

Ukraine as the Object of World Counterrevolution

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1. The war for great trade routes, for sources of raw materials and fuel

The World War of 1914-1918, which claimed tens of millions of lives and destroyed the enormous wealth accumulated in all countries over decades of global labour, was fought for control of sources of raw materials and fuel and for the great railways and sea routes to regions rich in these sources of raw materials and fuel.

Thus, the great pan-German project of the Baghdad Railway, which had been one of the main issues around which all international politics revolved in the 25 years preceding the world war, was intended to promote the following main objectives of German imperialism.

On the one hand, the Baghdad Railway was supposed to establish German domination, first in Constantinople, that is, on the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, in other words, on the great military and trade route from the Black Sea ports of Ukraine and the Caucasus to the Mediterranean Sea and Suez; secondly, on the great historical route from the Balkans through the ancient kingdoms of Lydia, Heraclea, Caesarea, Babylonia, Syria, that is, the road taken by Alexander the Great to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, which opened the gates to 300 million-strong India, the pearl in the crown of the British Empire.

On the other hand, the Baghdad Railway was supposed to chain the victorious chariot of the German Empire to the decaying Ottoman Empire, and hand over to the control of German capitalism and enterprising German industrialists, all sources of raw materials and fuel, all the inexhaustible underground riches of Asia Minor and, in particular, Mesopotamia, that amazing region whose fertile plains were successively ruled by empires that dominated the world with their power and civilization. Mesopotamia is where once, according to tradition there was an earthly paradise.

The completion of the Baghdad Railway and the possession of the Ottoman inheritance meant, on the one hand, the establishment of German rule; German hegemony on the great military and trade routes from Ukraine, the Caucasus, and the Balkan Peninsula to the rest of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. Secondly, it meant the *monopoly* control of the richest sources of raw materials and fuel in Asia Minor, such as copper ore deposits near Diyarbakir and Agram, immense oil fields near Baghdad, and the fertile plains of the vilayets^[1] of Basra and Mosul, which supplied huge quantities of wheat, oats, corn, beans, and cotton plantations in Mesopotamia, through the creation and development of which German planners intended to overthrow the hegemony of the United States in the *world cotton* market and free Germany from dependence on American cotton.

It is the same on the question of Morocco. In the struggle for this African region, over which Europe was only a hair's breadth away from war on multiple occasions, namely in 1905, then in 1908, and finally in 1914. Here we have the same conflict over great trade routes and sources of raw materials and fuel. Fighting over Morocco, Germany and France sought to gain control of this territory, firstly, to establish, each for itself, its exclusive influence on the Atlantic coast of Africa and on the great Mediterranean military and trade route from Gibraltar to the Suez Canal; secondly, to monopolize Morocco's underground riches, above all, as French deputy Margon proved at a meeting of the French Chamber of Deputies on November 21, 1913, *the iron and copper mines* of this African territory, which are superior in quality to the famous mines in Bilbao, and the untapped coal deposits in the Moroccan subsoil. It is well known what role the German metallurgical syndicate of the Mannesmann brothers, on the one hand, and the French metallurgical syndicate of the cannon king Schneider, on the other, played in the Moroccan politics of both countries^[2] and in the origins of the [first]^[3] World War.

What was already obvious before the war, namely the desire of each of the great imperialist powers to gain monopoly control over the most important world routes and the main areas rich in raw materials and fuel, this tendency of imperialism, was revealed with dazzling clarity in the course of the world war. Thus, after the first victories of the German army, the entire German press proclaimed that Germany was fighting, first of all, for "freedom of the seas," i.e., for the destruction of the English fortifications in Gibraltar and Suez, in other words, for the destruction of English hegemony on the great sea trade routes and for the transfer of this hegemony into German hands; secondly, for the annexation to the German Empire of the Belgian, French, and Ukrainian regions near its borders, rich in coal and iron.

The German imperialists made the annexation of the coal-mining regions of Belgium and the French-owned Bresse iron basin to Germany a fundamental condition for peace with their western neighbours. In the east, the German imperialists sought to seize the coal and iron basins of Poland. On the other hand, imperialist France set itself the goal of wresting the iron-industrial basin of Alsace-Lorraine, with its iron mines and steelworks, and the entire coal basin of the Saar from Germany. The essence of the Versailles peace lies precisely in the separation of these regions from Germany.^[4]

Thus, the world war was fought over great trade routes and sources of raw materials and fuel. *Ukraine, with its boundless natural resources and remarkable geographical position at the crossroads of Western Europe and the Black, Azov, and Caspian Seas, with the Caucasus and its mineral wealth and huge oil deposits, which is becoming increasingly important in the economic life of nations, further on to Turkestan with its cotton plantations, to Persia and all of Central Asia, could not but become the object of desire of all the imperialist powers.*

2. The Ukrainian hypnosis

The day after the Brest Peace,^[5] the German imperialists sent their troops not to northern or central Russia, not against Moscow or Petrograd, but to Ukraine. When German diplomats tried to sow discord between Soviet Russia and Ukraine, they did so in order to weaken Ukraine and be able to directly or indirectly annex it and thereby chain it to the victorious chariot of the German Empire.

When the German revolution in November 1918 crushed the throne of the Hohenzollerns, and German occupation troops retreated back home, new conquerors replaced the helmeted invaders. After the fall of the Hohenzollerns and the defeat of Germany, Ukraine became the object of desire and expansionist plans on the part of French and English capitalists.

If Krasnov and Skoropadsky were agents of German imperialism^[6] working to establish German hegemony in Ukraine and the Don, Denikin and Wrangel, on the contrary, were instruments for the implementation of the conquering schemes of Anglo-French imperialism, above all towards Ukraine. And, as is well known, having captured Kharkov and Tsaritsyn and giving his troops the historic order to march on Moscow, Denikin did not, however, move directly towards Moscow.

He turned left towards Ukraine and began to occupy Yekaterinoslav, Poltava, Kiev... Only at the end of September, three months after the aforementioned order, did Denikin begin operations in the Voronezh and Kursk directions. Obviously, Denikin was in a hurry to finally seize Ukraine in the interests of and on the orders of his superiors—the English and French bourgeoisie. But, having spent three months conquering the left and right banks of Ukraine, he weakened his fighting forces and thus hastened his own demise in the struggle against his most formidable enemy, Soviet Russia.

After Denikin's defeat, Ukraine seemed to have been saved from the clutches of Western European imperialism. But now, in place of the Black Hundred Cossacks and the gold-braided officers, the Polish nobility is emerging as a contender for Ukraine. Piłsudski's manifesto most vividly exposes the cards being played by the ruling classes of Poland. Piłsudski's manifesto leaves no doubt about the true goals of noble Poland in the war against both federal republics. Their goal is the occupation of Ukraine by Polish troops and the seizure of Ukraine. And again, we see that instead of taking the direct route through Smolensk to Moscow and giving battle to a formidable enemy on the fields of Soviet Russia, the noble troops are following the same path as Charles XII, the Germans, and Denikin. Such is the power of attraction to Ukraine or, as Comrade "N.N." puts it, the "*Ukrainian hypnosis*" that has affected all opponents of Soviet power and seems to have clouded their minds. What makes Ukraine the object of such passionate desires on the part of the vultures of capitalism, what is the source of the Ukrainian hypnosis, the attractive force of Ukraine, which has an irresistible effect on all opponents of Soviet power?

It is not only that Ukraine is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of its natural resources, but also that Ukraine possesses the basic elements of production—coal and iron, without which no factory can operate—and the basic elements of human nutrition—bread, meat, sugar, fats, and salt. Modern Germany, for example, has neither coal nor bread. If the capitalist system is preserved, Germany is doomed to destruction and extinction. It faces a fate worse than that of Spain, which has turned from a once-flourishing industrial country into the poorest region of Europe. As a capitalist power, Germany can now only exist by once again seizing Alsace-Lorraine and the Saar Basin from France, by once again occupying Ukraine—in short, after a new World War, which would be an adventure even more senseless and risky than the adventure of 1914–1918.^[7] Even France and England, despite their enormous territorial wealth, are unable to hold out for long without the support of Ukraine and

Soviet Russia with its cotton-rich Turkestan, oil-rich Caucasus, etc. There is only one capitalist country in the world that can survive without exploiting the riches of Ukraine. But this country—the United States—is located on another continent.^[8] It has grain, coal, iron, and even cotton in sufficient quantities, and therefore the American bourgeoisie is less interested than the French and English bourgeoisie in overthrowing the Soviet regime in Russia and Ukraine and in possessing the latter's riches.

3. The riches of Ukraine, Ukraine's role in the world economy on the eve of the war

It is well known what role Ukrainian grain played in supplying the population of Western European countries before the war. Ukrainian rye went to Germany, Ukrainian wheat to England and partly to Italy. Ukraine produces mainly grain, namely wheat and barley. According to data on production, imports, and exports, the average for the five-year period from 1909 to 1913 was a net surplus of 180,000,000 poods^[9] [2.94 million tonnes] of wheat and 211,000,000 poods [3.45 million tonnes] of barley in the nine Ukrainian provinces. Far behind is rye, with a surplus of 32,000,000 poods, [524,181 tonnes] followed by oats, with a surplus of 9,000,000 poods. [147,426 tonnes] In total, the average surplus of the four main crops over the five-year period amounted to a huge mass—432 million poods [7 million tonnes]. It goes without saying that with further progress in agriculture in Ukraine, the productivity of its fertile soil will increase significantly, and Ukraine will be able to produce a huge surplus of grain to supply other countries.

Along with grain, Ukraine also exported livestock abroad, albeit in incomparably smaller quantities. According to railway statistics, the net export from nine Ukrainian provinces averaged 231,000 head, or about 6 million poods [98,284 tonnes], in the three-year period from 1912 to 1914. It is obvious that with the intensification of livestock breeding, Ukraine will be able to export much larger quantities of livestock to other countries.

Sugar production played a very important role in the Ukrainian economy on the eve of the war. In the 1913-1914 campaign, there were about 200 sugar refineries operating in Ukraine, which produced an average of 67 million poods [1.09 million tonnes] of spirit per year in the five-year period from 1909 to 1914.

On average, 30 million buckets^[10] [369 million litres] of 40 proof alcohol were produced annually in the nine Ukrainian provinces during the five-year period from 1909 to 1914, of which only 61 percent was consumed domestically. The surplus was exported to Great Russia, the Caucasus, and other countries.

On the eve of the war, Ukraine was the most important supplier of eggs to the world market, which were exported abroad annually in thousands of railcars.

Even from this brief overview of the scale of Ukraine's agricultural exports on the eve of the war, it is clear what role the question of the exploitation of Ukraine and, if necessary, the forcible export of its grain, livestock, etc. to Western European countries had to start playing.

After several years of war, as a result of global impoverishment and world famine looming over the whole of Europe, it is not surprising that the day after the Brest Peace, the German imperialists threw their troops not against hostile Russia, but against "friendly" Ukraine. As Comrade Rakovsky recalled in his report of May 18, 1920, at the 4th All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets, Petliura's Ukraine, under the agreement concluded between the Ukrainian People's Republic on the one hand and Germany and Austria on the other, was to deliver by June 1, 1919, 75 million poods of grain, [1.22 million tonnes] 11 million poods [180,000 tonnes] of

livestock, 30,000 sheep, 2 million poultry, 45,000 poods [737 tonnes] of fat, 2,500 railcars of eggs, 2.5 million poods [40,951 tonnes] of sugar, 20 million liters of alcohol, etc.

The question of *Ukrainian* coal and iron has played a major role in our civil war. The Donetsk Basin, which ranks first among other industrial regions of Eastern Europe in terms of coal and iron wealth, is a stronghold for our domestic and international counterrevolution in the struggle against Soviet Russia and Ukraine.^[11] The Krasnovs, Kaledins, Denikins, and their European patrons dreamed of seizing the Donetsk Basin from Russia and Ukraine in order to put both Soviet republics in a stranglehold of cold and hunger, cause a complete paralysis of the railways in Russia and Ukraine, bring all economic life in the country to a standstill and provoke an uprising of the population, driven mad by hunger and cold, against Soviet power. On the other hand, foreign capital was too interested in the Donetsk Basin to give it up to the Soviet Republics without a fight and lose the colossal profits that the exploitation of the Donetsk Basin brought to European capitalists. It is well known that the day after the Brest Peace Treaty was signed, imperialist Germany began to strive to take control of the Donetsk Basin, and the German imperialist press devoted many columns to describing the riches of the Donbas, calculating in detail how much coal, metal, and ore German entrepreneurs and German occupation troops would be able to extract from this area in the interests of German industry.

When German troops were forced to leave the Donetsk Basin, it became the object of conquest by the Entente powers.

As for Donetsk coal and iron, if it is true that before the world war only insignificant quantities of our coal and iron were exported abroad, then this was even more important from the point of view of international imperialism and counterrevolution. Therefore, Donetsk coal and iron were a magnet that attracted huge amounts of European capital to the Donbas. English, French, and Belgian entrepreneurs invested huge sums in metallurgical enterprises and coal mines in the Donetsk Basin, and in fact the entire metallurgical and coal industry of the Donbas was in the hands of Anglo-French-Belgian capital before the October Revolution.

On the eve of the war in 1914, of the 3,600 coke ovens in the Donbas coal mines with a production of 175 million poods, [2.8 million tonnes] 3,150 ovens with a production of 153 million poods [2.5 million tonnes] of coke belonged to joint-stock companies with exclusively foreign capital. As for the metallurgical industry, foreign capital was also completely dominant on the eve of the war. For example, the famous Prodamet, which controlled 60% of all metal production, was mainly a syndicate of Belgian and French capitalists. The central administration of this syndicate was located in Paris.

Foreign capitalists completely owned the iron ore mines of the Kryvyi Rih [Krivoy Rog] region. Kryvyi Rih [Krivoy Rog] iron ore is among the best in the world in terms of iron content. The extraction of Kryvyi Rih [Krivoy Rog] ore grew rapidly during the 20th century, far outpacing the growth of our other iron ore regions. In 1900, production amounted to only 111 million poods, [1.8 million tonnes] but by 1904 it had reached 202 million poods, [3.3 million tonnes] and 380 million [6.2 million tonnes] in 1913. A significant portion of this excellent ore was always exported abroad, mainly to Germany and England, where it was processed into pig iron and iron and then imported back into Russia.

In dire need of our ore as a result of the war and general impoverishment, imperialist Germany made free duty-free export of ore from Russia and Ukraine one of the conditions of the Brest Treaty. Given the insignificance of iron ore reserves in Ukraine, the implementation of this requirement posed a serious threat to Ukraine's economic future.

After the departure of German troops, Kryvyi Rih [Krivoy Rog] ore was naturally bound to attract the attention of French, Belgian, and especially British capitalists. Foreign capitalists invested huge sums not only in metallurgical mines, factories, and coal mines in the Donbas, but also in

city trams, power stations, railways, and other industrial enterprises throughout Ukraine, and were by no means willing to give up their profits without a fight. When the Germans left Ukraine, Petliura, who had previously sold Ukraine to Wilhelm II, went to Odessa to the French Consul General d'Anselm to conclude a new treaty on the sale of Ukraine. Under this treaty, *all the railways of Ukraine were to pass to France*, and into the hands of the French stock exchange.

As for imperialist England, the latter was even more interested in the question of Ukraine than in the economic conquest of the coal and metallurgical regions of the Donbas, concessions on Ukrainian railways, power stations, etc. It was interested in the conquest of Ukrainian grain. The influential English bourgeois newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*, in an article published last August during Denikin's offensive, wrote: "The harvest in Ukraine is satisfactory and is capable of meeting the needs of Europe, provided that sufficient labour is applied." Comrade [Grigory] Sokolnikov quotes from the English "White Book" on the Bolsheviks a characteristic report by one of the English agents to Lord Balfour: "Europe will experience a serious shortage of food until the fields of Russia are used to such an extent that Russia, as the main breadbasket of Europe, will be able to supply all European states with its grain exports."^[12]

In the period preceding the world war, the former Russian Empire, with its population of 200 million, its boundless territories covering more than one-seventh of the globe, its inexhaustible natural resources, and its agricultural products, played a colossal role in the world economy. This role was not obvious, hidden by the monetary form of commodity exchange. The enormous share of Russian exports and their great importance for the world economy were masked by the negligible market value of these exports. Since Russian goods were exported abroad in the form of raw materials, unprocessed, they were valued very low, and the total value of Russian exports, expressed in monetary terms, in rubles, francs, pounds sterling, was extremely low compared to their true value in the world economy.

On the other hand, many items of Russian exports, imported back into Russia in processed form, such as goods made from Russian wood, Russian leather, Russian ore, etc., were sold here at prices ten, sometimes a hundred times higher than their price in unprocessed form.

The role that the former Tsarist empire played in the lives of many countries is evident from the serious difficulties that Italy is now experiencing. Recently, there have been quite a few sensational reports in the English and French newspapers about the Italian government's intentions to establish friendly relations with Soviet Russia, regardless of the policy of other powers in this matter. Italian Minister [Francesco Saverio] Nitti had to state in a special conversation with a correspondent of the *Matten* newspaper (7/20) that all these reports are biased. Nitti denied the policy attributed to him, which was to free Italy from the need to purchase American wheat, English coal and French iron *in order to obtain all this from Soviet Russia* or the Central Powers. Italy, Nitti said, needs raw materials more than any other country and must try to obtain them wherever possible. Therefore, it will continue to buy wheat in America in the hope that a day will come when Russia will once again start sending cheaper grain, but not just for Italy, but for the whole of Europe.

A number of countries—Italy, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries—found themselves in a critical situation simply because the blockade of Russia and the ruin of Germany meant that the most important suppliers of basic products such as grain, flax, timber, coal, iron, etc. to the large markets were out of action. As a result, many Anglo-Franco-American speculators, taking advantage of the weakening of competition on the international market, were able to exploit the friendly countries dependent on them to an extent that *they had never been able to do* before the world war.^[13] Nevertheless, Russia's withdrawal from the

war dealt a heavy blow to the economies of all capitalist countries.

The day after the end of the [First] World War, when a general, enormous shortage of essential foodstuffs began to be felt: bread, meat, sugar; and raw materials such as Russian flax, coal, ore, timber, leather, oils, etc., the unexpected disappearance of such a link as the former Russian Empire^[14] from the economic chain of capitalist states was a terrible blow to the latter. During the four years of war, humanity, through the fault of the exploiters, literally shot billions of tons of iron, coal, cotton, and leather into the air, which were used exclusively for the needs of the war. Today, when it would be especially necessary for the international bourgeoisie to begin the intensified exploitation of old Russia, to finally turn it into its colony, this goal has become more unattainable than ever.

For those European bourgeois scholars who understood that it was impossible to restore the old order, that it was impossible to restore the former economic relations of servitude, such as existed between the former Russian Empire and Western European states—it is clear that there is a need to end the armed conflict with the All-Russian Soviet Federative Republic. The only way to save Western Europe from economic collapse, hunger, and material deprivation is, according to these bourgeois economists and statesmen, to get closer to Russia. Saving Western Europe from economic ruin, hunger, and material deprivation means, in the opinion of such bourgeois economists and statesmen, rapprochement with Russia.

Without the help of Soviet Russia, all of Europe is doomed to degeneration. A conference on the fight against famine was held in London. The nature of this conference is evident from the fact that not even representatives of the bourgeois press were allowed to attend. And so, this conference on combating famine and industrial ruin acknowledged that victory over famine and the restoration of industry are unthinkable until Russia is given the opportunity to revive its economy and place its enormous food reserves at the disposal of other countries.

The reports by the Dutchman Wenkebach and the German professor Brentano made a particular impression. The former had been in Vienna since the outbreak of the war and gave a shocking account of the dire conditions there. Brentano emphasised that the decline of industry was the result of the *coal* crisis, which in turn was a consequence of the unbearably harsh terms of the peace treaty. The conference adopted a number of resolutions, including the following: “The conference believes that the economic conditions of the peace treaty bear the main responsibility for the danger of a gigantic revolution of hunger facing the entire civilised world.”

Of particular interest is the resolution adopted by the conference on the Russian question. “The conference believes,” the resolution states, “that the restoration of world industry cannot take place *until Russia is given the opportunity to revive its economy and place its enormous reserves of raw materials and food at the disposal of other countries.* But the first steps towards this goal must be the cessation of all violent interference, both towards and overt, in Russian affairs by foreign powers.”

However, a significant portion of the statesmen of the bourgeois countries are not yet willing to renounce such violent interference in Russian affairs. The Polish adventure is the best proof of these bandit plans of all capitalist states, especially England and France, towards the former Russian Empire.

Within the former Russian Empire, Ukraine occupied a relatively insignificant area. Its area was only 14.3 percent of European Russia without Poland, the provinces of Kovno, Grodno, Vilna, Courland, and Arkhangelsk. However, compared to Western European countries, Ukraine, with an area of 45 million desyatins^[15] [492,625 sq. km], is a large state, inferior only to Germany, France and Spain, which have an area of 46 to 50 million desyatins [546,250 sq. km]. Comprising only 14.3 percent of the territory of European Russia, Ukraine already played a huge

role in the foreign trade of the former Russian Empire before the war, exporting many of the most important items of Russian trade. It was from Ukraine that almost the entire share of wheat, barley, rye, flour, livestock, alcohol, sugar, salt and many other goods exported annually before the war from Tsarist Russia. As regards sugar production in particular, the importance of Ukrainian industry can be judged by the fact that of the total number of sugar and refined sugar factories operating in European Russia in 1913-1914, 294 were located in Ukraine.

These considerations, supplemented by the data we have given above regarding Ukrainian exports abroad before the war, already explain why the capitalist powers are striving at all costs to destroy Soviet power in Ukraine and place the latter in a position of servitude to the international capitalist market. The same data explain why, starting with the campaign against the two brotherly republics, Russia and Ukraine, international capitalism throws its main military forces at Ukraine. The catastrophic economic situation of the entire capitalist world and the urgent need to obtain as quickly as possible, today rather than tomorrow, an extra million poods [163,380 tonnes] of grain, sugar, salt, etc., These are the reasons for the feverish rush of the German, Denikin and Polish troops to Ukraine. Herein lies the driving force behind the “*Ukrainian hypnosis*,” to use the expression of Comrade N.N. (*Kommunist*, 16 May 1920), which is so strongly felt by all military opponents of Soviet power. History knows many examples when, during war, correct strategic plans and considerations were sacrificed to political motives and dynastic interests, thereby compromising the fate of the campaign. In this case, the burning issues of the stomach, the acute, urgent need for Ukrainian flour and refined sugar weighed heavily on the military scales and forced the strategists leading the campaign against the Soviet republics to choose the route to Moscow not by the shortest road, but necessarily through Kiev and other Ukrainian cities.

4. The Adventure of the Polish Nobles. Its driving forces

As a result of the World War, Poland found itself in an extremely difficult economic situation. Global impoverishment and a general shortage of goods engulfed the newly formed Polish Republic. Polish industrial factories developed rapidly before the war, largely thanks to the support of German capitalism and the transfer of many German factories, with their machinery, production methods, etc., to the Vistula region bordering Germany. Thanks to this transfer of many factories to the territory of the former Russian Empire, German industrial trusts were freed from the necessity of paying high customs duties at the Russian border and gained a huge advantage in the struggle for the Russian market compared to their English, American, and French competitors, who were far from the Russian borders. The newly formed Polish Republic had to maintain and develop its industry under the difficult conditions of global devastation. There was no question of assistance from a ruined and hostile Germany. As for the friendly Entente—France, England, the United States were eager to supply Poland with rifles, machine guns, cannons and other goods, which they had more than enough of after plundering Germany and ending the war, but when it came to delivering factory machinery, machine tools, locomotives, etc., and even more so raw materials, the situation was very bad.

A particularly important factor in the Polish collapse was its separation from the former Russian Empire. It is well known how quickly Polish industry grew by exploiting the huge Russian market and how Polish capitalism was bound up with the Tsarist policy of conquest.^[16] With every new offensive step of Russian imperialism in Central Asia, the Near and Far East, the population of every annexed or incorporated into the

zone of Russian influence region of Persia, Manchuria, Mongolia, and Talienwan, had the good fortune to see the travelling salesmen of Polish industry, representatives of Łódź and Warsaw, and to become acquainted with the quality of Polish manufactured goods long before our Petrograd and Moscow factory owners had time to get organised and send their representatives to these distant outposts. It is well known that Polish industry was more closely linked to our expansionist policy and more intensively exploited, with greater enthusiasm, persistence and systematicity, all the advantages of Russia's territorial expansion than the industry of the main factory districts of Russia, namely the Moscow-Petrograd districts. The World War, the establishment of the Soviet regime in Russia and Ukraine, the resulting creation of the Polish Republic separated it from the rest of the former tsarist empire, bringing Polish industry to the brink of collapse. *Polish industry lies in ruins.*

Roman Dmowski, described by Radek as a "real, not romantic representative of the Polish bourgeoisie," emphasised the impossibility of a separate Poland and openly declared that *it would be better to unite all Polish lands in a federation with Greater Russia than to have a small independent Poland.* Naturally, in the era of imperialism, in the era of the struggle for large markets, in the era of the feverish pursuit of raw materials by all countries, the bourgeois classes of Poland consider it useful for themselves to become part of a large economic complex. However, it goes without saying that the Polish imperialists do not even want to hear about a friendly union—horror of horrors!—of their dear "fatherland", their bourgeois, noble Poland, with the All-Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, i.e., first and foremost, with Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine. Since it is impossible for noble Poland *to unite and merge amicably* with Soviet Russia and Ukraine into a single federation, the Polish imperialists have only one way to save their homeland from economic and political bankruptcy, which is inevitable in the very near future: to subjugate the All-Russian Socialist Soviet Republic and turn all the territories of the former Tsarist empire into an economic vassal of Poland.

It goes without saying that this plan to destroy Soviet Russia and Ukraine by force of arms is, at first glance, pure madness, the most absurd adventure. But the world war of 1914-1918, the Brest Peace, the Treaty of Versailles, and the notorious "League of Nations" were all adventures, insane undertakings and deeds of a class doomed to destruction. The capitalist system has reached such a point of decay that the most prominent and intelligent representatives of the class interested in preserving it are incapable of offering anything to save it except conquering Ukraine in order to seize Ukrainian land, grain, sugar, coal, etc., with the aim of opening up a 'free' passage to the Black Sea, the Azov and Caspian Seas, and further on to the Caucasus, Turkestan and Central Asia, in order to restore Polish industry and the Polish gentry to their former markets and to their place, the former "serfs." Finally, this plan to subjugate the territories of the former Russian Empire, causing the dismemberment and decomposition of the latter as a result of the violent annexation of Ukraine, is yet another illustration of the madness that has gripped the leaders of Polish politics. But is this crazy project just some weird Polish fantasy? No, the main ideas behind it were once defended in thousands of German newspapers, leaflets, and brochures, and were even put into practice by German diplomats and generals. After the Germans left Ukraine, the English and French imperialists seized upon this project; now the same tune is being sung by the pompous Polish imperialists.

By marching on Russia and Ukraine, noble Poland is primarily carrying out the plans of Polish imperialism, the "great-power" Polish empire. From the very first days of the restoration of Polish independence, the Polish gentry, Polish capitalists and those who expressed their interests—Polish social patriots, who only recently had been shouting so loudly about the self-determination of nations—began to reveal their aspirations for plunder, violence and oppression of neighbouring peoples

and countries. In the west, Polish imperialists set as their main goal the seizure of coal fields and mineral resources not only in Silesia, but also in Bohemia (the Cieszyn coal basin), thereby turning against themselves, in addition to the Germans and their "Slavic brothers," the Czechs and Slovaks. The Polish imperialists are clearly striving to seize the Cieszyn coal region of Bohemia and the disputed areas of Upper Silesia and Posen in East Prussia. In the east, the insatiable Polish invaders are striving to restore the borders of 1772, annex Lithuania, Belarus, the coast of Latvia, the middle reaches of the Dvina River, Polesia and, finally, the right bank of the Ukraine with access to the Black Sea, i.e., with that southern beauty, Odessa.^[17]

Poland demands from Soviet Russia a territory three times larger than the entire area of Poland, with a population of 30 million people, of whom no more than 3 million are Poles. With these grandiose plans in mind, the bourgeois and landlord classes of Poland are not only pursuing Bonapartist goals. Deprived of any support from the broad masses of the people, the Piłsudski government is, of course, forced to seek support from the military and the officers loyal to it, who sympathise with all kinds of adventures. But this is only one of the motives for the Polish war. The entire international situation, the entire external situation, the entire internal economic situation is pushing Poland towards the most insane plans. Revolutionary ferment in the Polish countryside among the millions of rural labourers and in the cities among the factory proletariat is growing and manifesting itself in continuous strikes. Polish industry lies in ruins. The country's financial situation is desperate. Poland's relations with Germany, Czechoslovakia and Latvia are strained. The mood of the population in the annexed territories towards the gentry is hostile. The war with Russia and Ukraine is a war to suppress the revolutionary movement in Poland itself, a war aimed at keeping the eastern revolutionary flame as far as possible from the Polish powder keg, which could explode at the slightest spark. It is a war aimed at seizing the Ukrainian market, and further, Ukrainian grain, coal, iron, sugar, and salt.

Furthermore, it is a war for the economic domination of industrial Poland over all the regions of the former tsarist empire, a war for the return of Polish industry to its old markets in the Far East and Central Asia. Finally, it is a classic war between the lords and the serfs, a war to return to the Polish magnates, all these princes Radziwiłłs, Sanguszkos, Zamoyskis, Branickis, etc., their sugar factories, their richest Polesie forests, their vast Volhynian lands, for their palaces and estates, left in the hands of the "*muzhiks*." In short, this was clearly a class war between the powerful lords and landowners against the "serfs," against the "peasantry," against the "*canaille*."^[18]

In pursuit of its own imperialist goals, the Polish nobility, this mistress of the Anglo-French capitalists, was forced not to forget its patrons and to buy their favour with corrupt services. Denikin's defeat overturned all the plans of English entrepreneurs to extract tens of millions of poods [1.6 million tonnes] of grain and raw materials from Ukraine. Denikin had prepared millions of poods of Ukrainian wheat in the ports of the Black and Azov Seas for export to England in payment for military support. Denikin's defeat collapsed the contracts signed by British agents for the supply of Ukrainian grain, Caucasian oil, etc. to the English market. The calculations of French capitalists regarding railway concessions in Ukraine also collapsed, as did any hope of regaining the coal and iron ore mines and shafts of the Donbas. It is not surprising that imperialist France and England reacted with such sympathy to Piłsudski's adventure. According to British plans, noble Poland was to take on the role of a pump in the hands of Great Britain for pumping grain, lard, meat, livestock and other necessary products out of Ukraine, just as the Polish government was already doing with Belarussian timber. Thus, in the winter of 1919, the Polish government sold two billion marks worth of Belarussian timber to British capitalists. It should be noted, incidentally, that the latter are very interested in the forest riches of Lithuania and Belarus and support the

predatory felling of Belarusian and Lithuanian forests for export to England. Polish newspapers recently reported that, in order to export timber from Lithuania and Belarus to England, the union of timber industrialists in Minsk decided to send a special delegation to London, which would include Representatives of English firms are also involved. The Poles are cutting down the last remnants of Belarusian forests. Predatory England is using the services of Polish speculators to squeeze every last drop out of Belarus while it still can. The famous Belarusian potato is already disappearing, as a significant portion is being exploited by the English for alcohol.

This commonality of Anglo-Polish interests based on the plundering of Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania naturally creates fertile ground for the emergence of the most ardent sympathies of the ruling classes of Great Britain towards all the robberies of the gentry. The government telegram from the English king to Piłsudski is a clear sign of the common views that prevail between the British government and the Polish instigators. The landing of French troops in Danzig, as well as the dispatch of military supplies, such as cargo for the army in Poland, testify to the same commonality of views between the French government and the Polish invaders.^[19]

5. The Polish adventure and Ukrainian culture

The Polish invasion and Polish ambitions pose a mortal threat to the economic future of the worker-peasant Ukraine, its national independence and its culture. The Polish gentry is *polonising* all the areas it manages to bring under its influence. Thus, in Eastern Galicia, where Poles make up a negligible part of the population, Polish is being introduced as the official language. In Volhynia, where, according to Polish statistics, only 7 percent of the population belongs to the Polish nation, the Polish language has also been declared the official language. In Podolia, where, according to the same exaggerated Polish data, only 8 percent are Poles, the same is being done. Finally, in Belarus, where, as nowhere else, the arrival of Poles was marked by the arrival of tens of thousands of landowners who, like hungry locusts, pounced on the peasants' property, the most consistent policy of Polonization is being carried out. The Polish authorities systematically persecute Belarusian schools. The Higher Pedagogical Institute in Minsk has been dissolved. All secondary schools, except for one in Minsk, have been closed. Public schools have been left without any funds and exist only on voluntary contributions from the parents of the pupils themselves.

These facts alone show what the alliance between the bandit Petliura and the Polish nobility means for Ukrainian culture. The treacherous slogan "Ukrainian People's Republic" is only a cover for the subjugation of Ukraine to international capital and the Ukrainian kulaks.

During the first Ukrainian People's Republic in Ukraine, the Austro-German imperialists and General Skoropadsky ruled Ukraine. This was a time when, under a treaty with the Germans and Austrians, Petliura's Ukraine pledged to give Austria and Germany 75 million poods [1.2 million tonnes] of grain, 11 million poods [180,187 tonnes] of livestock, etc. (see above).

During the Second Ukrainian People's Republic, Ukraine was a colony of French capital under a treaty signed by the traitor Petliura in Odessa with French General d'Anselm. Under this treaty, almost all Ukrainian railways, financial and military enterprises were to pass into the hands of French stockbrokers.

The Third Ukrainian People's Republic, which the same Petliura is now promising, is only a smokescreen for the establishment in Ukraine of the hated black power of the Polish nobility.

The entire history of Ukraine cries out against this new treacherous act by Petliura. This history is a history of heroic deeds and great defeats of the Ukrainian peasantry, the Ukrainian "*canaille*," in its centuries-long struggle against the Polish gentry. On the contrary, the entire history of noble Poland was nothing but a long series of wars against Ukraine with the aim of enslaving the latter. Ukrainian literature, the immortal works of Shevchenko, and Ukrainian folk poetry vividly reflect this side of the long-suffering history of the Ukrainian people, whose entire development took place in a bloody struggle against the Polish lords. All the Cossack rebellions, all the struggles of the Zaporozhian Sich, and the struggle of Bohdan Khmelnytsky were essentially the struggle of Ukrainian peasants against the yoke of Polish landowners, the struggle against the "Polonizers," the enemies of the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian culture.

Petliura, a mercenary and hired bandit who sells himself to anyone who agrees to pay well for his bloody services, is now handing over Ukrainian land, the Ukrainian language, and all Ukrainian culture to the Polish gendarmes, the insolent Polonizers who are closing Belarusian schools and *declare Polish the official language* even in regions where the Polish population is negligible. Polish gentry and Polish "cultural leaders" are already trying to Polonise all of Belarus, Volhynia and Podolia, and intend to do the same to all the regions of Ukraine that they manage to conquer.

Only in closest alliance and unity with the working masses of Soviet Russia will Ukrainian workers be able to defend their language and their culture, created by the masses. How much blood have Russian workers and peasants already shed on the fields of Ukraine in the struggle for happiness and freedom! And what do those pitiful *eight thousand poods [131 tonnes] of grain*, which have been taken to Russia during the current period of Soviet power in Ukraine, mean in comparison with these rivers of blood, with this heroic self-sacrifice of Russian workers and peasants?

The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic is a member of the All-Russian Socialist Federative Republic, which in the near future will become the Great International Republic of Soviets. And what is the difference between our workers' and peasants' socialist federation and the robber capitalist empires? The "free" "constitution" of England keeps 300 million Indians in grinding slavery and suffocates them, who have long been groaning under the British yoke. Republican France brutally suppresses the slightest manifestation of freedom and national self-determination in Morocco, Algeria, Indo-China, and all its colonies; the great transatlantic Republic, The United States, still refuses to recognise the independence of Cuba and the Philippines, in the name of whose supposed "liberation" the war with Spain was started in 1898.

At this time, the government and the working and peasant masses of the Russian Socialist Federative Republic joyfully welcome the formation in the ruins of the former Tsarist empire, where, as in all capitalist countries, any aspiration for national self-determination that has been stifled and suppressed, the autonomous *Bashkir* Soviet Republic, the autonomous *Tatar* Socialist Soviet Republic, etc. In all capitalist states without exception, large and small, in France, England, Japan, America, Holland, Belgium, Poland, etc. we see brutal violence against national minorities, and sometimes the transformation of huge collectives of hundreds of millions of people into a *nation* of slaves and serfs, falling under the power of a more organised, more "civilised" minority, as we see in the example of the 300 million people enslaved in India and the armed capitalist England that rules over them. At one pole — in the capitalist countries—there is brutal suppression of national minorities, and sometimes even nationalities, where the national minority holds the reins of power in its hands. At the other pole—in the Republic of Soviets—there is the most careful, most brotherly feeling and attitude not only towards more or less large, but also towards the smallest national units.

Dozens and hundreds of honest Ukrainians, sincerely longing for the national and cultural revival of Ukraine, have come, like two pillars of the

Ukrainian national community, Vynnychenko and Hrushevsky,^[20] to the conviction that only Soviet power can now fulfill to the end the role of liberator of Ukraine from all forms of oppression.

On 27 May, the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee approved the provisions for an autonomous Tatar Socialist Soviet Republic with its centre in the city of Kazan. This announcement will resound throughout the entire Muslim world, in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkey, India, and will serve in the eyes of our Muslim brothers, workers and peasants of the East, as a new illustration of the great principles that underlie the national policy of the All-Russian Federal Republic.

Two or three decades will pass, and we will see how, together with the spread of public education in the Soviet Republic, together with the opening of thousands and thousands of schools, evening courses, academies, etc., together with the complete elimination of illiteracy in Russia and Ukraine, alongside the amazing monuments of Russian and Ukrainian literature, the works of Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoy, Gogol, Shevchenko, new great works will appear by new brilliant poets, fiction writers, etc., who come from the working and peasant milieu... The poetry and literature of the Tatar, Bashkir, Kyrgyz and other peoples, which are only just awakening to life, will blossom into full bloom; poetry and literature will blossom, and all these separate streams, tributaries, small rivers and large rivers, intertwining in a strange and harmonious manner, merging and feeding with their life-giving waters into a single international ocean of poetry and science, freed for the first time from the national and class oppression of the working people, will shine with such unprecedented, incomparable beauty, the like of which neither classical Hellas with all its marvellous works of art, nor the civilisation of the medieval and capitalist eras with all the immortals poets, artists, thinkers and scientists born of those eras, could give to the world.

From defence to attack

In order to achieve their class liberation and the right to genuine national liberation as quickly as possible and with the least loss of blood, the workers and peasants of Russia, Bashkiria, the Tatar regions, Ukraine, the Caucasus, etc. must join hands and, through joint efforts, put an end to the centuries-old, hereditary enemy of the working and peasant people—the capitalist, the kulak, both native and *foreign*.

Polish lords, Polish landowners, and Polonizers from the banks of the Vistula are now marching on Ukraine, declaring war on Ukrainian freedom and independence, on the Ukrainian worker-peasant Soviet government, and on the Ukrainian language. We will double, triple, or even increase our efforts tenfold if necessary, and we will put an end to the threat of the Polish nobles as soon as possible. However, let us remember that noble Poland is only an outpost of international imperialism, only a tool in the hands of the Imperialist International of death and destruction, and above all Anglo-French imperialism. As Comrades Chicherin and Rakovsky rightly point out in their note on the offensive of the Polish lords: “The very existence of workers’ republics successfully fighting for the economic revival of their countries is a thorn in the side of countries where the workers are not yet in power.”

We must show world imperialism, and above all England, which we can mortally wound, the Achilles’ heel of its formidable military and economic apparatus, that we do not consider the tactic of active defence to be the only method of self-defence for the Soviet republics. We wish to devote ourselves to peaceful labour, to peaceful creative work. We want our workers’ and peasants’ Socialist Federal Republic, through its fruitful *internal* activity, its great peaceful deeds in all areas of economic and cultural life, in a word, by the very fact of its existence to serve as an

example, a beacon, a guiding star for the workers and peasants of all countries and continents. But if England continues to persecute us like predatory beasts, if it keeps throwing new armies of mercenaries against us, we will not limit ourselves to driving the Polish lords out of Ukraine and helping the Polish workers and peasants raise the red banner over the Warsaw citadel.

We are approaching the end of the *first* period of the Soviet Republics’ wars with international capital, a period of active *defence* against the Anglo-French predators. We know where the Achilles’ heel lies, the weakest and most vulnerable spot in the body of our main enemy, Great Britain. The commander of the Soviet fleet, Raskolnikov, with his decisive actions—“on his own initiative, without orders from Moscow” to the coast of the Caspian Sea, and specifically by landing in the *Persian* port of Enzali, where an *English* detachment had retreated before the onslaught of our heroic sailors to Resht, took the first step, fraught with great world-historical consequences, from the tactics of active *defence* of the Soviet Republics to the tactics of a bold *offensive* in the struggle against world imperialism.

England could not prevent the emergence of the Soviet Azerbaijan Republic and powerlessly let the Baku oil fields slip from its hands. In vain did the British government, in an official statement to the House of Commons, reassure the alarmed British owners and shareholders of Persian oil fields and other concessions that there were sufficient British forces in Persia to repel a possible Bolshevik offensive. If necessary, our Cossack brigades will reappear in Tehran, but no longer white and under the command of the notorious Tsarist colonel Lyakhov, hated by the Persians, but as red cavalry regiments under the command of red commanders such as Comrade Budyonny, Primakov and others. Azerbaijan, Persia, which is friendly to us, and allied Afghanistan—all these are countries where every tremor of the ground beneath the feet of the English oppressors is powerfully reflected in all corners of the British Empire, causing strong underground shocks - harbingers of an impending earthquake in India and Turkey. When news of the blows we have dealt to English prestige in Azerbaijan, Persia, and Afghanistan reaches the Near East, the Middle East, and the Hindu, Muslim, and non-Muslim East, then not only will the British capitalist empire be shaken, but the ground will begin to burn under the feet of the French imperialists in Asian Indo-China, in the African colonies, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. The first period, the period of the revolutionary defensive wars of the Soviet Republics for the right to create a new life on the great socialist principles by peaceful means, is, we hope, coming to an end. Let us hope that we will not be forced, on the very next day after the conclusion of peace with Poland, to decisively and irrevocably set aside the peaceful plough and enter the second period of revolutionary wars of the Soviet Republics:—*offensive* wars in the West—in the name of uniting with our brothers abroad in the West—the Czech, Hungarian, and German workers groaning under the yoke of Anglo-French capitalism and all its agents *in the East*—in the name of liberating hundreds of millions of Persians, Afghans, Hindus, who are eagerly awaiting our arrival for the final decisive battle with world imperialism and its main representative—bloodthirsty capitalist Great Britain.

A vilayet was an administrative unit of the Ottoman Empire. —*Transl.*

For details on the struggle for Morocco, see our work “The World War and the Struggle for the Division of the Black Continent,” chapters III and I.

Pavlovich refers to the ‘World War’ only, as in 1919 there had up to then been only one. —*Transl.*

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The Peace of Brest Litovsk was an agreement negotiated between the RSFSR and the Central Powers on March 3rd 1918. The agreement saw the RSFSR exit from the war, fulfilling one of the three principal promises

of the Bolsheviks, 'Land, Bread and Peace.' The peace came at the price of significant Soviet loss of territory in what is now Ukraine, Belorussia and Poland. Pavlovich was part of the delegation which negotiated the Brest Peace. For details see: Trotsky, My Life, Chapter 31. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1930/mylife/ch31.htm> —*Transl.*

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105 years later, the globalization of world production and the same process of imperialist competition which Pavlovich describes has drawn the United States directly into competition for Ukraine's resources. See "Ukraine, US sign critical minerals deal" (2025) and "Critical resources, imperialism and the war against Russia" (2022).—*Transl.*

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Pravda, May 12, 1920.

For information on how capitalist England began plundering its ally Italy on the very next day after the latter broke off relations with Germany and the war between Italy and Germany began, see our book "International of Death and Destruction", pp. 53–56, published by 'Kommunist', Moscow, 1918.

Before the war, Russia met 80 percent of the global demand for flax.

A 'decyatin' (???????) was an old Tsarist unit of land area measurement. The decyatin, comes from the Russian word for the number ten, (?????) as the decyatin was one-tenth of a Verst. This system was abolished by the Bolsheviks in favour of the metric system. Note that contemporary Ukraine, excluding Crimea which was seized by Russia in the wake of the 2014 fascist Maidan coup, and including the regions which Russia claimed in the wake of the reactionary 2022 invasion, is slightly larger than the area described by Pavlovich, at approximately 577,000 sq. km. —*Transl.*

For details, see the brochure 'The War with the Polish Nobles'.

For Poland's territorial claims, see 'The War of the Lords and Serfs.'

For more information on Poland's internal situation and the main motives for the war with Russia and Ukraine, see our aforementioned brochure, 'The War of the Lords and Serfs.' Note by the translator: The Ukrainian term "???????" (muzhitsuva) refers to 'peasantry' not in a neutral, but in a colourful, and pejorative manner, based on the word "?????", (muzhik) which was and is still used as a put-down for a crude, base individual. I have written it simply as 'muzhiks' in the same spirit as 'serfs' and 'canaille' (see note below) to convey what I believe to be the author's intended meaning, vis a vis the attitude of the Polish nobles to the Ukrainian peasantry, and also his irreconcilable scorn towards this attitude, which he conveyed through the use of colourful Ukrainian peasant terminology, and for which there is no 'one to one' translation into English. The author's use of the term '?????' (bidla) to describe the poorest and downtrodden, has no corresponding English term. The most analogous term I can find, and one which also fits into the revolutionary socialist tradition with a meaning analogous to that likely intended by the author, is the French term 'canaille' – a derogatory description for both mean individuals and the lowest level of the working class.—*Transl.*

See Chicherin and Rakovsky's letter to the Allied governments.

Volodymyr Vynnychenko and Mykhailo Hrushevsky were leaders of the

Ukrainian national liberation struggle who at the time of the publication of the original Russian text in 1920 were evincing support for Soviet rule in Ukraine, conditional upon the Bolsheviks permitting the political activity of the socialist parties which had rejected Soviet power. Their political demands were not met. By 1922, Vynnychenko had emerged as an opponent of Soviet rule, and Hrushevsky's position was not then entirely clear. He would only return to Ukraine in 1924. This reference was omitted in the 1922 Ukrainian version of the text. —*Transl.*

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