unachievable as meaning "hard to achieve" politically. He gives a direct answer in the sense of economic unachievability.

"Does this mean," Kievsky writes, "that self-determination under imperialism is just as unachievable as labour money<sup>29</sup> under commodity production?" And he replies: "Yes, it means exactly that. For what we are discussing is the logical contradiction between two social categories: 'imperialism' and 'self-determination of nations', the same logical contradiction as that between two other categories: labour money and commodity production. Imperialism is the negation of self-determination, and no magician can reconcile the two."

Frightening as is the angry word "magician" Kievsky hurls at us, we must nevertheless point out that he simply fails to

\* *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik*, S. 146.

understand what economic analysis implies. There should be no "logical contradiction"—providing, of course, that there is proper logical thinking—*either* in an economic or political analysis. Hence, to plead a "logical contradiction" *in general* when what we are discussing is economic and *not* political analysis, is completely irrelevant. *Both* economic and political phenomena come within "social categories". Consequently, having first replied directly and definitely: "Yes, it means exactly that" (i.e., self-determination is *just as* unachievable as labour money under commodity production), Kievsky dismisses the whole matter by beating about the bush, without offering any economic analysis.

How do we prove that labour money is unachievable under commodity production? By economic analysis. And economic analysis, like every other, rules out "logical contradictions", takes economic and *only* economic categories (and not "social categories" in general) and from them concludes that labour money is unachievable. In the first chapter of *Capital* there is no mention whatever of politics, or political forms, or "social categories": the analysis applies *only* to economic phenomena, commodity exchange, its development. Economic analysis shows—needless to say, through "logical" arguments—that under commodity production labour money is unachievable.

Kievsky does not even attempt anything approximating an economic analysis! He *confuses* the economic substance of imperialism with its political tendencies, as is obvious from the very first phrase of the very first paragraph of his article. Here is that phrase:

"Industrial capital is the synthesis of pre-capitalist production and merchant-usurer capital. Usurer capital becomes the servant of industrial capital. Then capitalism subjects the various forms of capital and there emerges its highest, unified type—finance capital. The whole era can therefore be designated as the era of finance capital of which imperialism is the corresponding foreign-policy system."

Economically, that definition is absolutely worthless: instead of precise economic categories we get mere phrases. However, it is impossible to dwell on that now. The important thing is that Kievsky proclaims imperialism to be a "foreign-policy system".

First, this is, essentially, a wrong repetition of Kautsky's wrong idea.

Second, it is a purely political, and only political, definition of imperialism. By defining imperialism as a "system of policy" Kievsky wants to avoid the *economic* analysis he promised to give when he declared that self-determination was "*just as*" unachievable, i.e., economically unachievable, under imperialism as labour money under commodity production!\*

In his controversy with the Lefts, Kautsky declared that imperialism was "merely a system of foreign *policy*" (namely, annexation), and that it would be wrong to describe as imperialism a definite economic stage, or level, in the development of capitalism.

Kautsky is wrong. Of course, it is not proper to argue about words. You cannot prohibit the use of the "word" imperialism in this sense or any other. But if you want to conduct a discussion you must define your terms precisely.

Economically, imperialism (or the "era" of finance capital—it is not a matter of words) is the highest stage in the development of capitalism, one in which production has assumed such big, immense proportions that *free competition gives way to monopoly*. That is the *economic* essence of imperialism. Monopoly manifests itself in trusts, syndicates, etc., in the omnipotence of the giant banks, in the buying up of raw material sources, etc., in the concentration of banking capital, etc. Everything hinges on economic monopoly.

The political superstructure of this new economy, of monopoly capitalism (imperialism is monopoly capitalism) is the change *from* democracy to political reaction. Democracy corresponds to free competition. Political reaction corresponds to monopoly. "Finance capital strives for domination, not freedom," Rudolf Hilferding rightly remarks in his *Finance Capital*.

It is fundamentally wrong, un-Marxist and unscientific, to single out "foreign policy" from policy in general, let alone

\* Is Kievsky aware of the impolite word Marx used in reference to such "logical methods"? *Without applying* this impolite term to Kievsky, we nevertheless are obliged to remark that Marx described such methods as "fraudulent": arbitrarily inserting precisely what is at issue, precisely what has to be proved, in *defining* a concept.

We repeat, we do *not* apply Marx's impolite expression to Kievsky. We merely disclose the source of his mistake. (In the manuscript this passage is crossed out.—*Ed.*)

counterpose foreign policy to home policy. Both in foreign and home policy imperialism strives towards violations of democracy, towards reaction. In this sense imperialism is indisputably the "negation" of *democracy in general*, of *all democracy*, and not just of *one* of its demands, national self-determination.

Being a "negation" of democracy in general, imperialism is *also* a "negation" of democracy in the national question (i.e., national self-determination): it seeks to violate democracy. The achievement of democracy is, in the same sense, and to the same degree, harder under imperialism (compared with pre-monopoly capitalism), as the achievement of a republic, a militia, popular election of officials, etc. There can be no talk of democracy being "economically" unachievable.

Kievsky was probably led astray here by the fact (besides his general lack of understanding of the requirements of economic analysis) that the philistine regards annexation (i.e., acquisition of foreign territories against the will of their people, i.e., violation of self-determination) as equivalent to the "spread" (expansion) of finance capital to a larger economic territory.

But theoretical problems should not be approached from philistine conceptions.

Economically, imperialism is monopoly capitalism. To acquire full monopoly, all competition must be eliminated, and not only on the home market (of the given state), but also on foreign markets, in the whole world. Is it *economically* possible, "in the era of finance capital", to eliminate competition even in a foreign state? Certainly it is. It is done through a rival's financial dependence and acquisition of his sources of raw materials and eventually of all his enterprises.

The American trusts are the supreme expression of the economics of imperialism or monopoly capitalism. They do not confine themselves to economic means of eliminating rivals, but constantly resort to political, even criminal, methods. It would be the greatest mistake, however, to believe that the trusts cannot establish their monopoly by purely economic methods. Reality provides ample proof that this is "achievable": the trusts undermine their rivals' credit through the banks (the owners of the trusts become the owners of the banks: buying up shares); their supply of materials (the owners of the trusts become the owners of the railways: buying

up shares); for a certain time the trusts sell below cost, spending millions on this in order to ruin a competitor and then *buy up* his enterprises, his sources of raw materials (mines, land, etc.).

There you have a purely economic analysis of the power of the trusts and their expansion. There you have the purely economic path to expansion: *buying up* mills and factories, sources of raw materials.

Big finance capital of one country can always buy up competitors in another, politically independent country and constantly does so. Economically, this is fully achievable. Economic "annexation" is *fully* "achievable" without political annexation and is widely practised. In the literature on imperialism you will constantly come across indications that Argentina, for example, is in reality a "trade colony" of Britain, or that Portugal is in reality a "vassal" of Britain, etc. And that is actually so: economic dependence upon British banks, indebtedness to Britain, British acquisition of their railways, mines, land, etc., enable Britain to "annex" these countries economically without violating their political independence.

National self-determination means political independence. Imperialism seeks to violate such independence because political annexation often makes economic annexation easier, cheaper (easier to bribe officials, secure concessions, put through advantageous legislation, etc.), more convenient, less troublesome—just as imperialism seeks to replace democracy generally by oligarchy. But to speak of the *economic* "unachievability" of self-determination under imperialism is sheer nonsense.

Kievsky gets round the theoretical difficulties by a very simple and superficial dodge, known in German as "*burschikose*" phraseology, i.e., primitive, crude phrases heard (and quite naturally) at student binges. Here is an example:

"Universal suffrage," he writes, "the eight-hour day and even the republic are *logically* compatible with imperialism, though imperialism far from smiles [!!] on them and their achievement is therefore extremely difficult."

We would have absolutely no objections to the *burschikose* statement that imperialism far from "smiles" on the republic—a frivolous word can sometimes lend colour to a scientific polemic!—if in this polemic on a serious issue we were



given, *in addition*, an economic and political analysis of the concepts involved. With Kievsky, however, the *burschikose* phrase does duty for such an analysis or serves to conceal lack of it.

What can this mean: "Imperialism far from smiles on the republic"? And why?

The republic is one possible form of the political superstructure of capitalist society, and, moreover, under present-day conditions the most democratic form. To say that imperialism does not "smile" on the republic is to say that there is a contradiction between imperialism and democracy. It may very well be that Kievsky does not "smile" or even "far from smiles" on this conclusion. Nevertheless it is irrefutable.

To continue. What is the nature of this contradiction between imperialism and democracy? Is it a logical or illogical contradiction? Kievsky uses the word "logical" without stopping to think and therefore does not notice that in this particular case it serves to *conceal* (both from the reader's and author's eyes and mind) the *very question* he sets out to discuss! That question is the relation of economics to politics: the relation of economic conditions and the economic content of imperialism to a certain political form. To say that every "contradiction" revealed in human discussion is a logical contradiction is meaningless tautology. And with the aid of this tautology Kievsky evades the *substance* of the question: Is it a "logical" contradiction between two *economic* phenomena or propositions (1)? Or two *political* phenomena or propositions (2)? Or *economic* and *political* phenomena or propositions (3)?

For that is the heart of the matter, once we are discussing economic unachievability or achievability under one or another political form!

Had Kievsky not evaded the heart of the matter, he would probably have realised that the contradiction between imperialism and the republic is a contradiction between the economics of latter-day capitalism (namely, monopoly capitalism) and political democracy in general. For Kievsky will never prove that any major and fundamental democratic measure (popular election of officials or officers, complete freedom of association and assembly, etc.) is less contradictory to imperialism (or, if you like, more "smiled" upon) than the republic.

What we have, then, is the proposition *we* advanced in our theses: imperialism contradicts, "logically" contradicts, *all* political democracy *in general*. Kievsky does not "smile" on this proposition for it demolishes all his illogical constructions. But what can we do about it? Are we to accept a method that is supposed to refute certain propositions, but instead secretly advances them by using such expressions as "imperialism far from smiles on the republic"?

Further. Why does imperialism far from smile on the republic? And how does imperialism "combine" its economics with the republic?

Kievsky has given no thought to that. We would remind him of the following words of Engels in reference to the democratic republic. Can wealth dominate under this form of government? The question concerns the "contradiction" between economics and politics.

Engels replies: "The democratic republic officially knows nothing any more of property distinctions [between citizens]. In it wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely. On the one hand, in the form of the direct corruption of officials, of which America provides the classical example; on the other hand, in the form of an alliance between government and stock exchange. . . ."<sup>30</sup>

There you have an excellent example of economic analysis on the question of the "achievability" of democracy under capitalism. And the "achievability" of self-determination under imperialism is part of that question.

The democratic republic "logically" contradicts capitalism, because "officially" it puts the rich and the poor on an equal footing. That is a contradiction between the economic system and the political superstructure. There is the same contradiction between imperialism and the republic, deepened or aggravated by the fact that the change-over from free competition to monopoly makes the realisation of political freedoms even more "difficult".

How, then, is capitalism reconciled with democracy? By indirect implementation of the omnipotence of capital. There are two economic means for that: (1) direct bribery; (2) alliance of government and stock exchange. (That is stated in our theses—under a bourgeois system finance capital "can freely bribe and buy any government and any official".)

Once we have the dominance of commodity production, of the bourgeoisie, of the power of money—bribery (direct or through the stock exchange) is “achievable” under any form of government and under any kind of democracy.

What, it can be asked, is altered in this respect when capitalism gives way to imperialism, i.e., when pre-monopoly capitalism is replaced by monopoly capitalism?

Only that the power of the stock exchange increases. For finance capital is industrial capital at its highest, monopoly level which has merged with banking capital. The big banks merge with and absorb the stock exchange. (The literature on imperialism speaks of the declining role of the stock exchange, but only in the sense that every giant bank is itself virtually a stock exchange.)

Further. If “wealth” in general is fully capable of achieving domination over any democratic republic by bribery and through the stock exchange, then how can Kievsky maintain, without lapsing into a very curious “logical contradiction”, that the immense wealth of the trusts and the banks, which have thousands of millions at their command, cannot “achieve” the domination of finance capital over a foreign, i.e., politically independent, republic??

Well? Bribery of officials is “unachievable” in a foreign state? Or the “alliance of government and stock exchange” applies only to one’s own government?

\* \* \*

The reader will already have seen that it requires roughly ten pages of print to untangle and popularly explain ten lines of confusion. We cannot examine every one of Kievsky’s arguments in the same detail. And there is not a single one that is not confused. Nor is there really any need for this once the main arguments have been examined. The rest will be dealt with briefly.

#### 4. THE EXAMPLE OF NORWAY

Norway “achieved” the supposedly unachievable right to self-determination in 1905, in the era of the most rampant imperialism. It is therefore not only absurd, but ludicrous, from the theoretical standpoint, to speak of “unachievability”.

Kievsky wants to refute that by angrily calling us “rationalists”. (What has that to do with it? The rationalist confines himself to purely abstract disquisitions, while we have pointed to a very concrete fact! But perhaps Kievsky is using the foreign word “rationalist” in the same . . . how to put it more mildly? . . . in the same “unhappy” manner he used the word “extractive” at the beginning of his article, when he presented his arguments “in extractive form”?)

Kievsky reproaches us. For us, he says, “the important thing is the appearance of phenomena rather than the real substance”. Well, let us examine the real substance.

His refutation begins with this example: enactment of a law against trusts does not prove that their prohibition is unachievable. True enough. But the example is an unhappy one, for it militates *against* Kievsky. Laws are political measures, politics. No political measure can prohibit economic phenomena. Whatever political form Poland adopts, whether she be part of tsarist Russia or Germany, or an autonomous region, or a politically independent state, there is no prohibiting or repealing her dependence on the finance capital of the imperialist powers, or preventing that capital from buying up the shares of her industries.

The independence Norway “achieved” in 1905 was only political. It could not affect her economic dependence, nor was this the intention. That is exactly the point made in our theses. We indicated that self-determination concerns only politics, and it would therefore be wrong even to raise the question of its economic unachievability. But here is Kievsky “refuting” this by citing an example of political bans being powerless against the economy! What a “refutation”!

To proceed.

“One or even many instances of small-scale industry prevailing over large-scale industry is not sufficient to refute Marx’s correct proposition that the general development of capitalism is attended by the concentration and centralisation of production.”

Again, the argument is based on an unfortunate *example*, chosen to divert the attention (of the reader and the author) from the substance of the issue.

We maintain that it would be wrong to speak of the economic unachievability of self-determination in the same sense as we speak of the unachievability of labour money

under capitalism. Not a single "example" of *such* achievability can be cited. Kievsky tacitly admits we are correct on this point when he shifts to *another* interpretation of "unachievability".

Why does he not do so directly? Why does he not openly and precisely formulate *his* proposition: "self-determination, while unachievable in the sense that it is economically impossible under capitalism, contradicts development and is therefore either reactionary or merely an exception"?

He does not do so because a clear formulation of this counter-proposition would immediately expose its author, and he therefore tries to conceal it.

The law of economic concentration, of the victory of large-scale production over small, is recognised in our own and the Erfurt programmes.<sup>31</sup> Kievsky conceals the fact that nowhere is the law of political or state concentration recognised. If it were the same kind of law—if there were such a law—then why should not Kievsky formulate it and suggest that it be added to our programme? Is it right for him to leave us with a bad, incomplete programme, considering that he has discovered this new law of state concentration, which is of practical significance since it would rid our programme of erroneous conclusions?

Kievsky does not formulate that law, does not suggest that it be added to our programme, because he has the hazy feeling that if he did he would be making himself a laughing-stock. Everyone would laugh at this amusing imperialist Economism if it were expressed openly and if, parallel with the law that small-scale production is ousted by large-scale production, there were presented another "*law*" (connected with the first or existing side by side with it) of small states being ousted by big ones!

To explain this we shall put only one question to Kievsky: Why is it that economists (without quotation marks) do *not* speak of the "disintegration" of the modern trusts or big banks? Or of the possibility and achievability of such disintegration? Why is it that even the "imperialist Economist" (in quotation marks) is obliged to admit that the disintegration of big states is both possible and achievable, and not only in general, but, for example, the secession of "small nationalities" (please note!) from Russia (§ e, Chapter II of Kievsky's article)?

Lastly, to show even more clearly the lengths to which our author goes, and to warn him, let us note the following: We all accept the law of large-scale production ousting small-scale production, but no one is afraid to describe a specific "instance" of "small-scale industry prevailing over large-scale industry" as a reactionary phenomenon. *No* opponent of self-determination has yet ventured to describe as reactionary Norway's secession from Sweden, though we raised the question in our literature as early as 1914.\*

Large-scale production is unachievable if, for instance, hand-worked machines remain. The idea of a mechanical factory "disintegrating" into handicrafts production is utterly absurd. The imperialist tendency towards big empires is fully achievable, and in practice is often achieved, in the form of an imperialist alliance of sovereign and independent—politically independent—states. Such an alliance is possible and is encountered not only in the form of an economic merger of the finance capital of two countries, but also in the form of military "co-operation" in an imperialist war. National struggle, national insurrection, national secession are fully "achievable" and are met with in practice *under* imperialism. They are even more pronounced, for imperialism does not halt the development of capitalism and the growth of democratic tendencies among the mass of the population. On the contrary, it *accentuates* the antagonism between their democratic aspirations and the anti-democratic tendency of the trusts.

It is only from the point of view of imperialist Economism, i.e., caricaturised Marxism, that one can ignore, for instance, this specific aspect of imperialist policy: on the one hand, the present imperialist war offers examples of how the force of financial ties and economic interests draws a small, politically independent state into the struggle of the Great Powers (Britain and Portugal). On the other hand, the violation of democracy with regard to small nations, much weaker (both economically and politically) than their imperialist "patrons", leads either to revolt (Ireland) or to defection of whole regiments to the enemy (the Czechs). In this situation it is not only "achievable", from the point of view of finance

\* See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 425-30.—*Ed.*

capital, but *sometimes* even *profitable* for the trusts, for *their* imperialist policy, for *their* imperialist war, to allow *individual* small nations as much democratic freedom as they can, right down to political independence, so as not to risk damaging their "own" military operations. To overlook the peculiarity of political and strategic relationships and to repeat indiscriminately a word learned by rote, "imperialism", is anything but Marxism.

On Norway, Kievsky tells us, firstly, that she "had always been an independent state". That is not true and can only be explained by the author's *burschikose* carelessness and his disregard of political issues. Norway was *not* an independent state prior to 1905, though she enjoyed a very large measure of autonomy. Sweden recognised Norway's political independence only *after* her secession. If Norway "had always been an independent state", then the Swedish Government would not have informed the other powers on October 26, 1905, that it recognised Norway's independence.

Secondly, Kievsky cites a number of statements to prove that Norway looked to the West, and Sweden to the East, that in one country mainly British, and in the other German, finance capital was "at work", etc. From this he draws the triumphant conclusion: "This example [Norway] neatly fits into our pattern."

There you have a sample of the logic of imperialist Economism! Our theses point out that finance capital can dominate in "any", "even independent country", and all the arguments about self-determination being "unachievable" from the point of view of finance capital are therefore sheer confusion. We are given data *confirming* our proposition about the part foreign finance capital played in Norway *before* and *after* her secession. And these data are supposed to *refute* our proposition!!

Dilating on finance capital in order to *disregard* political issues—is that the way to discuss politics?

No. Political issues do not disappear because of Economism's faulty logic. British finance capital was "at work" in Norway before and after secession. German finance capital was "at work" in Poland prior to her secession from Russia and will continue to "work" there *no matter* what political status Poland enjoys. That is so elementary that it is embar-

assing to have to repeat it. But what can one do if the ABC is forgotten?

Does this dispense with the political question of Norway's status? With her having been part of Sweden? With the attitude of the workers when the secession issue arose?

Kievsky evades these questions because they hit hard at the Economists. But these questions were posed, and are posed, by life itself. Life itself posed the question: Could a Swedish worker who did not recognise Norway's right to secession remain a member of the Social-Democratic Party? *He could not.*

The Swedish aristocrats wanted a war against Norway, and so did the clericals. That fact does not disappear because Kievsky has "forgotten" to read about it in the history of the Norwegian people. The Swedish worker could, while remaining a Social-Democrat, urge the Norwegians to vote against secession (the Norwegian referendum on secession, held on August 13, 1905, resulted in 368,200 votes for secession and 184 against, with about 80 per cent of the electorate taking part). But the Swedish worker who, like the Swedish aristocracy and bourgeoisie, would deny the Norwegians the right to decide this question themselves, without the Swedes and irrespective of their will, would have been a *social-chauvinist* and a *miscreant the Social Democratic Party could not tolerate in its ranks.*

That is how § 9 of our Party Programme should be applied. But our imperialist Economist tries to *jump over* this clause. You cannot jump over it, gentlemen, without falling into the embrace of chauvinism!

And what of the Norwegian worker? Was it his duty, from the internationalist point of view, to vote *for* secession? Certainly not. He could have voted against secession and remained a Social-Democrat. He would have been betraying his duty as a member of the Social-Democratic Party only if he had proffered a helping hand to a Black-Hundred Swedish worker opposed to Norway's *freedom* of secession.

Some people refuse to see this elementary difference in the position of the Norwegian and Swedish worker. But they expose themselves when they *evade* this most concrete of political questions, which we squarely put to them. They remain silent, try to wriggle out and in that way surrender their position.

To prove that the "Norwegian" issue can arise in Russia, we deliberately advanced this proposition: in circumstances of a *purely* military and strategic nature a separate Polish state is fully achievable even *now*. Kievsky wants to "discuss" that—and remains silent!!

Let us add this: Finland too, out of *purely* military and strategic considerations, and given a certain outcome of the *present* imperialist war (for instance, Sweden joining the Germans and the latter's semi-victory), *can* become a separate state without undermining the "achievability" of even a single operation of finance capital, without making "unachievable" the buying up of Finnish railway and industrial shares.\*

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Signed: *V. Lenin*

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\* Given one outcome of the present war, the formation of new states in Europe (Polish, Finnish, etc.) is fully "achievable" without in any way disturbing the conditions for the development of imperialism and its power. On the contrary, this would *increase* the influence, contacts and pressure of finance capital. But given another outcome, the formation of new states of Hungary, Czechia, etc., is *likewise* "achievable". The British imperialists are already planning this second outcome in anticipation of their victory. The imperialist era does not destroy either the striving for national political independence or its "achievability" *within the bounds* of world imperialist relationships. *Outside* these bounds, however, a republican Russia, or in general any major democratic transformations anywhere else in the world are "unachievable" without a series of revolutions and are unstable without socialism. Kievsky has wholly and completely failed to understand the relation of imperialism to democracy.

## From IMPERIALISM AND THE SPLIT IN SOCIALISM

Is there any connection between imperialism and the monstrous and disgusting victory opportunism (in the form of social-chauvinism) has gained over the labour movement in Europe?

This is the fundamental question of modern socialism. And having in our Party literature fully established, first, the imperialist character of our era and of the present war, and, second, the inseparable historical connection between social-chauvinism and opportunism, as well as the intrinsic similarity of their political ideology, we can and must proceed to analyse this fundamental question.

We have to begin with as precise and full a definition of imperialism as possible. Imperialism is a specific historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is threefold: imperialism is (1) monopoly capitalism; (2) parasitic, or decaying capitalism; (3) moribund capitalism. The supplanting of free competition by monopoly is the fundamental economic feature, the *quintessence* of imperialism. Monopoly manifests itself in five principal forms: (1) cartels, syndicates and trusts—the concentration of production has reached a degree which gives rise to these monopolistic associations of capitalists; (2) the monopolistic position of the big banks—three, four or five giant banks manipulate the whole economic life of America, France, Germany; (3) seizure of the sources of *raw material* by the trusts and the financial oligarchy (finance capital is monopoly industrial capital merged with bank capital); (4) the (economic) partition of the world by the international cartels has *begun*. There are already over *one*

hundred such international cartels, which command the *entire* world market and divide it “amicably” among themselves—until war *redivides* it. The export of capital, as distinct from the export of commodities under non-monopoly capitalism, is a highly characteristic phenomenon and is closely linked with the economic and territorial-political partition of the world; (5) the territorial partition of the world (colonies) *is completed*.

Imperialism, as the highest stage of capitalism in America and Europe, and later in Asia, took final shape in the period 1898-1914. The Spanish-American War (1898), the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) and the economic crisis in Europe in 1900 are the chief historical landmarks in the new era of world history.

The fact that imperialism is parasitic or decaying capitalism is manifested first of all in the tendency to decay, which is characteristic of *every* monopoly under the system of private ownership of the means of production. The difference between the democratic-republican and the reactionary-monarchist imperialist bourgeoisie is obliterated precisely because they are both rotting alive (which by no means precludes an extraordinarily rapid development of capitalism in individual branches of industry, in individual countries, and in individual periods). Secondly, the decay of capitalism is manifested in the creation of a huge stratum of *rentiers*, capitalists who live by “clipping coupons”. In each of the four leading imperialist countries—England, U.S.A., France and Germany—capital in securities amounts to 100,000 or 150,000 *million* francs, from which each country derives an annual income of no less than five to eight thousand million. Thirdly, export of capital is parasitism raised to a high pitch. Fourthly, “finance capital strives for domination, not freedom”. Political reaction *all along* the line is a characteristic feature of imperialism. Corruption, bribery on a huge scale and all kinds of fraud. Fifthly, the exploitation of oppressed nations—which is inseparably connected with annexations—and especially the exploitation of colonies by a handful of “Great” Powers, increasingly transforms the “civilised” world into a parasite on the body of hundreds of millions in the uncivilised nations. The Roman proletarian lived at the expense of society. Modern society lives at the expense of the modern proletarian. Marx specially stressed this profound

observation of Sismondi. Imperialism somewhat changes the situation. A privileged upper stratum of the proletariat in the imperialist countries lives partly at the expense of hundreds of millions in the uncivilised nations.

It is clear why imperialism is *moribund* capitalism, capitalism in *transition* to socialism: monopoly, which grows *out* of capitalism, is *already* dying capitalism, the beginning of its transition to socialism. The tremendous *socialisation* of labour by imperialism (what its apologists—the bourgeois economists—call “interlocking”) produces the same result.

Advancing this definition of imperialism brings us into complete contradiction to K. Kautsky, who refuses to regard imperialism as a “phase of capitalism” and defines it as a *policy* “preferred” by finance capital, a tendency of “industrial” countries to annex “agrarian” countries.\* Kautsky’s definition is thoroughly false from the theoretical standpoint. What distinguishes imperialism is the rule *not* of industrial capital, but of finance capital, the striving to annex *not* agrarian countries, particularly, but *every kind* of country. Kautsky *divorces* imperialist politics from imperialist economics, he divorces monopoly in politics from monopoly in economics in order to pave the way for his vulgar bourgeois reformism, such as “disarmament”, “ultra-imperialism” and similar nonsense. The whole purpose and significance of this theoretical falsity is to obscure the *most profound* contradictions of imperialism and thus justify the theory of “unity” with the apologists of imperialism, the outright social-chauvinists and opportunists.

We have dealt at sufficient length with Kautsky’s break with Marxism on this point in *Sotsial-Demokrat* and *Kommunist*.<sup>32</sup> Our Russian Kautskyites, the supporters of the Organising Committee (O.C.),<sup>33</sup> headed by Axelrod and Spectator, including even Martov, and to a large degree Trotsky, preferred to maintain a discreet silence on the question of Kautskyism as a trend. They did not dare defend Kautsky’s war-time writings, confining themselves simply to praising

\* “Imperialism is a product of highly developed industrial capitalism. It consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to subjugate and annex ever larger *agrarian* territories, irrespective of the nations that inhabit them” (Kautsky in *Die Neue Zeit*. September 11, 1914).

Kautsky (Axelrod in his German pamphlet, which the Organising Committee has *promised* to publish in Russian) or to quoting Kautsky's private letters (Spectator), in which he says he belongs to the opposition and jesuitically tries to nullify his chauvinist declarations.

It should be noted that Kautsky's "conception" of imperialism—which is tantamount to embellishing imperialism—is a retrogression not only compared with Hilferding's *Finance Capital* (no matter how assiduously Hilferding now defends Kautsky and "unity" with the social-chauvinists!) but also compared with the *social-liberal* J. A. Hobson. This English economist, who in no way claims to be a Marxist, defines imperialism, and reveals its contradictions, much more profoundly in a book published in 1902.\* This is what Hobson (in whose book may be found nearly all Kautsky's pacifist and "conciliatory" banalities) wrote on the highly important question of the parasitic nature of imperialism:

Two sets of circumstances, in Hobson's opinion, weakened the power of the old empires: (1) "economic parasitism", and (2) formation of armies from dependent peoples. "There is first the habit of economic parasitism, by which the ruling state has used its provinces, colonies, and dependencies in order to enrich its ruling class and to bribe its lower classes into acquiescence". Concerning the second circumstance, Hobson writes:

"One of the strangest symptoms of the blindness of imperialism [this song about the "blindness" of imperialists comes more appropriately from the social-liberal Hobson than from the "Marxist" Kautsky] is the reckless indifference with which Great Britain, France, and other imperial nations are embarking on this perilous dependence. Great Britain has gone farthest. Most of the fighting by which we have won our Indian Empire has been done by natives; in India, as more recently in Egypt, great standing armies are placed under British commanders; almost all the fighting associated with our African dominions, except in the southern part, has been done for us by natives."

The prospect of partitioning China elicited from Hobson the following economic appraisal:

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\* J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism*, London, 1902.

"The greater part of Western Europe might then assume the appearance and character already exhibited by tracts of country in the South of England, in the Riviera, and in the tourist-ridden or residential parts of Italy and Switzerland, little clusters of wealthy aristocrats drawing dividends and pensions from the Far East, with a somewhat larger group of professional retainers and tradesmen and a large body of personal servants and workers in the transport trade and in the final stages of production of the more perishable goods: all the main arterial industries would have disappeared, the staple foods and manufactures flowing in as tribute from Asia and Africa... We have foreshadowed the possibility of even a larger alliance of Western states, a European federation of Great Powers which, so far from forwarding the cause of world civilisation, might introduce the gigantic peril of a Western parasitism, a group of advanced industrial nations, whose upper classes drew vast tribute from Asia and Africa, with which they supported great tame masses of retainers, no longer engaged in the staple industries of agriculture and manufacture, but kept in the performance of personal or minor industrial services under the control of a new financial aristocracy. Let those who would scout such a theory [he should have said: prospect] as undeserving of consideration examine the economic and social condition of districts in Southern England today which are already reduced to this condition, and reflect upon the vast extension of such a system which might be rendered feasible by the subjection of China to the economic control of similar groups of financiers, investors [rentiers], and political and business officials, draining the greatest potential reservoir of profit the world has even known, in order to consume it in Europe. The situation is far too complex, the play of world forces far too incalculable, to render this or any other single interpretation of the future very probable: but the influences which govern the imperialism of Western Europe today are moving in this direction, and, unless counteracted or diverted, make towards some such consummation."

Hobson, the social-liberal, fails to see that this "counteraction" can be offered *only* by the revolutionary proletariat and *only* in the form of a social revolution. But then he is a social-liberal! Nevertheless, as early as 1902 he had an excellent insight into the meaning and significance of a "United States of Europe" (be it said for the benefit of Trotsky the Kautskyite!) and of all that is now being glossed over by the *hypocritical Kautskyites* of various countries, namely, that the *opportunists* (social-chauvinists) are working hand in glove with the imperialist bourgeoisie *precisely* towards creating an imperialist Europe on the backs of Asia and Africa, and that objectively the *opportunists* are a section of the petty bourgeoisie and of certain strata of the working class who *have been bribed* out of imperialist superprofits and converted into *watchdogs* of capitalism and *corrupters* of the labour movement.

Both in articles and in the resolutions of our Party, we have repeatedly pointed to this most profound connection, the economic connection, between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the opportunism which has triumphed (for long?) in the labour movement. And from this, incidentally, we concluded that a split with the social-chauvinists was inevitable. Our Kautskyites preferred to evade the question! Martov, for instance, uttered in his lectures a sophistry which in the *Bulletin of the Organising Committee, Secretariat Abroad*<sup>34</sup> (No. 4, April 10, 1916) is expressed as follows:

"...The cause of revolutionary Social-Democracy would be in a sad, indeed hopeless, plight if those groups of workers who in mental development approach most closely to the 'intelligentsia' and who are the most highly skilled fatally drifted away from it towards opportunism...."

By means of the silly word "fatally" and a certain sleight-of-hand, the fact is evaded that certain groups of workers have already drifted away to opportunism and to the imperialist bourgeoisie! And that is the very fact the sophists of the O.C. want to evade! They confine themselves to the "official optimism" the Kautskyite Hilferding and many others now flaunt: objective conditions guarantee the unity of the proletariat and the victory of the revolutionary trend! We, forsooth, are "optimists" with regard to the proletariat!

But in reality all these Kautskyites—Hilferding, the O.C. supporters, Martov and Co.—are *optimists* ... with regard to *opportunism*. That is the whole point!

The proletariat is the child of capitalism—of world capitalism, and not only of European capitalism, or of imperialist capitalism. On a world scale, fifty years sooner or fifty years later—measured on a *world* scale this is a minor point—the "proletariat" of course "will be" united, and revolutionary Social-Democracy will "inevitably" be victorious within it. But that is not the point, Messrs. Kautskyites. The point is that at the present time, in the imperialist countries of Europe, you are *fawning* on the opportunists, who are *alien* to the proletariat as a class, who are the servants, the agents of the bourgeoisie and the vehicles of its influence, and *unless* the labour movement *rids* itself of them, it will remain a *bourgeois labour movement*. By advocating "unity" with the opportunists, with the Legiens and Davids, the Plekhanovs,

the Chkhenkelis and Potresovs, etc., you are, objectively, defending the *enslavement* of the workers by the imperialist bourgeoisie with the aid of its best agents in the labour movement. The victory of revolutionary Social-Democracy on a world scale is absolutely inevitable, only it is moving and will move, is proceeding and will proceed, *against* you, it will be a victory *over* you.

These two trends, one might even say *two* parties, in the present-day labour movement, which in 1914-16 so obviously parted ways all over the world, were *traced by Engels and Marx in England* throughout the course of *decades*, roughly from 1858 to 1892.

Neither Marx nor Engels lived to see the imperialist epoch of world capitalism, which began not earlier than 1898-1900. But it has been a peculiar feature of England that even in the middle of the nineteenth century she already revealed at least *two* major distinguishing features of imperialism: (1) vast colonies, and (2) monopoly profit (due to her monopoly position in the world market). In both respects England at that time was an exception among capitalist countries, and Engels and Marx, analysing this exception, quite clearly and definitely indicated its *connection* with the (temporary) victory of opportunism in the English labour movement.

In a letter to Marx, dated October 7, 1858, Engels wrote: "...The English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat *alongside* the bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable."<sup>35</sup> In a letter to Sorge, dated September 21, 1872, Engels informs him that Hales kicked up a big row in the Federal Council of the International and secured a vote of censure on Marx for saying that "the English labour leaders had sold themselves". Marx wrote to Sorge on August 4, 1874: "As to the urban workers here [in England], it is a pity that the whole pack of leaders did not get into Parliament. This would be the surest way of getting rid of the whole lot." In a letter to Marx, dated August 11, 1881, Engels speaks about "those very worst English trade unions which allow themselves to be led by men sold to, or at least paid by, the middle class". In a letter to Kautsky,



dated September 12, 1882, Engels wrote: "You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general. There is no workers' party here, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies."<sup>36</sup>

On December 7, 1889, Engels wrote to Sorge: "The most repulsive thing here [in England] is the bourgeois 'respectability', which has grown deep into the bones of the workers. . . . Even Tom Mann, whom I regard as the best of the lot, is fond of mentioning that he will be lunching with the Lord Mayor. If one compares this with the French, one realises what a revolution is good for, after all."<sup>37</sup> In a letter, dated April 19, 1890: "But *under* the surface the movement [of the working class in England] is going on, is embracing ever wider sections and mostly just among the hitherto stagnant *lowest* [Engels's italics] strata. The day is no longer far off when this mass will suddenly *find itself*, when it will dawn upon it that it itself is this colossal mass in motion."<sup>38</sup> On March 4, 1891: "The failure of the collapsed Dockers' Union; the 'old' conservative trade unions, *rich* and therefore cowardly, remain lone on the field. . . ." September 14, 1891: at the Newcastle Trade Union Congress the old unionists, opponents of the eight-hour day, were defeated "and the bourgeois papers recognise the defeat of the *bourgeois labour party*" (Engels's italics throughout). . . .

That these ideas, which were repeated by Engels over the course of decades, were also expressed by him publicly, in the press, is proved by his preface to the second edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 1892. Here he speaks of an "aristocracy among the working class", of a "privileged minority of the workers", in contradistinction to the "great mass of working people". "A small, privileged, protected minority" of the working class alone was "permanently benefited" by the privileged position of England in 1848-68, whereas "the great bulk of them experienced at best but a temporary improvement". . . . "With the breakdown of that [England's industrial] monopoly, the English working class will lose that privileged position. . . ." The members of the "new" unions, the unions of the unskilled workers, "had this immense advantage, that their minds were

virgin soil, entirely free from the inherited 'respectable' bourgeois prejudices which hampered the brains of the better situated 'old unionists' ". . . . "The so-called workers' representatives" in England are people "who are forgiven their being members of the working class because they themselves would like to drown their quality of being workers in the ocean of their liberalism"<sup>39</sup>. . . .

We have deliberately quoted the direct statements of Marx and Engels at rather great length in order that the reader may study them *as a whole*. And they should be studied, they are worth carefully pondering over. For they are the *pivot* of the tactics in the labour movement that are dictated by the objective conditions of the imperialist era.

Here, too, Kautsky has tried to 'befog the issue' and substitute for Marxism sentimental conciliation with the opportunists. Arguing against the avowed and naïve social-imperialists (men like Lensch) who justify Germany's participation in the war as a means of destroying England's monopoly, Kautsky "*corrects*" this obvious falsehood by another equally obvious falsehood. Instead of a cynical falsehood he employs a suave falsehood! The *industrial* monopoly of England, he says, has long ago been broken, has long ago been destroyed, and there is nothing left to destroy.

Why is this argument false?

Because, firstly, it overlooks England's *colonial* monopoly. Yet Engels, as we have seen, pointed to this very clearly as early as 1882, thirty-four years ago! Although England's industrial monopoly may have been destroyed, her colonial monopoly not only remains, but has become extremely accentuated, for the whole world is already divided up! By means of this suave lie Kautsky smuggles in the bourgeois-pacifist and opportunist-philistine idea that "there is nothing to fight about". On the contrary, not only have the *capitalists* something to fight about now, but they *cannot help* fighting if they want to preserve capitalism, for without a forcible redivision of colonies the *new* imperialist countries cannot obtain the privileges enjoyed by the older (*and weaker*) imperialist powers.

Secondly, why does England's monopoly explain the (temporary) victory of opportunism in England? Because monopoly yields *superprofits*, i.e., a surplus of profits over and above the capitalist profits that are normal and customary

all over the world. The capitalists *can* devote a part (and not a small one, at that!) of these superprofits to bribe *their own* workers, to create something like an alliance (recall the celebrated "alliances" described by the Webbs of English trade unions and employers) between the workers of the given nation and their capitalists *against* the other countries. England's industrial monopoly was already destroyed by the end of the nineteenth century. That is beyond dispute. But *how* did this destruction take place? Did *all* monopoly disappear?

If that were so, Kautsky's "theory" of conciliation (with the opportunists) would to a certain extent be justified. But it is *not* so, and that is just the point. Imperialism *is* monopoly capitalism. Every cartel, trust, syndicate, every giant bank *is* a monopoly. Superprofits have not disappeared; they still remain. The exploitation of *all* other countries by one privileged, financially wealthy country remains and has become more intense. A handful of wealthy countries—there are only four of them, if we mean independent, really gigantic, "modern" wealth: England, France, the United States and Germany—have developed monopoly to vast proportions, they obtain *superprofits* running into hundreds, if not thousands, of millions, they "ride on the backs" of hundreds and hundreds of millions of people in other countries and fight among themselves for the division of the particularly rich, particularly fat and particularly easy spoils.

This, in fact, is the economic and political essence of imperialism, the profound contradictions of which Kautsky glosses over instead of exposing.

The bourgeoisie of an imperialist "Great" Power *can economically* bribe the upper strata of "its" workers by spending on this a hundred million or so francs a year, for its *superprofits* most likely amount to about a thousand million. And how this little sop is divided among the labour ministers, "labour representatives" (remember Engels's splendid analysis of the term), labour members of war industries committees, labour officials, workers belonging to the narrow craft unions, office employees, etc., etc., is a secondary question.

Between 1848 and 1868, and to a certain extent even later, only England enjoyed a monopoly: *that is why* opportunism could prevail there for decades. *No* other

countries possessed either very rich colonies or an industrial monopoly.

The last third of the nineteenth century saw the transition to the new, imperialist era. Finance capital *not* of one, but of several, though very few, Great Powers enjoys a monopoly. (In Japan and Russia the monopoly of military power, vast territories, or special facilities for robbing minority nationalities, China, etc., partly supplements, partly takes the place of, the monopoly of modern, up-to-date finance capital.) This difference explains why England's monopoly position *could* remain *unchallenged* for decades. The monopoly of modern finance capital is being frantically challenged; the era of imperialist wars has begun. It was possible in those days to bribe and corrupt the working class of *one* country for decades. This is now improbable, if not impossible. But on the other hand, *every* imperialist "Great" Power can and does bribe *smaller* strata (than in England in 1848-68) of the "labour aristocracy". Formerly a "*bourgeois labour party*", to use Engels's remarkably profound expression, could arise only in one country, because it alone enjoyed a monopoly, but, on the other hand, it could exist for a long time. Now a "*bourgeois labour party*" *is inevitable* and typical in *all* imperialist countries; but in view of the desperate struggle they are waging for the division of spoils, it is improbable that such a party can prevail for long in a number of countries. For the trusts, the financial oligarchy, high prices, etc., while *enabling* the bribery of a handful in the top layers, are increasingly oppressing, crushing, ruining and torturing the *mass* of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat.

On the one hand, there is the tendency of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists to convert a handful of very rich and privileged nations into "eternal" parasites on the body of the rest of mankind, to "rest on the laurels" of the exploitation of Negroes, Indians, etc., keeping them in subjection with the aid of the excellent weapons of extermination provided by modern militarism. On the other hand, there is the tendency of the *masses*, who are more oppressed than before and who bear the whole brunt of imperialist wars, to cast off this yoke and to overthrow the bourgeoisie. It is in the struggle between these two tendencies that the history of the labour movement will now inevitably develop. For the first tendency is not accidental; it is "substantiated" economically. In

*all* countries the bourgeoisie has already begotten, fostered and secured for itself "bourgeois labour parties" of social-chauvinists. The difference between a definitely formed party, like Bissolati's in Italy, for example, which is fully social-imperialist, and, say, the semi-formed near-party of the Potresovs, Gvozdyovs, Bulkins, Chkheidzes, Skobelevs and Co., is an immaterial difference. The important thing is that, economically, the desertion of a stratum of the labour aristocracy to the bourgeoisie has matured and become an accomplished fact; and this economic fact, this shift in class relations, will find political form, in one shape or another, without any particular "difficulty".

On the economic basis referred to above, the political institutions of modern capitalism—press, parliament, associations, congresses, etc.—have created *political* privileges and sops for the respectful, meek, reformist and patriotic office employees and workers, corresponding to the economic privileges and sops. Lucrative and soft jobs in the government or on the war industries committees, in parliament and on diverse committees, on the editorial staffs of "respectable", legally published newspapers or on the management councils of no less respectable and "bourgeois law-abiding" trade unions—this is the bait by which the imperialist bourgeoisie attracts and rewards the representatives and supporters of the "bourgeois labour parties".

The mechanics of political democracy works in the same direction. Nothing in our times can be done without elections; nothing can be done without the masses. And in this era of printing and parliamentarism it is *impossible* to gain the following of the masses without a widely ramified, systematically managed, well-equipped system of flattery, lies, fraud, juggling with fashionable and popular catchwords, and promising all manner of reforms and blessings to the workers right and left—as long as they renounce the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. I would call this system Lloyd-Georgism, after the English Minister Lloyd George, one of the foremost and most dexterous representatives of this system in the classic land of the "bourgeois labour party". A first-class bourgeois manipulator, an astute politician, a popular orator who will deliver any speeches you like, even r-r-revolutionary ones, to a labour audience, and a man who is capable of obtaining sizable sops

for docile workers in the shape of social reforms (insurance, etc.), Lloyd George serves the bourgeoisie splendidly,\* and serves it precisely *among* the workers, brings its influence *precisely* to the proletariat, to where the bourgeoisie needs it most and where it finds it most difficult to subject the masses morally.

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Signed: *N. Lenin*

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\* I recently read an article in an English magazine by a Tory, a political opponent of Lloyd George, entitled "Lloyd George from the Standpoint of a Tory". The war opened the eyes of this opponent and made him realise what an excellent servant of the bourgeoisie this Lloyd George is! The Tories have made peace with him!

## From WAR AND REVOLUTION<sup>40</sup>

War is a continuation of policy by other means. All wars are inseparable from the political systems that engender them. The policy which a given state, a given class within that state, pursued for a long time before the war is inevitably continued by that same class during the war, the form of action alone being changed.

War is a continuation of policy by other means. When the French revolutionary townspeople and revolutionary peasants overthrew the monarchy at the close of the eighteenth century by revolutionary means and established a democratic republic—when they made short work of their monarch, and short work of their landowners, too, in a revolutionary fashion—that policy of the revolutionary class was bound to shake all the rest of autocratic, tsarist, imperial, and semi-feudal Europe to its foundations. And the inevitable continuation of this policy of the victorious revolutionary class in France was the wars in which all the monarchist nations of Europe, forming their famous coalition, lined up against revolutionary France in a counter-revolutionary war. Just as within the country the revolutionary people of France had then, for the first time, displayed revolutionary energy on a scale it had never shown for centuries, so in the war at the close of the eighteenth century it revealed a similar gigantic revolutionary creativeness when it remodelled its whole system of strategy, broke with all the old rules and traditions of warfare, replaced the old troops with a new revolutionary people's army, and created new methods of warfare. This example, to my mind, is noteworthy in that it clearly demonstrates to us things which the bourgeois journalists are now always forgetting when they pander to the philistine prejudices and ignorance

of the backward masses who do not understand this intimate economic and historical connection between every kind of war and the preceding policy of every country, every class that ruled before the war and achieved its ends by so-called "peaceful" means. So-called, because the brute force required to ensure "peaceful" rule in the colonies, for example, can hardly be called peaceful.

Peace reigned in Europe, but this was because domination over hundreds of millions of people in the colonies by the European nations was sustained only through constant, incessant, interminable wars, which we Europeans do not regard as wars at all, since all too often they resembled, not wars, but brutal massacres, the wholesale slaughter of unarmed peoples. The thing is that if we want to know what the present war is about we must first of all make a general survey of the policies of the European powers as a whole. We must not take this or that example, this or that particular case, which can easily be wrenched out of the context of social phenomena and which is worthless, because an opposite example can just as easily be cited. We must take the whole policy of the entire system of European states in their economic and political interrelations if we are to understand how the present war steadily and inevitably grew out of this system.

We are constantly witnessing attempts, especially on the part of the capitalist press—whether monarchist or republican—to read into the present war an historical meaning which it does not possess. For example, no device is more frequently resorted to in the French Republic than that of presenting this war on France's part as a continuation and counterpart of the wars of the Great French Revolution of 1792. No device for hoodwinking the French masses, the French workers and the workers of all countries is more widespread than that of applying to our epoch the "jargon" of that other epoch and some of its watchwords, or the attempt to present matters as though now, too, republican France is defending her liberty against the monarchy. One "minor" fact overlooked is that then, in 1792, war was waged in France by a revolutionary class, which had carried out an unparalleled revolution and displayed unmatched heroism in utterly destroying the French monarchy and rising

against a united monarchist Europe with the sole and single aim of carrying on its revolutionary struggle.

The war in France was a continuation of the policy of the revolutionary class which had carried out the revolution, won the republic, settled accounts with the French capitalists and landowners with unprecedented vigour, and was waging a revolutionary war against a united monarchist Europe in continuation of that policy.

What we have at present is primarily two leagues, two groups of capitalist powers. We have before us all the world's greatest capitalist powers—Britain, France, America, and Germany—who for decades have doggedly pursued a policy of incessant economic rivalry aimed at achieving world supremacy, subjugating the small nations, and making threefold and tenfold profits on banking capital, which has caught the whole world in the net of its influence. That is what Britain's and Germany's policies really amount to. I stress this fact. This fact can never be emphasised strongly enough, because if we forget this we shall never understand what this war is about, and we shall then be easy game for any bourgeois publicist who tries to foist lying phrases on us.

The real policies of the two groups of capitalist giants—Britain and Germany, who, with their respective allies, have taken the field against each other—policies which they were pursuing for decades before the war, should be studied and grasped in their entirety. If we did not do this we should not only be neglecting an essential requirement of scientific socialism and of all social science in general, but we should be unable to understand anything whatever about the present war. We should be putting ourselves in the power of Milyukov, that deceiver, who is stirring up chauvinism and hatred of one nation for another by methods which are applied everywhere without exception, methods which Clausewitz wrote about eighty years ago when he ridiculed the very view some people are holding today, namely, that the nations lived in peace and then they started fighting. As if this were true! How can a war be accounted for without considering its bearing on the preceding policy of the given state, of the given system of states, the given classes? I repeat: this is a basic point which is constantly overlooked. Failure to understand it makes nine-tenths of all war discussions mere wrangling, so much verbiage. We say: If you have not studied

the policies of both belligerent groups over a period of decades—so as to avoid accidental factors and the quoting of random examples—if you have not shown what bearing this war has on preceding policies, then you don't understand what this war is all about.

These policies show us just one thing—continuous economic rivalry between the world's two greatest giants, capitalist economies. On the one hand we have Britain, a country which owns the greater part of the globe, a country which ranks first in wealth, which has created this wealth not so much by the labour of its workers as by the exploitation of innumerable colonies, by the vast power of its banks which have developed at the head of all the others into an insignificantly small group of some four or five super-banks handling billions of rubles, and handling them in such a way that it can be said without exaggeration that there is not a patch of land in the world today on which this capital has not laid its heavy hand, not a patch of land which British capital has not enmeshed by a thousand threads. This capital grew to such dimensions by the turn of the century that its activities extended far beyond the borders of individual states and formed a group of giant banks possessed of fabulous wealth. Having begotten this tiny group of banks, it has caught the whole world in the net of its billions. This is the sum and substance of Britain's economic policy and of the economic policy of France, of which even French writers, some of them contributors to *l'Humanité*,<sup>41</sup> a paper now controlled by ex-socialists (in fact, no less a man than Lysis, the well-known financial writer), stated several years before the war: "France is a financial monarchy, France is a financial oligarchy, France is the world's money-lender."

On the other hand, opposed to this, mainly Anglo-French group, we have another group of capitalists, an even more rapacious, even more predatory one, a group who came to the capitalist banquet table when all the seats were occupied, but who introduced into the struggle new methods for developing capitalist production, improved techniques, and superior organisation, which turned the old capitalism, the capitalism of the free-competition age, into the capitalism of giant trusts, syndicates, and cartels. This group introduced the beginnings of state-controlled capitalist production, combining the colossal power of capitalism with

the colossal power of the state into a single mechanism and bringing tens of millions of people within the single organization of state capitalism. Here is economic history, here is diplomatic history, covering several decades, from which no one can get away. It is the one and only guide-post to a proper solution of the problem of war; it leads you to the conclusion that the present war, too, is the outcome of the policies of the classes who have come to grips in it, of the two supreme giants, who, long before the war, had caught the whole world, all countries, in the net of financial exploitation and economically divided the globe up among themselves. They were bound to clash, because a redivision of this supremacy, from the point of view of capitalism, had become inevitable.

The old division was based on the fact that Britain, in the course of several centuries, had ruined her former competitors. A former competitor was Holland, which had dominated the whole world. Another was France, which had fought for supremacy for nearly a hundred years. After a series of protracted wars Britain was able, by virtue of her economic power, her merchant capital, to establish her unchallenged sway over the world. In 1871 a new predator appeared, a new capitalist power arose, which developed at an incomparably faster pace than Britain. That is a basic fact. You will not find a book on economic history that does not acknowledge this indisputable fact—the fact of Germany's faster development. This rapid development of capitalism in Germany was the development of a young strong predator, who appeared in the concert of European powers and said: "You ruined Holland, you defeated France, you have helped yourself to half the world—now be good enough to let us have our fair share." What does "a fair share" mean? How is it to be determined in the capitalist world, in the world of banks? There power is determined by the number of banks, there power is determined in the way described by a mouthpiece of the American multimillionaires, which declared with typically American frankness and typically American cynicism: "The war in Europe is being waged for world domination. To dominate the world two things are needed: dollars and banks. We have the dollars, we shall make the banks and we shall dominate the world." This statement was made by a leading newspaper of the American

multimillionaires. I must say, there is a thousand times more truth in this cynical statement of a blustering American multimillionaire than in thousands of articles by bourgeois liars who try to make out that this war is being waged for national interests, on national issues, and utter similar glaringly patent lies which dismiss history completely and take an isolated example like the case of the German beast of prey who attacked Belgium. The case is undoubtedly a real one. This group of predators did attack Belgium with brutal ferocity, but it did the same thing the other group did yesterday by other means and is doing today to other nations.

When we argue about annexations—and this bears on the question I have been trying briefly to explain to you as the history of the economic and diplomatic relations which led up to the present war—when we argue about annexations we always forget that these, generally, are what the war is being waged for; it is for the carve-up of conquered territories, or, to put it more popularly, for the division of the plundered spoils by the two robber gangs. When we argue about annexations we constantly meet with methods which, scientifically speaking, do not stand up to criticism, and which, as methods of public journalism, are deliberate humbug. Ask a Russian chauvinist or social-chauvinist what annexation by Germany means, and he will give you an excellent explanation, because he understands that perfectly well. But he will never answer a request for a general definition of annexation that will fit them all—Germany, Britain, and Russia. He will never do that! And when *Rech*<sup>42</sup> (to pass from theory to practice) sneered at *Pravda*,<sup>43</sup> saying, "These Pravdists consider Kurland<sup>44</sup> a case of annexation! How can you talk to such people!" and we answered: "Please give us such a definition of annexation as would apply to the Germans, the English, and the Russians, and we add that either you evade this issue or we shall expose you on the spot!"—*Rech* kept silent. We maintain that no newspaper, either of the chauvinists in general, who simply say that the fatherland must be defended, or of the social-chauvinists, has ever given a definition of annexation that would fit both Germany and Russia, that would be applicable to any side. It cannot do this for the simple reason that this war is

\* See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 35-36.—*Ed.*

the continuation of a policy of annexations, that is, a policy of conquest, of capitalist robbery on the part of both groups involved in the war. Obviously, the question of which of these two robbers was the first to draw the knife is of small account to us. Take the history of the naval and military expenditures of these two groups over a period of decades, take the history of the little wars they waged before the big war—"little" because few Europeans died in those wars, whereas hundreds of thousands of people belonging to the nations they were subjugating died in them, nations which from their point of view could not be regarded as nations at all (you couldn't very well call those Asians and Africans nations!); the wars waged against these nations were wars against unarmed people, who were simply shot down, machine-gunned. Can you call them wars? Strictly speaking, they were not wars at all, and you could forget about them. That is their attitude to this downright deception of the masses.

The present war is a continuation of the policy of conquest, of the shooting down of whole nationalities, of unbelievable atrocities committed by the Germans and the British in Africa, and by the British and the Russians in Persia—which of them committed most it is difficult to say. It was for this reason that the German capitalists looked upon them as their enemies. Ah, they said, you are strong because you are rich? But we are stronger, therefore we have the same "sacred" right to plunder. That is what the real history of British and German finance capital in the course of several decades preceding the war amounts to. That is what the history of Russo-German, Russo-British, and German-British relations amounts to. There you have the clue to an understanding of what the war is about. That is why the story that is current about the cause of the war is sheer duplicity and humbug. Forgetting the history of finance capital, the history of how this war had been brewing over the issue of redivision, they present the matter like this: two nations were living at peace, then one attacked the other, and the other fought back. All science, all banks are forgotten, and the peoples are told to take up arms, and so are the peasants, who know nothing about politics. All they have to do is to fight back! The logical thing, following this line of argument, would be to close down all newspapers, burn all books and

ban all mention of annexations in the press. In this way such a view of annexations could be justified. They can't tell the truth about annexations because the whole history of Russia, Britain, and Germany has been one of continuous, ruthless and sanguinary war over annexations. Ruthless wars were waged in Persia and Africa by the Liberals, who flogged political offenders in India for daring to put forward demands which were being fought for here in Russia. The French colonial troops oppressed peoples too. There you have the pre-history, the real history of unprecedented plunder! Such is the policy of these classes, of which the present war is a continuation. That is why, on the question of annexations, they cannot give the reply that we give, when we say that any nation joined to another one, not by the voluntary choice of its majority but by a decision of a king or government, is an annexed nation. To renounce annexation is to give each nation the right to form a separate state or to live in union with whomsoever it chooses. An answer like that is perfectly clear to every worker who is at all class-conscious.

In every resolution, of which dozens are passed, and published even in such a paper as *Zemlya i Volya*,<sup>45</sup> you will find the answer, poorly expressed: We don't want a war for supremacy over other nations, we are fighting for our freedom. That is what all the workers and peasants say, that is how they express the view of the workingman, his understanding of the war. They imply by this that if the war were in the interests of the working people against the exploiters they would be for such a war. So would we, and there is not a revolutionary party that could be against it. Where they go wrong, these movers of numerous resolutions, is when they believe that the war is being waged by them. We soldiers, we workers, we peasants are fighting for our freedom. I shall never forget the question one of them asked me after a meeting. "Why do you speak against the capitalists all the time?" he said. "I'm not a capitalist, am I? We're workers, we're defending our freedom." You're wrong, you are fighting because you are obeying your capitalist government; it's the governments, not the peoples, who are carrying on this war. I am not surprised at a worker or peasant, who doesn't know his politics, who has not had the good or bad fortune of being initiated into the secrets of diplomacy or the picture of this finance plunder (this oppression of Persia by Russia and

Britain, say)—I am not surprised at him forgetting this history and saying naïvely: Who cares about the capitalists, when it's me who's fighting! He doesn't understand the connection between the war and the government, he doesn't understand that the war is being waged by the government, and that he is just a tool in the hands of that government. He can call himself a revolutionary people and write eloquent resolutions—to Russians this means a lot, because this has come into their lives only recently. There has recently appeared a "revolutionary" declaration by the Provisional Government.<sup>46</sup> This doesn't mean anything. Other nations, more experienced than we are in the capitalist art of hoodwinking the masses by penning "revolutionary" manifestos, have long since broken all the world's records in this respect. If you take the parliamentary history of the French Republic since it became a republic supporting tsarism, you will find dozens of examples during the decades of this history when manifestos full of the most eloquent phrases served to mask a policy of the most outrageous colonial and financial plunder. The whole history of the Third Republic<sup>47</sup> in France is a history of this plunder. Such are the origins of the present war. It is not due to malice on the part of capitalists or the mistaken policy of some monarch. To think so would be incorrect. No, this war is an inevitable outgrowth of super-capitalism, especially banking capital, which resulted in some four banks in Berlin and five or six in London dominating the whole world, appropriating the world's funds, reinforcing their financial policy by armed force, and finally clashing in a savage armed conflict because they had come to the end of their free tether in the matter of conquests. One or the other side had to relinquish its colonies. Such questions are not settled voluntarily in this world of capitalists. This issue could only be settled by war. That is why it is absurd to blame one or another crowned brigand. They are all the same, these crowned brigands. That is why it is equally absurd to blame the capitalists of one or another country. All they are to blame for is for having introduced such a system. But this has been done in full keeping with the law, which is safeguarded by all the forces of a civilised state. "I am fully within my rights, I am a buyer of shares. All the law courts, all the police, the whole standing army and all the navies in the world are safeguarding my sacred right to these shares."

Who's to blame for banks being set up which handle hundreds of millions of rubles, for these banks casting their nets of plunder over the whole world, and for their being locked in mortal combat? Find the culprit if you can! The blame lies with half a century of capitalist development, and the only way out of this is by the overthrow of the rule of the capitalists and by a workers' revolution. That is the answer our Party has arrived at from an analysis of the war, and that is why we say: The very simple question of annexations has been so muddled up and the spokesmen of the bourgeois parties have uttered so many lies that they are able to make out that Kurland is not annexation by Russia. They have shared Kurland and Poland between them, those three crowned brigands.<sup>48</sup> They have been doing this for a hundred years, carving up the living flesh. And the Russian brigand snatched most because he was then the strongest. And now that the young beast of prey, Germany, who was then a party to the carve-up, has grown into a strong capitalist power, she demands a redivision. You want things to stay as they were? she says. You think you are stronger? Let's try conclusions!

That is what the war boils down to. Of course, the challenge "let's try conclusions" is merely an expression of the decade-long policy of plunder, the policy of the big banks.

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### From A TURN IN WORLD POLITICS

History does not stand still even in times of counter-revolution. History has been advancing even during the imperialist slaughter of 1914-16, which is a *continuation* of the imperialist policies of preceding decades. World capitalism, which in the sixties and seventies of the last century was an advanced and progressive force of free competition, and which at the beginning of the twentieth century grew into *monopoly* capitalism, i.e., imperialism, took a big step *forward* during the war, not only towards greater concentration of finance capital, but also towards transformation into *state capitalism*. The force of national cohesion, the significance of national sympathies, were revealed in this war, for example, by the conduct of the Irish in one imperialist coalition, and of the Czechs in the other. The intelligent leaders of imperialism say to themselves: Of course, we cannot achieve our aims without throttling the small nations; but there are two ways of doing that. Sometimes the more reliable and profitable way is to obtain the services of sincere and conscientious advocates of "fatherland defence" in an imperialist war by creating *politically* independent states; "we", of course, will see to it that they are *financially dependent*! It is more profitable (when imperialist powers are engaged in a major war) to be an ally of an independent Bulgaria than the master of a dependent Ireland! To complete what has been left undone in the realm of national reforms may sometimes internally strengthen an imperialist coalition—this is properly taken into account by, for instance, one of the most servile lackeys of German imperialism, Karl Renner, who, of course, is a staunch supporter of "unity" in the Social-Democratic

parties in general, and of unity with Scheidemann and Kautsky in particular.

The objective course of events is having its effect, and just as the executioners of the 1848 and 1905 revolutions were, in a certain sense, their executors, so the stage managers of the imperialist slaughter are *compelled* to carry out certain state-capitalist, certain national reforms. Moreover, it is necessary, by throwing out a few sops, to *pacify* the masses, angered by the war and the high cost of living: why not promise (and partly carry out, for it does not commit one to anything!) "reduction of armaments"? After all, war is a "branch of industry" similar to forestry: it takes decades for trees of proper size—that is to say, for a sufficiently abundant supply of adult "cannon fodder"—to grow up.

*Sotsial-Demokrat* No. 58,  
January 31, 1917

Vol. 23, pp. 267-68

From MATERIALS RELATING  
TO THE REVISION  
OF THE PARTY PROGRAMME

COMMENTS ON THE REMARKS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE  
OF THE SEVENTH  
(APRIL) ALL-RUSSIA CONFERENCE  
OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)

Imperialism is moribund capitalism, capitalism which is dying but not dead. The essential feature of imperialism, by and large, is not monopolies pure and simple, but monopolies in conjunction with exchange, markets, competition, crises.

It is therefore theoretically wrong to delete an analysis of exchange, commodity production, crises, etc., in general and to "replace" it by an analysis of imperialism *as a whole*. There is no such whole. There is a *transition* from competition to monopoly, and therefore the programme would be much more correct, and much more true to reality, if it retained the general analysis of exchange, commodity production, crises, etc., and had a characterisation of the *growing* monopolies added to it. In fact it is this combination of antagonistic principles, viz., competition and monopoly, that is the essence of imperialism, it is this that is making for the final crash, i.e., the socialist revolution.

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From REVISION OF THE PARTY PROGRAMME<sup>49</sup>

V

We must draw our conclusions on the chief question which should, according to the unanimous decision of all Bolsheviks, be primarily dealt with and assessed in the new programme — the question of *imperialism*. Comrade Sokolnikov maintains that such treatment and assessment could be more expediently given piecemeal, so to speak, dividing up the various characteristics of imperialism among various sections of the programme. I think it would be more to the purpose to present it in a special section or a special part of the programme, by gathering together everything that there is to say about imperialism. The members of the Party now have both drafts before them, and the congress will decide. We are in full accord with Comrade Sokolnikov in that imperialism must be dealt with. What we must find out is whether there are differences of opinion as to *how* imperialism should be treated and assessed.

From this point of view let us examine the two drafts of the new programme. In my draft five basic distinguishing features of imperialism are presented: (1) capitalist monopoly associations; (2) the fusion of banking and industrial capital; (3) the export of capital to foreign countries; (4) the territorial partition of the globe, already completed; (5) the partition of the globe among international economic trusts. (In my pamphlet *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, which came out after the *Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme*, these five distinguishing features of imperialism are cited on p. 85.\*) In Comrade Sokolnikov's draft we actually find the same five basic features,

\* See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 266.—Ed.

so that on the question of imperialism there is apparently complete agreement in principle within our Party—as was to be expected, for the practical propaganda of our Party on this question, both oral and printed, has long since, from the very beginning of the revolution, shown the complete unanimity of all the Bolsheviks on this fundamental question.

What remains to be examined is the differences in the way the definition and characterisation of imperialism are *formulated*. Both drafts point specifically to the time when capitalism may be properly regarded as having become transformed into imperialism. The necessity for such a statement in the interests of precision and correct historical evaluation of economic development would hardly be denied. Comrade Sokolnikov says: “during the last quarter of a century”; I say: “about the beginning of the twentieth century”. In the above-mentioned pamphlet on imperialism (on pp. 10 and 11, for instance\*) I cited the testimony of an economist who has made a special study of cartels and syndicates. According to him, the turn towards the *complete* victory of the cartels in Europe came with the crisis of 1900-03. That is why, it seems, it would be more accurate to say: “about the beginning of the twentieth century”, than “during the last quarter of a century”. It would be more correct for still another reason. The above-mentioned specialist and all other European economists generally work with data supplied by Germany, and Germany is *far ahead* of other countries in the formation of cartels.

Furthermore, speaking of monopolies my draft says: “Monopolist associations of capitalists have assumed decisive importance”. Comrade Sokolnikov calls attention to monopoly associations *several times*. Only once is he fairly definite:

“During the last quarter of a century the direct or indirect control of production organised on capitalist lines has passed into the hands of all-powerful, interlocking banks, trusts and syndicates which have formed world-wide monopoly associations under the direction of a handful of magnates of finance capital.”

Here, it appears, there is too much “propaganda”. “To win popularity” something that has no place there is injected into the programme. In newspaper articles, in speeches,

\* See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 200-02.—Ed.

in popular pamphlets, “propaganda” is indispensable; the programme of a party, however, must be distinguished by the precision of its economics; it must contain nothing superfluous. The statement that capitalist monopoly associations have acquired “decisive importance” seems to me more exact; it says all that is necessary. Besides much superfluous matter, the above-quoted excerpt from Comrade Sokolnikov’s draft contains an expression questionable from the theoretical point of view—“control of production organised on capitalist lines”. Is it only organised on capitalist lines? No. This is too weak. Even production *not* so organised—petty craftsmen, peasants, small cotton-growers in the colonies, etc., etc.—has become dependent on banks and finance capital in general. When we speak of “world capitalism” in general (and this is the only capitalism we can discuss here if we are not to make mistakes), our statement that monopolist associations acquire “decisive importance” *does not* mean that any other producers are excluded from subordination to this rule. To limit the influence of monopolist associations to “production organised on capitalist lines” is incorrect.

To proceed. In his draft, Comrade Sokolnikov twice repeats the same thing about the role played by banks: once in the above-quoted passage and a second time in the section dealing with crises and wars, where he defines finance capital as “a product of a merger of banking and industrial capital”. My draft says that “enormously concentrated banking capital has fused with industrial capital”. To say it once in the programme is sufficient.

The third feature, “the export of capital to foreign countries has assumed vast dimensions” (so in my draft). In Comrade Sokolnikov’s draft, we find a mere reference to the “export of capital” in one place, while in another, and in an entirely different connection, we read of “new countries which are fields for the utilisation of capital exported in search of superprofits”. It is difficult to accept as correct the statement on superprofits and new countries since capital has also been exported from Germany to Italy, from France to Switzerland, etc. Under imperialism, capital has begun to be exported to the old countries as well, and not for *superprofits* alone. What is true with regard to the new countries is not true with regard to the export of capital in general.

The fourth feature is what Hilferding has called "the struggle for economic territory". This term is *not* exact, for it does not indicate what mostly distinguishes modern imperialism from the *older* forms of struggle for economic territory. Ancient Rome fought for such territories; the European kingdoms in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries fought for such territories and acquired colonies; so did old Russia by her conquest of Siberia, etc., etc. The distinguishing feature of modern imperialism is (as pointed out in my draft) that "the whole world has been divided up territorially among the richer countries", i.e., the partition of the earth among various states has been completed. This circumstance makes the conflicts for a *re-partitioning* of the globe all the sharper, and is the cause of the particularly sharp collisions which lead to war.

All this is expressed in Comrade Sokolnikov's draft with great verbosity and is hardly accurate theoretically. But before I quote his statement of the case which also includes the economic partitioning of the globe, I will first touch upon that fifth and last feature of imperialism. Here is how this is expressed in my draft:

"The economic partitioning of the world among international trusts has begun." The data of political economy and statistics do not warrant any more elaborate statement. *This* partitioning of the world is a very important process, but it has just begun. *This* partitioning, or rather *re-partitioning* of the world, is bound to cause imperialist wars since the territorial partition is complete, i.e., there are *no* more "free" lands that can be grabbed without war against a rival nation.

Let us see now how Comrade Sokolnikov formulates this part of the programme:

"But the realm of capitalist relations becomes ever wider; they are carried across frontiers, into new lands. These lands serve the capitalists as markets for commodities, as sources of raw materials, as fields for the utilisation of capital exported in search of superprofits. The vast accumulation of surplus value at the disposal of finance capital (a product of a merger of banking and industrial capital) is dumped on to the world market. The rivalry of powerful nationally and at times internationally organised associations of capitalists for command of the market, for the possession or control of territories of weaker countries, i.e., for the exclusive right to oppress them mercilessly, inevitably leads to attempts at partitioning the whole world among the richest capitalist countries, to imperialist wars, which engender universal suffering, ruin, and degeneration."

Here we have too many words, covering up a series of theoretical errors. One cannot speak of "attempts" at dividing up the world, because the world has *already* been divided up. The war of 1914-17 is not "an attempt at partitioning" the world, but a struggle for the *re-partitioning* of a world already divided. The war became inevitable for capitalism, because a few years before it imperialism *divided up* the world according to yardsticks of strength now out of date, and which are being "corrected" by the war.

The struggle for colonies (for "new lands"), and the struggle for "the possession of territories of weaker countries", all existed *before* imperialism. Modern imperialism is characterised by *something else*, namely, by the fact that at the beginning of the twentieth century the whole earth was divided up and occupied by various countries. That is why, under capitalism, the *re-partitioning* of "world domination" could only take place at the price of a world war. "Internationally organised associations of capitalists" existed *before* imperialism. Every joint-stock company with a membership of capitalists from various countries is an "internationally organised association of capitalists".

The distinguishing feature of imperialism is *something quite different*, something which *did not exist* before the twentieth century—the economic partitioning of the world among international trusts, the partitioning of countries, *by agreement*, into market areas. This particular point has not been expressed in Comrade Sokolnikov's draft, the power of imperialism is, therefore, represented as much *weaker* than it really is.

Finally, it is theoretically incorrect to speak of dumping a vast accumulation of *surplus value* on to the world market. This reminds one of Proudhon's theory of realisation, according to which capitalists may easily realise both fixed variable capital, but find it difficult to realise surplus value. As a matter of fact capitalists cannot realise without difficulties and crises either surplus value or variable and fixed capital. Commodities dumped on to the market are not only accumulated value, but also value reproducing variable capital and fixed capital. For instance, stocks of rails or iron are thrown into the world market, and should be exchanged for articles consumed by the workers, or for other means of production (wood, oil, etc.).

## VI

Having thus concluded our analysis of Comrade Sokolnikov's draft, we must note one very valuable addition which he proposes and which in my opinion should be adopted and even developed. To the paragraph which deals with technical progress and the greater employment of female and child labour, he proposes to add the phrase "as well as the labour of unskilled foreign workers imported from backward countries". This addition is valuable and necessary. The exploitation of *worse paid* labour from backward countries is particularly characteristic of imperialism. On this exploitation rests, to a certain degree, the *parasitism* of rich imperialist countries which bribe a part of their workers with higher wages while shamelessly and unrestrainedly exploiting the labour of "cheap" foreign workers. The words "worse paid" should be added and also the words "and frequently deprived of rights"; for the exploiters in "civilised" countries always take advantage of the fact that the imported foreign workers have no rights. This is often to be seen in Germany in respect of workers imported from Russia; in Switzerland, of Italians; in France, of Spaniards and Italians, etc.

It would be expedient, perhaps, to emphasise more strongly and to express more vividly in our programme the prominence of the handful of the richest imperialist countries which prosper parasitically by robbing colonies and weaker nations. This is an extremely important feature of imperialism. To a certain extent it facilitates the rise of powerful revolutionary movements in countries that are subjected to imperialist plunder, and are in danger of being crushed and partitioned by the giant imperialists (such as Russia), and on the other hand, tends to a certain extent to prevent the rise of profound revolutionary movements in the countries that plunder, by imperialist methods, many colonies and foreign lands, and thus make a very large (comparatively) portion of their population *participants* in the division of the imperialist loot.

I would therefore suggest that the point on this exploitation of a number of weak countries by the richest should be inserted in that section of my draft where social-chauvinism is described (page 22 of the pamphlet).<sup>\*</sup> The relevant passage

<sup>\*</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 470.—Ed.

in the draft would then assume the following form (the additions are in italics):

"Such a perversion is, on the one hand, the social-chauvinist trend, socialism in word and chauvinism in deed, the use of the 'defence of the fatherland' slogan to hide the predatory interests 'their own' national bourgeoisie *pursues in an imperialist war and to maintain the privileged position of citizens of rich nations which make enormous profits by pillaging colonies and weak nations*. Another such perversion, on the other hand, is the equally wide and international movement of the 'Centre', etc."

It is necessary to add the words "in an imperialist war" for greater accuracy. "Defence of the fatherland" is nothing but a slogan to justify the war, the recognition of it as legitimate and just. There are different kinds of wars. There may also be revolutionary wars. We must therefore say precisely what we mean: imperialist war. This is of course implied, but to avoid misinterpretation, it must not be implied, but stated directly and clearly.

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Signed: N. Lenin

## LETTER TO AMERICAN WORKERS

Comrades! A Russian Bolshevik who took part in the 1905 Revolution, and who lived in your country for many years afterwards, has offered to convey my letter to you.<sup>50</sup> I have accepted his proposal all the more gladly because just at the present time the American revolutionary workers have to play an exceptionally important role as uncompromising enemies of American imperialism—the freshest, strongest and latest in joining in the world-wide slaughter of nations for the division of capitalist profits. At this very moment, the American multimillionaires, these modern slave-owners, have turned an exceptionally tragic page in the bloody history of bloody imperialism by giving their approval—whether direct or indirect, open or hypocritically concealed, makes no difference—to the armed expedition launched by the brutal Anglo-Japanese imperialists for the purpose of throttling the first socialist republic.

The history of modern, civilised America opened with one of those great, really liberating, really revolutionary wars of which there have been so few compared to the vast number of wars of conquest which, like the present imperialist war, were caused by squabbles among kings, landowners or capitalists over the division of usurped lands or ill-gotten gains. That was the war the American people waged against the British robbers<sup>51</sup> who oppressed America and held her in colonial slavery, in the same way as these “civilised” blood-suckers are still oppressing and holding in colonial slavery hundreds of millions of people in India, Egypt, and all parts of the world.

About 150 years have passed since then. Bourgeois civilisation has borne all its luxurious fruits. America has taken

first place among the free and educated nations in level of development of the productive forces of collective human endeavour, in the utilisation of machinery and of all the wonders of modern engineering. At the same time, America has become one of the foremost countries in regard to the depth of the abyss which lies between the handful of arrogant multimillionaires who wallow in filth and luxury, and the millions of working people who constantly live on the verge of pauperism. The American people, who set the world an example in waging a revolutionary war against feudal slavery, now find themselves in the latest, capitalist stage of wage-slavery to a handful of multimillionaires, and find themselves playing the role of hired thugs who, for the benefit of wealthy scoundrels, throttled the Philippines in 1898 on the pretext of “liberating” them, and are throttling the Russian Socialist Republic in 1918 on the pretext of “protecting” it from the Germans.

The four years of the imperialist slaughter of nations, however, have not passed in vain. The deception of the people by the scoundrels of both robber groups, the British and the German, has been utterly exposed by indisputable and obvious facts. The results of the four years of war have revealed the general law of capitalism as applied to war between robbers for the division of spoils: the richest and strongest profited and grabbed most, while the weakest were utterly robbed, tormented, crushed and strangled.

The British imperialist robbers were the strongest in number of “colonial slaves”. The British capitalists have not lost an inch of “their” territory (i.e., territory they have grabbed over the centuries), but they have grabbed all the German colonies in Africa, they have grabbed Mesopotamia and Palestine, they have throttled Greece, and have begun to plunder Russia.

The German imperialist robbers were the strongest in organisation and discipline of “their” armies, but weaker in regard to colonies. They have lost all their colonies, but plundered half of Europe and throttled the largest number of small countries and weak nations. What a great war of “liberation” on both sides! How well the robbers of both groups, the Anglo-French and the German capitalists, together with their lackeys, the social-chauvinists, i.e., the socialists who

went over to the side of "*their own*" bourgeoisie, have "defended their country"!

The American multimillionaires were, perhaps, richest of all, and geographically the most secure. They have profited more than all the rest. They have converted all, even the richest, countries into their tributaries. They have grabbed hundreds of billions of dollars. And every dollar is sullied with filth: the filth of the secret treaties between Britain and her "allies", between Germany and her vassals, treaties for the division of the spoils, treaties of mutual "aid" for oppressing the workers and persecuting the internationalist socialists. Every dollar is sullied with the filth of "profitable" war contracts, which in every country made the rich richer and the poor poorer. And every dollar is stained with blood—from that ocean of blood that has been shed by the ten million killed and twenty million maimed in the great, noble, liberating and holy war to decide whether the British or the German robbers are to get most of the spoils, whether the British or the German thugs are to be *foremost* in throttling the weak nations all over the world.

While the German robbers broke all records in war atrocities, the British have broken all records not only in the number of colonies they have grabbed, but also in the subtlety of their disgusting hypocrisy. This very day, the Anglo-French and American bourgeois newspapers are spreading, in millions and millions of copies, lies and slander about Russia, and are hypocritically justifying their predatory expedition against her on the plea that they want to "protect" Russia from the Germans!

It does not require many words to refute this despicable and hideous lie; it is sufficient to point to one well-known fact. In October 1917, after the Russian workers had overthrown their imperialist government, the Soviet government, the government of the revolutionary workers and peasants, openly proposed a just peace, a peace without annexations or indemnities, a peace that fully guaranteed equal rights to all nations—and it proposed such a peace to *all* the belligerent countries.<sup>52</sup>

It was the Anglo-French and the American bourgeoisie who refused to accept our proposal; it was they who even refused to talk to us about a general peace! It was *they* who

betrayed the interests of all nations; it was they who prolonged the imperialist slaughter!

It was they who, banking on the possibility of dragging Russia back into the imperialist war, refused to take part in the peace negotiations and thereby gave a free hand to the no less predatory German capitalists who imposed the annexationist and harsh Brest Peace<sup>53</sup> upon Russia!

It is difficult to imagine anything more disgusting than the hypocrisy with which the Anglo-French and American bourgeoisie are now "blaming" us *for* the Brest Peace Treaty. The very capitalists of those countries which could have turned the Brest negotiations into general negotiations for a general peace are now our "accusers"! The Anglo-French imperialist vultures, who have profited from the plunder of colonies and the slaughter of nations, have prolonged the war for nearly a whole year after Brest, and yet they "accuse" *us*, the Bolsheviks, who proposed a just peace to all countries, they accuse *us*, who tore up, published and exposed to public disgrace the secret, criminal treaties concluded between the ex-tsar and the Anglo-French capitalists.

The workers of the whole world, no matter in what country they live, greet us, sympathise with us, applaud us for breaking the iron ring of imperialist ties, of sordid imperialist treaties, of imperialist chains—for breaking through to freedom, and making the heaviest sacrifices in doing so—for, as a socialist republic, although torn and plundered by the imperialists, keeping *out* of the imperialist war and raising the banner of peace, the banner of socialism for the whole world to see.

Small wonder that the international imperialist gang hates us for this, that it "accuses" us, that all the lackeys of the imperialists, including our Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks,<sup>54</sup> also "accuse" us. The hatred these watchdogs of imperialism express for the Bolsheviks, and the sympathy of the class-conscious workers of the world, convince us more than ever of the justice of our cause.

A real socialist would not fail to understand that for the sake of achieving victory over the bourgeoisie, for the sake of power passing to the workers, for the sake of *starting* the world proletarian revolution, we *cannot* and must *not* hesitate to make the heaviest sacrifices, including the sacrifice of

part of our territory, the sacrifice of heavy defeats at the hands of imperialism. A real socialist would have proved by *deeds* his willingness for "his" country to make the greatest sacrifice to give a real push forward to the cause of the socialist revolution.

For the sake of "their" cause, that is, for the sake of winning world hegemony, the imperialists of Britain and Germany have not hesitated to utterly ruin and throttle a whole number of countries, from Belgium and Serbia to Palestine and Mesopotamia. But must socialists wait with "their" cause, the cause of liberating the working people of the whole world from the yoke of capital, of winning universal and lasting peace, until a path without sacrifice is found? Must they fear to open the battle until an easy victory is "guaranteed"? Must they place the integrity and security of "their" bourgeois-created "fatherland" above the interests of the world socialist revolution? The scoundrels in the international socialist movement who think this way, those lackeys who grovel to bourgeois morality, thrice stand condemned.

The Anglo-French and American imperialist vultures "accuse" us of concluding an "agreement" with German imperialism. What hypocrites, what scoundrels they are to slander the workers' government while trembling because of the sympathy displayed towards us by the workers of "their own" countries! But their hypocrisy will be exposed. They pretend not to see the difference between an agreement entered into by "socialists" with the bourgeoisie (their own or foreign) *against the workers*, against the working people, and an agreement entered into *for the protection* of the workers who have defeated their bourgeoisie, with the bourgeoisie of one national colour *against the bourgeoisie* of another colour in order that the proletariat may take advantage of the antagonisms between the different groups of bourgeoisie.

In actual fact, every European sees this difference very well, and, as I shall show in a moment, the American people have had a particularly striking "illustration" of it in their own history. There are agreements and agreements, there are *fagots et fagots*, as the French say.

When in February 1918 the German imperialist vultures hurled their forces against unarmed, demobilised Russia, who had relied on the international solidarity of the proletariat

before the world revolution had fully matured, I did not hesitate for a moment to enter into an "agreement" with the French monarchists. Captain Sadoul, a French army officer who, in words, sympathised with the Bolsheviks, but was in deeds a loyal and faithful servant of French imperialism, brought the French officer de Lubersac to see me. "I am a monarchist. My only aim is to secure the defeat of Germany," de Lubersac declared to me. "That goes without saying (*cela va sans dire*)," I replied. But this did not in the least prevent me from entering into an "agreement" with de Lubersac concerning certain services that French army officers, experts in explosives, were ready to render us by blowing up railway lines in order to hinder the German invasion. This is an example of an "agreement" of which every class-conscious worker will approve, an agreement in the interests of socialism. The French monarchist and I shook hands, although we knew that each of us would willingly hang his "partner". But for a time our interests coincided. Against the advancing rapacious Germans, *we*, in the interests of the Russian and the world socialist revolution, utilised the equally rapacious counter-interests of *other* imperialists. In this way we served the interests of the working class of Russia and of other countries, we strengthened the proletariat and weakened the bourgeoisie of the whole world, we resorted to the methods, most legitimate and essential in *every* war, of manoeuvre, stratagem, retreat, in anticipation of the moment when the rapidly maturing proletarian revolution in a number of advanced countries *completely matured*.

However much the Anglo-French and American imperialist sharks fume with rage, however much they slander us, no matter how many millions they spend on bribing the Right Socialist-Revolutionary, Menshevik and other social-patriotic newspapers, *I shall not hesitate one second* to enter into a *similar* "agreement" with the German imperialist vultures if an attack upon Russia by Anglo-French troops calls for it. And I know perfectly well that my tactics will be approved by the class-conscious proletariat of Russia, Germany, France, Britain, America—in short, of the whole civilised world. Such tactics will ease the task of the socialist revolution, will hasten it, will weaken the international bourgeoisie, will strengthen the position of the working class which is defeating the bourgeoisie.



The American people resorted to these tactics long ago to the advantage of their revolution. When they waged their great war of liberation against the British oppressors, they had also against them the French and the Spanish oppressors who owned a part of what is now the United States of North America. In their arduous war for freedom, the American people also entered into "agreements" with some oppressors against others for the purpose of weakening the oppressors and strengthening those who were fighting in a revolutionary manner against oppression, for the purpose of serving the interests of the oppressed *people*. The American people took advantage of the strife between the French, the Spanish and the British; sometimes they even fought side by side with the forces of the French and Spanish oppressors against the British oppressors; first they defeated the British and then freed themselves (partly by ransom) from the French and the Spanish.

Historical action is not the pavement of Nevsky Prospekt, said the great Russian revolutionary Chernyshevsky. A revolutionary would not "agree" to a proletarian revolution only "on the condition" that it proceeds easily and smoothly, that there is, from the outset, combined action on the part of the proletarians of different countries, that there are guarantees against defeats, that the road of the revolution is broad, free and straight, that it will not be necessary during the march to victory to sustain the heaviest casualties, to "bide one's time in a besieged fortress", or to make one's way along extremely narrow, impassable, winding and dangerous mountain tracks. Such a person is no revolutionary, he has not freed himself from the pedantry of the bourgeois intellectuals; such a person will be found constantly slipping into the camp of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, like our Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and even (although more rarely) Left Socialist-Revolutionaries.

Echoing the bourgeoisie, these gentlemen like to blame us for the "chaos" of the revolution, for the "destruction" of industry, for the unemployment and the food shortage. How hypocritical these accusations are, coming from those who welcomed and supported the imperialist war, or who entered into an "agreement" with Kerensky who continued this war! It is this imperialist war that is the cause of all these misfortunes. The revolution engendered by the war cannot avoid

the terrible difficulties and suffering bequeathed it by the prolonged, ruinous, reactionary slaughter of the nations. To blame us for the "destruction" of industry, or for the "terror", is either hypocrisy or dull-witted pedantry; it reveals an inability to understand the basic conditions of the fierce class struggle, raised to the highest degree of intensity that is called revolution.

Even when "accusers" of this type do "recognise" the class struggle, they limit themselves to verbal recognition; actually, they constantly slip into the philistine utopia of class "agreement" and "collaboration"; for in revolutionary epochs the class struggle has always, inevitably, and in every country, assumed the form of *civil war*, and civil war is inconceivable without the severest destruction, terror and the restriction of formal democracy in the interests of this war. Only unctuous parsons—whether Christian or "secular" in the persons of parlour, parliamentary socialists—cannot see, understand and feel this necessity. Only a lifeless "man in the muffler"<sup>55</sup> can shun the revolution for this reason instead of plunging into battle with the utmost ardour and determination at a time when history demands that the greatest problems of humanity be solved by struggle and war.

The American people have a revolutionary tradition which has been adopted by the best representatives of the American proletariat, who have repeatedly expressed their complete solidarity with us Bolsheviks. That tradition is the war of liberation against the British in the eighteenth century and the Civil War in the nineteenth century. In some respects, if we only take into consideration the "destruction" of some branches of industry and of the national economy, America in 1870 was *behind* 1860. But what a pedant, what an idiot would anyone be to deny on *these* grounds the immense, world-historic, progressive and revolutionary significance of the American Civil War of 1863-65!<sup>56</sup>

The representatives of the bourgeoisie understand that for the sake of overthrowing Negro slavery, of overthrowing the rule of the slave-owners, it was worth letting the country go through long years of civil war, through the abysmal ruin, destruction and terror that accompany every war. But—now, when we are confronted with the vastly greater task of overthrowing capitalist *wage*-slavery, of overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie—now, the

representatives and defenders of the bourgeoisie, and also the reformist socialists who have been frightened by the bourgeoisie and are shunning the revolution, cannot and do not want to understand that civil war is necessary and legitimate.

The American workers will not follow the bourgeoisie. They will be with us, for civil war against the bourgeoisie. The whole history of the world and of the American labour movement strengthens my conviction that this is so. I also recall the words of one of the most beloved leaders of the American proletariat, Eugene Debs, who wrote in the *Appeal to Reason*,<sup>57</sup> I believe towards the end of 1915, in the article "What Shall I Fight For" (I quoted this article at the beginning of 1916 at a public meeting of workers in Berne, Switzerland<sup>58</sup>)—that he, Debs, would rather be shot than vote credits for the present criminal and reactionary war; that he, Debs, knows of only one holy and, from the proletarian standpoint, legitimate war, namely: the war against the capitalists, the war to liberate mankind from wage-slavery.

I am not surprised that Wilson, the head of the American multimillionaires and servant of the capitalist sharks, has thrown Debs into prison. Let the bourgeoisie be brutal to the true internationalists, to the true representatives of the revolutionary proletariat! The more fierce and brutal they are, the nearer the day of the victorious proletarian revolution.

We are blamed for the destruction caused by our revolution. . . . Who are the accusers? The hangers-on of the bourgeoisie, of that very bourgeoisie, who, during the four years of the imperialist war, have destroyed almost the whole of European culture and have reduced Europe to barbarism, brutality and starvation. These bourgeoisie now demand we should not make a revolution on these ruins, amidst this wreckage of culture, amidst the wreckage and ruins created by the war, nor with the people who have been brutalised by the war. How humane and righteous the bourgeoisie are!

Their servants accuse us of resorting to terror. . . . The British bourgeoisie have forgotten their 1649, the French bourgeoisie have forgotten their 1793.<sup>58</sup> Terror was just and

legitimate when the bourgeoisie resorted to it for their own benefit against feudalism. Terror became monstrous and criminal when the workers and poor peasants dared to use it against the bourgeoisie! Terror was just and legitimate when used for the purpose of substituting one exploiting minority for another exploiting minority. Terror became monstrous and criminal when it began to be used for the purpose of overthrowing *every* exploiting minority, to be used in the interests of the vast actual majority, in the interests of the proletariat and semi-proletariat, the working class and the poor peasants!

The international imperialist bourgeoisie have slaughtered ten million men and maimed twenty million in "their" war, the war to decide whether the British or the German vultures are to rule the world.

If *our* war, the war of the oppressed and exploited against the oppressors and the exploiters, results in half a million or a million casualties in all countries, the bourgeoisie will say that the former casualties are justified, while the latter are criminal.

The proletariat will have something entirely different to say.

Now, amidst the horrors of the imperialist war, the proletariat is receiving a most vivid and striking illustration of the great truth taught by all revolutions and bequeathed to the workers by their best teachers, the founders of modern socialism. This truth is that no revolution can be successful unless *the resistance of the exploiters is crushed*. When we, the workers and toiling peasants, captured state power, it became our duty to crush the resistance of the exploiters. We are proud we have been doing this. We regret we are not doing it with sufficient firmness and determination.

We know that fierce resistance to the socialist revolution on the part of the bourgeoisie is inevitable in all countries, and that this resistance will *grow* with the growth of this revolution. The proletariat will crush this resistance; during the struggle against the resisting bourgeoisie it will finally mature for victory and for power.

Let the corrupt bourgeois press shout to the whole world about every mistake our revolution makes. We are not daunted by our mistakes. People have not become saints because the revolution has begun. The toiling classes who for cen-

\* See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 125.—*Ed.*

turies have been oppressed, downtrodden and forcibly held in the vice of poverty, brutality and ignorance cannot avoid mistakes when making a revolution. And, as I pointed out once before, the corpse of bourgeois society cannot be nailed in a coffin and buried.\* The corpse of capitalism is decaying and disintegrating in our midst, polluting the air and poisoning our lives, enmeshing that which is new, fresh, young and virile in thousands of threads and bonds of that which is old, moribund and decaying.

For every hundred mistakes we commit, and which the bourgeoisie and their lackeys (including our own Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries) shout about to the whole world, 10,000 great and heroic deeds are performed, greater and more heroic because they are simple and inconspicuous amidst the everyday life of a factory district or a remote village, performed by people who are not accustomed (and have no opportunity) to shout to the whole world about their successes.

But even if the contrary were true—although I know such an assumption is wrong—even if we committed 10,000 mistakes for every 100 correct actions we performed, even in that case our revolution would be great and invincible, and *so it will be in the eyes of world history*, because, *for the first time*, not the minority, not the rich alone, not the educated alone, but the real people, the vast majority of the working people, are *themselves* building a new life, are *by their own experience* solving the most difficult problems of socialist organisation.

Every mistake committed in the course of such work, in the course of this most conscientious and earnest work of tens of millions of simple workers and peasants in reorganising their whole life, every such mistake is worth thousands and millions of “flawless” successes achieved by the exploiting minority—successes in swindling and duping the working people. For only *through* such mistakes will the workers and peasants *learn* to build the new life, learn to do *without* capitalists; only in this way will they hack a path for themselves—through thousands of obstacles—to victorious socialism.

Mistakes are being committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our peasants, who at one stroke, in one

\* See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 434.—Ed.

night, October 25-26 (old style), 1917, entirely abolished the private ownership of land, and are now, month after month, overcoming tremendous difficulties and correcting their mistakes themselves, solving in a practical way the most difficult tasks of organising new conditions of economic life, of fighting the kulaks,<sup>59</sup> providing land for the *working people* (and not for the rich), and of changing to *communist* large-scale agriculture.

Mistakes are being committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our workers, who have already, after a few months, nationalised almost all the biggest factories and plants, and are learning by hard, everyday work the new task of managing whole branches of industry, are setting the nationalised enterprises going, overcoming the powerful resistance of inertia, petty-bourgeois mentality and selfishness, and, brick by brick, are laying the foundation of *new* social ties, of a *new* labour discipline, of a *new* influence of the workers' trade unions over their members.

Mistakes are committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our Soviets, which were created as far back as 1905 by a mighty upsurge of the people. The Soviets of Workers and Peasants are a new *type* of state, a new and higher *type* of democracy, a form of the proletarian dictatorship, a means of administering the state *without* the bourgeoisie and *against* the bourgeoisie. For the first time democracy is here serving the people, the working people, and has ceased to be democracy for the rich as it still is in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic. For the first time, the people are grappling, on a scale involving one hundred million, with the problem of implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat and semi-proletariat—a problem which, if not solved, makes socialism *out of the question*.

Let the pedants, or the people whose minds are incurably stuffed with bourgeois-democratic or parliamentary prejudices, shake their heads in perplexity about our Soviets, about the absence of direct elections, for example. These people have forgotten nothing and have learned nothing during the period of the great upheavals of 1914-18. The combination of the proletarian dictatorship with the new democracy for the working people—of civil war with the widest participation of the people in politics—such a combination cannot be brought about at one stroke, nor does it fit

in with the outworn modes of routine parliamentary democracy. The contours of a new world, the world of socialism, are rising before us in the shape of the Soviet Republic. It is not surprising that this world does not come into being ready-made, does not spring forth like Minerva from the head of Jupiter.<sup>60</sup>

The old bourgeois-democratic constitutions waxed eloquent about formal equality and right of assembly; but our proletarian and peasant Soviet Constitution casts aside the hypocrisy of formal equality. When the bourgeois republicans overturned thrones they did not worry about formal equality between monarchists and republicans. When it is a matter of overthrowing the bourgeoisie, only traitors or idiots can demand formal equality of rights for the bourgeoisie. "Freedom of assembly" for workers and peasants is not worth a farthing when the best buildings belong to the bourgeoisie. Our Soviets have *confiscated* all the good buildings in town and country from the rich and have *transferred all* of them to the workers and peasants for *their* unions and meetings. This is *our* freedom of assembly—for the working people! This is the meaning and content of our Soviet, our socialist Constitution<sup>61</sup>!

That is why we are all so firmly convinced that no matter what misfortunes may still be in store for it, our Republic of Soviets is *invincible*.

It is invincible because every blow struck by frenzied imperialism, every defeat the international bourgeoisie inflict on us, rouses more and more sections of the workers and peasants to the struggle, teaches them at the cost of enormous sacrifice, steels them and engenders new heroism on a mass scale.

We know that help from you will probably not come soon, comrade American workers, for the revolution is developing in different countries in different forms and at different tempos (and it cannot be otherwise). We know that although the European proletarian revolution has been maturing very rapidly lately, it may, after all, not flare up within the next few weeks. We are banking on the inevitability of the world revolution, but this does not mean that we are such fools as to bank on the revolution inevitably coming on a *definite* and early date. We have seen two great revolutions in our country, 1905 and 1917, and we

know revolutions are not made to order, or by agreement. We know that circumstances brought *our* Russian detachment of the socialist proletariat to the fore not because of our merits, but because of the exceptional backwardness of Russia, and that *before* the world revolution breaks out a number of separate revolutions may be defeated.

In spite of this, we are firmly convinced that we are invincible, because the spirit of mankind will not be broken by the imperialist slaughter. Mankind will vanquish it. And the first country to *break* the convict chains of the imperialist war was *our* country. We sustained enormously heavy casualties in the struggle to break these chains, but we *broke* them. We are *free from* imperialist dependence, we have raised the banner of struggle for the complete overthrow of imperialism for the whole world to see.

We are now, as it were, in a besieged fortress, waiting for the other detachments of the world socialist revolution to come to our relief. These detachments *exist*, they are *more numerous* than ours, they are maturing, growing, gaining more strength the longer the brutalities of imperialism continue. The workers are breaking away from their social-traitors—the Gomperses, Hendersons, Renaudels, Scheidemanns and Renners. Slowly but surely the workers are adopting communist, Bolshevik tactics and are marching towards the proletarian revolution, which alone is capable of saving dying culture and dying mankind.

In short, we are invincible, because the world proletarian revolution is invincible.

*N. Lenin*

August 20, 1918

*Pravda*, No. 178,  
August 22, 1918

Vol. 28, pp. 62-75

standing in the way of the proletariat's economic and political struggle, the horrors, misery and ruin caused by the imperialist war—all these factors transform the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian communist revolution.

That era has dawned.

*Pravda* No. 43,  
February 25, 1919

Vol. 29, pp. 122-23

### **From DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE R.C.P. (B.)**

(12) The concentration and centralisation of capital which destroys free competition, had, by the turn of the twentieth century, created powerful monopoly associations of capitalists—syndicates, cartels and trusts—that became of decisive importance in all economic life, had led to the merging of bank capital and highly concentrated industrial capital, to the increased export of capital to other countries and to the stage which marked the beginning of the economic division of the world among the trusts that embrace ever-growing groups of capitalist powers when it had already been divided territorially between the richest countries. This epoch of finance capital, the epoch of a struggle between capitalist states unparalleled in its ferocity, is the epoch of imperialism.

(13) The inevitable outcome of this is imperialist wars, wars for markets, spheres of investment, raw materials and cheap labour-power, i.e., for world domination and the crushing of small and weak peoples. The first great imperialist war of 1914-18 was a war of this type.

(14) The extremely high level of development which world capitalism in general has attained, the replacement of free competition by state monopoly capitalism, the fact that the banks and the capitalist associations have prepared the machinery for the social regulation of the process of production and distribution of products, the rise in the cost of living and increased oppression of the working class by the syndicates and its enslavement by the imperialist state due to the growth of capitalist monopolies, the tremendous obstacles

**From ANSWERS TO AN AMERICAN  
JOURNALIST'S QUESTION<sup>62</sup>**

5. More than anything else I should like to state the following to the American public:

Compared to feudalism, capitalism was an historical advance along the road of "liberty", "equality", "democracy" and "civilisation". Nevertheless capitalism was, and remains, a system of *wage-slavery*, of the enslavement of millions of working people, workers and peasants, by an insignificant minority of modern slave-owners, landowners and capitalists. Bourgeois democracy, as compared to feudalism, has changed the form of this economic slavery, has created a brilliant screen for it but has not, and could not, change its essence. Capitalism and bourgeois democracy are wage-slavery.

The gigantic progress of technology in general, and of means of transport in particular, and the tremendous growth of capital and banks have resulted in capitalism becoming mature and overmature. It has outlived itself. It has become the most reactionary hindrance to human progress. It has become reduced to the absolute power of a handful of millionaires and multimillionaires who send whole nations into a bloodbath to decide whether the German or the Anglo-French group of plunderers is to obtain the spoils of imperialism, power over the colonies, financial "spheres of influence" or "mandates to rule", etc.

During the war of 1914-18 tens of millions of people were killed or mutilated for that reason and for that reason alone. Knowledge of this truth is spreading with indomitable force and rapidity among the working people of all countries, the more so because the war has everywhere caused unparalleled ruin and because interest on war debts has to be paid

*everywhere*, even by the "victor" nations. What is this interest? It is a tribute of thousands of millions to the millionaire gentlemen who were kind enough to allow tens of millions of workers and peasants to kill and maim one another to settle the question of the division of profits by the capitalists.

Written on July 20, 1919  
*Pravda* No. 162,  
July 25, 1919

Vol. 29, pp. 517-18

**From SPEECH  
DELIVERED AT THE FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS  
OF WORKING COSSACKS  
MARCH 1, 1920**

A big tussle is developing among the bourgeois countries themselves. America and Japan are on the verge of flinging themselves at each other's throats because Japan sat snug during the imperialist war and has grabbed nearly the whole of China, which has a population of four hundred million. The imperialist gentlemen say, "We are in favour of a republic, we are in favour of democracy; but why did the Japanese grab more than they should under our very noses?" Japan and America are on the verge of war, and there is absolutely no possibility of preventing that war, in which another ten million will be killed and twenty million crippled. France, too, says, "Who got the colonies?—Britain." France was victorious, but she is up to her ears in debt; she is in a hopeless position, whereas Britain has piled up wealth. Over there, new combinations and alliances are already being engineered. They want to fling themselves at each other's throats again over the division of colonies. And an imperialist war is again brewing and cannot be prevented. It cannot be prevented, not because the capitalists, taken individually, are vicious—individually they are just like other people—but because they cannot free themselves of the financial meshes in any other way, because the whole world is in debt, in bondage, and because private property has led and always will lead to war.

*Pravda* Nos. 47, 48 and 49,  
March 2, 3 and 4, 1920

Vol. 30, pp. 393-94

**From SPEECH DELIVERED  
AT A MEETING OF ACTIVISTS  
OF THE MOSCOW ORGANISATION OF THE R.C.P. (B.)  
DECEMBER 6, 1920**

Are there any radical antagonisms in the present-day capitalist world that must be utilised? Yes, there are three principal ones, which I should like to enumerate. The first, the one that affects us closest, is the relations between Japan and America. War is brewing between them. They cannot live together in peace on the shores of the Pacific, although those shores are three thousand versts apart. This rivalry arises incontestably from the relation between their capitalisms. A vast literature exists on the future Japanese-American war. It is beyond doubt that war is brewing, that it is inevitable. The pacifists are trying to ignore the matter and obscure it with general phrases, but no student of the history of economic relations and diplomacy can have the slightest doubt that war is ripe from the economic viewpoint and is being prepared politically. One cannot open a single book on this subject without seeing that a war is brewing. The world has been partitioned. Japan has seized vast colonies. Japan has a population of fifty million, and she is comparatively weak economically. America has a population of a hundred and ten million, and although she is many times richer than Japan she has no colonies. Japan has seized China, which has a population of four hundred million and the richest coal reserves in the world. How can this plum be kept? It is absurd to think that a stronger capitalism will not deprive a weaker capitalism of the latter's spoils. Can the Americans remain indifferent under such circumstances? Can strong capitalists remain side by side with weak capitalists and not be expected

to grab everything they can from the latter? What would they be good for if they did not? But that being the case, can we, as Communists, remain indifferent and merely say: "We shall carry on propaganda for communism in these countries." That is correct, but it is not everything. The practical task of communist policy is to take advantage of this hostility and to play one side off against the other. Here a new situation arises. Take the two imperialist countries, Japan and America. They want to fight and will fight for world supremacy, for the right to loot. Japan will fight so as to continue to plunder Korea, which she is doing with unprecedented brutality, combining all the latest technical inventions with purely Asiatic tortures. We recently received a Korean newspaper which gives an account of what the Japanese are doing. Here we find all the methods of tsarism and all the latest technical perfections combined with a purely Asiatic system of torture and unparalleled brutality. But the Americans would like to grab this Korean titbit. . . .

I have shown you one of the imperialist antagonisms we must take advantage of—that which exists between Japan and America. There is another—the antagonism between America and the rest of the capitalist world. Practically the entire capitalist world of "victors" emerged from the war tremendously enriched. America is strong; she is everybody's creditor and everything depends on her; she is being more and more detested; she is robbing all and sundry and doing so in a unique fashion. She has no colonies. Britain emerged from the war with vast colonies. So did France. Britain offered America a mandate—that is the language they use nowadays—for one of the colonies she had seized, but America did not accept it. U.S. businessmen evidently reason in some other way. They have seen that, in the devastation it produces and the temper it arouses among the workers, war has very definite consequences, and they have come to the conclusion that there is nothing to be gained by accepting a mandate. Naturally, however, they will not permit this colony to be used by any other state. All bourgeois literature testifies to a rising hatred of America, while in America there is a growing demand for an agreement with Russia. America signed an agreement with Kolchak giving him recognition and support but here they have al-

ready come to grief, the only reward for their pains being losses and disgrace. Thus we have before us the greatest state in the world, which by 1923 will have a navy stronger than the British, and this state is meeting with growing enmity from the other capitalist countries. We must take this trend of things into account. America cannot come to terms with the rest of Europe—that is a fact proved by history. Nowhere has the Versailles Treaty<sup>63</sup> been analysed so well as in the book by Keynes, a British representative at Versailles. In his book Keynes ridicules Wilson and the part he played in the Treaty of Versailles. Here, Wilson proved to be an utter simpleton, whom Clemenceau and Lloyd George twisted round their little fingers. Thus everything goes to show that America cannot come to terms with the other countries because of the profound economic antagonism between them, since America is richer than the rest.

We shall therefore examine all questions of concessions from this angle: if the least opportunity arises of aggravating the differences between America and the other capitalist countries, it should be grasped with both hands. America stands in inevitable contradiction with the colonies, and if she attempts to become more involved there she will be helping us ten times as much. The colonies are seething with unrest, and when you touch them, whether or not you like it, whether or not you are rich—and the richer you are the better—you will be helping us, and the Vanderlips will be sent packing. That is why to us this antagonism is the main consideration.

The third antagonism is that between the Entente and Germany. Germany has been vanquished, crushed by the Treaty of Versailles, but she possesses vast economic potentialities. Germany is the world's second country in economic development, if America is taken as the first. The experts even say that as far as the electrical industry is concerned she is superior to America, and you know that the electrical industry is tremendously important. As regards the extent of the application of electricity, America is superior, but Germany has surpassed her in technical perfection. It is on such a country that the Treaty of Versailles has been imposed, a treaty she cannot possibly live under. Germany is one of the most powerful and advanced of the capitalist countries.



She cannot put up with the Treaty of Versailles. Although she is herself imperialist, Germany is obliged to seek for an ally against world imperialism, because she has been crushed.

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in *Krasnaya Gazeta* No. 275

Vol. 31, pp. 442-43,  
448-50

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in Vol. XVII of N. Lenin's  
(V. Ulyanov's) *Collected Works*

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The manifesto *The War and Russian Social-Democracy* was the first official document of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. which defined the attitude of the Bolshevik Party towards the world imperialist war of 1914-18. It was drawn up in September 1914, published on November 1 as an editorial in the newspaper *Sotsial-Demokrat*, Central Organ of the R.S.D.L.P., and sent to the International Socialist Bureau (executive body of the Second International) and to some socialist newspapers in Britain, Germany, France and Sweden. p. 33
- <sup>2</sup> *Junker*—big Prussian landowner. p. 34
- <sup>3</sup> This pamphlet—*Socialism and War (The Attitude of the R.S.D.L.P. Towards the War)*—was conceived by Lenin in connection with the preparations for the first (since the beginning of the 1914 war) International Socialist Conference. He called this work “comments on the resolutions of our Party”. p. 36
- <sup>4</sup> *The Paris Commune of 1871*—the world’s first experience in creating a proletarian dictatorship, the government which was formed by the proletarian revolution in Paris, and existed from March 18 to May 28, 1871. p. 37
- <sup>5</sup> The reference is to the wars which revolutionary France had to wage from 1792 against the counter-revolutionary coalition of European monarchies seeking to crush the revolution by force of arms, and to the subsequent Napoleonic wars. p. 37
- <sup>6</sup> The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 ended in France’s defeat. p. 37
- <sup>7</sup> Lenin refers to Wilhelm Liebknecht’s speech at the Erfurt Congress of the German Social-Democrats in 1891. p. 37
- <sup>8</sup> The reference is to Clausewitz’s statement on war in his book *Vom Kriege* (On War). p. 41

<sup>9</sup> *The Triple Entente*—a bloc of imperialist powers (Britain, France and Russia) formed early in the 20th century against the imperialist Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy). It derived its name from the *Entente cordiale*, an Anglo-French agreement concluded in 1904. In 1915 Italy joined the Entente after breaking away from the Triple Alliance. p. 42

<sup>10</sup> *Struvists* (after P. B. Struve)—representatives of “legal Marxism”, a liberal-bourgeois distortion of Marxism. The “legal Marxists” took from Marxism that which was acceptable to the liberal bourgeoisie—the teaching on the progressive character of capitalism as compared with feudalism—and discarded its revolutionary essence—the teaching on the inevitable destruction of capitalism and on the proletarian revolution.

*Economists*—adherents of Economism, an opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic movement at the close of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. They maintained that the political struggle against tsarism must be waged by the liberal bourgeoisie, while the workers should confine themselves to the economic struggle for better working conditions, higher wages, etc. p. 46

<sup>11</sup> The reference is to Karl Kautsky’s pamphlet *Der Weg zur Macht* (The Road to Power) published in 1909. p. 47

<sup>12</sup> *Die Neue Zeit* (New Times)—a theoretical journal of the German Social-Democratic Party, published in Stuttgart from 1883 to 1923. In the latter half of the 1890s, following Engels’s death, the journal made a regular practice of publishing articles by revisionists. During the First World War (1914-18) it adopted a Centrist stand, actually supporting the social-chauvinists. p. 47

<sup>13</sup> Lenin’s book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* was written in Zurich in January-June 1916.

The preparatory materials for his book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (*Notebooks on Imperialism*) comprise nearly 50 printed sheets. They contain extracts from 148 books (including 106 German, 23 French, 17 English books, and 2 translations into Russian) and from 232 articles. In mid-1917 the book was published under the title *Imperialism, the Latest Stage of Capitalism* (*A Popular Outline*). p. 49

<sup>14</sup> *The Second International*—an international association of socialist parties, founded in 1889. With the beginning of the imperialist epoch opportunist tendencies began increasingly to take the upper hand in it.

When the First World War (1914-18) broke out, its leaders betrayed the cause of socialism taking the side of their imperialist governments and justifying the war. The Second International ceased to exist. p. 51

<sup>15</sup> *Narodniks*—followers of Narodism, an ideological-political trend in Russia that emerged among the intellectuals in the 1870s. They advo-

cated propaganda among the peasants, going among the “people” (*narod* in Russian), hence their name. Their outlook was distinguished by the following features: denial of the working class’s leading role in the revolutionary movement; the erroneous view that the socialist revolution can be accomplished by small proprietors, i.e., peasants; the view of the village commune, a survival of feudalism and serfdom in the Russian countryside, as the embryo of socialism, etc. p. 54

<sup>16</sup> *Die Bank*—a journal of German financiers published in Berlin from 1908 to 1943. p. 62

<sup>17</sup> *The Anglo-Boer War* (October 1899-May 1902)—a colonial war of conquest waged by Britain against two South-African republics—Transvaal and Orange—as a result of which they lost their independence and became British colonies. p. 62

<sup>18</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 110. p. 67

<sup>19</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 35. p. 67

<sup>20</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3 Moscow, 1970, pp. 450-52. p. 67

<sup>21</sup> *Liquidationism*—an extreme Right trend that arose among the Mensheviks, the opportunist wing of the R.S.D.L.P., after the defeat of the first Russian revolution of 1905-07. Its exponents sought to liquidate the Marxist revolutionary party, which had to work underground because of the fierce reaction in Russia, and intended to establish their own reformist party, which would engage only in the activity permitted by the tsarist government. p. 68

<sup>22</sup> *The Fabian Society*—a British reformist organisation founded in 1884. Most of the Society’s members were bourgeois intellectuals who asserted that the transition from capitalism to socialism could be effected only through petty reforms and a gradual transformation of society. In 1900 the Fabians joined the Labour Party. p. 69

<sup>23</sup> In April 1898, the American imperialists, who sought to utilise the anti-Spanish national liberation movement in the Philippine Islands and in Cuba in their own interests, started war against Spain. Under the pretext of aid to the Philippine people who had proclaimed an independent republic they landed their troops in the Philippines. Under the Peace Treaty of December 10, 1898, signed in Paris, vanquished Spain renounced her claims to the Philippines in favour of the U.S.A. In February 1899 the American imperialists treacherously launched military operations against the Philippine Republic. Having met with stubborn resistance, the American invaders began mass executions and tortures of the peaceful population.

In 1901 the Philippine national liberation movement was suppressed and the Philippines became an American colony. p. 70

- <sup>24</sup> Lenin refers to the so-called Final Protocol signed on September 7, 1901, between the imperialist powers (Britain, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and the U.S.A.) and China after the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion of 1899-1901. China became a semi-colony of foreign imperialists, who obtained unlimited possibilities for exploiting and plundering the country. p. 77
- <sup>25</sup> *The Boxer* (more precisely: I Ho T'uan) *Rebellion*—a popular anti-imperialist uprising in China in 1899-1901 organised by the I Ho Ch'uan (Righteous Harmony Fists) society. It was ruthlessly crushed by an expeditionary corps of the imperialist powers under the command of the German General Waldersee, with the German, Japanese, British, American and Russian troops taking part. In 1901 China was forced to sign the Final Protocol (see previous note). p. 78
- <sup>26</sup> *Fashoda*—an inhabited locality in Eastern Sudan. The clash in Fashoda in September 1898 between British and French colonial detachments led to a sharp crisis in international relations which reflected the struggle waged by Britain and France for supremacy in Sudan and the completion of the partitioning of Africa. p. 79
- <sup>27</sup> This article was written in reply to one by P. Kievsky, "The Proletariat and the 'Right of Nations to Self-Determination' in the Era of Finance Capital". Both articles were meant for No. 3 of *Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata*; however, due to financial difficulties, No. 3 was not published and the articles did not appear in print. "Imperialist Economism" is an opportunist trend that spread among the revolutionary wing of the international Social-Democratic movement in 1915. Its exponents (Bukharin, Pyatakov [P. Kievsky] and others) came out against the right of nations to self-determination, maintaining that in the era of imperialism there can be no national liberation movements and national wars. The imperialist Economists oversimplified Marxism thinking that since in the era of imperialism the working class is faced with the task of effecting the socialist revolution it must abandon the struggle for democracy, political freedom, the emancipation and national independence of the oppressed nations. Lenin gave the name of imperialist Economism to this trend by analogy with an opportunist trend that spread among some of the Russian Social-Democrats at the close of the last century and was called Economism. "Capitalism has triumphed—therefore there is no need to bother with political problems, the old Economists reasoned in 1894-1901, falling into rejection of the political struggle in Russia. Imperialism has triumphed—therefore there is no need to bother with the problems of political democracy, reason the present-day imperialist Economists." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 29.) p. 87
- <sup>28</sup> The reference is to V. I. Lenin's theses "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 143-56.) p. 87
- <sup>29</sup> So-called *labour money* (paper notes representing the time spent by the worker to produce a given commodity)—money which the utopian socialists and pettybourgeois reformers Owen, Grey, Proudhon and others proposed to introduce. The authors of this project presumed that if payment of wages to the workers and all purchases by them in co-operative shops were made with this paper money, the workers would no longer need state coinage, and their poverty and destitution would thus be ended. Like other projects which advanced similar means for "improving" modern society within the framework of capitalist production relations, the schemes for issuing "labour money" were not, and could not be, materialised. p. 87
- <sup>30</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1970, p. 329. p. 93
- <sup>31</sup> *The Erfurt Programme*—the programme of the German Social-Democratic Party adopted at a congress in Erfurt in 1891. It was one of the most consistent Marxist programmes of the socialist parties of the Second International. p. 96
- <sup>32</sup> *Sotsial-Demokrat*—an illegal newspaper, Central Organ of the R.S.D.L.P., published abroad from February 1908 to January 1917. Lenin was its editor-in-chief. The newspaper played a big role in the struggle against international opportunism. *Kommunist*—a journal published in Geneva in 1915 by the *Sotsial-Demokrat* editorial board. Only one (double) issue appeared, containing three articles by Lenin. p. 103
- <sup>33</sup> The Organising Committee—the leading centre of the Mensheviks, the opportunist wing of the R.S.D.L.P. During the First World War (1914-18) the O.C. adopted a social-chauvinist stand, justified tsarist Russia's part in the war and preached nationalist ideas. p. 103
- <sup>34</sup> *Bulletin of the R.S.D.L.P. Organising Committee, Secretariat Abroad*—a Menshevik newspaper published in Geneva from February 1915 to March 1917. p. 106
- <sup>35</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 110. p. 107
- <sup>36</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 351 p. 108
- <sup>37</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 408 p. 108
- <sup>38</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 412. p. 108
- <sup>39</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes. Vol. 3. Moscow, 1970, pp. 450, 451. p. 109
- <sup>40</sup> *War and Revolution*—a lecture delivered by Lenin in Petrograd on May 14 (27), 1917. It was a paid lecture; the money thus obtained

went to the fund of the newspaper *Pravda*, which was organised in 1914 to strengthen the illegal Bolshevik press. p. 114

<sup>41</sup> *L'Humanité*—a daily founded in 1904 as the organ of the French Socialist Party. During the First World War (1914-18) it was controlled by the extreme Right wing of the party and adopted a social-chauvinist stand.

Since December 1920, following a split in the French Socialist Party and the foundation of the Communist Party of France, *L'Humanité* has been the latter's Central Organ. p. 117

<sup>42</sup> *Rech* (Speech)—a Russian bourgeois newspaper published in Petrograd from 1906 to 1917. p. 119

<sup>43</sup> *Pravda* (The Truth)—a legal Bolshevik daily which began publication on April 22 (May 5), 1912. At the present time it is the organ of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. p. 119

<sup>44</sup> *Kurland*—the old name of the Baltic region west and south-west of the Gulf of Riga. p. 119

<sup>45</sup> *Zemlya i Volya* (Land and Freedom)—a daily published in 1917 by the Petrograd Regional Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. p. 121

<sup>46</sup> *The Provisional Government*—a bourgeois government set up in Russia after the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution which overthrew the monarchy. p. 122

<sup>47</sup> *The Third Republic*—a bourgeois republic set up in France as a result of the September Revolution of 1870; it existed until July 1940, when France was defeated by Nazi Germany. p. 122

<sup>48</sup> This refers to the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian monarchies, which made three partitions of Poland. p. 123

<sup>49</sup> This article analyses the pamphlet *Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme. Collection of Articles by U. Milyutin, U. Sokolnikov, A. Lomov, U. Smirnov* published in Moscow in the summer of 1917. p. 127

<sup>50</sup> The "Letter to American Workers", together with the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. and the Soviet Government's Note to President Wilson containing the demand to stop the armed intervention in Russia, was brought to the U.S.A. by P. I. Travin (Sletov) and published in December 1918 in *The Class Struggle* and *The Revolutionary Age*—organs of the Left wing of the Socialist Party of America. p. 134

<sup>51</sup> The reference is to the revolutionary liberation war of independence waged by 13 British colonies in North America (1775-1783), as a result of which an independent bourgeois state was formed—the United States of America. p. 134

<sup>52</sup> This refers to the historic *Decree on Peace* adopted by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets on October 26 (November 8), 1917. p. 136

<sup>53</sup> *The Brest Peace Treaty* was signed in Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918, between Soviet Russia and the powers of the Quadruple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey) and ratified on March 15 by the Fourth Extraordinary All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Despite its harsh terms the Treaty was of positive importance for Russia, since it enabled her to withdraw from the world war in which Russia participated on the side of the Entente. p. 137

<sup>54</sup> *Socialist-Revolutionaries* (S. R.'s)—members of a petty-bourgeois party in Russia founded at the end of 1901 and beginning of 1902. During the First World War (1914-18) most of its members took a social-chauvinist position.

After the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 the S.R.s, together with the Mensheviks, were the mainstay of the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government, of which S.R. leaders were members. After the Great October Socialist Revolution, during the Civil War and armed intervention, the S.R.s waged an active struggle against Soviet power.

During the war of 1914-18 a Left wing began to take shape within the S.R. Party, and in November 1917 it formed an independent Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party. Following the October Revolution the Left S.R.s entered into an alliance with the Bolsheviks and were represented in the Soviet Government. However, in July 1918 they raised an armed revolt and launched upon the path of struggle against the Soviets.

*Mensheviks*—an opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic movement. This name originated at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (1903) when, during the election of the Party's central bodies, they were left in a minority (*menshinstvo* in Russian) while the revolutionary Social-Democrats, led by Lenin, constituted a majority (*bolshinstvo* in Russian)—hence the names: Mensheviks and Bolsheviks.

After the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 Mensheviks were among the members of the Provisional Government and supported its imperialist policy. During the Civil War they waged an armed struggle against the Soviet government. p. 137

<sup>55</sup> "Man in the muffler"—the main character from the story of the same name by the Russian writer Chekhov; a narrow-minded philistine who is afraid of any innovation and initiative. p. 141

<sup>56</sup> *The American Civil War* (1861-65)—a war between the Northern and Southern States, in which the Northerners fought against the Southern slave-owners who sought to preserve slavery. p. 141

<sup>57</sup> *Appeal to Reason*—a newspaper published by the American socialists; it was founded in the state of Kansas in 1895. It enjoyed wide popu-

larity among the workers; during the world imperialist war the newspaper adopted an internationalist stand.

Debs's article was published in the paper on September 11, 1915. The title of the article, which Lenin most probably quoted from memory, was "When I Shall Fight". p. 142

<sup>58</sup> The reference is to the 17th-century English revolution and to the 18th-century French revolution. p. 142

<sup>59</sup> *Kulak*—a rich peasant in Russia who exploited the labour of others. p. 145

<sup>60</sup> *Jupiter* and *Minerva*—ancient Roman gods.

*Jupiter*—god of heaven, light and rain; later he was the supreme deity of the Roman state.

*Minerva*—goddess of war and protectress of handicrafts, sciences and arts; according to a myth, she was born from Jupiter's head. p. 146

<sup>61</sup> The First Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. was adopted by the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets on July 10, 1918; Lenin played a decisive role in drawing it up. p. 146

<sup>62</sup> This article is Lenin's reply to the five questions put by the American United Press Agency. The latter sent out the reply to American newspapers but omitted Lenin's answer to the fifth question. It was published in October 1919 by a Left socialist journal, *The Liberator*. p. 150

<sup>63</sup> *The Peace Treaty of Versailles* concluded the First World War (1914-18). It was signed on July 28, 1919, by the U.S.A., the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan and other countries allied with them, on the one hand, and defeated Germany on the other. The Treaty of Versailles confirmed the repartition of the capitalist world in favour of the victor countries and imposed immense reparation payments on Germany. p. 155

## NAME INDEX

A

*Aguinaldo, Emilio* (b. 1869)—Philippine politician, President of the Republic of the Philippines (from 1899); headed his people's struggle against the American invaders.—70

*Axelrod, Pavel Borisovich* (1850-1928)—one of the leaders of Menshevism, an opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic movement; social-chauvinist during the First World War (1914-18).—68, 103

B

*Bacon, Reginald* (1863-1947)—British Rear-Admiral, expert in naval affairs; director of the ordnance works in Coventry (1910-15).—27

*Berard, Victor* (1860-1929)—French economist, publicist and philologist.—71

*Bissolati, Leonida* (1857-1920)—one of the founders of the Italian Socialist Party and a leader of its Right reformist wing. Expelled from the party in 1912, he founded a reformist Socialist Party. During the First World War, social-chauv-

inist, advocate of Italy's participation in the war on the Entente's side.—112

*Bukharin Nikolai Ivanovich* (1888-1938)—Russian publicist and economist, member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1906. During the First World War he adopted an anti-Leninist stand on a number of questions: the state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the right of nations to self-determination, etc. After the October Socialist Revolution his attitude towards the question of concluding the Brest Peace Treaty (1918) and in the discussion on the trade unions (1920) was that of an opportunist. Later he headed the Right opposition in the Party, for which he was expelled from it in 1937.—44, 45

*Bulkin, F. A.* (b. 1888)—Russian Social-Democrat, liquidator, defencist during the First World War.—111

C

*Calwer, Richard* (1868-1927)—prominent German economist, representative of reformism and revisionism in the German Social-Democratic movement.—55

*Carnegie, Andrew* (1835-1919)—American multimillionaire, born in Scotland.—65

*Chernyshevsky, Nikolai Gavrilovich* (1828-1889)—Russian revolutionary democrat, utopian socialist; one of the outstanding forerunners of Russian Social-Democracy.—140

*Chkheidze, Nikolai Semyonovich* (1864-1926)—one of the Menshevik leaders, defencist, actively supported the bourgeois Provisional Government.—68, 112

*Chkhenkeli, Akaky Ivanovich* (1874-1959)—Social-Democrat, liquidator.—68, 107

*Clausewits, Karl* (1780-1831)—Prussian general, prominent bourgeois military theoretician, author of several works on the history of the Napoleonic and other wars.—41, 116

*Clemenceau, Georges Benjamin* (1841-1929)—French politician and statesman, head of the French Government from November 1917; one of the organisers and instigators of armed intervention against Soviet Russia.—155

*Cunow, Heinrich* (1862-1936)—German Right-wing Social-Democrat, revisionist and distorter of Marxism.—54

## D

*David, Eduard* (1863-1920)—one of the leaders of the Right wing of German Social-Democracy.—106

*Debs, Eugene* (1855-1926)—prominent leader of the U.S. labour movement; headed the Left wing of the Socialist Party of America.—142

## E

*Engels, Frederick* (1820-1895)—founder of scientific communism, leader and teacher of the international proletariat, friend and associate of Karl Marx.—41, 66, 67, 93, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111

*Eschwege, Ludwig*—German economist, contributor to the journal *Die Bank*.—71

## G

*Giffen, Robert* (1837-1910)—British bourgeois economist and statistician, specialised in finances.—61

*Gladstone, William Ewart* (1809-1898)—British politician and statesman, leader of the Liberal Party, Prime Minister in several Cabinets.—28

*Gompers, Samuel* (1850-1924)—American trade unionist, pursued the policy of class collaboration with the capitalists.—147

*Gvozdyov, K. A.* (b. 1883)—Menshevik liquidator, social-chauvinist during the world imperialist war of 1914-18, supported the participation of tsarist Russia in the war.—112

## H

*Hales, John* (b. 1839)—English trade unionist, head of the reformist wing of the British Federal Council of the First International. In 1871 was expelled from the International for opportunism and chauvinism.—107

*Henderson, Arthur* (1863-1935)—one of the leaders of the En-

glish trade union movement and of the Labour Party; social-chauvinist during the world imperialist war of 1914-18.—147

*Hildebrand, Gerhard*—German Social-Democrat, economist and publicist; expelled from the party in 1912 for opportunism.—64

*Hilferding, Rudolf* (1877-1941)—one of the opportunist leaders of the German Social-Democratic movement and the Second International, author of the book *Finance Capital*, which played a positive role in the study of monopoly capitalism.—59, 72, 79, 89, 104, 106, 130

*Hill, David Jane* (1850-1932)—American historian and diplomat.—78

*Hobson, John Atkinson* (1858-1940)—British economist, representative of bourgeois reformism and pacifism.—53, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 66, 69, 70, 76, 104, 105

*Huysmans, Camille* (1871-1968)—one of the leaders of the Belgian working-class movement, Centrist.—84

*Ilyin, U. (Lenin, U. I.)* (1870-1924)—48

## K

*Kautsky, Karl* (1854-1938)—one of the leaders of German Social-Democracy and the Second International; at first a Marxist, then a renegade from Marxism and ideologist of Centrism.—46, 47, 48, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 67, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 84, 88, 89, 103, 104, 107, 109, 110, 125

*Kerensky, Alexander Fyodorovich* (1881-1970)—Socialist-Revolutionary; from July 1917 headed the bourgeois Provisional Government.—140

*Keynes, John Maynard* (1883-1946)—English vulgar economist, advocate of state-monopoly capitalism.—155

*Kievsky, P.*—see *Pyatakov, Georgi Leonidovich*.

*Kolchak, Alexander Vasilyevich* (1873-1920)—Admiral, monarchist, one of the leaders of the Russian counter-revolutionaries; in 1918-19, a puppet of the Entente; headed the military bourgeois-landowner dictatorship in Siberia and the Far East.—154

*Krupp*—a family of industrialists, headed the armaments and metallurgical concern in Germany.—75

## L

*Lansburg, Alfred* (1872-1940)—German bourgeois economist.—62, 71, 73, 74, 75

*Legien, Karl* (1861-1920)—German Right-wing Social-Democrat, trade union leader, revisionist.—106

*Lensch, Paul* (1873-1926)—German Social-Democrat, chauvinist.—109

*Liebknecht, Wilhelm* (1826-1900)—prominent leader of the German and international working-class movement, one of the founders and leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party; friend of Marx and Engels.—37

*Lincoln, Abraham* (1809-1865)—outstanding American statesman, U.S. President during the Civil War (1861-65).—70



*Lloyd George, David* (1863-1945)—British statesman and diplomat, Liberal Party leader, Prime Minister (1916-22), one of the inspirers and organisers of armed intervention against Soviet Russia.—113, 155

*Lubersac, Jean*—member of the French military mission in Russia in 1917-18.—139

*Lysis (Letailleur), Eugène*—French bourgeois economist, author of a number of works on finance and politics.—117

## M

*Mann, Thomas* (1859-1941)—prominent figure in the British working-class movement, leader of several strikes; later, member of the Communist Party of Great Britain.—108

*Martov, L. (Tsederbaum, Yuli Osipovich)* (1873-1923)—one of the Menshevik leaders, social-chauvinist during the 1914-18 war.—68, 84, 103, 106, 107

*Marx, Karl* (1818-1883)—founder of scientific communism, brilliant thinker, leader and teacher of the international proletariat.—36, 41, 66, 67, 86, 89, 102, 107, 109

*Maslov, Pyotr Pavlovich* (1867-1946)—economist, Social-Democrat, Menshevik; author of works on the agrarian question in which he sought to revise the basic propositions of Marxist political economy.—68

*Milyukov, Pavel Nikolayevich* (1859-1943)—ideologist of the Russian imperialist bourgeoisie, historian and publicist. In 1917, member of the bourgeois Provisional Government.—44, 116

## N

*Nakhimson, Miron Isaakovich (Spectator)* (b. 1880)—Russian economist and publicist, Menshevik.—72, 73, 75, 103

*Napoleon III (Louis Bonaparte)* (1808-1873)—Emperor of the French (1852-70).—37

*Neymarck Alfred*—French statistician.—71

## O

*Owens, Michael Joseph* (1859-1923)—American inventor and industrialist.—60

## P

*Plekhanov, Georgi Valentinovich* (1856-1918)—outstanding leader of the Russian and international working-class movement, first propagator of Marxism in Russia. During the First World War (1914-18) adopted a social-chauvinist stand.—42, 44, 106

*Potresov, Alexander Nikolayevich* (1869-1934)—one of the opportunist leaders in the Russian Social-Democratic movement, Menshevik liquidator.—68, 107, 112

*Proudhon, Pierre Joseph* (1809-1865)—French publicist, economist and sociologist; ideologist of the petty bourgeoisie.—131

*Purishkevich, Vladimir Mitrofanovich* (1870-1920)—big Russian landowner, reactionary.—44

*Pyatakov, Georgi Leonidovich* (1890-1937)—Bolshevik from 1910; during the First World War adopted an anti-Leninist

stand on the question of the right of nations to self-determination and other major questions of the Party's policy.—87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100

## R

*Renaudel, Pierre* (1871-1935)—one of the reformist leaders of the French Socialist Party, social-chauvinist.—147

*Renner, Karl* (1870-1950)—leader and theoretician of the Austrian Right-wing Social-Democrats.—124, 147

*Riesser, Jakob* (1853-1932)—German economist and banker.—79, 83, 84

## S

*Sadoul, Jacques* (1881-1956)—French officer, member of the French military mission in Russia in 1917; later became a Communist.—139

*Saint-Simon, Henri Claude* (1760-1825)—French utopian socialist.—85, 86

*Sartorius von Waltershausen, August* (b. 1852)—German bourgeois economist, author of works on world economics and politics.—61

*Scheidemann, Philipp* (1865-1939) one of the leaders of the extreme Right wing of the German Social-Democratic movement.—125, 147

*Schilder, Sigmund* (b. 1932)—German economist.—61, 79

*Schulze-Gaevernitz, Gerhard* (1864-1943)—German bourgeois economist.—61, 64, 65, 85

*Sismondi, Jean Charles Léonard Simonde de* (1773-1842)—Swiss economist and historian, ideologist of the petty bourgeoisie.—103

*Skobelev, Matvei Ivanovich* (1885-1939)—Russian Social-Democrat, Menshevik, Centrist during the world imperialist war of 1914-18.—68, 112

*Sokolnikov, V. (Sokolnikov, G.Y.)* (1889-1938)—member of the Bolshevik Party from 1905; member of the Moscow Committee and the Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P. (B.) in 1917.—127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132

*Sorge, Friedrich Adolf* (1828-1906)—German socialist, prominent figure in the international working-class and socialist movement; friend and associate of Marx and Engels. After the 1848-49 revolution emigrated to the U.S.A.—107

*Spectator*—see *Nakhimson, Miron Isaakoch*.

## T

*Trotsky (Bronstein), Lev Davidovich* (1870-1940)—rabid enemy of Leninism. Before the First World War he supported the liquidators under the cover of "non-factionalism"; Centrist during the war. At the Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) in 1917 he became a member of the Party but continued to wage a covert struggle against Leninism. The Communist Party exposed Trotskyism as a petty-bourgeois deviation in the Party and routed it ideologically and organisationally. Trotsky was expelled from the Party and deported from the U.S.S.R.;

in 1932 he was deprived of Soviet citizenship.—103, 105

V

*Vanderlip, Frank Arthur* (1864-1937)—American banker; President of the National City Bank in New York.—155

W

*Webb, Beatrice* (1858-1943), and *Sidney* (1859-1947)—well-

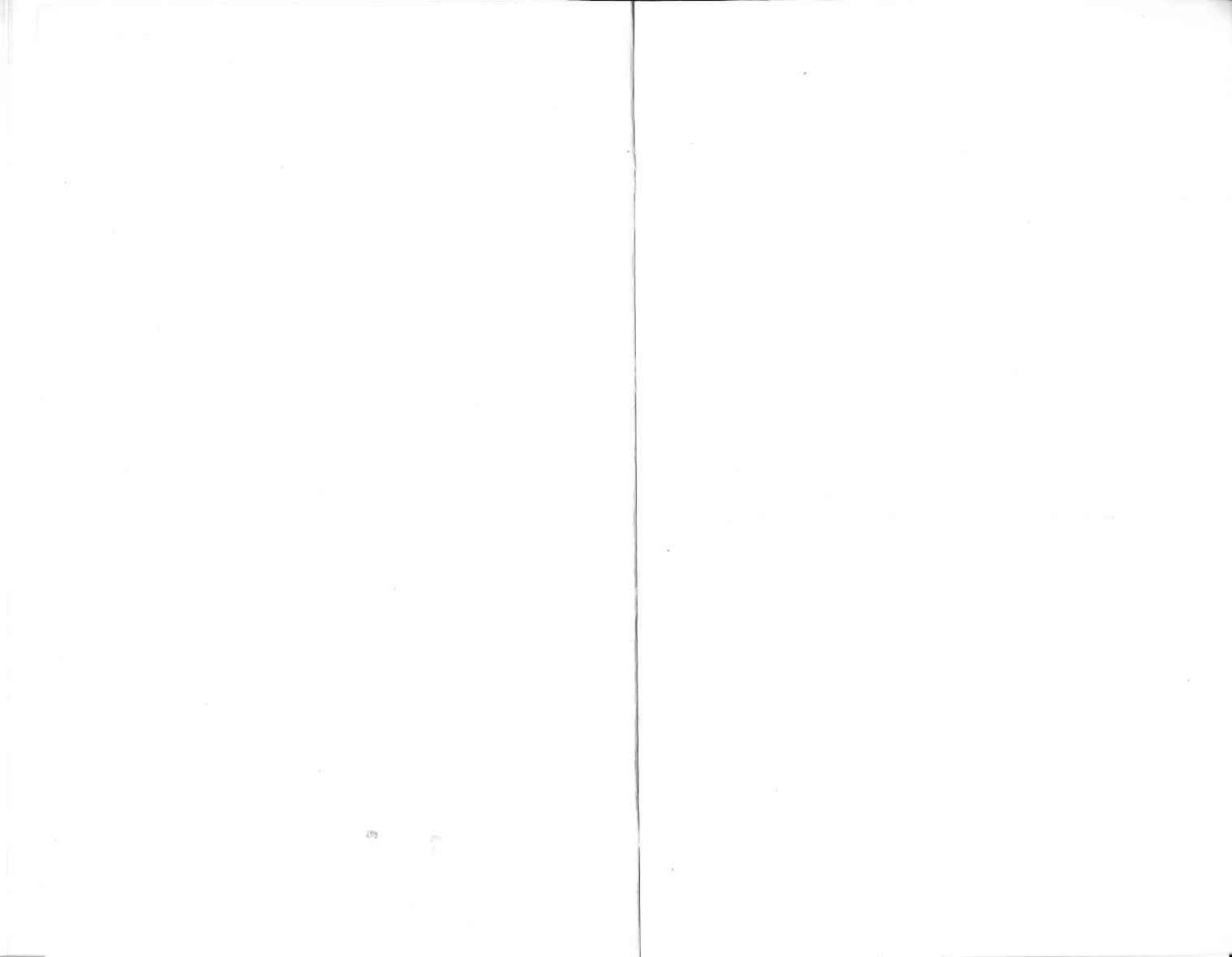
known English public figures, authors of several works on the history and theory of the English working-class movement.—110

*Wilson, Woodrow* (1856-1924)—U.S. President (1913-21); his home policy was aimed at suppressing the labour movement and his foreign policy was expansionist. Wilson was one of the organisers of armed intervention against Soviet Russia.—142, 155.

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