

1870



1960

IN COMMEMORATION OF
THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE BIRTH OF LENIN

LENIN
ON IMPERIALISM,
THE EVE OF
THE PROLETARIAN
SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Michael
Harrison
1970

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

**LENIN
ON IMPERIALISM,
THE EVE OF
THE PROLETARIAN
SOCIAL REVOLUTION**

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
PEKING 1960**

First Edition September 1960
Second Edition October 1960

Published in conformity with the
Chinese edition prepared by the Peo-
ple's Publishing House, Peking, 1960.

Printed in the People's Republic of China

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I. IMPERIALISM IS MONOPOLISTIC, DECAY- ING, MORIBUND CAPITALISM

We must begin with the most precise and fullest possible definition of imperialism. Imperialism is a special historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is threefold: Imperialism is 1) monopolistic capitalism; 2) parasitic, or decaying, capitalism; 3) moribund capitalism.

From "Imperialism and the Split in
the Socialist Movement" (October 1916).

Imperialism is a continuation of the development of capitalism, its highest stage — in a sense, a transition stage to Socialism.

I cannot therefore regard the addition of an analysis of imperialism to the general analysis of the basic features of capitalism as "mechanical." Imperialism, in fact, does not *and cannot transform* capitalism from top to bottom. Imperialism complicates and accentuates the contradictions of

capitalism, it "entangles" monopoly with free competition, but it *cannot abolish* exchange, the market, competition, crises, etc.

Imperialism is capitalism which is withering, but not yet withered, dying but not dead. Not pure monopolies, but monopolies in conjunction with exchange, markets, competition, crises — such is the essential feature of imperialism in general.

From "Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme" (April-May 1917).

IMPERIALISM IS MONOPOLISTIC CAPITALISM

The core of the whole international situation that has now arisen lies in the economic relations of imperialism. Throughout the course of the twentieth century, this new, higher, and last stage of capitalism has become fully defined. Of course, you know that the most characteristic, the most essential feature of imperialism has been the fact that capital has achieved enormous dimensions. Free competition has been superseded by monopoly of gigantic dimensions. An insignificant number of capitalists have been able to concentrate in their hands, sometimes, whole branches of industry; these have passed

into the hands of combines, cartels, syndicates and trusts, which, not infrequently, are of an international character. Thus, whole branches of industry, not only in single countries, but all over the world, were found to have been captured by monopolists in regard to finance, in regard to right of ownership, and partly, in regard to production. On this soil there has developed the unprecedented domination of an insignificant number of very big banks, of kings of finance, of financial magnates who have, in fact, transformed even the freest republics into financial monarchies.

From "The International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International, Report Delivered at the Second Congress of the Communist International" (July 19, 1920).

Economically, imperialism is monopoly capitalism. In order that monopoly may be complete, competitors must be eliminated, not only from the home market (the market of a given country), but also from the foreign market, from the whole world. Is it *economically* possible "in the era of finance capital" to eliminate competition even in a foreign country? Of course it is; the means to this end

are — financial dependence, the cornering of sources of raw materials and the buying out of all the competitors' enterprises.

The American trusts are the highest expression of the economics of imperialism, or monopoly capitalism. The trusts do not confine themselves to economic means to eliminate competitors; they constantly resort to political and even criminal means. It would be a profound mistake to believe, however, that it is economically infeasible for a trust to secure a monopoly by purely economic methods of struggle. On the contrary, reality at every step proves that it is "feasible"; the trusts undermine the credit of their competitors through the medium of the banks (the heads of the trusts are also the heads of the banks: buying up shares); the trusts hinder the transportation of materials to their competitors (the heads of the trusts are also the heads of the railroads: buying up shares); the trusts temporarily force down prices below cost of production and spend millions for this purpose in order to ruin their competitors and to *buy up* their enterprises and sources of raw material (mines, land, etc.).

This is the purely economic analysis of the power of the trusts and their expansion. This is the purely economic road towards expansion: *buying up* enterprises, business establishments and sources of raw materials.

Big finance capital in one country can always buy up competitors in another, politically independent, country, and always does so. Economically this is quite feasible. Economic "annexation" is *quite* "feasible" without political "annexation," and constantly occurs.

From "A Caricature of Marxism and 'Imperialist Economism'" (August-October 1916).

Imperialism is monopoly capitalism. Every cartel, trust and syndicate, every gigantic bank is monopoly. Super-profit has not disappeared, it has remained. The exploitation of *all* other countries by one privileged, financially rich country has remained and has become more intense. A handful of rich countries — there are only four of them, if we are to speak of independent, and really gigantic "modern" wealth: England, France, the United States and Germany — have developed monopoly to

vast proportions, obtain *super*-profits amounting to hundreds of millions, even billions, "ride on the backs" of hundreds and hundreds of millions of the populations of foreign countries, fight among each other for the division of the particularly rich, particularly fat and particularly easy spoils.

From "Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement" (October 1916).

Monopolist capitalist combines, cartels, syndicates and trusts divide among themselves, first of all, the home market, seize more or less complete possession of the industry of a country. But under capitalism the home market is inevitably bound up with the foreign market. Capitalism long ago created a world market. As the export of capital increased, and as the foreign and colonial connections and "spheres of influence" of the big monopolist combines expanded in all ways, things "naturally" gravitated towards an international agreement among these combines, and towards the formation of international cartels.

From "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (January-June 1916).

Let us recall what caused the change from the former "peaceful" epoch of capitalism to the present imperialist epoch: free competition was replaced by monopolist capitalist combines, the world was divided up. It is obvious that both these facts (and factors) are really of world-wide significance: Free Trade and peaceful competition were possible and necessary as long as capital was in a position to enlarge its colonies without hindrance, and to seize unoccupied land in Africa, etc., as long as the concentration of capital was still slight and no monopolist undertakings, i.e., undertakings of such magnitude as to dominate a *whole* branch of industry, existed. The appearance and growth of such monopolist undertakings (has this process, perchance, been checked in England or in America? Not even Kautsky will dare deny that the war has accelerated and intensified it) make the free competition of former times *impossible*, cut the ground from under its feet, while the division of the world *compels* the capitalists to pass from peaceful expansion to armed struggle for the *redivision* of colonies and spheres of influence.

From "The Collapse of the Second International" (from latter half of May to first half of June 1915).

. . . The characteristic feature of the period under review is the final partition of the globe — final, not in the sense that a *repartition* is impossible; on the contrary, repartitions are possible and inevitable — but in the sense that the colonial policy of the capitalist countries has *completed* the seizure of the unoccupied territories on our planet. For the first time the world is completely divided up, so that in the future *only* redivision is possible, i.e., territories can only pass from one “owner” to another, instead of passing as ownerless territory to an “owner.”

Hence, we are passing through a peculiar epoch of world colonial policy, which is most closely connected with the “latest stage in the development of capitalism,” with finance capital.

From “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism” (January-June 1916).

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 combines 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 monopolistic 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 very important features of the phenomenon that has to be defined have to be especially deduced. 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 complete 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 combines 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 in that stage of development in which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; 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.

Ibid.

IMPERIALISM IS PARASITIC OR DECAYING CAPITALISM

The fact that imperialism is parasitic or decaying capitalism manifests itself first of all in the tendency to decay, which is a distinguishing feature of *all* monopoly under the private ownership of the means of production. The difference between the republican-democratic and the monarchist-reactionary imperialist bourgeoisie is obliterated precisely because both are rotting alive (which by no means

prevents the astonishingly rapid development of capitalism in individual branches of industry, individual countries, individual periods). Secondly, the decay of capitalism manifests itself in the creation of a huge stratum of *rentiers*, capitalists who live by "clipping coupons." In each of the four advanced imperialist countries, Great Britain, United States, France and Germany, capital invested in securities amounts to 100 to 150 *billion* francs, from which each country derives an annual income of no less than 5 to 8 billions. Thirdly, the export of capital is parasitism raised to the second power. Fourthly, "finance capital strives for domination, not for freedom." Political reaction *all* along the line is the attribute of imperialism: Corruption, bribery on a gigantic scale. Panama scandals of all kinds. Fifthly, the exploitation of oppressed nations, which is inseparably connected with annexations, especially the exploitation of colonies by a handful of "Great" Powers, transforms the "civilized" world more and more into a parasite on the body of hundreds of millions of uncivilized people. The Roman proletarian lived at the expense of society. Modern society lives at the expense of the modern proletarian. Marx particularly em-

phasized this profound observation of Sismondi. Imperialism changes the situation somewhat. A privileged upper stratum of the proletariat in the imperialistic states lives partly at the expense of the hundreds of millions of uncivilized people.

From "Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement" (October 1916).

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 exists in the general environment of capitalism, commodity production and competition, in permanent and insoluble contradiction 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 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 revolutionized the manufacture of bottles. The German bottle-manufacturing cartel purchased Owens' patent, but pigeonholed it, re-

frained from utilizing 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 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 certain branches of industry, in certain 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 100-150 billion francs in securities. Hence the extraordinary growth of a class, or rather, of a social 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.

From "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (January-June 1916).

Monopolies, oligarchy, the striving for domination instead of striving 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 (England).

Ibid.

The national income of Great Britain approximately doubled from 1865 to 1898, while the income "from abroad" increased *ninefold* in the same period. While the "merit" of imperialism is that it "trains the Negro to habits of industry" (not without coercion, of course . . .), 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 Great Britain is being taken out of cultivation and used for sport, for the diversion of the rich. About Scotland — the most aristocratic playground in the world —

it is said that "it lives on its past and on Mr. Carnegie" (an American billionaire). On horse racing and fox hunting alone Britain annually spends £14,000,000. The number of rentiers in England is about one million. The percentage of the productively-employed population to the total population is declining. . . .

Ibid.

Such exploitation of the labour of the *worst paid* workers from the backward countries, is particularly characteristic precisely for imperialism. Precisely on this, to a certain extent, rests the *parasitism* of the imperialist, rich countries in buying over part of its workers with a higher wage while engaging in the unlimited and shameless exploitation of the labour of "cheap" foreign workers. The words "worst paid" should be added, and also the words "and often without rights" since the exploiters of the "civilized" countries also make use of the fact that the imported foreign workers are without rights.

From "The Review of the Party Programme" (October 6-8, 1917).

Imperialism, which means the partition of the world, and the exploitation of other countries besides China, which means high monopoly profits for a handful of very rich countries, creates the economic possibility of bribing the upper strata of the proletariat, and thereby fosters, gives form to, and strengthens opportunism.

From "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (January-June 1916).

Economically, imperialism (or the "epoch" of finance capital — we will not argue about words) is the highest stage of development of capitalism, namely, the stage when production is carried on so large, so huge a scale that *free competition is superseded by monopoly*. This is the *economic* essence of imperialism. Monopoly manifests itself in trusts, syndicates, etc., in the omnipotence of gigantic banks, in the cornering of the sources of raw materials, etc., in the concentration of bank capital, etc. The whole point lies in economic monopoly.

The political superstructure of the new economy, of monopoly capitalism (imperialism is monopoly capitalism), is the turn *from* democracy to political reaction. Democracy corresponds to free competi-

tion. Political reaction corresponds to monopoly: "Finance capital strives for domination, not for freedom," as R. Hilferding correctly says in his *Finance Capital*.

To separate "foreign politics" from politics in general, or, still worse, to contrast foreign politics to home politics, is fundamentally wrong, un-Marxian and unscientific. Imperialism strives to violate democracy, strives towards reaction both in foreign politics and in home politics. In this sense, imperialism is, undoubtedly, the "negation" of *democracy in general, democracy as a whole*, and not of only *one* of the demands of democracy, namely, self-determination of nations.

From "A Caricature of Marxism and
'Imperialist Economism'" (August-October
1916).

In civilized and advanced Europe, with its brilliantly developed machine industry, its rich all-round culture and its constitution, a historical moment has been reached when the commanding bourgeoisie, out of fear for the growth and increasing strength of the proletariat, is supporting everything backward, moribund and medieval. The obsolescent

bourgeoisie is combining with all obsolete and obsolescent forces in an endeavour to preserve tottering wage slavery.

.....

And a more striking example of this decay of the *entire* European bourgeoisie can scarcely be cited than the support it is lending to *reaction* in Asia for the sake of the selfish aims of the financial manipulators and capitalist swindlers.

From "Backward Europe and Advanced
Asia" (published in *Pravda*, No. 113,
May 18, 1913).

IMPERIALISM IS MORIBUND CAPITALISM

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.

From "Imperialism, the Highest Stage
of Capitalism" (January-June 1916).

It is clear, therefore, why imperialism is *moribund* capitalism, the *transition* to Socialism: monopoly growing *out* of capitalism is *already* the dying of

capitalism, the beginning of its transition to Socialism.

From "Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement" (October 1916).

The usual division of historical epochs . . . is this: (1) 1789-1871; (2) 1871-1914; (3) 1914-? . . . The First Epoch, from the great French Revolution to the Franco-Prussian War, is the epoch of the rise of the bourgeoisie, of its full victory. This is the ascending line of the bourgeoisie, the epoch of bourgeois-democratic movements in general, of bourgeois-national movements in particular, an epoch of a rapid breakdown of the obsolete feudal absolutist institutions. The Second Epoch is the epoch of the full domination and decline of the bourgeoisie, an epoch of transition from the progressive character of the bourgeoisie to reactionary, even rabidly reactionary, finance capital. This is the epoch when there are being prepared and there slowly gather the forces of a new class of modern democracy. The Third Epoch, which is just beginning, places the bourgeoisie in the same "position" as that in which the feudal lords found themselves during the First Epoch. This is the epoch of imperialism and im-

perialist convulsions resulting from the nature of imperialism.

.....

The international conflicts in the Third Epoch have, as far as the *form* is concerned, remained the same international conflicts as in the First Epoch, but their social *contents*, their class *contents* have fundamentally changed. The objective historical surroundings have become entirely different.

In place of the struggle of rising capital striving towards national liberation from the remnants of feudalism, there has come the struggle of the most reactionary finance capital against the new forces, the struggle of a power that has exhausted and outlived itself, that is headed downward towards decay. The bourgeois-national framework of states, which in the First Epoch was a support to the *development* of the productive forces of humanity then in the process of liberating itself from feudalism, has now, in the Third Epoch, become a *hindrance* to the free development of the productive forces. From a rising, progressive class the bourgeoisie has become a sinking, decaying, internally dead, reactionary class. The rising class — on a wide his-

torical scale—has become an entirely different one.

From "Under a Stolen Flag" (after February 1915).

It [capitalism] has outlived itself. It has become the most reactionary brake on human development. It has boiled down to the autocracy of a handful of billionaires and millionaires, driving the peoples to the slaughter to decide the question whether the German or Anglo-French group of beasts of prey should get the imperialist loot, power over the colonies, financial "spheres of influence" or "administrative mandates" and so on.

During the war of 1914-18 tens of millions of people were killed and crippled precisely because of this, and only because of this. The consciousness of this truth is spreading with unrestrainable force and speed among the masses of toilers in all countries, the more so because the war caused unheard-of ruin everywhere and *everywhere*, including the "victor" nations, has to be paid for in interests on debts. And what is this interest? It is the tribute of billions paid to Messrs. millionaires for being so kind as to permit tens of millions of workers and peasants to kill and wound each other to decide the

question of how the profits of the capitalists should be divided.

The collapse of capitalism is inevitable. The revolutionary consciousness of the masses is growing everywhere. Thousands of signs point to this. . . .

The capitalists, bourgeoisie, can at "best" for themselves postpone the victory of Socialism in one or the other individual country at the cost of wiping out new hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants. But they cannot save capitalism. The *Soviet Republic* has come to take its place. . . .

From "Reply to Questions Put by an American Correspondent" (July 20, 1919).

And our slogans, like our revolutionary banner, are rising in all countries. In America, in that country which was formerly called the freest, Socialists fill the jails. In Germany, the words of the German Socialist Frederick Adler, "Turn your bayonets not against the Russian workers and peasants but against your own bourgeoisie" . . . are spreading widely among workers and soldiers. The end of the slaughter started by the capitalists is not in sight. The more Germany wins, the more beasts similar to herself join the opposite side, and now,

fighting together with the English and French, there is also America. An end will be put to war only by the workers: the world revolution is inevitable. In Germany, a "defeatist" movement, similar to the one we had, has already begun; mass strikes are going on in Italy and Austria; in America, mass arrests of Socialists are taking place. And, feeling their doom, the capitalists and landlords are exerting their last efforts in order to strangle the revolutionary movement: the Russian capitalists are stretching their hands for help to the Anglo-French capitalists and landlords.

Now there are two fronts: on the one hand — the workers and peasants, on the other — the capitalists. The final, decisive battle is coming. Now there can be no compromising with the bourgeoisie. Either they must win, or we.

From "Speech at a Meeting in the
Butyrski District" (August 2, 1918).

Comrades, those who have been following the development of European society have long ceased to doubt that capitalism cannot end peacefully and that it will lead either to a direct revolt of the broad

masses against the yoke of capital or to the same result by the more painful and bloody way of war.

From "On Combating the Famine, Report
to a Joint Session of the All-Russian
Central Executive Committee, the Moscow
Soviet of Workers', Peasants' and Red
Army Deputies, and the Trade Unions"
(June 4, 1918).

II. ALL CAPITALIST CONTRADICTIONS HAVE BECOME IMMEASURABLY MORE ACUTE IN THE EPOCH OF IMPERIALISM

**THE IMPERIALISTS ARE WILD BEASTS AND BEASTS
OF PREY. THEY PLUNDER THE WORLD; THEY
FIGHT AMONG THEMSELVES AND ARM
AGAINST EACH OTHER**

The principal feature of the latest stage of capitalism is the domination of monopolist combines of the big capitalists. These monopolies are most firmly established when *all* the sources of raw materials are captured by one group, and we have seen with what zeal the international capitalist combines exert every effort to make it impossible for their rivals to compete with them by buying up, for example, iron ore fields, oil fields, etc. Colonial possession alone gives the monopolies complete guarantee against all contingencies in the struggle with competitors, including the contingency that the latter will defend them-

selves by means of a law establishing a state monopoly. The more capitalism is developed, the more strongly the shortage of raw materials is felt, the more intense the competition and the hunt for sources of raw materials throughout the whole world, the more desperate is the struggle for the acquisition of colonies.

From "Imperialism, the Highest Stage
of Capitalism" (January-June 1916).

Capital *gains* by the bankruptcy of a competing capitalist or of a competing nation, because in this way capital becomes more concentrated; hence, the sharper and "keener" economic competition, i.e., the economic driving of a competitor towards bankruptcy, becomes, the more the capitalists strive to add *military* pressure in order to drive him in that direction.

From "The Collapse of the Second International" (from latter half of May to first half of June 1915).

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 rela-

tion of forces is changed, what other solution of the contradictions can be found *under capitalism* than that of *force*?

From "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (January-June 1916).

Out of this partition of the whole world, out of this domination of capitalist monopoly, out of this omnipotence of an insignificant number of very big banks — two, three, four or five in a country, not more — inevitably arose the first imperialist war of 1914-18. This war was waged in order to bring about a repartition of the whole world. This war was waged in order to decide which of the insignificant groups of the biggest states — the British or the German — was to secure the opportunity and the right to rob, strangle and exploit the whole world. You know that the war decided this question in favour of the British group. And as a result of this war all capitalist contradictions have become immeasurably more acute.

From "The International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International, Report Delivered at the Second Congress of the Communist International" (July 19, 1920).

In actual fact this is a war between two groups of robber Great Powers over the division of colonies, over the enslavement of other nations, over profits and privileges on the world market. This is the most reactionary of wars, a war of modern slaveholders for the preservation and consolidation of capitalist slavery. . . . Whether Germany will be victorious, Russia will be victorious, or there will be a "draw"—in every case the war will bring to mankind the new oppression of hundreds and hundreds of millions of the population in the colonies, Persia, Turkey, China, new enslavement of the nations, new chains for the working class of all countries.

From "Appeal on the War" (August 1915).

Furious wrangling is going on between Japan, Great Britain, America and France over the partition of Turkey, Persia, Mesopotamia and China. The bourgeois press in these countries is full of the most furious attacks and the most angry pronouncements against their "colleagues" because each is trying to snatch the booty from under the other's nose. We see complete disintegration among the upper classes of this most insignificant handful of very rich coun-

tries. A milliard and a quarter of people cannot live under the conditions into which "advanced" and civilized capitalism wishes to force them; they represent 70 per cent of the population of the world. An insignificant handful of the richest states, Great Britain, America, Japan (Japan was able to plunder the Eastern, Asiatic countries, but she cannot have any independent financial and military power without the assistance of another country), these two or three countries cannot restore economic intercourse and are directing their policy towards disrupting the policy of their colleagues and partners in the League of Nations. It is this that gives rise to the world crisis. And these economic roots of the crisis are the main reason why the Communist International is achieving brilliant successes.

From "The International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International, Report Delivered at the Second Congress of the Communist International" (July 19, 1920).

The contradiction of interests of the imperialist states is obvious to us all. Despite the declarations of their ministers that disputed questions are being

regulated in a peaceful way, the fact is that the imperialist powers cannot take any serious step in any political question without falling out among themselves. The French need a powerful Poland and a powerful Russia of the tsarist type and are prepared to make any sacrifices to achieve this aim. But Great Britain, because of her geographical position, is striving for something else — to dismember Russia and to enfeeble Poland, so as to establish an equilibrium between France and Germany, which would assure the victorious imperialists the administration of the colonies they have secured by plundering Germany in the World War. The conflict of interests here is a crying one, and however much the representatives of the imperialist powers at San Remo assure us that complete unanimity prevails among the Allies, we know that there is no concord among them.

From "Speech Delivered at a Joint Meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet of Workers', Peasants' and Red Army Deputies, the Trade Unions and the Factory Committees" (May 5, 1920).

Are there basic contradictions in the contemporary capitalist world which should be made use of? There

are three basic ones I should like to name. The first, and nearest to us, is in the relations between Japan and America. A war between them is being prepared. They cannot manage to live together peacefully on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, although these shores are 3,000 versts apart. This rivalry undoubtedly arises from the relations between their capitalisms. There is a gigantic literature devoted to the question of a future Japanese-American war. That this war is being prepared, that it is inevitable, is beyond doubt.

.....

I have pointed out to you one imperialist contradiction which we must make use of, that between Japan and America; the other is between America and the whole of the rest of the capitalist world. Almost the entire capitalist world of "victors" came out of the war with giant gains. America is strong, all are now in debt to her, all depend on her, all hate her more and more, she robs all, and she robs in a very original way. She has no colonies. England came out of the war with gigantic colonies, France also. England offered America a mandate — that is the kind of language being talked now — over one of the robbed colonies, but America did

not take it. The American merchants, apparently, reason in a different sort of way. They saw that war, both as regards the ruin and as regards the sentiments of the workers, plays a very definite role, and came to the conclusion that there was no advantage for them in accepting the mandate. But it can be understood that they will not allow this colony to be used by other states. . . . We have before us the paramount state of the world, which by 1923 will have a navy stronger than the English, but this state is encountering the ever-greater hatred of the other capitalist countries. We must take such a trend of circumstances into account. America cannot be reconciled with the rest of Europe — this is a fact proved by history.

.....

And we have the third dissension, between the Entente and Germany. Germany is defeated, suppressed by the Versailles Treaty, but she possesses gigantic economic potentialities. Germany is the world's second country in degree of economic development, if we consider America the first. Experts even say that, in the electrical industry, she excels America, and you know that the electrical industry is of gigantic significance. As regards the

extent of the use of electricity, America excels, but in technical perfection, Germany excels. And such a country has had imposed on it the Versailles Treaty, which it cannot live with. Germany is one of the strongest, most advanced capitalist countries, she cannot tolerate the Versailles Treaty, and Germany is bound to seek an ally against world imperialism, being herself imperialist, but suppressed.

From "Speech at the Meeting of Activists
of the Moscow Organization of the R.C.P.
(B.)" (December 6, 1920).

German imperialism has exposed itself utterly as a beast of prey. The most important thing is that both in America and in France, in these notorious democracies (it is the betrayers of Socialism, the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries, those miserable people calling themselves Socialists, who babble about democracies), in these leading democracies of the world, in these republics, imperialism grows daily more insolent and wild beasts, and beasts of prey appear there as nowhere else. They plunder the world; they fight among themselves and arm against each other. It is impossible to conceal this for long. This could be hidden during the heat of war. The heat is passing; peace is coming closer and the

masses in these very democracies see, despite all the lies, that the war has led to new plunder. The most democratic republic is nothing but a fine garment for a beast of prey, the most bestial and cynical, that is ready to ruin hundreds of millions of people, in order to pay off debts, that is, pay the imperialist lords, the capitalists, for having kindly allowed the workers to cut each other's throats. This is becoming clearer to the masses every day.

From "Successes and Difficulties of the
Soviet Power" (published in March-April
1919).

The capitalists divide the world, not out of any particular malice, but because the degree of concentration which has been reached forces them to adopt this method in order to obtain profits. And they divide it "in proportion to capital," "in proportion to strength," because there cannot be any other method of division under commodity production and capitalism. But strength varies with the degree of economic and political development. In order to understand what is taking place, it is necessary to know what questions are settled by the changes in strength. The question as to whether these changes are "purely" economic or *non-eco-*

conomic (e.g., military) is a secondary one, which cannot in the least affect the fundamental views on the latest epoch of capitalism. To substitute the question of the form of the struggle and agreements (today peaceful, tomorrow warlike, the next day warlike again) for the question of the *substance* of the struggle and agreements between capitalist combines is to sink to the role of a sophist.

The epoch of the latest stage of capitalism shows us that certain relations between capitalist combines grow up, *based on* the economic division of the world; while parallel and in connection with it, certain relations grow up between political combines, between states, on the basis of the territorial division of the world, of the struggle for colonies, of the "struggle for economic territory."

From "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (January-June 1916).

Private property is robbery, and a state based on private property is a state of beasts of prey, who go to war for the division of spoils.

From "Speech to a Conference of Chairmen of the District, *Volost* and Village Executive Committees of Moscow Province" (October 15, 1920).

**WARS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION ARE INEVITABLE
IN THE EPOCH OF IMPERIALISM. THE DECISIVE,
LONG, HARD STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL
LIBERATION BEGINS**

Imperialism is the progressing oppression of the nations of the world by a handful of Great Powers; it is an epoch of wars among these powers for the extension and consolidation of national oppression; it is the epoch of the deception of the masses of the people by the hypocritical social-patriots, i.e., people who *under the pretext* of "freedom of nations," "right of nations to self-determination," and "defence of the fatherland," justify and defend the oppression of a majority of the world's nations by the Great Powers.

From "The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (after October 16, 1915).

This domination of a handful of capitalists reached its complete development when the whole world was found to have been divided up, not only in the sense that the various sources of raw materials and means of production had been captured by the biggest capitalists, but also in the sense that the preliminary

distribution of the colonies had been completed. Forty years ago the population of the colonies was calculated at a little over a quarter of a milliard, and this population was subjected to six capitalist states. Before the war of 1914 the population of the colonies was already calculated at about 600,000,000, and if countries like Persia, Turkey, and China, which already at that time were in the position of semi-colonies, were added, we would get in round numbers a population of a milliard oppressed by the richest, most civilized and freest countries which forced them into a position of colonial dependence. And you know that, apart from direct state, juridical dependence, colonial dependence presupposes a number of relations of financial and economic dependence, presupposes a number of wars, which were not regarded as wars because very often they amounted to sheer massacres, when European and American imperialist troops, armed with the most perfect weapons of destruction, massacred the unarmed and defenceless inhabitants of colonial countries.

. . . You have the following picture of the world: after the war, at one stroke, not less than *a milliard*

and a quarter of the inhabitants of the world are subjected to colonial oppression, are subjected to the exploitation of brutal capitalism, which boasted about its love of peace, and which had some right to boast about this fifty years ago, when the world had not yet been divided up, when monopoly did not yet rule, when capitalism could still develop comparatively peacefully, without colossal military conflicts.

Now, after this "peaceful" epoch has come to an end, we see a monstrous intensification of oppression, we see a reversion to colonial and military oppression far worse than that which existed before. The Versailles Treaty has put Germany and a number of other vanquished countries in conditions in which economic existence is materially impossible, in conditions of utter lack of rights and degradation.

How many nations have benefited by this? In order to reply to this question we must recall that the population of the United States — which alone fully profited by the war, and which has been entirely transformed from a country very much in debt into a country to which all are in debt — is not more than 100,000,000; that the population of Japan — which profited a great deal by remaining outside of the European-American conflict and by seizing an

enormous Asiatic continent — is equal to 50,000,000; that the population of Great Britain — which next to the above-mentioned countries profited most — is 50,000,000. And if we add the neutral countries with very small populations — countries which became enriched during the war — we will get in round numbers a quarter of a milliard.

Thus we get the main outlines of the picture of the world as it appeared after the imperialist war. A billion and a quarter oppressed in the colonies — countries which are being cut up alive, like Persia, Turkey and China; and countries which have been vanquished and flung into the position of colonies. Not more than a quarter of a milliard inhabit countries which have retained their old positions, but have fallen into economic dependence upon America, and all of them, during the war, were in a state of military dependence, for the war affected the whole world and did not permit a single state to remain really neutral. And finally, we have not more than a quarter of a milliard inhabitants of countries in which only the upper stratum, of course, only the capitalists, benefited by the partition of the world. We thus get a total of about one and three-quarters of a milliard comprising the whole

population of the world. I would like you to memorize this picture of the world, for all the fundamental contradictions of capitalism, of imperialism, which are leading to revolution, all the fundamental contradictions in the working-class movement which have led to the furious struggle against the Second International, to which our chairman referred, are all connected with this division of the population of the world.

Of course, these figures illustrate the economic position of the world only roughly, in main outline. And naturally, comrades, with the population of the whole world divided in this way, exploitation by finance capital, capitalist monopoly, has increased ever so much more.

Not only have the colonial and the vanquished countries fallen into a state of dependence, but within each victor country contradictions have become more acute, all capitalist contradictions have become more acute.

From "The International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International, Report Delivered at the Second Congress of the Communist International" (July 19, 1920).

The imperialist war likewise contributed to the growth of the revolutionary movement, because the European imperialists had to enlist whole colonial regiments in their struggle. The imperialist war aroused the East also and drew its peoples into international politics. Britain and France armed colonial peoples and helped them to familiarize themselves with military technique and up-to-date machines. That knowledge they will use against the imperialist gentry. The period of awakening of the East in the contemporary revolution is being succeeded by a period in which all the Eastern peoples will participate in deciding the destiny of the whole world, so as not to be simply an object of enrichment of others. The peoples of the East are becoming alive to the need for practical action, for every nation to take part in shaping the destiny of all mankind.

That is why I think that in the history of development of the world revolution — which, judging by its beginning, will continue for many years and will demand much effort — that in the revolutionary struggle, in the revolutionary movement, you will be called upon to play a big part and in this struggle merge with our struggle against international imperialism. Your participation in the international

revolution will confront you with a complicated and difficult task, the accomplishment of which will serve as the foundation for our common success, because here the majority of the people are for the first time stirring into independent motion and will be an active factor in the struggle for the overthrow of international imperialism.

From "Address to the Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East" (November 22, 1919).

One of the main qualities of imperialism is that it hastens the development of capitalism in the most backward countries, and thereby extends and intensifies the struggle against national oppression. That is a fact. It inevitably follows from this that imperialism must often give rise to national wars.

From "The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution" (September 1916).

National wars waged by colonial and semi-colonial countries are not only possible but *inevitable* in the epoch of imperialism. The colonies and semi-colonies (China, Turkey, Persia) have a population

of nearly one billion, i.e., *more than half* the population of the earth. In these countries the movements for national liberation are either very strong already or are growing and maturing.

From "The Pamphlet
by Junius" (July 1916).

National wars *against* the imperialist powers are not only possible and probable, they are inevitable, they are *progressive* and *revolutionary*, *although*, of course, what is needed for their *success* is either the combined efforts of an enormous number of the inhabitants of the oppressed countries (hundreds of millions in the example we have taken of India and China), or a *particularly* favourable combination of circumstances in the international situation (for example, when the intervention of the imperialist powers is paralysed by exhaustion, by war, by their mutual antagonisms, etc.), or a *simultaneous* uprising of the proletariat of one of the Great Powers against the bourgeoisie (this latter case stands first in order from the standpoint of what is desirable and advantageous for the victory of the proletariat).

Ibid.

But tomorrow in world history will be just such a day when the peoples oppressed by imperialism will finally be aroused and waked and the decisive long, hard struggle for their liberation will begin.

From "The Question of Nationalities or
of 'Autonomization'" (December 31, 1922).

**THE SITUATION HAS BECOME UNBEARABLE FOR THE
PROLETARIAT. THE PROLETARIAT WILL CER-
TAINLY OVERTHROW THE YOKE OF CAPITAL
WITH REVOLUTIONARY RUTHLESSNESS**

Imperialism is the highest stage of development of capitalism. Capital in the advanced countries has outgrown the boundaries of national states. It has established monopoly in place of competition, thus creating all the objective prerequisites for the achievement of Socialism. Hence, in Western Europe and in the United States of America, the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for the overthrow of the capitalist governments, for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, is on the order of the day. Imperialism is forcing the masses into this struggle by sharpening class antagonisms to an immense degree, by worsening the conditions of the masses both eco-

nomically—trusts and high cost of living—and politically: growth of militarism, frequent wars, increase of reaction, strengthening and extension of national oppression and colonial plunder.

From "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination (Theses)" (January-February 1916).

. . . The universal rise in the cost of living, the yoke of capital joined in alliances, cartels, trusts and syndicates and the imperialist policy of the powers are rendering the lot of the working masses insupportable, and intensifying the struggle of capital with labour; the time is swiftly approaching when an end will be put to capitalism, when millions of united proletarians will create a social system in which there will be no poverty of the masses, no exploitation of man by man.

From "To the Question of Workers' Deputies in the Duma and Their Declarations" (mid-November 1912).

The vast majority of the population — and all the more so of the toiling population — of any capitalist country, including Russia, have thousands of times experienced, themselves and through their kith and

kin, the oppression, the robbery and every sort of tyranny of capitalism. The imperialist war, i.e., the slaughter of ten million people in order to decide whether British or German capital was to have supremacy in plundering the whole world, intensified, increased and deepened these ordeals exceedingly, and made the people realize their meaning. Hence the inevitable sympathy displayed by the vast majority of the population, particularly the toiling masses, for the proletariat, because it is with heroic courage and revolutionary ruthlessness overthrowing the yoke of capital, overthrowing the exploiters, suppressing their resistance, and shedding its blood to pave the road for the creation of the new society, in which there will be no room for exploiters.

From "A Great Beginning" (June 28, 1919).

It was objectively inevitable that the imperialist war should have immensely accelerated and have extremely intensified the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie; it is objectively inevitable that it shall be transformed into a civil war between hostile classes.

From "Letters from Afar" (March 7, 1917).

. . . The imperialist war has created an impossible situation for the victor countries also. This is also shown by the enormous disparity between wages and the rise in prices.

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Clearly, under such circumstances, the growth of indignation among the workers, the growth of revolutionary temper and ideas, the growth of spontaneous mass strikes, are inevitable; for the position of the workers is becoming intolerable. The workers are becoming convinced by their own experience that the capitalists who have enriched themselves enormously by the war are throwing the burden of the cost of war and the debts upon their shoulders. Recently, a cable was received to the effect that America wanted to deport to Russia another 500 Communists in order to get rid of "pernicious agitators."

Even if America deports to Russia not 500 but 500,000 Russian, American, Japanese and French "agitators" it will make no difference, because the disparity between prices and wages, which they can do nothing to prevent, will continue. And they can do nothing to prevent it because private property is strictly preserved in that country; they regard it

as "sacred." This must not be forgotten, because it is only in Russia that private ownership by the exploiters has been destroyed. The capitalists can do nothing to remove the disparity between prices and wages; the workers cannot live on their old wages. The old methods, separate strikes, the parliamentary struggle, or voting, are useless in combating this disaster, because "private property is sacred" and the capitalists have accumulated such huge debts that the whole world is in bondage to a handful of people. Meanwhile the conditions of life of the workers are becoming more and more unbearable. There is no way out except by the abolition of the "private property" of the exploiters.

From "The International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International, Report Delivered at the Second Congress of the Communist International" (July 19, 1920).

**THE IMPERIALISTS ARE BENT ON DESTROYING THE
SOCIALIST COUNTRIES BUT THEY ARE DOOMED
TO FAILURE**

The world political situation has now placed on the order of the day the dictatorship of the prole-

tariat, and all events in world politics are inevitably concentrating around one central point, viz., the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic, which is inevitably grouping around itself the Soviet movement of the advanced workers of all countries, as well as all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities which have become convinced by their bitter experience that there is no salvation for them except the victory of the Soviet power over world imperialism.

From "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions" (published in June 1920).

. . . In the present world situation, after the imperialist war, the mutual relations between the nations, the whole world system of states, are determined by the struggle waged by a small group of imperialist nations against the Soviet movement and the Soviet states, at the head of which stands Soviet Russia.

From "The Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions at the Second Congress of the Communist International" (July 26, 1920).

The imperialists were engrossed with each other. But now the Anglo-Franco-American group has swept away the other. They are making it their cardinal aim to stifle world Bolshevism, to destroy its chief seat, the Russian Soviet Republic. With this object in view they are preparing to build a Chinese Wall to protect themselves from Bolshevism, just as they protect themselves by quarantine from the plague. These people are trying to get rid of Bolshevism by quarantining it, but that is impossible. Even if the British and French imperialists, who command the most perfect technique in the world, succeed in erecting some such Chinese Wall around the Republic, the bacillus of Bolshevism will penetrate these walls all the same, and infect the workers of all countries.

From "The International Situation, Speech at the Sixth Extraordinary All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', Cossacks' and Red Army Deputies" (November 8, 1918).

I said at that meeting, that was reported so unfortunately in *Pravda*, that we have now passed from war to peace, but we have not forgotten that war will come again. While capitalism remains and there

is Socialism, they cannot live peacefully: either one or the other will be victorious in the end; funeral services will be sung either over the Soviet Republic or over world capitalism. This is a respite in the war. The capitalists will seek pretexts for making war.

From "Speech at the Meeting of Activists of the Moscow Organization of the R.C.P. (B.)" (December 6, 1920).

I say that the imperialists of England, France and America are making their last attempt to get us by the throat, but they won't be able to do it. No matter how difficult the situation, we can say with confidence that we will beat international imperialism. We will beat the billionaires of the whole world. We can beat them for two reasons. In the first place, because these are beasts who have gone to such extremes in their internecine struggle that they continue to bite each other without seeing that they are on the edge of the abyss. And secondly, because the Soviet power is growing constantly throughout the world.

From "The Address on the Foreign and Internal Situation of the Soviet Republic, Delivered at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Plenum of the Moscow Soviet of Workers' and Red Army Deputies" (April 3, 1919).

III. THE U.S.A. REPRESENTS THE MOST FEROCIOUS AND BRAZEN IMPERIALISM

IN THE U.S.A. A HANDFUL OF BILLIONAIRES RULE WITH AN IRON HAND WHILE THE PEOPLE LANGUISH IN SLAVERY AND SERVITUDE

By her high level of development of the productive forces of organized human labour, by the employment of machinery and all the marvels of modern technology, America holds first place among the free and cultured nations. At the same time America has become one of the outstanding countries as regards the depth of the gulf which divides a handful of arrogant billionaires, wallowing in filth and luxury, from the millions of toilers who are always on the borderline of poverty. The American people, who have set the world an example of how to conduct revolutionary war against feudal subjection, now find themselves in a state of modern,

capitalist, wage slavery to a handful of billionaires; they find themselves playing the role of hired assassins, who for the benefit of wealthy scoundrels strangled the Philippines in 1898 on the pretext of "liberating" her, and who are trying to strangle the Russian Socialist Republic in 1918 on the pretext of "protecting" it from the Germans.

From "A Letter to American Workers" (August 20, 1918).

Take America, that freest and most civilized of countries. There you have a democratic republic. But what do we find? The brazen rule of a handful, not even of millionaires, but of billionaires, while the people languish in slavery and servitude. If all the mills, factories, banks, and the entire wealth of the country belong to the capitalists, and side by side with the democratic republic you have feudal servitude for the labouring millions and unrelieved destitution — where is your boasted equality and fraternity?

No, wherever the "democrats" prevail, there you have robbery, genuine and unadorned.

From "The Speech at the Meeting at the Former Mikhelson Works" (August 30, 1918).

The forms of domination of the state may vary: capital manifests its power in one way where one form exists, and in another way where another form exists — but essentially the power is in the hands of capital, whether there are voting qualifications or not, or whether the republic is a democratic one or not — in fact the more democratic it is the cruder and more cynical is the rule of capitalism. One of the most democratic republics in the world is the United States of America, yet nowhere (and those who were there after 1905 probably know it) is the power of capital, the power of a handful of billionaires over the whole of society, so crude and so openly corrupt as in America. Once capital exists, it dominates the whole of society, and no democratic republic, no form of franchise can alter the essence of the matter.

From "The State"
(July 11, 1919).

In the United States only 11.1 per cent of the population is made up of Negroes (and also mulattoes and Indians) who should be regarded as an oppressed nation inasmuch as the equality, won by

the civil war of 1861-1865 and guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic is, in fact, in the chief places where Negroes are settled (in the south), being increasingly limited in many respects in connection with the transition from the progressive, pre-monopolist capitalism of the 1860-1870's to the reactionary, monopolistic capitalism (imperialism) of the latest era. . . .

From "Statistics and
Sociology" (January 1917).

**THE U.S.A. HAS INCREASED ITS ARMAMENTS TO AN
UNHEARD-OF EXTENT AND IS LORDING IT
OVER THE CAPITALIST WORLD**

. . . Another big turn in world politics consists in the gigantic enrichment, at the expense of Europe, of the finance capital of the United States of America which in the most recent period has increased its armaments (just as Japanese imperialism has done, although it is very much weaker) to an unheard-of extent and which is very glad to distract the attention of "its" workers from

these armaments by means of cheap pacifist phrases about . . . *Europe!*

From "Rough Draft of Theses for an Appeal
to the International Socialist Commission
and to All Socialist Parties" (before
December 25, 1916).

How is it¹ to be determined in the capitalist world, in the world of banks? There strength is determined by the number of banks, there strength is determined in the way described with purely American frankness and purely American cynicism by an American multimillionaire publication, when it declared: "The war in Europe is being waged for world domination. To dominate the world two things are needed: dollars and banks. Dollars we have, banks we shall open, and shall dominate the world." That statement was made by a leading American multimillionaire newspaper. I must say that these cynical words of a conceited and insolent American multimillionaire contain a thousand times more truth than do thousands of articles by bourgeois liars who represent this war as one waged over national interests, national issues of some sort, and put forward a similar quite obvious lie which

¹ Here Lenin referred to the "proper share" claimed by each imperialist plunderer in dividing up the world. — Ed.

casts history aside altogether and takes a particular case, such as that of the German vultures having assaulted Belgium.

From "War and Revolution" (May 14, 1917).

The American billionaires were perhaps the richest of all, and geographically speaking, their position was most secure. They have profited more than all the rest. They have reduced all countries, even the richest, to the position of their vassals. They have grabbed hundreds of billions of dollars. And on every dollar we see traces of filth: the filthy secret treaties between England and her "allies," between Germany and her vassals, treaties concerning the division of the spoils, pacts of mutual "assistance" in oppressing the workers and persecuting the socialist internationalists. On every dollar there is a clot of filth from the "lucrative" war contracts which in every country have made the rich richer and the poor poorer. Every dollar is stained with blood — of that ocean of blood that was shed by the ten million killed and twenty million maimed in the great, noble, emancipatory and holy war to decide whether the English or the German robbers shall get the lion's share of the loot, whether the

English or the German thugs shall be the *first* to strangle the weak nations all over the world.

From "A Letter to American Workers" (August 20, 1918).

Britain and France are victors, but they are up to their ears in debt to America, who has decided that the French and the British may consider themselves victors as much as they like, but that she is going to skim the cream and to exact usurious interest for her assistance during the war; and the guarantee of this is to be the American navy, which is now being built and is overtaking the British navy in size. And that rapacious American imperialism is acting so crudely may be seen from the fact that American agents are buying white slaves, women and girls, and shipping them to America for purposes of prostitution. Just think, free, cultured America supplying white slaves for brothels! Conflicts with American agents are occurring in Poland and Belgium. That is one small illustration of what is taking place on a vast scale in every small country which received assistance from the Entente. . . . The Americans have become so brazen that they are beginning to enslave that

"great and free victor," France, which was formerly a country of usurers, but is now thoroughly in debt to America, because she has lost her economic strength, and has not enough grain or coal of her own and cannot develop her material resources on a large scale, while America insists that the tribute be paid unreservedly and in full. It is thus becoming increasingly apparent that France, Britain and other powerful countries are economically bankrupt.

From "Address to the Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East" (November 22, 1919).

AMERICAN IMPERIALISM IS THE BUTCHER AND HANGMAN OF THE REVOLUTION IN ALL COUNTRIES

It has turned out that the English and Americans are coming forward in the capacity of executioners and gendarmes of Russian freedom, in the same way as this role was carried out under the Russian executioner Nicholas I, doing no worse than the kings who performed the role of executioners when they were strangling the Hungarian revolution. Now this role has been taken up by the agents of Wilson.

They are strangling the revolution in Austria, they are playing the role of gendarmes, they are putting an ultimatum before Switzerland: we will not give you bread if you do not get into the battle against the Bolshevik Government. They declare to Holland: don't you dare admit Soviet ambassadors to your country, otherwise — blockade. They have a simple instrument, the rope of starvation. That is what they strangle the peoples with.

. . . Do not forget that in America we have the freest republic and the most democratic, but this does not in the least hinder imperialism from behaving in an equally bestial way there, and not only are internationalists lynched there but the mob drags them into the street, strips them naked, pours tar over them and sets them on fire.

From "The Report on the Attitude of the Proletariat to Petty-Bourgeois Democracy, Made to the Conference of the Party Workers of Moscow" (November 27, 1918).

It means that British and American soldiers are to act as butchers and hangmen of the world revolution.

When in 1848 Russian serf troops were sent to crush the Hungarian revolution, this could be done

with impunity because they were serf troops. It could be done with impunity even with Poland. But it is altogether inconceivable that a people already enjoying a century of freedom and taught to hate German imperialism because it is a beast that must be destroyed, should not understand that Anglo-American imperialism is just such another beast which, in justice, must also be destroyed.

From "The International Situation, Speech at the Sixth Extraordinary All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', Cossacks' and Red Army Deputies" (November 8, 1918).

When the representatives of the British and American bourgeoisie appeared in Finland and Esthonia they began their throttling work with an insolence exceeding that of the Russian imperialists, because the Russian imperialists were representatives of olden days and did not know how to throttle as it should be done, whereas these people know how to throttle and do it thoroughly.

From "The Report of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars to the Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets" (December 5, 1919).

* * *

In any case, the task which stands before us is the desperate struggle with Anglo-American imperialism. It has begun to feel that Bolshevism has become a world force, and precisely for this reason tries to strangle us with the maximum speed, wishing to finish off first the Russian Bolsheviks, then its own Bolsheviks.

From "The Report on the Attitude of the Proletariat to Petty-Bourgeois Democracy, Made to the Conference of the Party Workers of Moscow" (November 27, 1918).

. . . At the present moment the American revolutionary proletarians are destined to play a particularly important role as uncompromising foes of American imperialism, which is the youngest, strongest and latest to participate in the worldwide slaughter of nations for the division of capitalist profits. The American billionaires, those modern slave-owners, have just opened a particularly tragic page in the bloodstained history of bloodstained imperialism by giving their approval—direct or indirect, open or hypocritically concealed, it makes no difference—to an armed expedition of the

British and Japanese brutes for the purpose of strangling the first socialist republic.

From "A Letter to American Workers" (August 20, 1918).

The American workers will not follow the bourgeoisie. They will be on our side, for civil war against the bourgeoisie. The history of the world and the American labour movement strengthens my conviction. I also recall to mind the words of Eugene Debs, one of the most beloved leaders of the American proletariat, in an article in *Appeal to Reason*, at the end of 1915, I think, entitled "What Shall I Fight for" (I quoted this article in the beginning of 1916 at a public meeting of workers in Berne, Switzerland). He said that he, Debs, would rather be shot than vote for loans for the present criminal and reactionary imperialist war; that he, Debs, knows of only one holy and, from the standpoint of the proletariat, legitimate war: war against the capitalists, war for the liberation of mankind from wage slavery!

I am not surprised that Wilson, the head of the American billionaires and servant of the capitalist sharks, threw Debs into prison. Let the bourgeoisie

commit their atrocities against the true internationalists, the true representatives of the revolutionary proletariat! The greater their fury and brutality, the nearer will be the day of the victorious proletarian revolution.

Ibid.

We find England and America — countries with greater potentialities of remaining democratic states than any — going to just such savage and insensate lengths as Germany before them, and they are therefore just as rapidly, if not more rapidly, approaching the end which has so effectively been reached by German imperialism. The latter first swelled, spread over three-quarters of Europe, grew incredibly fat; then it burst, leaving a ghastly smell behind it. And that is the end for which British and American imperialisms are now heading.

From "The International Situation, Speech at the Sixth Extraordinary All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', Cossacks' and Red Army Deputies" (November 8, 1918).

IV. STATE-MONOPOLY CAPITALISM HAS NOT CHANGED THE NATURE OF CAPITALISM BUT INTENSIFIED ITS CONTRADICTIONS

MONOPOLY IN GENERAL HAS EVOLVED INTO STATE MONOPOLY

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., into imperialism, took a big step *forward* during the war, not only towards the greater concentration of finance capital, but also towards transformation into *state capitalism*.

From "A Turn in World Politics" (published in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 58, January 31, 1917).

On the other hand, in opposition to this, mainly Anglo-French group, there came forward another

capitalist group, an even more rapacious, even more predatory one, a group of those who came to partake of the viands of capitalism when all seats at the table were occupied, but who introduced into the struggle new methods of developing capitalist production, improved technique, unparalleled organization, which transformed the old capitalism, the capitalism of the era of free competition, into the capitalism of huge trusts, syndicates, and cartels. This group introduced state control into capitalist production, combining the gigantic forces of capitalism and the gigantic forces of the state to form a single mechanism which brought tens of millions of people into the single organization of state capitalism.

From "War and Revolution" (May 14, 1917).

The development of capitalism has made gigantic strides, particularly in the twentieth century, and the war has done more than had been done in twenty-five years. State control of industry has advanced not only in Germany, but also in England. Monopoly in general has evolved into state monopoly. Objective conditions show that the

war has accelerated the development of capitalism, which advanced from capitalism to imperialism, from monopoly to state control. All this has brought the socialist revolution nearer and has created the objective conditions for it. Thus the course of the war has brought the socialist revolution nearer.

From "The Report on the Current Situation, Delivered at the Seventh (April) All-Russian Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks)" (April 24, 1917).

**STATE-MONOPOLY CAPITALISM MEANS MILITARY
SERVITUDE FOR THE TOILERS AND PARADISE
FOR THE CAPITALISTS**

The objective conditions for a socialist revolution that undoubtedly existed even before the war in the more developed and advanced countries, have been and are ripening with tremendous rapidity as a result of the war. The crowding-out and ruin of small and medium-sized economic enterprises is proceeding at an accelerated pace. The concentration and internationalization of capital are making gigantic strides, monopoly capitalism is changing into state-monopoly capitalism. Social regulation of pro-

duction and distribution is, under the pressure of circumstances, being introduced in many countries. Some are introducing universal labour service.

When private property in the means of production is retained, all these steps towards a greater monopolization and nationalization of production are inevitably accompanied by an increased exploitation of the labouring masses, by an increase of oppression, by a growing difficulty in offering resistance to the exploiters, by a growth of reaction and military despotism. At the same time these steps lead to a gigantic increase in the profits of large capitalists at the expense of all the other strata of the population; they deliver the labouring masses to the bondage of capitalists through tributes imposed on them in the form of billions of interest to be paid on war loans for many decades to come.

From "The Resolution on the Current Situation of the Seventh (April) All-Russian Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks)" (published in the Supplement to *Soldatskaya Pravda*, No. 13, May 16, 1917).

Imperialism — the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, the era of the de-

velopment of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism — has demonstrated with particular force an extraordinary strengthening of the “state machine” and an unprecedented growth of its bureaucratic and military apparatus, in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries.

From “The State and Revolution” (August-September 1917).

In Germany things have come to the point where the direction of the economic life of 66 million people is being done *from one centre*, where the organization from one centre of the national economy of 66 million people has imposed the greatest sacrifices on the overwhelming majority of the people and all in order that the “upper 30,000” should be able to pocket billions in war profits and so that millions should perish in the slaughter to the advantage of these “noblest and best” representatives of the nation.

From “Propositions of Principle on the Question of War” (December 1918).

The imperialist war has immensely accelerated and intensified the process of transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism. The monstrous oppression of the toiling masses by the state, which is merging more and more with the all-powerful capitalist associations, is becoming ever more monstrous. The advanced countries are being converted — we speak here of their “rear” — into military convict prisons for the workers.

From “Preface to the First Edition of *The State and Revolution*” (August 1917).

Both America and Germany “regulate economic life” in such a way as to create conditions of *military servitude* for the workers (and partly for the peasants) and a *paradise* for the bankers and capitalists. Their regulation consists in that the workers are “squeezed” to the point of starvation, while the capitalists are guaranteed (surreptitiously, in a reactionary-bureaucratic fashion) profits *higher* than before the war.

From “The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It” (September 10-14, 1917).

The banking magnates seem to be afraid that state monopoly will steal upon them from an unexpected quarter. It goes without saying, however, that this fear is no more than the expression of the rivalry, so to speak, between two department managers in the same office; for, on the one hand, the billions entrusted to the savings banks are in the final analysis actually controlled by *these very same* bank capital magnates, while, on the other hand, state monopoly in capitalist society is merely a means of increasing and guaranteeing the income of millionaires in one branch of industry or another who are on the verge of bankruptcy.

From "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (January-June 1916).

STATE-MONOPOLY CAPITALISM IS A COMPLETE MATERIAL PREPARATION FOR SOCIALISM

The dialectics of history is precisely such that the war, by extraordinarily expediting the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopolistic capitalism, has *thereby* extraordinarily advanced mankind towards Socialism.

Imperialist war is the eve of socialist revolution. And this not only because the horrors of the war give rise to proletarian revolt — no revolt can bring about Socialism if the economic conditions for it have not ripened — but because state-monopolistic capitalism is a complete *material* preparation for Socialism, the *threshold* of Socialism, a rung in the ladder of history between which and the rung called Socialism *there are no intermediate rungs*.

From "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It" (September 10-14, 1917).

To elucidate the question still more, let us first of all take the most concrete example of state capitalism. Everybody knows what this example is. It is Germany. Here we have "the last word" in modern large-scale capitalist technique and planned organization, *subordinated to Junker-bourgeois imperialism*. Cross out the words in italics, and, in place of the militarist, Junker-bourgeois imperialist state, put a state, but of a different social type, of a different class content — a Soviet, that is, a proletarian state, and you will have the sum total of the conditions necessary for Socialism.

From "The Food Tax" (April 21, 1921).

**STATE-MONOPOLY CAPITALISM IS STILL UNDOUBT-
EDLY CAPITALISM. THE REFORMISTS CALL IT
SOCIALISM FOR THE PURPOSE OF REPUDIAT-
ING THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION**

Here we have what is most essential in the theoretical appraisal of the latest phase of capitalism, i.e., imperialism, viz., that capitalism becomes monopoly *capitalism*. The latter must be emphasized because the erroneous bourgeois reformist assertion that monopoly capitalism or state-monopoly capitalism is *no longer* capitalism, but can already be termed "state Socialism" or something of that sort, is most widespread. The trusts, of course, never produced, do not now produce, and cannot produce complete planning. But however much they do plan, however much the capitalist magnates calculate in advance the volume of production on a national and even on an international scale, and however much they systematically regulate it, we still remain under *capitalism* — capitalism in its new stage, it is true, but still, undoubtedly, capitalism. The "proximity" of *such* capitalism to Socialism should serve the 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 in favour of tolerating the repudiation of such a revolution and the efforts to make capitalism look more attractive, an occupation in which all the reformists are engaged.

From "The State and Revolution"
(August-September 1917).

V. THE FIGHT AGAINST IMPERIALISM MUST BE INSEPARABLY BOUND UP WITH THE FIGHT AGAINST OPPORTUNISM

THE MEANING OF KAUTSKY'S INVENTION OF THE THEORY OF "ULTRA-IMPERIALISM" BOILS DOWN ENTIRELY TO GLOSSING OVER THE MOST PROFOUND CONTRADICTIONS OF IMPERIALISM

In advancing this definition of imperialism, we definitely come into conflict with K. Kautsky, who refuses to regard imperialism as a "phase of capitalism," and who defines imperialism as a *policy* which is "preferred" by finance capital, as the striving of "industrial" countries to annex "agrarian" countries. This definition of Kautsky's is thoroughly false theoretically. The distinguishing feature of imperialism is the domination, *not* of industrial capital, but of finance capital, the striving to annex, *not* only agrarian countries, but *all kinds* of countries. Kautsky *separates* imperialist politics from

imperialist economics, he separates monopoly in politics from monopoly in economics, in order to pave the way for his vulgar, bourgeois reformism in the shape of "disarmament," "ultra-imperialism" and similar piffle. The meaning and object of this theoretical falsehood is to gloss over the *most profound* contradictions of imperialism and thus justify the theory of "unity" with the apologists of imperialism, the frank social-chauvinists and opportunists.

From "Imperialism and the Split in
the Socialist Movement" (October 1916).

"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 superimperialism, 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."

.....

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 struggles 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 tabloids 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 in the international mercantile shipping trust, now engaged in *redividing* the world on the basis of a new relation of forces, which is being changed by methods altogether *non-peaceful*?

From "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (January-June 1916).

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-cartelized industry, on the other, etc.

The notorious theory of "ultra-imperialism," invented by Kautsky, is just as reactionary.

.....

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 Kautsky's "theory" can have, 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 — there is nothing but this in Kautsky's "Marxian" theory.

Ibid.

Kautsky's obscuring of the deepest contradictions of imperialism, which inevitably becomes the embellishment of imperialism, 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. The result of these tendencies is reaction all along the line, whatever the political system, and an extreme intensification of existing antagonisms in this domain also. 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).

Ibid.

**THE OPPORTUNISTS ARE BOURGEOIS ENEMIES OF
THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND REAL
AGENTS OF THE BOURGEOISIE IN THE
WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT**

The war has clearly proven that in a crisis (and the imperialist era will undoubtedly be an era of such crises) a substantial mass of opportunists,

supported and often directly guided by the bourgeoisie (this is particularly important!) goes over to its camp, betrays Socialism, harms the workers' cause, ruins it. In every crisis the bourgeoisie will always aid the opportunists, will always suppress the revolutionary portion of the proletariat, shrinking before nothing, employing the most lawless and cruel *military* measures. The opportunists are bourgeois enemies of the proletarian revolution. In peaceful times they conduct their bourgeois work under cover, finding refuge inside of the workers' parties; in times of crisis they appear *immediately* as open allies of the *entire* united bourgeoisie from the conservative to the most radical and democratic part of it, from the freethinkers to the religious and clerical sections.

From "And Now What?" (published in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 36, January 9, 1915).

. . . Capitalism has now singled out a *handful* (less than one-tenth of the inhabitants of the globe; less than one-fifth at a most "generous" and liberal calculation) of exceptionally rich and powerful states which plunder the whole world simply by "clipping coupons." Capital exports yield an income

of eight to ten billion francs per annum, at prewar prices and according to prewar bourgeois statistics. Now, of course, they yield much more.

Obviously, out of such enormous *superprofits* (since they are obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze out of the workers of their "own" country) it is *possible to bribe* the labour leaders and the upper stratum of the labour aristocracy. And the capitalists of the "advanced" countries are bribing them; they bribe them in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert.

This stratum of bourgeoisified workers, or the "labour aristocracy," who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their entire outlook, is the principal prop of the Second International, and, in our days, the principal *social* (not military) *prop of the bourgeoisie*. For they are the real *agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class* movement, the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class, real channels of reformism and chauvinism. In the civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie they inevitably, and in no small numbers, take the side of the bourgeoisie, the "Versaillese" against the "Communards."

Unless the economic roots of this phenomenon are understood and its political and social significance is appreciated, not a step can be taken toward the solution of the practical problems of the communist movement and of the impending social revolution.

From "Preface to the French and German Editions of *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*" (July 6, 1920).

**UNLESS A DETERMINED, RUTHLESS STRUGGLE ALL
ALONG THE LINE IS CONDUCTED AGAINST OP-
PORTUNISM IT IS USELESS TO TALK ABOUT
THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM**

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 striving. And so there is created that bond between imperialism and opportunism, which revealed itself first and

most clearly in England, owing to the fact that certain features of imperialist development were observable 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 precisely progressive capitalism that led to the increase of opportunism, or, if it were precisely the best paid workers who were inclined towards opportunism, etc. We must have no illusions about “optimism” of this kind. It is optimism in regard to 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 of a durable victory for it: the rapid growth of a malignant 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 “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism” (January-June 1916).

The fact is that as a political phenomenon “bourgeois labour parties” have already been formed in *all* the advanced capitalist countries, and unless a determined, ruthless struggle all along the line is conducted against these parties—or, what is the same thing, against these groups, trends, etc.—it is useless talking about the struggle against imperialism, about Marxism, or about the socialist labour movement.

From “Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement” (October 1916).

The proletariat is the child of capitalism, of world capitalism, not only of European, and not only of imperialist capitalism. On a world scale, fifty years earlier or fifty years later—on *such* a scale, this is a minor question—the “proletariat” “will,” of course, be united, revolutionary Social-Democracy will “inevitably” be victorious in its ranks. But this is not the point, Messrs. Kautskyans. The point is that *you* are now in the imperialist countries of Europe

cringing before the opportunists who are *alien* to the proletariat as a class, who are the servants, the agents, the conduits of the influence of the bourgeoisie, and of whom the labour movement must *rid* itself if it does not want to remain a *bourgeois labour movement*. Your advocacy of "unity" with the opportunists, with the Legiens and Davids, the Plekhanovs or Chkhenkelis and Potresovs, etc., is, objectively, the advocacy of *enslaving* the workers to the imperialist bourgeoisie with the aid of the latter's best agents in the labour movement. The victory of revolutionary Social-Democracy on a world scale is absolutely inevitable, but it is marching and will take place *against* you, it will be a victory *over* you.

Ibid.

VI. THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION BROKE THE CHAINS OF IMPERIALISM AND HOISTED IN THE SIGHT OF THE WHOLE WORLD THE BANNER OF STRUGGLE FOR THE COMPLETE OVERTHROW OF IMPERIALISM

The extremely high degree of development of world capitalism in general and the substitution of monopoly capitalism for free competition, the fact that the banks and also the capitalist combines have created an apparatus 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 due to the growth of capitalist monopolies, the enormous obstacles in the path of the economic and political struggle of the proletariat, the horrors of the imperialist war and the disaster and ruin caused by it — all these factors transform the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian socialist revolution.

That era has begun.

Only a proletarian socialist revolution can lead humanity out of the deadlock created by imperialism and imperialist wars. No matter what difficulties the revolution may have to encounter, and in spite of possible temporary setbacks or waves of counter-revolution, the final victory of the proletariat is inevitable.

From "Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme" (April-May 1917).

Imperialism is the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat. This has been confirmed since 1917 on a worldwide scale.

From "Preface to the French and German Editions of *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*" (July 6, 1920).

There can be no boundary line between the victories of the October Revolution and the victories of the international socialist revolution; outbursts are bound to begin in other countries.

From "The Report of the Council of People's Commissars to the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', Soldiers' and Red Army Deputies" (July 5, 1918).

The workers of the whole world, irrespective of the country they live in, greet us, sympathize with us and applaud us for having broken the iron ring of imperialist ties, of sordid imperialist treaties, of imperialist chains; for having broken through to freedom, even at the cost of tremendous sacrifice; for having, as a socialist republic, even though torn and plundered by the imperialists, *got out* of the imperialist war and for having hoisted in the sight of the whole world the banner of peace, the banner of Socialism.

It is not surprising that the gang of international imperialists hate us and "blame" us, and that all the lackeys of imperialism, including our Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, also "blame" us. From the hatred these watchdogs of imperialism display for the Bolsheviks, as well as the sympathy of the class-conscious workers of all countries, we draw new assurance of the justice of our cause.

From "A Letter to American Workers" (August 20, 1918).

We know that circumstances have advanced *our* Russian detachment of the socialist proletariat to

the forefront not because of our merits, but because of the exceptional backwardness of Russia, and that individual revolutions may suffer a series of defeats *before* the international revolution breaks out.

In spite of that we are firmly convinced that we are invincible, because humanity will not be broken by the imperialist butchery; on the contrary, it will get the upper hand of it. And the first country to *break* the convict chain of imperialist war was *our* country. We suffered severe losses in the struggle to break this chain, but we *broke* it. We stand *free* of imperialist dependence and have raised in the sight of the whole world the banner of struggle for the complete overthrow of imperialism.

Ibid.

In one of the capitalist countries, the least developed, the victory of the working class *is already achieved*. In the others, with unparalleled pain and effort, the conditions are being established which will make this victory "at any rate inevitable."

Let the "Socialist" snivellers croak, let the bourgeoisie rage and fume; only people who shut their eyes so as not to see, and stuff their ears so as not

to hear can fail to notice that all over the world the birth pangs of the old capitalist society, which is pregnant with Socialism, have begun. Our country, which has temporarily been advanced by the march of events to the van of the socialist revolution, is undergoing the very severe pains of the first period of travail, which has already begun. We have every reason to face the future with complete assurance and absolute confidence, for it is preparing for us new allies and new victories of the socialist revolution in a number of the more advanced countries. We are entitled to be proud and to consider ourselves fortunate that it has been our lot to be the first, in one part of the globe, to fell that wild beast, capitalism, which has drenched the earth in blood and reduced humanity to starvation and demoralization, and whose end is near and inevitable, no matter how monstrous and savage its frenzy in the face of death.

From "Prophetic Words"
(June 29, 1918).

列宁論帝国主义是无产階級
社会革命的前夜

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外文出版社出版(北京)
1960年9月第一版 1960年10月第二版
编号: (英) 3050—377

