

The World Revolution

Gorter, Herman
1918

Originally published in 1918 in Dutch as *De wereldrevolutie*. It was written after the Russian Revolution but before the end of the First World War. Its arguments about the differences between the Western European and Russian revolutions anticipate Gorter's later Open Letter to Comrade Lenin. The English translation was made by Hugh McMillan and published in Glasgow by the Socialist Information and Research Bureau in 1920. In this red texts edition footnotes have been converted to numbered end-notes and the errata have been worked into the main body of the text. A scan of the pamphlet on which this version was based can be found at <https://archive.org/details/worldrevolution00gort>. Note that some words are illegible in the scan and are marked as such in this text.

By Dr. Herman Gorter. Professor of Moscow University. Translated by Hugh McMillan. 1920.

To the foremost fighter of the world's proletariat, Vladimir Ulianoff (Lenin)

Errata

- Page 42, line 9. – For “reconstruct” read “defend.”
- Page 46, line 31. – For “its” read “his.”
- Page 74, line 5. – For “Revolution” read “Imperialism.”

Foreword

Herman Gorter, the writer of this pamphlet, is a well known Dutch poet and social-revolutionary. He has long been a prominent figure in Socialist circles on the Continent, and quite recently has been made Professor of Moscow University. He well deserves the distinction that the Soviet Government has bestowed upon him. When so many Socialists lost themselves in opportunism and patriotism, he was one of the few whose vision was not blurred, and whose devotion to the cause of Socialism was never in doubt. He was one of the very few whose judgment was always founded on knowledge and inspired by love. The light that he has held up so constantly and devotedly is now reflected in the spirit of the advance guard of the Dutch proletariat. And the light that Gorter has held up is the same light that was held up by the Dutch poetess, Henriette Roland-Holst, and by that brilliant writer on Socialism, Professor Pannekoek.

May these “neutrals” create among the workers of the world that atmosphere of confidence, the absence of which was one of the causes of the division of the world-proletariat into hostile camps – a division that made war possible – a war whose burden was, is, and unless they are united in revolution, will continue to be, thrown across the shoulders of the proletarians of all countries.

With regard to the pamphlet itself, it is a continuation of the pamphlet "Imperialism, World War, and Social Democracy." The latter pamphlet, which has not yet appeared in English, proved the necessity of the unity of the world-proletariat in its struggle against world-Imperialism. This pamphlet shows that this struggle of the world-proletariat will be the proletarian revolution for Socialism. The first chapter, with the exception of a few sentences, was written in September, 1917. The last chapter was written in July, 1918.

The official Trade Union leaders in the Anglo-Saxon lands are becoming bolder in their Judas utterances, and more base than Judas with the gold.

They are bold because they know that the worker has not realised that he has been betrayed. And with the gold they have doubtless been helping to buy up the Joy Loans of a Capitalist State.

Their protests against Intervention in Russia have been putrid with hypocrisies.

Citizen armies – the new Capitalist Militarism – are to be formed in all countries. In the British Empire, too, and yet who among these Labour leaders has taken action?

The Capitalists are about to recruit the middle classes, yet who of these Labour men has uttered a word of warning to these classes?

No, these Labour officials would delight to see Communism in England become a cult for suburbia, whilst they erected the most contemptible bureaucracy possible to imagine.

The war has taught Socialists many lessons.

After four and a half years the patriots who were clamorous for "no compromise" triumphed completely, with the result that the Ramsay MacDonalds could not tell where they were or how they stood.

So it will be with these compromisers, these confusionists. That abyss into which they tell us we are leading the world is their own inevitable death-trap. For it will be a good thing if this present civilisation crumbles away. The world-proletariat have it in them to create a better; but not to know what to do with an old and artificial civilisation, and not to have the moral and spiritual power to create a new one – is surely to be on the edge of an abyss.

In spite of these confusionists, real revolutionary Socialists have reason to be hopeful.

There is hope, because there is a body of workers in England, in Scotland, in Ireland, in America, in South Africa, in Australia – a body of workers whose thoughts are as clear as mid-day, and who will never allow their minds to be confused again. This body is growing in strength and numbers.

It has already entered the workshop as an "unofficial" movement.

These workers alone could assist Russia at the present moment. But they are a minority – a small minority.

And every move they make is followed by persecution and imprisonment. One day, however, they will be assisted by a great force – the idea that saw the light of day in Russia will be once more triumphantly on the march.

Every British workman will then have to be at his post, and he will have to know and feel his awful responsibility. Until then – it might be said, the Russian Revolution has awakened in the British workman an interest not so much in Russia as in himself as a workman. This new knowledge is being accumulated and propagated. Intelligent action will follow on a main.

C. Malcolm.

Chapter 1: The Need for a World Revolution

The world revolution approaches as a result of this first world-war.

Just as a terrific storm passing through an immense forest bends the trees on every side, so has the world-war bent the proletariat in all directions.

For years a misdirected propaganda had been carried on, aiming only at reform, and therefore not recognising the danger of Imperialism and of the approaching world-war. The world proletariat, deceived by their Governments, and betrayed by their leaders, were handed over to Imperialism and to the war.

But they will overcome all their differences and will once more in complete unity renew the struggle.

The war could only continue, and can only be carried on now, simply because the workers of the world are not United.

And the Russian Revolution, betrayed by the proletariat of Europe and America, and in the first instance by the German working class, shows clearly that every revolution of the proletariat must ultimately fail if the international proletariat do not present a united front to world Imperialism.

The revolution draws near as a result of this first world war. The proletariat of Europe and America will rise against Imperialism, and after a long and bitter fight will bring it to an end. But Imperialism cannot be overthrown unless Capitalism is also overthrown.

The coming fight, the coming revolution, is also the social revolution, the revolution for Socialism. And the revolution of the European and American proletariat will finally establish Socialism throughout the whole world.

It is therefore not only a European and American revolution, but a world revolution that approaches.

It is the duty of all true revolutionaries to investigate the conditions of this revolution for Socialism, to prepare for it in advance, and to set up an international programme of our demands.

This will be done in the following pages.

The proletariat as a whole stands opposed to Imperialism. It stands against all the Imperialisms in the world.

There are no better or worse Imperialisms. The Imperialisms of the two great groups, Germany on the one hand, England and America on the other, are equally bad, and equally hateful, to the workers of the world.

This is the first thing that ought to be shown, for only when the workers realise that there is no choice between the two, that they are seriously threatened from both sides, and that there is no means of escape from the two frightful Imperialisms; only when the proletariat realise that, will they understand that a world revolution against world Imperialism is necessary for the workers of the world.

We will show in the first place the need of a world revolution by showing the need of Imperialism to suppress and slaughter the proletariat, even after this war; and the similarity of these suppressions and murders by each and all Imperialisms.

Secondly, there is no way out of this suppression and slaughter, except by a world revolution. Thirdly, the practicability of a world-revolution and its programme. Fourthly,

that the Russian Revolution is an example of the world revolution for the proletariat. In the 5th Chapter we shall review the whole.

The greatest opponents, the leaders, in the fight for world power – England and Germany – the only belligerents who had the might, which means the right, to carry on this struggle now stand face to face **On One Front**, from the North Sea to the Mediterranean, with all their forces. The fight for world dominion has begun.

Russia, who had a bureaucratic and militaristic, but no strong Capitalist Imperialism, and who was therefore not ripe for this war, has dropped out. Only a few of the little States on both sides remain.

The United States of America have now entered the war, and it has now become in earnest a fight for the domination of the world.

If Germany wins she will rule Europe and a great part of Asia and Africa, and she will have made the first step towards world dominion. Should England and the United States win, then they will rule the world.

The United States realised this and therefore they entered the war. Like Rome and Carthage, Germany and England (with the United States) stand opposed. Rome and Carthage fought on the Mediterranean and its coasts: now the fight extends over every sea and ocean, and the lands between. And like the struggle of old, there is no hope of reconciliation; it must be a fight to a finish, till one side or the other is victorious.

This fight is for the domination of the world, and so long as people have this object in view they will use every means and make any sacrifice, even to the extent of sacrificing half the nation's young blood, in order to obtain it.

In the pamphlet, "Imperialism, the World War, and Social Democracy," I wrote that German Imperialism is as dangerous to the international proletariat as the English. I should now say, "as the English–American."

The question arises: Is that exactly true? Or is it simply a contention? Perhaps it is prompted by the wish to class all Imperialisms alike in order to make it more easy to secure the necessary unity of all the international proletariats.

Now let us examine this for a moment. Because if the Imperialism of one power be more dangerous to the international proletariat than the Imperialism of another, then the proletariat ought to desire the defeat of the first and oppose it with all its strength. Then could the welfare of the proletariat be ensured by the victory of one. Then would the revolution perhaps be almost impossible or unnecessary.

In order to ascertain clearly whether the victory of one Imperialism would bring greater disadvantage to the working class than other, we must picture to ourselves what would be the result of a complete victory of the one, and then of the other¹.

If Germany is victorious that means that she can impose her own conditions. She will hold Belgium in her power; she will seize a still larger part of the coal–mining district of France; she will retain possession of Lithuania, Esthonia, Livonia, Courland, and Poland, and perhaps Finland. She will make Serbia, Albania, Montenegro and Romania, and perhaps Greece, into dependencies of Austria. She will give Turkey territory up to the Persian Gulf. She will split Russia up into parts, making them German dependencies. She will rule the Balkans and Turkey; she will force France and Italy into an alliance with her; she will take back her Colonies, and some of the Colonies of the others.

¹ In order to know how a thing operates we must examine it scientifically. We must do this here with both Imperialisms, and therefore must regard both as in possession of full power.

Germany is then master from the coast of Flanders and Emden to the Persian Gulf; and through Siberia into northern and central Asia.

Germany has reached the goal for which she planned and carried on the war.

Germany, through her military, political and economic supremacy, and through the trade restrictions she can impose, thus acquires complete control over Scandinavia and Holland. Germany, then, rules Europe and a great part of Asia, up to the very gates of British India.

But although England and the United States have been defeated on the Continent of Europe, they are not destroyed. Their sea power is still unbroken.

Germany, in order to have world power, must have sea power, and in order to get that, must forthwith prepare for another war. Arbitration, disarmament, reduction of armaments, are impossible; neither Germany nor England, nor the United States, want it. That would kill world power and stop the exploitation and domination of the earth. That is not what they desire; they want to maintain Imperialism, and that can be done only by force.

Arbitration, disarmament: these watch-words are merely lies which they, supported by confederates such as, the Reformers and the pseudo-Marxists, betray the workers with and keep them quiet, and enable them to prosecute this and the following war.

What, then, are the results of a German victory?

As soon as she has recovered in a measure from the effects of this war, Germany will immediately prepare with all her power for the next. To the numerous weapons invented during this war she will add others still more terrible. By her political and military supremacy she will force the same course on all her Allies: Turkey, Austria-Hungary, Poland, the Balkans, Scandinavia, Holland, Italy, France, and Russia. The German organisation of the gigantic trusts, banks, factories, railroads, and shipping, will be imposed on Europe from Holland to Constantinople.

The Prussian-German spirit, that bastard born of despotism and slavery, presses itself through and over all Europe and rules everywhere. And the people of Europe must obey unless they wish to be politically and economically extinguished. This is the German "League of Nations," the German "world-peace" that Germany wants and which through victory she will obtain.

The working class will then be oppressed and scattered by the weight of militarism, trusts, and enterprising companies, in every country in Europe. And at last the second World war will break out, and it will be still more terrible than the first: the world war for the control of Asia and Africa. And the members of the working class will be sent out once more to destroy each other.

These are the results of a victory for German Imperialism.

Now to the British-American. If Britain and America win and are in a position to dictate terms, Germany will have Alsace-Lorraine, Prussian Poland, and all her Colonies, taken from her, and perhaps also German territory up to the Rhine. Austria will be divided into many States. Poland will receive a part of Prussia and Galicia. The Balkans will come under British direction. The territory of Turkey will be divided up.

That the United States have made a condition that Austria, the Balkans and Turkey, must withdraw themselves from German influence; and that Arabia, Mesopotamia and Syria shall be "independent," only goes to show how much the United States have made the policy of Britain their own policy. For if these conditions are fulfilled, then the British world Empire, from the Cape through Cairo to India, will be established. To be sure for this Britain has promised her help to the United States in the East Asiatic and Pacific regions. Besides, Germany would be saddled with an enormous

war debt, under the name of "indemnities" and "reparations," which, in yearly payments, would continue for a great number of years. Her Fleet would be reduced to a number of small craft. Heligoland would become a British fortress. Through the loss of coal mines in Lorraine she would be considerably weakened. She would then stand absolutely powerless against England and America.

Russia will be in a like position if the Revolution is not able to withstand the pressure of the victorious Imperialism of the Entente. Weakened by internal troubles and counter-revolutions there is no saying what may happen. The United States would obtain great influence there.

France and Italy would receive a large slice of the booty. France especially would soon rapidly develop by means of her re-captured coal and iron mines. But these States are not powerful enough to "play the game" with England and America. There are only these two and Japan.

It can easily be seen what Japan is after. She makes large claims in China, Manchuria, Siberia, lower India, etc., and therefore her power must be broken. The colossal British Fleet (almost doubled during the war), with the new Fleet of the United States, dominates all.

We state here in advance that these two Allies will remain together. Their Capitalistic interests have been welded together closely during the war, and it will certainly be to their advantage to remain together.

What is, then, the fate of the world? The United States and Britain will do everything to prevent any other State becoming as powerful as themselves. For this purpose they will divide Europe into a number of small States; **and in order to dominate and exploit them they will try to keep them weak.** They will capture the markets of the world while Germany and Russia are still weak.

Europe, France, Italy, and the small States will simply be their servants. It will be the same in Central and South America. It will be as if two Emperors rode in one carriage followed by a crowd of vassals.

In all political differences in Europe and America they will play off one State against another; just as England in the past (we are silent here concerning her many conquests and deeds of violence) prevented Russia, Turkey, the Balkans, Asia Minor, Egypt, Persia, India, and therefore the whole of the Near and Far East, attaining independence and power, by either putting one against the other, or by directly plundering them herself; so will England and the United States deal with Germany, Austria, Poland, Russia, Turkey and the Balkans. Similarly in America with Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, etc.

The United States and England will turn Central and Eastern Europe into a perfect hell. The provinces cut off from Germany, Poland the new States formed from Austria-Hungary, the new Russian States, the Balkan peoples and the Turks, will be continually at war with one another, and during this time England and the United States will rule the world. They will endeavour to make Germany economically dependent on English-American capital. Russia will be flooded with it. They will establish everywhere branches of their trusts and banks; and where they do not succeed in doing so, will seek to destroy those in existence.

They will reduce Germany to such a condition of weakness as to compel her to act in conjunction with them in the interest of their profits. For they are masters of the sea and of the overseas markets.

Asia and Africa will be completely at their mercy, to rob and exploit as they choose; especially China, which is partly governed by themselves and partly by despots paid by

them. Now, Germany in her fight against a superior Power, should at least be forced to develop and make powerful Austria, Turkey, the Balkans, Asia–Minor, and other States. England and America do not require to do so because they have a monopoly, and also because they are not threatened.

In Central Europe the principal Power has fallen – the only Power that could venture to go to war with England and America. She is politically, and in a great measure economically, broken, and the other States are too small and too weak to fight, and are helpless and torn by their own internal troubles. All are alike with the exception of England. Europe is powerless. The political wars of nations, a prime factor in the progress of Capitalism, are now eliminated. In Central and South America the same conditions prevail.

And the possibility of developing themselves or of obtaining independence in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt, Persia, India, China, etc., has disappeared for a long time to come.

A weak, broken Europe, a weak South America, Asia and Africa, a weak, broken world – that is the aim of American politics.

But the United States, England and Japan, do not trust one another, and apart from them there are France and Italy, still great powers, and Russia and Germany still gathering strength and becoming themselves again.

There are always powerful coalitions to be feared, and people begin immediately to prepare for the new world war.

And this is the “League of Nations” and the “world peace” of the United States and England, for which President Wilson, Asquith and Lloyd George made so much propaganda; and in which Germany, as soon as she became democratised will also have a place! And for this purpose they want the self–determination of the peoples of Europe (but not of those of Asia nor of Africa) – the self–determination that those peoples make who are not strong but weak; and which merely serves to prevent strong Coalitions under Germany’s leadership, and enables them to rule Europe themselves².

² This problem is a most serious one, and it is fraught with great danger. The national proletariat who are led by the Reformists trust the Liberals and Democrats, and the international proletariat trust the Imperialism of the Great citizen democracies.

And so long as this trust continues, so long as the French, English, American, Belgian, etc., workers believe that the English–American Imperialism is one whit better than the German; so long will there be no unity of the proletariats, no new International, and no enthusiastic fight by the world proletariat for the world revolution.

Therefore another word or two about this.

Wilson’s aim: the independence and self–determination of all European nations and a League of Nations, is impossible. For the interests of all those nations are different; and there are some strong ones and some weak ones among them. This must, under Capitalism (divided into national Capitalisms as it still is) lead to dictation and oppression.

It cannot be otherwise.

It is extremely hypocritical on the part of England and America, after destroying the power of Germany, to grant independence to all European nations. For the interests of England and America make it necessary that no single Power on the Continent shall grow strong. Therefore this independence is only an appearance. It is merely a means to gain their end, and that is to make the European nations political and economic vassals of both Anglo–Saxon nations.

The truth is this: there can be no independence under Imperialism. Should Germany win there would be set up a League of Nations in which the nations would not be independent, but simply subjects of Germany. Should the Allies win they would set up a League of Nations in which all would be weak except England and America; and their weakness would force them to submit to these two.

The aim of both Imperialisms is the same: the subjection of the nations, command of the world, world–power, world–domination.

Germany murders independence openly and cruelly; England and America allow it to exist in appearance, but kill it in reality.

It is true, then, that the German spirit of naked brutality will not rule. German Imperialism has become powerless.

But into its place has stepped the powerful Anglo–American monopoly, by which a great part of the world has been brought to a standstill, and nearly the whole of it into subjection.

And the spirit of this Imperialistic monopoly is the rough brutality and corruption of American Capitalism, united with the refined brigandage of the English, which makes their victims powerless.

What a combination. Refined hypocrisy and false democracy!

And what will be the effect of this Imperialism on the proletariats of the world? The American–English banks, the American–English trusts, will rule the world. It will be very difficult for other countries to compete with them. They will often be forced to submit.

The struggle of the proletariats will also be made difficult, almost impossible, against this monopoly.

And this American–English Capitalism will do as the English have always done – buy one part of the proletariat and pit it against the other. That part will be a well paid, well–organised, well developed proletariat. They will use these well–fed, well–clothed, well–housed, well–educated proletarians as bloodhounds and executioners of the remainder of the proletariat and of the weak nations. On these people they can always reckon in their fight against the poorer proletariat, whom they will always be able to stir up against the weaker nations.

A paid army such as this constitutes the greater danger to the international proletariat. It will raise an army of traitors in all countries. It will be able to do this, for it will have the monopoly since Germany's fall. And it will be able to oppress the "unskilled," the under–fed, the poorly–paid, the badly–housed, the miserably poor workers, as much as it likes; and the greatest number will belong to this category. Besides, the workers will be pressed into the army.

This, then, is the "world peace" of American–English Imperialism. And this is the world peace that a part of the bourgeoisie of the neutral countries so earnestly desired!

But under this Imperialism war will break out again. For Germany will gather strength again, Russia will again rise, and China will not suffer her self to remain in slavery. The world will not remain patient. It cannot suffer the absolute rule of American–English capital.

Capital itself is not international enough for that. Besides, the predatory countries are still too numerous and the noise of friction too audible. New coalitions will form themselves against England and America. These two Powers may disagree, and the proletariats of the world will be thrown again into the blood bath and slaughtered whole–sale.

The difference is only apparent, not real.

The difference between German and Anglo–American Imperialism is the same as that between Conservatism and Liberalism, between Absolutism and Republicanism, between Aristocracy and Democracy.

There is only one difference between the Imperialism of a reactionary absolutist autocracy and the Imperialism of Liberal republican democracy, and that is in appearance; in reality they are alike.

Real independence cannot be attained under Capitalism, whether it be an autocracy or a democracy. Capitalism and Imperialism tend inevitably to the subjection of the nations.

The reason is that the monopolistic banking interests in Germany, England, and the United States, are all–powerful, and rule the whole world. It is characteristic that, in regard to this matter, Capitalism is in a blind alley.

This question, as so many others, can only be solved by Socialism.

These, then, are the results of German and of Anglo–American Imperialism.

On the one side Germany all–powerful on the Continent of Europe with German militarism everywhere, and in a short time a still more frightful world war.

On the other side England and the United States all–powerful over the whole earth, with subjection or weakness and stagnation everywhere. And after a little time another bath of blood.

If this first world war does not come to a real decision, the struggle will soon be renewed and the two “Leagues of Nations” will engage in another massacre.

On both sides subjection and slaughter of the working people of the world.

And in any case slaughter and oppression for the proletariats. That is the future.

Worker, choose! Both sides decoy you with their League of Nations. Both say: “We are not Imperialistic; it is the others who are!” But, indeed, both threaten you with subjection and destruction.

If one should ask the workers which they would prefer – the despotism, the brutality, the carnage of German Imperialism; or the brutality of the American, united with the refined exploitation of English Imperialism, through which the blood bath always comes – the workers would reply: “We don’t know: the results of both are alike frightful.”

So it is.

The German and the Anglo–American Imperialisms are indeed alike terrible for the proletariat.

The German, English, and American, and **all** other proletariats on earth are threatened in the same manner and in the same measure by German and English–American Imperialism.

But the workers can also unite. They can form a League in which one national proletariat will stand up for the other; a League like a Trade Union, or a Trust of workers, who will fight together against world Imperialism; for their interests are really the same.

Only the combined English, German and American proletariats, and therefore only the combined proletariats of the world, can destroy German and English–American Imperialism – can destroy Imperialism generally, world Imperialism.

Every national, and also the whole international, proletariat must fight energetically against **both**. The workers of all countries must have a united front. They will then be able to attack and destroy **both** at the same time.

They must establish an International to destroy both at the same time.

The two great Imperialisms are of the same stamp. And since the Imperialisms of all nations in the world are united with, or subject to, these two – Germany on one hand, England and America on the other – so it is true that for all the workers on earth, for the whole world proletariat, the Imperialism of both groups, and Imperialism in general, are alike terrible.

Therefore it is certain that the workers of the world will again be oppressed and destroyed by Imperialism. And because of more slaughter and more oppression by Imperialism (for no matter how the war ends it is certain that the proletariats of the world will be again oppressed and sacrificed), therefore a revolt of the workers of the world is necessary.

But international Imperialism cannot be overthrown unless international Capitalism is also overthrown.

The Revolution, the social world revolution, against Capitalism is therefore necessary for the world proletariat.

We shall prove this in the first place.

All those who prefer one Imperialism to another stand in a false position.

They divide the international proletariat and make its victory over Imperialism impossible. They are all, whether social-patriots, pseudo-Marxists, or parties in neutral countries, playing the game of the German and English-American Imperialists, and of the international Capitalist classes, and Governments.

They stand on the side of these classes and Governments and assist Imperialism.

They divide and distinguish two groups of Imperialism – the English-American under the mask of democracy; German under the mask of absolutism – for the purpose of showing the proletariat that their own brand of Imperialism has not come to stay; or that it is only out to obtain peace, or that the enemy Imperialism is the only Imperialism, or to show that it is much worse than their own. This is done by Wilson, Bethmann-Holweg, von Kuhlman, Lloyd George, Poincare, Czernin, Asquith. This is the object of their speeches; by this deception alone are they able to declare war and continue it; by this alone can they support it; and these Socialists help them to do it.

But only by one united world proletariat can world Imperialism be defeated.

The position is really similar to the internal politics of the national ruling classes, who separate the workers by the watchwords, Liberal, Clerical, Conservative, Democrat, etc. – watchwords which, under Imperialism, are fast disappearing. They are now being divided into more gigantic masses, into world-masses – Imperialists and workers; into supporters of the Workers' International, and supporters of this or that Imperialism.

German Imperialism, as the cruellest and most brutal run by an autocracy, takes the place of the Conservatives and Reactionaries.

English-American Imperialism, as more deceitful and more hypocritical, governed by a so-called democracy, takes the place of the Liberals.

In reality they are both alike.

The Great Imperialists – the Kaisers, the Kings, the Presidents, the Governors, of the English, American and German banks; the Ministers and Politicians – know well what they are about. They know that, through these divisions, and through these divisions alone (for the proletariat is already so powerful that were it united internationally it would destroy the Imperialism of all States, would destroy Imperialism itself), by Splitting the proletariat into two groups, will they be able to accomplish their aim. That aim is a great and lasting victory for Bank Capital, and the placing of the world under its control.

The proletariat as a whole must unite against Imperialism as a whole – against all Imperialisms. This can only be done if the proletariat realises that the German and English-American international Imperialisms are the same; if it is not to be as formerly, Liberal over Clerical; if one Imperialism is not to be looked upon as a “lesser evil” than the other, and set up over the other; if it is not to be an alliance with one, then there will not be a national, but an international reformism. In national politics, to set up Liberalism over Conservatism, or Conservatism over Clericalism, is national reformism. In international politics, to set up Democratic Imperialism over Absolutist Imperialism, is “international reformism.” It is a weakness of mind on the part of the proletariat to hope that one part of Capitalism, the democratic part, is in a position to make “reforms” or settle questions that only Socialism is in a position to do.

Just as those who, in the nation placed Liberal over Clerical politics, prevent the national unity of the proletariat; so those who place English–American Imperialism over German prevent the unity of the international proletariat.

National and international reformism ought both to be strongly opposed and destroyed.

The main thing for the proletariat is a realisation of the fact that both Imperialisms are alike; that their aims and their effects are alike destructive; and, realising this, to unite for the destruction of both.

Chapter 2: No Other Way out for the World's Proletariat

"The Imperialism of both groups is alike terrible for the proletariat.

It can only be destroyed by a united world proletariat.

The world revolution is therefore a necessity."

This that we said in the first chapter should be sufficient. It should be sufficient that all Imperialisms, that the Imperialisms of both groups of all nations, are alike terrible for the proletariat, and that therefore the proletariat of all nations ought to unite to destroy Imperialism.

We should go on to prove that the destruction of Imperialism, the world revolution, is possible for the proletariat if the governments, the bourgeoisie, the social–patriots, and the pseudo–Marxists of all countries, the Majority and Minority in France and Italy, the Majority and the Independents of Germany, the Labour Party and the pacifist Socialists in England, and all the great Socialist parties of the United States – in short, all Capitalists and all Socialists in the world, with the exception of the real revolutionaries, had not made it appear to the workers that between Socialism and Imperialism there was still another way out.

They had told the workers that after the war Imperialism and Imperialistic Capitalism would bring about disarmament, compulsory arbitration, a League of Nations, and a general peace. The Capitalists, the social–patriots, the pseudo–Marxists, the Labour Party and the pacifist Socialists in England, the Majority and the Independents in Germany, the Majority and the Minority in France and Italy, and the Socialists in the United States, said this in order to hold back the world proletariat from revolution.

It was represented to them that if Capitalism was able to stop the war, it would be able to develop peacefully, and the world revolution would not then be necessary.

Since these representations have a powerful counter–revolutionary significance, especially on account of the number and the power of those who make them, it is the duty of every revolutionary to prove again and again that they are false.

Before going on to show the practicability of a revolution we shall state what will happen.

In all Capitalistic States, in all Capitalistic nations, millions and millions of workers in their own countries and in the Colonies will produce quantities of new surplus wealth every year.

This mass of wealth will grow continually greater year by year, and will be added to the old capital.

There are still many countries in the world with great natural treasures and weak populations, from whom colossal profits can be extracted.

New capital seeks these fields of exploitation.

This is the cause of Imperialism.

All the countries of the earth already have masters.

The earth is already divided up.

The nations must fight to get the best places.

This is the cause of Imperialist wars.

There are three particular Capitalistic States whose mass of capital has grown so large that they quarrel with each other in every corner of the earth for profit.

These are England, Germany, and the United States.

The millions of workers in England, Germany, and the United States of America, have worked so hard for so many years with such unceasing energy that the Capitalists in these countries aim at the monopoly of world power.

These three gigantic nations now fight really for the domination of the world.

Do not say that this picture is overdrawn, that no one nation or group of nations will ever be able to succeed in dominating the world. For the nature of capital is such that it creates ever more surplus wealth, that it can produce unlimited quantities of surplus wealth if it can only obtain ever more workers, raw materials, and machines. Every powerful Capitalist State, every powerful Capitalist nation, feels, therefore, that if it had only more countries subject to it, the existence of capital gives to it the possibility of at last being able to conquer the world.

These three giants rise out of the struggle of all Capitalist nations.

And two of them, England – and by this name we mean the British World Empire, England with her Colonies and dominions – and the United States have combined, perhaps for a long time, perhaps for a short time, perhaps for ever, in order to strive for the domination of the world.

And as in the economic struggle, the most powerful syndicates ultimately absorb the smaller companies, so also these three great powers unite all the lesser ones in two groups in order to carry on the world struggle³.

The development of Capitalism has reached its highest point. Only a few gladiators remain in the arena.

International Capitalism now approaches the struggle through which it will be brought to an end.

And just as the struggles of the small cities in the Middle Ages resulted in the formation of the little Medieval States; and just as the struggle between these little States resulted in the formation of great national States – so now there is being formed, as a result of the struggle between the great; national States, the two groups, the great alliances, the two Leagues of Nations.

In and through the struggles of the medieval cities arose the power of the small burgher or citizen.

³ With the intention of making the problem of the world war and disarmament perfectly clear, we have tried to simplify the struggle by confining it to the three greatest nations. As a matter of fact, the struggle is much more complex: it embraces all the nations of the world; and on that account the settlement of the problem by peaceful means makes it still more impossible. In the pamphlet, "Imperialism, the World War and Social Democracy" (pages 119–142) we have made this perfectly clear. There also we have shown the economic causes that make a world peace and a League of Nations impossible. If in the future England and the United States should become separated that would not alter the fact that we are now subject to World-Imperialism. Each of these States would then try to obtain world domination; each would set about forming new groups and would arrange new alliances (for example, say with Germany or Japan). They would then do just as they are doing now.

In and through the struggles of the national States arose the power of the great bourgeoisie. In and through the struggles of the groups of nations arose the power of the great Capitalists, of the monopolists of industry, of the banks and of the trusts.

And just as the burghers and the bourgeoisie arose through the struggles of the princes, the nobles and the Church, so also will arise now, out of the struggle of all the Capitalist nations, out of the struggles of the monopolist who wish to dominate all countries, another, a third power – the proletariat of the world.

And whilst the two greatest powers of the earth, the two groups of all the Capitalistic nations, and the monopolists of all lands struggle for the domination of the world, the world proletariat will rise up against them and become masters of the world.

Capitalism, having attained its highest point, blossomed into monopoly, and in its struggle for the monopoly of the earth it shall be destroyed by the proletariat.

In its perfect bloom, its last and greatest straining every muscle, developed to the highest pitch to struggle for the monopoly of world power, it is broken in the struggle for its existence, and out of the last blaze of its power a new world stands forth.

Capitalism began with private ownership.

The few Capitalists have grown through the possession of capital into a numerous and powerful class. This has developed into, the possession of all capital and its direction by a few.

And it dies in full bloom. The blossoms fall and the new world steps forth.

The workers at the end of the eighteenth Century united to fight their employers. The Socialists in the middle of the nineteenth Century united in national parties to fight the national bourgeoisie. They now unite internationally to fight the international bourgeoisie.

And in this unity they will conquer.

Why do not the national Capitalists unite with each other? Why do not Germany, England and the United States unite? Why do they not work together for the exploitation of all the workers – and of all the world? For then their power would be much greater; they would not need to fight with one another, and they would be able to prevent the proletariat from fighting, perhaps, for the revolution.

The answer is, firstly: Their capitals are national and not international. The international capitals in comparison with the national capitals are only a very small part of capital.

And secondly: The national Capitalists have different interests and different aims.

What are their aims? What are the aims of the three great nations? As we have already said, Germany wants to subjugate Belgium, Poland, France, Russia, Austria–Hungary, the Balkans, Turkey, Asia Minor, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Persia, perhaps Siberia, and other parts of Asia, thus making the first step towards world domination. Established on the coasts of the Indian Ocean she is then ready for the second world war to capture India, the Pacific Ocean, and all the countries bordering it; then Africa, and the domination of the world.

England wants to spread her World Empire over Africa, through Asia to India.

The United States want to rule on the Pacific Ocean, in China, in the Indian Archipelago, in Polynesia, in Central and South America, and perhaps in the northern part of Asia. Then England and the United States will rule almost the **whole world**.

And by what means can the three reach their goal, world domination?

As we have already said, Germany through the union of Europe under her leadership: the United States and the English World Empire through the breaking up of Europe.

And how will they obtain these means?

By fighting, by war.

Just imagine to yourselves, workers of Europe and America, workers of the world, whom they want to deceive and keep under Capitalism, and hold back from revolution with the hope that world peace, disarmament, and a League of Nations are possible – just imagine to yourselves that the war is ended. Imagine that the slaughter of humanity is over. Imagine in the first place that England and America have won. Then are Africa and Asia, Central and South America, and all the world markets, practically in their power; and the Continent of Europe is helpless.

Then imagine to yourselves that Germany has won. Then Germany has a part of Africa and stands before the gates of India, and probably also before those of China.

Then imagine to yourselves that neither of them has won. Then the situation is the same as before the war.

Place these three cases – the only three possibilities – clearly before your eyes, and ask yourself then: Will there be no more, wars after this one?

If England and the United States win, will a weakened and broken-up Europe suffer that? Will Germany not place herself at the head of Europe and try to rise again?

And now put the second case clearly before your eyes. Germany at the end of the war, after "peace has been signed, stands at the gates of India and China, and within the gates stand the English and American powers.

What will happen? Think upon it, workers. Will England and the United States not try to drive Germany back?

Now place the third case before your eyes. The war ends without a decision. There is no victor and no vanquished. Then all remain as they were before the war – Germany encircled by England and her Allies, and continuing to arm and prepare for the world war. Will Germany now disarm, and will England and America refrain from pressing her?

Consider how these great powers jostle each other now. They stand on one another's borders. Remember that on the other side of their boundaries lie countries that offer splendid opportunities for Capitalist Exploitation at the highest possible profit. Remember that the two groups want the same lands – Africa and Asia, and now Russia. Remember that these countries are abundantly rich, and yet almost unexploited. Millions, nay, billions, there await the exploiter. Worker, remember the nature of capital. Its substance is spreading in ever greater quantities. Consider that through your labour and through that of all the peoples subject to, or allied with, the two groups, the power of capital continually increases. The two groups stand facing each other on the frontiers. Within their boundaries is the ever-growing mass of capital. And without lies the booty – Profit.

What do you think, then? Will there be another war?

You can give no other answer but yes.

So long as the Capitalists of Germany, England, and the United States have different aims and want to possess the same countries and to dominate the world; so long as they remain national and not international, there will be war.

The possibility of disarmament, of the League of Nations, of general peace, has been refuted. Enough has been said for any discerning worker.

But since the blood-dripping Governments, the Capitalists, the Social Patriots, and the pseudo-Marxists, still seek by many arguments to betray and deceive the workers, we are obliged to attack and expose them.

The Governments and bourgeois parties of all countries, the Social Patriots and false radicals, the Majority and the Independent Socialists in Germany, the Majority and Minority in France, the Labour Party and the Pacifist Socialists in England, and all the great Socialist Parties in the United States who propagate the ideas of peace, disarmament, or the reduction of armaments, all those who made the war, or permitted it, all must show how these are possible and in what way they can be accomplished. They ought to show, not by hollow phrases, but by facts, what they think about the Peace arrangements.

Which parts of the earth ought England, Germany, or the United States, to receive?

Which parts should go to the little nations, or to France, Italy, Japan, Austria, Hungary, Turkey, etc.? They ought to show this on the map so that everybody can see that it is right and just, and that no new wars shall come out of the Treaty. They should show in what manner the territories should be divided, and how confidence can be established among the various nations, so that they may discontinue military preparations.

Workers, they are unable to do this. When asked to deal with concrete facts they refuse. Up to the present time nobody has been able to define boundaries on the map which would give satisfaction to every Power. Their talk is specious – empty words – hollow catch-phrases without significance. President Wilson, the sanguinary humanitarian of the United States, and all the Capitalist Governments, never cease to mouth the phrases, Justice! Freedom! Right!

The Governments of the bourgeoisie, the reformists dripping with blood, say: "Establish a political Trust of Nations similar to the economic trusts formed by the Capitalists. This would obviate competition, and the nations would work together, but in different spheres. In this way England, Germany, and the United States, of America, would divide up the world and establish a Trust for their profit."

This comparison with Trusts is misleading. There is a most decided difference. One which has prevented States in ancient times from forming a Trust for the exploitation of the world.

The difference is this: The economic trust deals with dead things; with gold and merchandise. These it can easily rule nationally and internationally.

But States are living forms comprised of human beings, and everything that lives develops. Thus it would happen, even were a satisfactory division and regulation arrived at, that after a short time conditions would alter. The economic and capital power would change so that one of the masters would be more powerful than the others; or the subject nation would become strong enough to shake off the yoke and become masters themselves. Then we should have another war.

Human beings cannot be united in such a Trust or League. The nations of old, who aimed at world power, tried it and failed. It cannot be done now.

The hypocritical bourgeoisie and the German Government, who have murdered thousands, yes, tens of thousands, of sailors, give out the cry: "The Freedom of the Seas. Give us that and war will end." But in peace time the seas were free. The war has made no difference in that respect.

The gory Capitalists and Governments, who began the war on account of profit and trade competition, say: "Free Trade – give us Free Trade, no preferential tariffs or taxes – then shall we have peace."

But how do they establish trade in primitive countries – in Central Africa? By Force, by Murder and War!

This war only decides who shall carry the weapons; who shall perpetrate the murders – Germany or England.

Business prospers best where the business people have political power. If these primitive countries are free to all alike, a struggle for political power must ensue sooner or later.

Trade, however, is no longer the principal object. This is now Capital Export; the making of new capital. It expresses itself in roads, harbours, factories and railways.

How does this Imperialism realise itself in Asia and Africa; how are the arrangements for Capitalist production brought about, with its consequent expropriation and proletarianising of the natives? By force! And war alone will decide which particular nation shall be the expropriator.

The tender pacifists and those Socialists who, by their pacifism hypnotised the workers and helped to cause the war, they also are dripping with blood. They say: "The costs of another world-war would be too great in money and men." But the millions for the conquest of Africa and Asia will bring their fruit in the shape of billions of interest.

Italy, Romania, and the United States of America did not enter the war **before** they knew what it would cost.

Is not this demand for unity laughable so long as the interests and strength of the nations are so decidedly different; when so many weak nations can be quite easily destroyed? Is it not ridiculous?

If England and the United States of America believe they are able to seize everything, why should they ally themselves with Germany? If Germany wins, why should she not trust in the improvement of weapons of war to obtain more? If the British Empire and the United States of America possess within themselves almost inexhaustible sources of wealth, why should they unite with others and divide with them their profits, which may expand enormously?

So long as Germany believes she can shatter opposition by her military power, why should she share her power with others?

So long as there remain such extensive territories for Capitalism to conquer – as China, the Near East, Lower India, parts of Central Asia, and of Africa – so long as there remain so many weak nations to subject, just so long will States trust in their own power and worship the idol of their own Imperialism.

Should Germany conquer England or the United States of America, those States would inevitably revolt again. And if either of the former beat Germany, she, too, would never endure it, but would rise again.

It is obvious that the opposing national interests will prevent a League of Nations being anything but a sham. There will, indeed, be established "Leagues of Nations," but they will be but alliances of special groups, and will have as their object the more vigorous exploitation of weaker nations and to carry on war against rivals.

The phrase-mongers, the Capitalist Governments, the false Socialists in all lands, all those who for the sake of their country betrayed the cause of peace – they say: "Establish an International Police Force from amongst the nations, which shall punish all aggressors; and a High Court of Arbitration which shall decide who is guilty."

This is the most absurd proposal of all, for there is no surer method of advancing competition in armaments than this.

The Capitalist State, like man, is sinful. It was born of ambition, and gain and lust. These are the original sins of Capitalism, to which it is predestined through the "fall" of private property.

Every State will be afraid to sin for fear of a united attack by the others. Because of this it must prepare a defence against all the others in order to attain its ambitions. It must develop an army and navy capable of combatting them all. They all know that "interests" will dominate their judgment, and they know also that it is possible for the decision to be in favour of an offender. They know that their interests may be on the side of an offender, and they would then defend him and oppose the League. With this eventuality before them they would prepare huge armies and navies. They will arm and fight as before, only including the "International Police" in their armoury of cant-phrases.

"Self-Determination for Nations" is another cry of these complacent humbugs. "If only every nation were independent or voluntarily united, then the prime cause of war will disappear."

But the Great War shows that the opposite is the case. Existing small nations like Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, etc., or possible nations like Poland, Esthonia, Courland, and Finland – all would still be bones of contention amongst the great Powers.

The Russian Revolution has surely made the right of Self-Determination one of the bases of the Revolution; they have made it one of their principles: but with this vital difference – they introduce Socialism at the same time. Without Self-Determination they could not have effected the Revolution. But they showed also that Self-Determination under Imperialism was impossible.

And if it be said that the Self-Determination promised by Germany is only an appearance, even so can it be said of England and America. It will separate the nations from one another and perpetuate their weakness. This sort of Independence can be even worse for a nation than subjection.

It will be shown in a most terrible way that Self-Determination can only follow and not precede Socialism.

Capitalism, and especially Imperialism, cannot settle the question of nationality. Either they must grant the small nations independence, in which case they become the envy of the large nations, or subject and annex them.

Germany follows the latter method in Europe. She wants the whole of Europe under her domination in order to light England.

England and the United States of America follow the first method. They want Europe to remain weak, with no great Power on the Continent, and whilst small nations are quarrelling amongst themselves, to build up a colonial system and world domination without hindrance.

Capitalism is here in a cleft-stick. It cannot grant independence to small nations without making them objects of war; it cannot unite them without subjecting them; and in either case it plants the seed of another world-war.

The Capitalist Governments and their underlings all say: "Disarmament by degrees." But how can they disarm whilst they continue to threaten one another?

How can Germany disarm when her enemies dominate the world and have made Europe powerless? It would be suicide – it would ruin Europe.

As we are of a different opinion to some of our comrades who belong to the Extreme Left, and as this question is closely related to the whole problem of the liberation of the workers from Imperialism and war, we would like to go a little deeper into it.

Many Socialists propose as a means of bringing the war to an end the formula: "No Annexations and no indemnities." But these conditions cannot be put forward by the proletariat of the world; for their fulfilment would leave Capitalism exactly where it is, and could be followed only by new arming and new wars.

But even revolutionary demands, as demands, which the working class may put forward to upset the Government and simplify the revolution; even these are of no avail, for as soon as a Government gets into a tight corner it will adopt these demands itself (as Germany did in 1917), announce them as its own aims, and retort to the workers: "See, our demands are yours," and thereby break the revolution.

"No annexations and no indemnities" does not provide a way out.

That is the horror of the situation, and nothing shows more clearly the catastrophic nature of the crisis to which Imperialism has brought society.

Capitalist nations cannot arrive at any peace between themselves, neither during the war nor after.

They are compelled at all times to wade deeper in the blood-bath. The proletariat under Imperialism can only have Imperialistic peace or Imperialistic war; and every Imperialist war means a new and more dreadful Imperialism; and every Imperialistic peace means a new and more dreadful war.

There is only one way out of Imperialism, and war: the Revolution.

The Capitalist Governments, of England, France, and the United States of America, together with those pretended Socialists who threw away their power and gave themselves completely to the Military General Staffs; who made no real attempt to secure peace – **they** are entirely responsible for the war; **they** are the servants of the General Staffs, and, like them, reek with blood. They talk "Democracy." If only we had democracy established in Germany and Austria-Hungary, the democracies of the world would make peace. But the plutocratic Republic of France is a "democracy," and world-dominating Britain is a "democracy," and America, land of trusts and monopolies, armed strike-breakers who organise legal murders of the workers' leaders, is also a "democracy." Have they done anything to prevent war? No! England, through her policy under Edward VII of encircling Germany, helped to bring it on. America joined in as soon as she discovered that it was a fight for world-domination. And will these democracies make peace if they win? If Germany and a stricken Europe threaten them with war, or if the Allies are beaten and Germany at the head of all the nations of Europe threatens them still further, will they make peace? No!

In the making of capital abroad, absolute Monarchies and democratic Republics are alike. In the greed of power, the lust of profit, all nations are alike.

Monarchies and democracies under Imperialism are hells, full of the same damnation: expansion over the world, the fight for world domination.

Monarchies, principalities, and democratic Parliaments, all are equally obedient servants of Imperialist Capitalism and financial interests. Both of these want war, and the institutions are tools in their hands. These two interests, through their representatives on the Governments and General Staffs, dictate to the Parliaments what must be done. The Parliaments and other institutions only possess power so long as they are obedient to the Capitalist forces.

This power will only be overthrown by the triumph of the peoples, and until the workers themselves obtain control, world peace is impossible.

The best example of the truth of this assertion is to be seen in President Wilson, the servant of the American trusts and monopolies, which, in order to secure world-power for

themselves, are building armies and fleets powerful enough to secure victory in all future wars.

These are the principal solutions which the Governments, Social Patriots, and pseudo-Socialists propose to lead Capitalism out of Imperialism.

We have shown them to be false, that none of them stand a moment's investigation by a clear and searching eye. Theoretically, the investigation shows no way out of Imperialism for Capitalism. But the proletariat should not depend upon theory alone, but also on realities.

Already the earth trembles under new wars. Germany has Poland and Belgium and part of France in her power. She has broken up Russia, taken possession of the Ukraine, the Caucasus and Finland; annexed Livonia, Esthonia and Courland, and reduced Greater Russia to helplessness. She will do the same with the rest of Europe. This has been approved not only by the Monarchists of Germany, but by the Democrats and Social Democrats as well – at least by the Majority.

England and America will not suffer this. Is this world peace? Is this disarmament? This is an assurance, an absolute assurance, of a new war.

If America and England are victorious they will make all the nations of Europe independent. They have openly stated their intention to do so.

This means they will break Europe up into small pieces and allow internal jealousies full play; that they will create internal hells in Germany, Austria-Hungary, Poland, the Balkans, and Russia; and thus become undisputed masters of the world. That is the aim of their hypocritical Lloyd George and President Wilson. All the Parties agree with them, not only the Conservatives, but also the Democrats and the Socialist Majorities. Europe will never suffer that. It will rise under the leadership of Germany and fight. Is this world peace? World arbitration and disarmament? No! It is an absolute assurance of a new world war – of a succession of world wars.

Proletarians take heed! Notice only the realities about you. Look at the war volcanoes blazing around you in Europe, Alsace-Lorraine, Poland, Russia, the Balkans, Asia, and also in Africa.

Imperialism remains, competition in armaments remains, war remains.

Workers! Remember that: the Governments and the Social Patriots said all these things before the war.

Remember, proletariat of the world, that they want to deceive you again, and that after this war they will make a new compromise, a new alliance with the bourgeoisie. Remember, workers, that the great social democratic Parties at their Congress in Copenhagen and Basle spoke about world peace and general disarmament. What good has it done? None; war has broken out again.

Remember, workers, proletariat of the world, that by these watchwords, world peace, disarmament, etc., have the bourgeoisie kept their power over you. Through these watchwords they held you back from revolution.

The bourgeoisie knew when you accepted these watch-words that you agreed to try peaceful means, and that you had given up the only real means – revolution against war. They also knew that they could make war without any danger of your rising in revolt, and, therefore, they have made this war. These watchwords enabled them to do so.

Workers, will you continue to be befooled by such catch-phrases? Will you be deceived again by the Capitalists and their Governments, and their henchmen, the false Socialists?

The Czar of Russia and all the Governments held a Conference at the Hague, and said they wanted to found a Court of Arbitration. That was only to deceive you.

By these devices they have led you and kept you in the grip of war.

The Social Patriots have urged you to "fight for world peace and disarmament."

By this means they brought you into the war, and in July–August, 1914, held you back from revolution, because you were not prepared for revolution; you had placed your hopes in disarmament and world peace.

They have trapped you into the war by their watch-words. Will you accept them again and go to war?

That is impossible, for by so doing you will be causing a third war, and perhaps further wars.

It is the use of these watchwords which help to continue the war and increase the slaughter. They restrain you from revolution by promising disarmament, world peace, and a League of Nations when once peace is established, and they vote the war credits without opposition.

Trusting their promises you say: "Let us see it through, for surely the better thing will come." But your hopes are false, and, through these very hopes is the slaughter maintained and intensified.

During and after the war these watchwords will be more deceptive than formerly, for war has bred hatred deep into the hearts of the nations, drawn them further apart, made their interests more opposing and conflicting, and, as we have already shown, created fresh causes of war.

The mass of capital grows; need for expansion increases; the interest in new wars becomes more powerful in all parts of the world. New world-wars are much more certain than before this one commenced.

Will you allow yourselves again to be deluded by their catch-phrases?

They have given you a false picture of the world peace. Just because of that came the world war, and what is worse, the war of the workers against one another. They gave a false picture of the League of Nations, and as a consequence have split the proletariat into national parties.

Will you allow yourselves to be deceived again? If you do, another war will come, more frightful than was this, with a fresh Splitting of the proletariat.

There was but one way out of this war, and there is but one way of saving us from it – the working class Revolution.

Workers, the Capitalists of the world have organised themselves into gigantic groups. In these groups they have concentrated their whole strength for the conquest of the world for the purpose of fighting each other for domination. In this struggle between the Powers, you, the workers, will be oppressed and scattered, killed and maimed, for many years to come. There is no way out for Capitalism from Imperialism.

The Capitalists, who can only survive by war, now organise in two groups to fight for the mastery of the world – they can find no way out, but stick fast in the mire.

Workers of the world, the way out of war and Imperialism does not lie through "Justice," "Freedom of the Seas," "Free Trade," "Peace without Annexations or Indemnities," "League of Nations," "Compulsory Arbitration," or "The Right of Self-Determination." These are all lies and deceitful frauds used to bind you tighter to Imperialism and to strengthen it.

There is no Justice for you or yours in Capitalism.

There is only one Justice for you.

There is only one Freedom – the freedom of the proletariat.

There is only one Peace – that is Communism.

There is no Capitalist path from Imperialism, but there is a proletarian way; that is to overthrow Capitalism. You can do this if you, the workers, are united in one great World League; then you can destroy the Imperialisms of the entire world.

The Revolution – the World Revolution – that, and that only is the way out.

Imperialism cannot be overthrown except by the destruction of Capitalism.

This is no prophecy – it is only the plain, unvarnished truth – a truth verified in actuality by the Russian Revolution.

Chapter 3: The Feasibility of the Revolution

Socialism emerges from the seas of blood and lies in which the world has been submerged by Capitalist Imperialism.

Out of the struggle between the Great Powers of the world comes the proletariat and pits its strength against Capitalism.

The proletariat will win in this fight, and will establish Communism, for Communism is the base of our existence, the foundation on which rested for many generations the existence of humanity.

The period of individualism, of private property, is as a moment compared with the centuries of Tribal Communism. Now, the old foundation of human existence is found again.

Communism, from which everything that is useful has developed, all our wealth, all that is noble in the hearts of men, will be set up again. Communism, of which the great philosophers like Plato have dreamt; Communism which was the seed and aim of the early Christians; Communism which is described and depicted in the sacred pictures of all great religions; Communism, for which all the poor and oppressed classes have struggled throughout the period of private ownership up to our own times; Communism which was imagined by our Utopists; for which our comrades of all lands have given their lives; the Communism which our great leader, Karl Marx, foresaw, knew, and understood, the modern Communism based on scientific knowledge, of which he laid the foundation stone; this now comes forth in all its wonder and beauty.

And we “blessed ones” can see it and fight for it. Already it lives in one country – Russia, and like a golden flame spreads the light of revolution over all the world.

If the proletariat is united; if the proletariat of all lands unite, and fight all Imperialisms as one, nothing can withstand them.

If, on the other hand, they do not now unite, the golden flame will be extinguished and not re-kindled for many years.

It is now our task as theoreticians of the proletariat to examine with clear eyes, and to demonstrate the feasibility of, the world revolution.

If a god had ordained the destiny of mankind, and if he had prescribed the line of development, matters could not be better arranged by the victory of Socialism.

Capitalism itself has developed the necessary basis for the victory.

How different everything has turned out from what our great master, Marx, expected. Just as he had underestimated the power of Capitalism to expand into monopoly and Imperialism, so had he underestimated the mental, moral and material power that the workers would have to use in order to destroy Capitalism. Neither did he see the new causes of war.

He believed that Capitalism would break down through an economic crisis, and be displaced by the proletariat. Indeed, capital in its spread over the world does come up against political obstacles⁴, which it will only be able to overcome by curtailing its own power. This will bring frightful sufferings to the workers, and these will lead to the revolution – to the overthrow of Capitalism.

Everything is now at hand and in alphabetical order that is necessary for the revolution. There are many things here which make the revolution feasible. Men and means – material and spiritual power for its realisation, and the hunger need, the first and greatest – indeed, the one and only maker of revolution – are here.

Not in one country alone, but throughout the whole world has suffering come through the war. Hunger creates pain, revolt, and hate; pain on account of loss and destruction, revolt against the Capitalist class, and hate against Capitalism above all else.

The human and psychological factors that make for revolution are here, and they will develop the longer the war lasts.

The material means are here because Capitalism has centralised production, and the transport and distribution of goods.

Miracle upon miracle. The material productive powers introduced by Capitalism during the war are no longer the weapons with which Capitalism can reconstruct [read defend] a Capitalist State.

It is as though a god or wizard had touched them with a magic wand, and transformed them from Capitalist instruments into proletarian instruments for an entirely different state of society.

Capitalism, Imperialism, and the war have made the necessary material and psychological conditions for Socialism. They have done more – they have fleeced and robbed each other, and they now confront the proletariat weaker than ever before; they can no longer govern. They have placed weapons of war in the hands of the proletariat; weapons which can be used to destroy Capitalism. The proletariat is armed.

One after another countries are being annexed, oppressed, and robbed of their freedom. They can only obtain a return of this freedom through the triumph of the working class. These countries weaken Capitalism, and strengthen Socialism.

It has been shown during the war how quickly the foundations of society can be changed, and if the most reactionary power, Czardom, can be overthrown, that, more than anything else, is a great moral example.

That example – the Russian Revolution – stands before the workers now. It has produced the first great proletarian revolutionary leaders.

It is now our task to examine, separately and closely, these spiritual and material means in order that the international proletariat may see that the revolution is possible, and may thus hasten it.

⁴ Really through economic causes, through over-production of capital and the existence of rich countries with weak populations to which capital is exported, forcing colonial or imperial politics and so dragging them into war.

In speaking about the feasibility of the revolution, we would remark that there is no difference between revolution during the war and after the war. So far as it is possible to judge by appearance, the revolution will come during the war; through defeat, through hunger, through the endless bloodshed from which there is no escape.

In all countries the revolutionary proletariat must rise against their own Governments, and demand and enforce immediate peace. Secondly, they must have an international understanding, and to have this they must establish a new International.

If the representatives of the revolutionary workers in all countries could meet together, and call a general strike in the munition factories, and demand that the soldiers cease fighting⁵ against the external enemy – then, indeed, the revolution would be an accomplished fact.

When we speak of the World Revolution, though we mean all countries in the world, we have England and Germany especially in mind, for there the material conditions are most ripe for Socialism. In other countries the revolution will break out and conquer; but it is certain if the revolution in England and Germany wins, the victory will be made easier for the rest of the world.

And, thirdly, it should be said here that we do not prophecy the duration of the revolution or its character; for it is possible that the fight which Socialism will have to wage against Capitalism, Militarism, and Imperialism, may last for years. It is also possible that Socialism may win speedily. The power of the contending classes is great, and the incentive strong; but as to the duration of the fight we will say nothing, simply calling the whole struggle the revolution. As to the method of the revolution there is nothing positive to say.

Karl Marx presumed it possible for the revolution to take place without force in England. Who does not heartily wish this could be so everywhere? Who would not hope that an end could be put to all strife and suffering without the spilling of a drop of blood? But in all countries, England included, the opposing classes are armed, and a forcible revolution seems inevitable everywhere⁶.

We speak, then, of the revolution in a general sense, including peaceable and forcible methods, of long or short duration, during or after the war.

Now, as to the practicability of the revolution.

The Capitalist State, the better to conduct the war, was forced to take over the control of the world production and distribution – the coal mines, railways, agriculture, shipping, banks, etc.

It had the distribution of food supplies and raw materials in its hands.

This was so in both belligerent and neutral nations.

That which people declared to be impossible, and which the reformists repudiated – one great central control of wealth production and distribution in the Capitalist State – is realised. It is with us.

Stern necessity has enforced in three years of war what more than half-a-century of peace could not have accomplished – social control of labour.

Socialism rests on the social control of labour, of production, of distribution. Therefore the foundations for Socialism are laid. Capitalism in its highest development has laid the foundation for Socialism – the central control of world production and distribution.

⁵ This was done in 1917 by the Zimmerwaldians in Stockholm.

⁶ However, if the English proletariat wished, and rose like one man in revolt, it would at least be possible to establish the Revolution without a long or bitter struggle.

The workers now find to their hands the means to establish and build up Socialism. In proof of this there stands clearly another fact. In all countries before the war there were innumerable small businesses, each working independently of the others; and many large establishments did likewise.

During the war vast numbers of them, either voluntarily or by State compulsion, amalgamated in trusts and combines.

The proletariat must take control of these now centralised means of production. They must never allow industry, trade, agriculture, transport, and the banks, to again revert to the hands of Capitalist owners.

It must be said here that production and distribution are questions, of general economy, and they will remain so. But during the war they have been taken under the control of the State, although the instruments of production were not the property of the State, these still belonging to the private owners – the Capitalists.

The State in the hands of the Capitalists is used as a means of oppressing and exploiting the workers. If it directs production and distribution in any way, then it does so in the interests of Capitalists, and it is to them that the profits will go. Its function is to rob the worker.

This must be altered. The proletariat of the world, of England and Germany in particular, must see to it that private property and interests, whether vested in the State or individuals, are overthrown.

But how can this be done if the Capitalists are all-powerful in the State; are, in fact, the State itself?

There is no other way but to conquer political power and establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

You must destroy the power of the old State, and in its stead set up the new State-power of the workers. You must change the dictatorship of the Capitalist States into that of the proletariat.

That this is feasible we will show later on – but we must first recognise that the necessary material is here.

Having demonstrated that the material conditions are here, we have now to show that the proletariat must seize political power, on personal, human, and psychological grounds.

During this war Capitalism has destroyed much of its productive machinery. Millions of workers have been killed, many more helplessly crippled, and widows and orphans now form a large proportion of the population in all countries.

Scarcely any goods are being produced. There is a shortage of raw material. Machinery stands idle or has become useless. All industry is diverted to war purposes. The means of transport are in a wretched state; whole fleets of ships lie at the bottom of the sea. Fields are untilled or badly cultivated, and are producing much less than formerly. The supply of cattle is decreasing. The production of the necessaries of life dwindles. Indeed, we are faced with a world famine. Small business men are ruined by the million, and farmers have lost everything. Nations are burdened with enormous debts, the interest on which exceeds in some cases the total pre-war incomes.

The State can repudiate these debts; but that would ruin the Capitalists. It can endeavour to pay them; but then they must bleed the peoples dry. In either case the workers have a very poor outlook.

An economic and a financial crisis are approaching together. General poverty will then come upon the whole world.

The demobilised soldiers will be confronted with unemployment. When there is no raw material, or factories have been destroyed by war, where are they to get work?

An economic war will inevitably follow the war of the military forces; but in no case will the raw materials be available for industry, and high prices must be the order of the day.

These terrible conditions will affect not only the working classes, but also the small tradesmen and farmers. And along with these conditions we shall have the new Imperialism, the preparations for the new war, whose horrid spectre I have already described.

The psychological and spiritual conditions favouring revolution are not less than the palpable or material.

People say, however, that the general poverty, misery, and scarcity of raw material, machinery, and capital, will be an obstacle, not an aid, to Socialism.

They evidently think that Socialism can only be established out of riches and abundance. This is a very misleading argument, for out of this disorder, poverty, and destruction, the Capitalist has to reconstruct and make secure again its [read his] position. Capital and Labour are confronted with the same material; and with so many elements advantageous to revolution, and with the workers' thoughts always turning in this direction, the greater possibility is on the side of Labour. If the destruction is no obstacle to Capitalism, then it can be no obstacle to Socialism.

This question, then, presents itself: Who is best able to establish a new society? The answer is that the proletariat can much better and more speedily establish Socialism than can the Capitalists reconstruct the Capitalist system.

How will Capitalism go to work in its task? How will it deal with the difficulties? It has a new economic system to set up. That means that it will simply revert to the old one and create anew surplus wealth. It has to produce more surplus wealth than ever in order to balance and exceed its unproductive expenditure. At the same time it will have huge armies to maintain, millions of unemployed to support, a host of crippled and wounded from the war, together with widows and orphans. It will have, in addition, an enormous debt to pay, and the cost of new preparations for war to meet.

The founding of a new economy; the restoration of the old one; the making of new gains greater than their losses; helping the crippled in the war; interest on National Debt to pay; new armaments and military establishments to maintain – all this Capitalism has to face. And this is an impossible feat for Capitalism. Why so? Because capital helps capital and must save it. Because it cannot take from itself the millions required for reconstruction, and thus expropriate itself. Because production is for the few, not for the many. Because it is not the duty of all men to produce.

It cannot divest itself of its capital and wealth in order to help the poor and workless. It cannot annul or repudiate its debt or refuse to pay the interest. It cannot tax itself to the extent now necessary. It cannot prevent preparations for war, and thus liberate the productive forces for useful work.

It cannot even stop luxury and permit the labour thus absorbed to be diverted to useful channels.

It cannot in this great crisis set its productive forces going in a sufficiently active manner – just because it is itself. It cannot establish itself on a new foundation – because it is itself.

It follows from all this that Capitalism is in a quagmire from which it cannot extricate itself. It shows that the destruction of its productive forces in the war has brought it to a crisis out of which only a revolution can come, and out of which crisis only a revolution can erect the necessary productive power.

It is quite clear that Imperialism has put a shackle around productive power from which it cannot free itself. Only the revolution can do this.

Certainly Capitalism will struggle to survive. It will attempt to gather from the ruins of war the materials for building anew the Capitalist edifice.

It will be aided in its endeavours by the Reformists, the Social Patriots, the false Marxists. An old form of society does not go under without a struggle.

By what method will it try to save itself?

Certainly by a method not pleasant: for the proletariat – the traditional, old-established way – by the vigorous exploitation, oppression, and enslavement of the proletariat; by the extraction of abundant surplus wealth from their labour.

Men like Scheidemann, Legien, Henderson, Vandervelde, Thomas, Turati, Kautsky, will aid in this.

For Capitalism there is only one way – the way of increased exploitation.

The new surplus wealth can have only one source – the already over-burdened workers. They will be urged, indeed forced, to toil harder than ever before⁷. They will be inadequately paid; the soldiers who remain in the armies will be also underpaid, and the unemployed will starve. All will be heavily burdened with taxation.

By what means can the Capitalists enforce their will on the workers? By the State.

The State will compel the workers, small tradesmen, the crippled, widows and orphans, to live in misery and poverty.

The State will maintain armed forces for the purpose of keeping the workers in subjection – paying one section of workers to browbeat the others.

It will regulate production in the interests of Capitalism.

It will retain conscription.

It will take industry under its protection – making the proletariat State workers, industrial soldiers. It will turn them into slaves of the companies, syndicates and trusts. The State will be a house of correction. State Socialism will be introduced in the interests of Capitalism, in which State Capitalism will be all-powerful, and the workers reduced to complete slavery⁸.

The State will become the most relentless of exploiters; the strike will be made impossible.

The Army will be used to enforce all this.

The same Army mobilised in 1914 to fight for Imperialism and Capitalism, now leavened with an introduction of aristocratic and Capitalist elements, will be used to keep the workers in subjection after the war.

During every economic or political strike this Army will be used, and the cannon and rifles, machine guns, aeroplanes and bombs, manufactured by the workers, will be turned

⁷ For example, through the Taylor system and other speeding-up methods camouflaged as “welfare” systems.

⁸ By State Socialism we understand a system of society in which the State operates many businesses for the Capitalists, and protects the Capitalists by laws and regulations against the workers.

on them in order to subdue them.

In short, the leaders of Capitalism will use the State and the Army to save Capitalism, and to obtain for themselves an ever-increasing surplus wealth, to be obtained only by the most frightful forms of oppression.

But all these horrors will compel the dispossessed and subject classes, the workers, unemployed, demobilised soldiers, etc., to rebel.

Since Capitalism has no other means of defence but the State, then the fight will be against the State, this being the embodiment of Capitalism itself. The fight against Imperialism will have developed into a fight against Capitalism itself – a fight for the Social Revolution.

Can the proletariat accomplish what Capitalism will fail to do – build order out of chaos, give food and comfort to millions of workers? Can it at one and the same time save humanity?

Most assuredly it can.

It can do this because many of the obstacles confronting Capitalism will not be before the proletariat.

Certainly it will be a hard task to build a new order from such waste and ruin. It will be like taking over a bankrupt business. Yet the proletariat will do it better and more quickly than the bourgeoisie, because it will not require to haggle or negotiate to please Capitalism.

In the first place, all the wealth and means of production to hand can be used for the benefit of all.

It would first assume control of industry, trade, transport, banks and agriculture. These would be controlled and regulated by a centralised authority a development much advanced by Capitalism itself. A vast amount of unnecessary labour would thereby be saved and labour itself would be more equitably apportioned and unemployment thus avoided.

Kaisers, Kings, bankers, industrial magnates, junkers, landlords, etc. – all on whose personal account special groups of labour were ordered will disappear, and the labour directed to productive channels.

The proletariat will not require to maintain an economic war. It will be able to arrange, internationally, trade, transport, and exchange, in a manner never possible to Capitalism. Labour will be organised and centralised internationally.

The proletariat will have no interest to pay, as it will repudiate all national debts.

The proletariat will establish instead of State Capitalism, which only benefits the monopolists, real Socialism, which is for the benefit of all. Owing to the fact that production and distribution will be regulated by the proletariat, only really necessary goods will be produced; and the duty of labour, which will be imposed upon all the able-bodied, will result in a far greater production of all things needful.

The proletariat will thus be able to establish a new Society better and more speedily than is possible by the Capitalists.

We will not enumerate here the many other circumstances which will enable the proletariat to achieve success.

The following, however, will come by degrees: – Education; the harmonising and unification of productive labour; the application of the highest technical knowledge to transport, industry, and agriculture. These are a few of the most important and necessary in

the meantime.

We can now see that the material and physical conditions, the spiritual needs and the material means; the possibility and feasibility of the overthrow of Capitalism are here.

The greatest, incentive, the most encouraging fact for the proletariat, is the knowledge that the whole future is for the workers; that the workers alone can reconstruct society.

In order to confiscate the wealth and means of production, it will be necessary for the workers to capture political power.

But people will say that the Russian Revolution has partly failed; Germany has crushed it in many parts, and that it is in danger of being entirely suppressed. Will not the World Revolution also be suppressed?

The answer to that is: The conditions of the Western European Revolution, especially in England and Germany, are entirely unlike, and cannot be compared with, those of the Russian Revolution.

In the first place the industrial workers in Russia were very few in numbers compared with the whole population. Russia is not a manufacturing country, but an agricultural one.

The Revolution could only be won by the Bolsheviks with the aid of the poor peasantry. This difficulty was the greater for the Revolutionists, because they were at the same time attacked from without.

England and Germany have a preponderance of industrial workers. The Russian Revolution serves as an example to Western Europe. It is a symbol, a teacher, a forerunner. It has shown the way. It has drawn up a programme that the proletariat of Western Europe must adopt as their own.

In the second place, we might say that the Revolutions in the Ukraine and Finland were only partly destroyed because the Western European workers did not rise. If they had risen, then the Socialist Soviet would still be standing there victorious⁹.

But the Western workers will revolt during or after the war, and with the help of the Russian proletariat will achieve complete victory. But it may be objected that real revolutionaries amongst the Western proletariat are very few in number, and therefore will not be able to win. Again, let us turn to Russia. The Maximalists there during the war and before the Revolution were in a minority. Famine conditions converted them into a majority. The same causes will operate to bring about the same result in other countries.

It may be said that though the proletariat are more numerous in Western Europe than any other single class, yet they do not exceed in numbers all the other classes put together. In Germany the number of industrial workers is estimated at 15 millions. In England their number, in proportion to the population, is much greater. To this must be added the farm labourers, who will throw in their lot with the revolutionary proletariat, as we shall show. Their organisations, both political and industrial, are powerful. In England they number have millions. In Germany between three millions and four millions are organised. In other countries like conditions prevail. In all of them a large number of the population will act with and support the revolutionaries in the coming struggle. They need only to be exposed to the rays of the sun of revolution to have their latent strength quickened and made manifest in all its grandeur.

The fight is now between "big business" and the proletariat. The issue is, who shall receive the surplus wealth, the Capitalists or the workers? Either the Capitalists will

⁹ In the fourth chapter we will deal more extensively with the difference between the Russian and the Western European Revolutions.

continue to appropriate it by the oppression of State Socialism, or the proletariat will take it by setting up real Socialism.

How the struggle will end depends largely upon what attitude is taken by the middle class, especially the lower middle class; which in England and Germany is the most numerous.

The Capitalists will be forced to tax themselves. But the debts and requirements of the States are so great that in order to provide for these, and maintain and increase their power, they will be compelled to oppress all other classes, including the middle class. In addition to exploiting the working class, they will lay the heaviest possible burdens upon the middle class, shopkeepers and farmers. They will keep down the salaries of their officials and employees. All this, combined with famine, scarcity of raw materials, and of work, and high prices will drive the middle class to the side of the workers.

That part of surplus wealth that went to the middle class was always small. After the war and under Imperialism it will be smaller still. To this class, or at least to the lower portion of it, a Socialist society offers more than the Capitalist State. Real Socialism would be better for them than State Socialism.

The patient, persistent propaganda of the last thirty years has done its work. Millions in Western Europe now know what Socialism means. They will realise ere long that now is the time to decide. There is only one choice possible: Imperialistic Capitalism or Socialism. The question to be decided is: Which shall be dictator of the world – Capital or Labour, Imperialism or Socialism?

The terrible plight into which Imperialism has brought the world has made possible the international unity of the workers, and the adhesion to their ranks of the lower middle classes.

And so there rises before us the possibility of almost immediately realising Socialism. Shall the workers conquer the world? Shall they unite humanity in one great whole? Shall the human race be freed once and for all from the shackles of Capitalism and Imperialism? It depends upon the workers themselves – upon whether they are sufficiently brave, sufficiently educated, and sufficiently united.

There is one danger to be guarded against – the danger of disunity. The Imperialists of the victorious belligerent group will unite with those of the defeated nations, and with the reformists and social-patriots, against the proletariat. There will thus be formed one front: on one side the Capitalist classes, reformists and chauvinists; on the other the revolutionaries. If a national proletariat prefers one Imperialism to another; if it allows itself to be bribed by its national rulers, or to be deceived by treacherous Labour leaders; if it accepts the State Socialism of its national Capitalists; if the international proletariat remains divided, one section betraying and deserting the others; if one part after another is allowed to be smashed by international Imperialism – then the success of the Revolution will be impossible, and we shall have to endure a new era of Capitalism, Imperialism, and Militarism.

But even if defeated at the first attempt, international unity, even if it takes years to accomplish, must be established. It should, in any case, be the result of this first world war.

In the beginning of the great struggle for Socialism, the proletariat of each country will, of course, fight against its own national Capitalism; but as the struggle progresses, the necessary international unity will be established. There will be set up an International like a Trade Union or a federation of Trade Unions, in which the members will be pledged to support and defend one another. As in a Trade Union when a member acts as a black-leg, or as in a federation when one of the affiliated bodies fails to strike in sympathy with

the others, so in the new International, when the proletariat of a nation does not play its part in the emancipation of humanity, it will be considered a national scab.

We shall now endeavour to sketch the programme which such an International should endeavour to carry out.

International Programme of the Revolutionaries.

1. Political power to be in the hands of the proletariat.
2. Legislation by the proletariat.
3. A minimum standard of living for all workers. All workers to be equal.
4. Control and regulation of all production and distribution by the proletariat.
5. Work to be obligatory on all.
6. Repudiation of National Debts.
7. Confiscation of war profits.
8. Taxes to be levied only on capital and income: that on the former to be increased till it becomes expropriation.
9. Confiscation of banks.
10. Confiscation of large businesses.
11. Confiscation of the land.
12. Judicial power to be wielded by the proletariat.
13. Abolition of all tolls and tariffs.
14. Present military systems to be abolished and the proletariat to be armed.

Explanation of Programme.

The first item gives the proletariat the means to destroy the old Capitalist State by destroying its instruments of power – bureaucracy, police, and army.

The second gives it the power to lay the foundations of, and build up, the new society. These means and powers must be given only to the proletariat, because it is the only class that is capable of realising Socialism. But, of course, it may allow other sections of the population to share in these privileges, if it considers them true to the Revolution.

The third assures to the workers a sound basis of existence through the equitable allocation of food, housing, etc. This must also be guaranteed to the small shopkeepers, poor farmers, disabled soldiers and sailors, widows and orphans, and all who have not sufficient means of subsistence. In short, help immediately, and complete liberation in the future, should be promised to all who are oppressed.

The fourth point, together with the fifth – work for all – is the only means whereby a Socialist society can be constructed from the ruins of the old one.

Clauses 6 to 9 provide the means for carrying out the third, and so consolidating the foundations of the new order.

It will be understood, of course, that in taxing capital and income, a minimum will be fixed, below which no tax will be imposed.

The tenth point – confiscation of large businesses, – covers iron and steel works, coal mines, foreign trade, railways, shipping, etc.

It is not contrary to the fourth point; for in that it is control and regulation of all production that is insisted upon. The confiscation of small businesses cannot be carried out

right away on account of their great number.

So far as agriculture is concerned, the land will be confiscated and the principle of common ownership established; but in the case of the smaller holders this can only be done by degrees. At first only the large agricultural concerns ought to be taken over and worked by the community itself, or co-operatively by the small farmers and the labourers.

The line dividing great and small concerns would be different in different countries, provinces, and businesses. There will be, in each case, different means and methods of confiscation.

The wealthy landowner and the rich farmer can be dealt with by taxation. The moderately wealthy farmer will be hit sufficiently by the confiscation of the land banks. The community, and not a landlord, will receive rent from the farmer.

There is nothing in these proposals that cannot be carried out. On the other hand, if mooted and not carried into execution, they would drive the farming class into counter-revolution. By these measures, in conjunction with the third point of the programme, the small farmers and farm labourers can be won over to the Revolution, and the middle class farmers can be induced to become, if not friends, at least not enemies.

The agricultural question is one of great difficulty. The measures indicated above, coupled with the development of productive power, provide the only possible settlement.

The twelfth point – the vesting of judicial authority in the proletariat – gives to that class alone the power in the Socialist Republic by which it can defend the new society from attack.

The last paragraph but one – the abolition of all tolls and tariffs – has for its object the removal of one of the greatest causes of enmity between peoples, and of one of the most serious obstacles to the international regulation of production and distribution.

The last demand is the crowning part of the programme. It overthrows Capitalistic militarism, and puts an end to Capitalistic wars. The second part of it – the arming of the proletariat – puts into the hands of the workers the means whereby they can defend the Revolution from enemies both within and without, and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is absolutely necessary that revolutionary international Social Democrats should get their programme ready as soon as possible – in fact, at once! If the revolution does not take place in the principal countries at the same time and with the same intention; if a succession of unorganised revolts takes place – failure will be the inevitable result, and the revolution will be smothered in blood.

The example of the Russian Maximalists shows us clearly the advantages a clear-cut and well-defined programme gives when it is ready and published beforehand. It shows also what happens when the people of other nations do not revolt at the same time and with the same programme.

The programme should be a revolutionary one, but should contain only those demands which the Revolution can make possible of fulfilment. It ought to be as simple as possible, so that every worker may understand what the Revolution aims at. It should be of such a nature that all Socialists can endorse it. Therefore it should not contain any legislative details which might cause conflict between nations with different lines of development.

Lastly, it is essential that it should unite only **real revolutionaries**. It should, by its provisions, debar all who are not prepared to fight for the Revolution.

The programme outlined above would ensure all that.

There is still one other remark to make which is of the greatest importance to the workers. They would do well to remember that after the war the strike – even the general strike – cannot win them everything; because there will be shortage of capital, shortage of raw material and of machinery, and little demand for labour.

As soon as the workers are disarmed, the ruling classes will begin to bind and gag them. This, coupled with unemployment and hunger, and the sufferings that follow in their train, may goad the people into revolt. In such an event the ruling classes will have, under arms and ready for action, troops selected from the anti-revolutionary sections of the population, and the proletariat will be dragooned into submission.

If, on the other hand, the proletariat, before demobilisation takes place, puts forward these proposals or a similar general programme, the ruling caste, fearing the power of the workers and the other classes which would support them, will give way, and their demands will be conceded without bloodshed.

Therefore we insist on the necessity for getting the programme ready immediately. The one sketched above is offered merely as an example. It would be well if the revolutionaries of all countries would set about the work at once.

The necessity and the possibility of the Revolution in West Europe – which is a condition of the World Revolution – can be clearly seen. A proletariat strong in its organisations and great in its numbers is here. A society ripe for Socialism, which has already taken its first step into State Socialism, is here. And the way to the new society, now at last visible to the workers, lies through a revolutionary programme.

Has the proletariat the physical and moral strength to overthrow Capitalism in all countries and to conquer Imperialism?

It will have the power when it is united.

Will the workers be able to achieve unity?

In order that they may benefit by the example of the Russian proletariat in its struggle for unity and victory, we shall deal in the next chapter with the Russian Revolution.

Chapter 4: The Example of the Russian Revolution

The Russian Revolution is, for the European and American workers, who have it still before them, a splendid and clear example. This example is itself the result of the development of Imperialism, from which the West European workers can learn how they have to act, how they can attain unity and win the victory.

We will deal with the Russian Revolution in order that the proletariat may see how far it can follow the same path, and where it must take its own course¹⁰.

The Russian industrial proletariat is very small in proportion to the whole population of the gigantic Empire.

The great mass of the Russian population are peasants, and among these a very great number are small farmers or farm labourers. The poor peasantry form the majority of the peasant population.

The old Czarism was supported by the great land-owners, a powerful body in Russia, and also by the capital of the big industries, which was, however, a weak prop when one considers the extent of the Empire. Czarism found it could not bear the burden of the

¹⁰ The Russian Revolution is the first revolution to be undertaken by Marxists, and in accordance with the Marxican [sic] theory. The teachings of the Anarchist, the syndicalist, the Reformist, and the pseudo-Marxist (e.g., Kautsky), were proved in the Revolution to be useless.

great war; and when it became apparent that the industries and transport were not equal to the task they were called upon to perform and famine ensued, it was overthrown by the combined efforts of the upper and lower bourgeoisie, the middle class peasants, the poor peasants, and the proletariat. These classes then attempted, with Russia as a bourgeois republic, to carry on the war.

The peasants' party, the Social–Revolutionists, the reformists and the social–patriots (Mensheviks), all worked hand in hand.

The small party of real revolutionaries (the Bolsheviks) opposed them. It was led by the man who had always stood firm for revolution – the revolution for Socialism and against any momentary success; and has thereby proved himself to be the ablest politician the world–proletariat has had since Marx. This man was Lenin.

As the Russian proletariat is the advance guard of the world–proletariat, so Lenin is the champion of this advance guard.

Only later generations who will know all his wor[?] and deeds, and who will be free from passion and prejudice will be able to compare him with his contemporaries, and pass true judgment upon him. But I am convinced that he surpasses all other leaders of the proletariat, and that he alone deserves to be placed side by side with Marx. Marx surpasses him in theoretical knowledge and dialectical acuteness, he towers above Marx by his deeds.

His tactics, before, during, and after the Revolution are far beyond anything that the proletariat had previously accomplished in the sphere of politics.

And we are drawn towards him as we were towards Marx. And the mind and the soul of the man inspire us with affection. His simplicity, his sincerity, his courage, the truth of his very being – these are the causes of our affection. He is the leader of the Russian Revolution. May he be the leader of the World Revolution!

The Bolsheviks said that the workers of Russia should not start the bourgeois revolution with the bourgeoisie, the landed proprietors and the rich farmers, but should begin a proletarian revolution with the help of the poor peasants.

They drew up a programme for the social revolution of which the chief points were: All power to the worker, the land for the poor peasants, and peace.

The Capitalists, the landed proprietors, the rich peasants, and the reformists, carried on the war till Russia was again nearing the abyss. None of the demands of the workers and poor peasants was conceded.

Then the poor peasantry and the whole of the proletariat drifted away from the reformists and social–patriots and became united under the Bolshevik banner. The Bolsheviks were able to overthrow the Government and seize political power. And they used this power to lay the foundation for Socialism.

The same thing will have to be done by the Western European and American workers.

They must either immediately overthrow their Capitalistic Government, whether it be monarchy or democracy; they must first deal with the bourgeois Government and then with the Government made up of elements taken from bourgeoisie and social–patriotic and reformist groups.

The Russian revolutionaries – the workers and the small farmers – captured political power. And they took that over solely for their own ends.

They gave the right to vote and the right to be elected only to proletarians and poor peasants.

They divided Russia into districts, whose Workers' Councils (Soviets) elected the District Workers' Councils. These District Workers' Councils elected the Central Council [of?] the Empire, and the congress of the Councils elected the Executive Committee.

All members of the Local, District, and Central Councils, and also all officials and employees, are elected for a short period only, and are always liable to be called to account for their actions¹¹.

As in general all officials have a low salary, and as all the Councils have to meet regularly and often, there will be formed a flexible body as the first Socialist Government in the world.

The light of the new world radiates from these Councils.

The working class of the world has found in these Workers' Councils its organisation and its centralisation, its form and its expression, for the revolution and for the socialist society.

What Marx had foretold – that the working class could not simply take over the Government machinery of the Capitalistic State, but that it must find its own forms – actually [?] come to pass. The organisation and the centralisation, the form and the expression of the proletarian revolution, the foundation of the socialist society, are here.

The Russian revolutionaries in these institutions have given an example to the workers of the world.

With this example before its eyes the world–proletariat can now make the world revolution.

The world–proletariat must erect Workers' Councils – councils of the locality, of the provinces or districts, of the empires or nations, as a means to the revolution, and as, the new form of its society. These Councils alone shall have power.

Workers' Councils of the nations, of the peoples, in place of Capitalistic Governments: that is the form of the revolution and of the new society which the workers must everywhere create.

The Russian revolutionaries gave power only to the workers, and to the poor peasants who are on a par with the workers.

They gave the land to the poor peasants.

They made peace whilst Capitalists and Capitalism slaughtered humanity and destroyed the earth.

They took over all the great industries, the banks, and the means of transport.

They repudiated the National Debt.

They confiscated all property.

They introduced compulsory labour.

For the first time since modern Capitalism came into being, the worker, the producer of capital, became its owner. The working class came into possession of its products: the means of production. The whole capital came into the hands of those who produced it, and who were its sole legitimate owners. It left the hands of those who expropriated it, and went back into the hands of the real owners, the people who created it.

The Russian revolutionaries introduced a uniform standard of education with free instruction for everyone. They threw open to everyone all the higher educational

¹¹ This is to prevent the formation of a new bureaucracy, or a new independent power, being raised above the workers.

institutions.

They introduced control of the factories and workshops by the workers.

They brought the industries under the control of the community of workers.

They began to exploit the great industries as communal industries.

They allowed cooperative societies of poor peasants to exploit the large estates.

They made a start with systematic barter, a systematic transport, and a systematic production.

They began to make the whole social progress of production into a great systematic entity. They did the same with distribution.

Throughout the whole of Russia, communistic industries are now springing up.

All banking institutions are in the possession of the Soviets.

A number of industrial and transport undertakings are in the possession of, and are controlled by, the Socialist community.

A number of agricultural industries are run for the Socialist community through Socialist and Communist peasants, among whom the land has been apportioned.

A beginning has been made with Socialist exchange and Socialist trade. In short, the Socialist society has been founded.

And is it possible that what the Russian workers can do and have done, can not be done by the English and German workers?

The latter will be able to do it much better.

They will be better able to take over the banks, and the means of production and distribution.

They will be better able to establish the Socialist society. And then will follow suit the proletariat of all Europe and North America – of the whole world. In their case the great industries are far more powerful and more numerous. Besides, they have the organisation which will enable them to take over the means of life.

They have the power, the experience.

They have the intellectual strength.

They have a net of unions, in all branches of industry, over the whole land.

The Workers' Unions in Russia rejoice over the beginning of Socialism, over Socialist work, which is not done for private Capitalism and masters, but for the community and for equals.

The intellectuals, who in the beginning with the possessing classes resorted to sabotage, have now in great numbers taken up Socialist work.

Socialist labour conditions are developing. Of course it is with difficulty, but they are developing.

And with and through these conditions the Socialist mind, the Socialist spirit, has come. The Communist character has appeared. Through Socialist work the Communist emotion is engendered: Communist joy, Communist desire, Communist happiness, the Communist heart.

There is no longer any doubt that in a short time the spiritual expression, the new and higher knowledge, and the new and higher art, will burst forth out of this bud, out of this first beginning of the Commune.

Contrary to expectations a Socialist society was born from the blood of the Russian workers, and it now stands before us like a beautiful flower.

Through the struggles of the Russian workers and poor peasants there appears for the proletariat, and indeed for all exploited people, the dawn of a new era.

The Bolsheviks are holding aloft a torch which illuminates the whole of nature and society. They give to the world–proletariat, in advance, in their own methods and deeds, a picture of those that must be adopted and emulated in order to attain success.

The unexpected has happened. In the infinite riches of nature and society there lay something whose existence was undreamt of. Neither England nor Germany made the beginning in Socialism. That honour belongs to Russia. Through a remarkable combination of circumstances and conditions the opportunity came to set up Communism; and there it stands to–day.

Communist society should soon spread over the whole of Russia. In the hands of the workers it should soon grow to perfection. If not, then Socialism is only possible internationally.

The Bolsheviks realise that, and have therefore done everything in their power to set in motion the proletariat of all other lands in the direction of Socialism. They know that their own revolution runs the greatest danger of being defeated; and still the revolution in Europe and North America hangs fire. The different economic and political conditions in those parts of the world delay the advent of the world revolution.

But that does not prevent the Bolsheviks from carrying on their glorious work. They realise that the triumph of the revolution in Russia would act as a guiding star to the proletariat of the world. They realise that it is necessary to set an example to the workers of other countries. They are determined to hold fast to Socialism in spite of all opposition. The workers of the world would be compelled to recognise that Socialism had come out of the great war that had apparently destroyed it.

When Germany made peace with the Bolsheviks it was a peace in appearance only. In reality it was intended to destroy them. Just as the Bolsheviks expected, the Germans stole the Ukraine, the granary of Russia where the Soviets were in power. They took Poland, Lithuania, Livonia, Esthonia, Finland, and the Caucasus, and made preparations to annex other parts of Russia.

The Bolsheviks submitted to this in order to save the Socialist society. They withdrew into the interior of the country, and did all they could to develop and extend the new form of society. They knew that only in this way could they keep in touch with, and remain united to, the German and English–American proletariat. Their sacrifice of a part of their country so that they might continue the struggle against Imperialism and maintain their solidarity with the workers of other lands, was the first example of international unity amongst the workers.

History does not furnish a greater or more sublime act than this – great in its comprehensiveness, sublime in its meaning, for the workers and for the whole of humanity.

The arrival of Socialism has been proclaimed by a herald worthy of its name.

There is no reason why the revolution could not have succeeded, or why the Socialist society could not have been gradually built up, if there had been no intervention by other nations, although the establishment of Socialism in a country that is mainly agricultural is contrary to orthodox Socialist Science. The orthodox view is that only in a highly–developed industrial country is it possible to achieve Socialism. But the developments of nature and of society are not all comprehended by science. They are always bringing to light something new. In Russia there were exceptional classes and class conditions.

There was a fairly numerous, very revolutionary proletariat, a large number of whom are, like the peasants, in great poverty. These classes were stronger than all the others. There was a degenerate class of bureaucrats and landowners, and a weak Capitalist class. Why, then, could not the first two classes together establish a Socialist society? Why could they not Socialise by degrees, banks, industry, trade, etc.? They had the power. They were armed. Under these conditions who could prevent them?

They would encounter, of course, great opposition from the possessing classes, the richer farmers, the nobles, the Capitalists, and a part of the middle class – even from some of the poor peasants themselves who still cling to individualist ideas. But these difficulties are not insurmountable.

Time and patience only are required.

The attempt will, at all events, be made.

In order to give them a fair chance of success it is necessary that no outside power should attack them, and rob them of their food, and assist and strengthen the counter-revolution.

Workers of the world! It was, is, and will be, impossible to maintain Socialism in any country if it is attacked by all other countries. It must be set up in several – in all of the advanced countries, at least – at the same time.

That is the first lesson we are taught by the Russian Revolution.

Now the great drama proceeds. Germany tears the body of Russia to pieces, and by cutting off the Ukraine causes hunger and scarcity. Prices rise. The speculation in food-stuffs assumes gigantic dimensions. Some of the farmers, dissatisfied with the prices for their produce fixed by the community, desert the workers. Hunger and want bring the work of reform to a standstill – especially the division of the land and the communisation of agriculture. Some of the farmers and the Social Revolutionaries break away from the Bolsheviks and try to persuade Russia to re-enter the war against Germany that has caused so much misery, and by that means overthrow the Revolution. At the same time England, France, Japan, and the United States force their way into Russia and endeavour to seize large slices of territory in Siberia and on the Murman coast. They supply the counter-revolutionaries with arms and money, and assist them in any other way they can. On all sides enemies of the Revolution raise their heads, but they have no chance of winning except by foreign assistance.

Attacked on all sides by the minions of Capitalism, the kernel of the Socialist Brotherhood struggles for existence – endeavouring to develop, or at least to live, and awaits the European Revolution. But, as already stated, the American, the world revolution, is not coming to its assistance; and meanwhile the Russian Revolution itself stands in the greatest danger. The world revolution will come, but later, owing to different historical, economic and political conditions that exist in other parts of the world.

We shall now indicate what these conditions are, so that the proletariat may see why the world revolution can come only after the Russian Revolution.

The first great difference between the Russian and West European Revolutions is this. The Russian revolutionaries could only carry through the Revolution with the help of the peasants. The peasants themselves were revolutionary. Without their help the workers could have done but little, even with the most reckless courage. In Russia there were a great number of large estates. These belonged to the Royal Family, the State, the nobles, and the Church. These estates could be divided. The peasant wanted the land. The revolutionary workers wanted them to have it. The peasants therefore joined forces with the workers.

Herein lies the great difference between Russia and Western Europe. In the West, even in, England and Germany, there are not many propertyless farmers or peasants; and except in a few countries and districts there are not many large estates. On the contrary, in many European countries – Germany, France, Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium – middle-sized and small estates are the general rule. The workers in Western Europe must make the Revolution without the peasants, or in comparison with Russia, with only a small number. There the proletariat had strong support; here they stand alone. That is the first reason why the Revolution here will come later.

The second reason is: The Government and the bureaucracy were weak; in Europe, and especially in England and Germany, they are very strong. In Russia the organisation of Capitalism was very defective; here (especially again in England and Germany) Capitalism is splendidly organised. In Russia the opponents of the revolutionaries were weak; those of the West European revolutionaries are strong. The Russian proletariat stood with a strong auxiliary behind them and a weak Capitalism in front. In the West the proletariat stand alone in opposition to a powerful Capitalism.

The workers in Western Europe are, in comparison with the rest of the population, more numerous than in Russia, but not so numerous as workers and peasants combined.

In the West the workers have a firm foundation on which to build Socialism. Firstly, the banking system, the principal branches of industry, transport and trade, were, even before the war, ripe for socialisation. Secondly, Imperialism has during the war centralised production and distribution. This organisation is technically powerful and can be taken over by the proletariat as a basis on which to rear the Socialist society. In Russia these organisations either do not exist or are very imperfect.

In Russia society was technically unripe for Socialism before the war, and its organisation has been greatly weakened during the period of the war. In Western Europe society was ripe for the change before the war; and during the war its organisation and centralisation have been greatly strengthened.

In Russia a small proletariat, helped by a great revolutionary peasantry, stand before the task of building up a new society with limited economic means at their disposal. The proletariat of Western Europe stand before their task alone, but they are powerful and well organised, and possess great economic resources.

The Russian proletariat, small in numbers but assisted by the peasantry, struggle with slender means against weak opponents. The workers of Western Europe great in numbers, but quite alone, fight with great resources against powerful opponents. The organisation of the Western workers has been thrown into confusion during the war through the separation of its members. The organisation of capital, and especially of the Governments, has been greatly strengthened in the same period. Through these causes the Revolution will come later, and will be more difficult in Western Europe than in Russia. It will be entirely different from the Russian Revolution.

The peasants of the West are not revolutionary as those of Russia are. This is true of the great majority of the small farmers and of the shopkeepers as well.

Although the proletarians stand alone now, if they adopt the right tactics they will not stand alone when the crisis comes. Because the material foundations of Socialism are here they can reckon on the help of others in the Revolution. With the right tactics and the right programme they will attract millions of adherents. A real proletarian programme aiming at the establishment of complete Socialism will make adherents and allies of all the lower working classes, the small business people, the lesser Government officials and employees, and the small farmers.

Although these classes are not revolutionary of themselves they will certainly ally themselves with the proletariat, for they have been hard hit by the war and oppressed by Imperialism. The small Capitalists have long been hesitating between the Capitalist and Socialist parties. Up to the present the greater number of them have adhered to the Capitalist parties. But as a result of the war they can be won over to Socialism if the right policy is pursued. The proletariat will then have a majority.

The war has pressed so heavily upon these classes that if they can only be made to realise that their only choice is between Imperialism and Socialism, they will choose the latter. When the alternative is presented to them of being despoiled by Capitalist Imperialism through high prices, taxes and war, or being saved by Socialism, they will plump for Socialism.

Let the proletariat say to all the working classes: Imperialism and war destroy you. We assure you an existence whether you have work to do or not. You shall not lack the necessities of life.

Let them say to the small Capitalists and Government minor officials and employees: Imperialism breaks you by its wars, its taxes, low wages, hunger and poverty. Socialism, which will take all wealth and all big businesses and put them in the hands of the community; which will centralise production and distribution over the whole world – offers to you low taxes, and later no taxes at all. It assures you regular work and an honourable position. It gives you, in common with all other citizens, peace, happiness, and comfort.

To the small shopkeepers let them say: Remain in your places. You shall have wares to sell. We have all the large businesses in our hands. We will supply you with wares and raw material. By degrees your businesses will become part of our system, and you will ultimately, like all other citizens, be employed in the production or distribution of goods for the community.

To the small farmers and to a part of the well-to-do farmers let the proletariat say: Imperialism and Capitalism break you through war, taxes, and high rents. They take away your sons. They deprive you of your cattle. They will continue to do after the war. The Socialist society, on the other hand, will allow you to carry on your work in peace. It will relieve you, wholly or partly, from taxes. It will free you from your landlords, and in many other ways reduce your burdens. As for the large estates, it will apportion them amongst you to be worked on a Communistic basis for the benefit of the whole community. As so on as the development of productive forces makes it feasible, it will convert all your businesses into a co-operative Communist concern, in which all workers will be equally great and powerful in, a free society of workers.

And finally, to all these classes let the proletariat say: We can do all this if you help us. In that event we shall have in our hands control of all the great industries of wealth production and distribution. We shall have all the capital and all the riches of society at our command.

There can be no doubt that those classes who are so much oppressed by Imperialism will accept this offer. The increasing pressure to which they are being subjected will make them range themselves on the side of the proletariat. In England, if it is set about in the right way, it can quite easily be done.

Here is seen again the great difference between Russia and Western Europe. In the former the proletariat could not make such an offer, because Russia was weak in productive forces and poor in capital. In the latter there are enormous masses of capital and gigantic productive power, and a complete organisation of both. With such conditions it is easy to supplant Imperialistic Capitalism with its inevitable results, death and destruction, by Socialism, and in consequence, comfort, equality, and peace. The intelligent members

of the "lower" classes, who have no direct interest in Capitalism, will be won over to the side of the revolutionaries.

We may well take a lesson in this matter from the Bolsheviks. How did they obtain the help of the peasants? They put forward a programme which demanded "All power to the workers," "the land for the peasants," and "Peace."

No other party had a like programme. The Social–Revolutionaries (in their first phase) and the Mensheviks (the reformers) betrayed the people and the peasants by alliances with the landowners and Capitalists.

If the Western proletariat make any compromise with the Capitalists, or ally themselves with them in any way, they will receive no support from the shopkeepers, Government officials or employees. These people are too intelligent not to see that in that case the proletariat would be powerless to free them from Imperialism.

There is no middle course. The toilers must do as they did in Russia – demand all power to the workers, confiscate all wealth and industries, concentrate production and distribution in their own hands. They must, in short, establish Socialism.

The Russian Revolution teaches us another lesson. The Bolsheviks won not only by the help of the poor peasants, but also, in the first instance by the absolute unity of all the working class. If they had not had that unity they could not have induced the other classes to join them.

The working classes in Western Europe are threatened with a great danger – a danger which has grown greater during the last twenty–five years. It comes from the reformists and social–patriots. Just as they held the proletariat back from revolution, and effected an alliance with the bourgeoisie and brought them into the war, so they will endeavour with the help of the bourgeoisie to bring the proletariat of the world into State Socialism.

The Capitalists, in order to escape the danger of bankruptcy through disorganisation of production and National Debts, will be forced after the war to nationalise many undertakings, or to put them under State control. They will then take away the right to strike, reduce wages, increase the working hours, and speed up work to the highest possible pitch. In short, the workers will be State slaves.

The programme of the German, English, Italian, and French reformists, shows quite clearly that they will assist the Capitalists to do this. Their assistance will be given on condition that one part of the workers – the members of the great Trade Unions – get advantages over, and preferences greater than, the others – such as higher wages, better conditions of labour, etc.

The Capitalists would willingly buy at this price the social–patriots and a part of the proletariat.

In England the danger is threatened by the Labour Party and the Trade Unions; in Germany by the Majority and the Independents, the Trade Unions and the Social–Democrats; in France by the Majority and Centre Parties and the workers' syndicates; and in America by the Trade Unions. Everywhere the danger appears.

If this plot succeeds, the division of the workers will be effected. Some will go over to Imperialism; others will declare for the Revolution. Then will the Revolution be lost, for the working class will be powerless. It will be impotent in itself, and will receive no support from other sections of the population – shopkeepers, small farmers, etc. It will be at the mercy of Imperialism.

Only when the proletariat is absolutely united, and no section of it agrees to State Socialism, will it have the power to win.

We repeat again, the perfect unity of the proletariat is the second lesson of the Russian Revolution.

There is still another lesson the Russian example affords to the Western proletariat. The Russian workers are partly defeated already because the German, English, and American proletariat did not make a revolution at the same time.

The Russian revolutionaries are in constant danger of defeat. If they are finally crushed we know the reason why.

Attacked by all the powers of Capitalism, by all the forces of the world, the Russian proletariat will hold fast to the Revolution to the last, and dying will give another and greater example to the proletariat of the world.

Holding fast to the World Revolution, suffering for it, dying for it: this is internationalism, indeed. This solidarity of the workers of Russia with the workers of the world: this is the last and greatest lesson the Russian Revolution teaches to the world proletariat.

In the middle of the Capitalist orgy of blood appeared the unity of the proletariat. In the midst of the world war appeared the kernel of a new humanity.

The Russian Revolution, through its decision, its foresight and its courage, through its form of organisation (the Soviets) and through its deeds (through its deeds more than anything else), its overthrow of Czardom and Capitalism; the confiscation of capital, the initiation of the organisation of Socialism, its union of the poor peasants with the other workers, its fidelity to international unity – is a splendid example to Western Europe, to America, and the whole world.

There can be no doubt that the workers of the world, with this brilliant example before them, will begin at once to unite.

The struggle to establish Socialism all over the world will then begin in earnest.

Chapter 5: Summing up

I.

The World Revolution is necessary.

The Imperialisms of all nations are alike inimical to the workers.

Therefore the international proletariat must unite and destroy World Revolution [read Imperialism].

But Imperialism cannot be destroyed unless Capitalism is destroyed.

Therefore the Revolution for the destruction of Capitalism and the establishment of Socialism is necessary now.

II.

There is no way out of Imperialism for Capitalism.

There is no salvation for the proletariat through Imperialism.

Imperialist Capitalism has divided the nations of the world into two groups to fight for the mastery of the earth.

Three powerful nations – Germany, England, and the United States – have the leadership of these two groups.

There is no hope of a peaceful settlement of this struggle, for all three nations, and all the countries allied with them, want world power for one of themselves, or for the group to which they belong.

There is no means of deciding the issue but war.

The bourgeoisie, the reformists, and the social-patriots seek a settlement, but their solutions have no real value, and serve only to blind the workers and keep them in subjection. A Court of Compulsory Arbitration, a League of Nations, Disarmament, the Right of Self-Determination for all nationalities, Democracy – neither these nor any of the other petty little proposals put forward by these groups can extricate Capitalism from the contradictions into which it has fallen. From the mass of surplus wealth which it heaps up; from the desire for expansion which is the result of this accumulation; from the conquest of foreign markets which it must make; from the wars that must result; from the self-destruction that will follow from that warfare: from these there is no escape for Capitalism.

The proletariat will not be able to bear the strain of the struggle. They will be forced to revolt in order to escape from the slaughter and oppression.

And they can only escape Imperialism by destroying Capitalism.

Their revolt, then, is the necessary Revolution against World Capitalism, the Social-Revolution of the World-Proletariat, the World Revolution.

III.

This Revolution is possible and feasible.

It is so from the following reasons: –

Capitalism is ripe for Socialism.

The war has laid the foundations for Socialism.

Capitalism itself must go over to Socialism – State Socialism, of course.

The proletariat is moving in the same direction with natural evolution.

The material and moral results of the war are so disastrous for the proletariat that it must come to revolution.

The destruction of productive power, the pain, the hate, the hunger, the never-ending slaughter, will drive the proletariat to revolution during or after the war.

The proletariat is so strong in its organisation that it is quite able to carry through the Revolution.

The following programme could, we think, be accepted by the international proletariat.

Political power to be in the hands of the proletariat.

Legislation by the proletariat.

The guarantee of a decent standard of living to all workers. All workers to be equal.

Control and regulation of all production and distribution by the proletariat.

Compulsory work for all.

Repudiation of the National Debts.

Confiscation of war profits.

Only capital and income to be taxed: the tax on the former rising till it amounts to confiscation.

Confiscation of banks.

Confiscation of all large businesses.

Confiscation of the land.

Judicial rights to be vested in the proletariat.

Abolition of all tolls and tariffs.

Abolition of present military systems. Arming of the proletariat.

On this programme the international proletariat can unite and win.

On this programme it would win.

IV.

The workers of the world have a brilliant example to guide them. That example is the Russian Revolution. It has shown that only two things are necessary for success: unity of the workers, national and international; and simultaneous revolt.

If the workers of a country are not united they will be defeated by the international bourgeoisie.

If the proletariat does not go in for the complete overthrow of the Capitalist system it cannot free itself nor any other exploited class, and will not get the support from those others it would otherwise receive.

But the Russian Revolution has done something more.

It has discovered the form by which the proletariat can achieve victory: Workers' Councils (Soviets). These it has set up in every village and every province in the country.

These Councils have all economic and political power.

The Workers' Councils, which will destroy Capitalism and establish Socialism; which will expropriate Capitalism and transfer all power and wealth to Socialism; which will build up Socialism politically and economically: these Councils are the form and expression of the New Society, of the New Humanity.

At present they embrace only the struggling, the victorious proletariat; but in the coming time they will comprise the entire human race.

The Councils of Labour – of Labour and nothing but Labour – will, in the days to come, be the highest and holiest corporation of humanity.

Unity of the national proletariat; unity of the international proletariat; the uniting and organising of the proletariat into Workers' Councils – these are the three great things the Russian Revolution has taught the workers of the world.

If the West European, the North American, the world-proletariat, were united; if they would establish the new International; if they would all revolt at the same time; if they would organise themselves in Workers' Councils and take over all economic and political power – then would the World Revolution be accomplished.

Already we see in the not distant future the New International, the great Workers' Council of all the nations of the earth.

Already we see the International Workers' Council, the forerunner of the new, free, Communist Humanity.

THE END.

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